

Information Sheet: Publicising and marketing an event

Good publicity is a key factor when organising your event and you should start planning well ahead. There are many different kinds of publicity to consider and you will need to take various factors into account – who your projected audience is and the most appropriate ways of reaching them, how big (or small) your marketing budget is, how much time you have available and what resources.

There are many different kinds of publicity vehicles which you should consider:

- Print media such as posters, postcards and flyers
- Broadcast media such as television and radio
- Written media such as newspapers, magazines and parish newsletters
- Electronic media such as websites, blogs, social media and emails
- Word of mouth through existing networks and groups

Issues to take into account:

- Some forms of promotion are free! Email your contacts, ask them to circulate your email to their own contacts. Use websites where you can post information free of charge. Use Twitter and Facebook to their full advantage – they are very powerful when used properly. Think about writing a blog and learn how to use MailChimp so you can produce a professional looking e.newsletter. Email addresses are gold-dust, but target what you send correctly – the wrong kind of communication (or too much of it!) can be irritating to the recipient
- Local listings in newspapers are often free to community groups and a good press release could also get you priceless editorial. Think about a number of “trigger points” for press to make sure you achieve a build up of awareness for your event – come up with three or four human stories and release them at appropriate intervals. Listings on event websites are usually also free – start with Visit Ryedale
- Consider whether you have community partners who could help you – do your partners send out newsletters or mailings that you could “piggyback”? Remember that they cannot give you the details of their mailing list because of the Data Protection Act, but they could include material on your behalf – you could offer to stuff their envelopes for free in return. It’s worth thinking about the types of media that your targeted audience will already be accessing – are they likely to be members of a local art group? Do they use local shops?
- Copy deadlines can be months ahead, so if you are planning to place advertisements check the deadlines well in advance. Make sure that your copy includes all the necessary detail – get someone else to check it. An online presence you can refer to in hard copy is invaluable, so if you can it’s worth setting up a single page website at the very least – there are lots of free ways to do this. An events page or group on Facebook can work really well too
- If you send a press release always follow it up with a phone call if you can – journalists receive hundreds of press releases and yours needs to stand out. It is always best to nominate a single person within your group to be the contact for the press. Remember that some funders will want any press releases to be cleared by their own media department, so allow plenty of time for this
- Remember to credit your funders on *everything* you produce – both in hard copy and digitally. Some funders have very specific guidelines about how big their logo should be, how it should be placed on the page and what words should accompany it. Follow these guidelines carefully because otherwise they may not be willing to release their grant. Keep copies of everything so you can share it with your funders
- Remember to invite your funders to your event and ask if they have any networks which you can use to circulate publicity material

Posters and Flyers

Most events will have some sort of poster, postcard or flyer which can be handed round or picked up. There are some key factors to take into account when designing these:

- Don’t be tempted to make your posters too large. Many notice-boards can only cope with up to size A4. A3 may have more impact, but the places they can be used are more limited
- Consider making your flyer a more unusual shape to make it stand out. People are more likely to read and retain something they take pleasure in looking at

- You need to think about how your posters and flyers will be distributed and how many you will need. Who is going to be responsible for distribution? Whoever undertakes this task needs to keep a clear list of who has been approached so no areas are overly covered and none are missed out. The Creative Economy Officer will help you with some of your distribution and the Visitor Information Points will be useful too. If you have a healthy budget you may like to consider using one of the literature distribution companies – the outlay can be significant, but you may feel this is outweighed by savings in time and fuel. Use of these companies also guarantees your literature a place in some venues which would otherwise be inaccessible to you
- It may be tempting to fly post but remember this is illegal. It is also important to check the rules before you place posters on boards along roadside verges etc. If you break the rules you should be aware that they will probably be removed and you may be fined. Consider approaching a local farmer or landowner who may allow you to put a very large sign on their land – this is especially helpful if the road is close to the venue or is used by large numbers of your potential visitors – tourists, for example. Remember that there are regulations about how long you can do this for before planning guidelines are breached, so seek advice first. The Government publish a helpful [booklet](#) on this subject
- If your budget will allow it's always worthwhile employing a graphic designer. Unless you are very gifted it's likely that your homemade poster will look precisely that, and it is important that the quality of your publicity reflects the quality of your event
- Ensure that the design is strong, memorable and appropriate with a minimum of words. Additional words subtract from the impact, but you must get across the information your audience needs – what, where, when and who. If you need your audience to have access to additional information – for example, on ticketing arrangements, facilities, access etc. then make sure you put a web address on all your material. Make sure that the look and feel of your material fits in with the look and feel of your event and the audience you are seeking to attract
- Make sure you include the necessary logos for the organisations involved (funders, partners, venues etc.)
- Ensure that the design uses an appropriate font which is the correct size and style – it should be easily read from some distance away and conform to best practice guidelines for accessibility. This means ensuring that the contrast between the text and the background is sufficient. Sans serif fonts are usually considered to be more accessible.

There is a separate information sheet which details how to write a successful press release. Once your press release has been circulated you may be asked to give an interview on local radio or to a newspaper. If so, it is helpful to be thoroughly prepared so the publicity you receive is as helpful as possible:

- Ask if the interview will be live or pre-recorded. If it is live ask to see the questions so you can ensure you are correctly prepared. If any of the questions are irrelevant this is the time to say so
- Try to prepare the main points you want to cover but don't attempt to learn an entire "answer" as this will just make you appear stilted
- Keep your answers clear, short and to the point – there are always time constraints and a considerable amount of a pre-recorded interview will not make it on-air. This means that you need to get the important information in as early as possible
- Think about some "human" stories which will bring the whole thing to life and try and be aware of the importance of the "local" angle to the likely audience of the piece. This will help keep it interesting
- Emphasise the importance of your event – be enthusiastic about why it really matters
- Turn off your mobile phone and try to find a venue for the interview where you won't be interrupted
- If you do the interview over the telephone avoid doing so on a mobile

It is generally true that the people who achieve the best results with their publicity are those who are the most single-minded about it. Tell everybody you meet about your event – at work, in the queue at the post office, in the bar at the pub and make sure you are always carrying some print-work so you can give them to people you meet and put them up on notice boards you pass (remember to ask permission!) Remember that the best ambassadors are enthusiasts, so do what you can to get people excited about your event.

You may also find the toolkits and resources on Culture Hive useful: <http://www.culturehive.co.uk/> (You don't need to be a member of the AMA to use them).