

FEDERATION COUNCIL'S EVENTS AND FESTIVAL GUIDELINES

Marketing, Advertising & Communication

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1. Marketing Your Event

Promoting/Marketing/Advertising your event is a crucial stage in the event planning process – there is no point planning a fantastic event if no one knows about it!

The first step in developing a strategy to promote your event is to decide who your target audience is (this is something that should already have been done in the earlier stages of the event process). By doing this, you can develop ways that will effectively market your event to the right people, instead of wasting time and resources reaching people who are unlikely to attend anyway.

It is important that all marketing and promotional activities are consistent in their message. As such, there needs to be a coordinated approach to this part of the planning process. It might be a good idea to develop a logo or slogan that people will associate with your event. When developing logos and slogans for the event, be sure that you are not breaching any copyright laws.

It is important to consider the promotion of your event when developing your budget, as you will need to allocate at least some money to these activities. Do not make promises or promote things that you cannot deliver. Whilst some forms of advertising can be expensive, others can be just as effective but with minimal costs. However, there are a number of ways that you can provide your event with a high level of exposure, even with a limited budget. You just need to be creative and resourceful!

Be aware of your obligations to sponsors and funding bodies – you may be required to recognise their contribution in any promotional material.

Make sure you get your timing right – do not leave your promotional activities to the last minute or you will significantly reduce the number of people you have attending.

2. Marketing and Promotion platforms

The following list provides you with some ideas about how to make people aware about your event and excited to attend. Again, the strategy you choose will depend on things such as your target market, your available budget, and the type of event.

Posters

For local events, use the tried and true poster. Areas with lots of pedestrian traffic or car stops are gold. Local shop windows, libraries, office noticeboards, cafes and Laundromats - basically, anywhere people gather can ensure your posters reach your audience.

Flyers / DLs

Deliver to households, handed out at supermarkets, distributed through local businesses and schools

Community Noticeboards

This is another low cost option, which can be quite effective. There are also public community Facebook pages in larger Federation Council towns that allow you to post about your event. i.e. Mulwala, Corowa, Howlong,

Media Releases

It is worthwhile making contact with local newspapers, radio and TV networks, as they may like to run a story on your event. Most media networks broadcast a free community segment, so providing a media release may help to increase your event promotion. See Appendix for a Media Release template.

Radio

Contact the radio stations and tell them about your event. They may be able to arrange an on air interview to discuss your event, or you can pay for advertising. They may even broadcast live from your event!

TV

This can be a costly way to promote your event, but the exposure it will receive can make it very worthwhile. A number of television and radio stations offer free event listings on the Community Noticeboards on their websites.

Socials/Social Media

Events promoted on the business/ event Face book or Instagram page or look for the ones related to your cause or event and post your details there as well.

Hash tag

Create a hash tag and use it when tweeting about your event or uploading photos to Instagram or promoting your event on Face Book. Remember when hash tagging to add local area tourism specific hashtags

Website

it might sound like a no-brainer, but be sure to put the details of your event on your website, preferably on the home page. Anybody who hears vaguely about the event is likely to go to your website (or Google it) and look for the details. Set up an event specific website for your event. Online Website Builder sites such as Weebly and WIX are free, include templates and instructions and can create a professional website for people to visit for information about your event.

Other Websites

Many websites have general calendars of events, aimed at particular markets, such as tourists, and as a public service by municipalities or government agencies. Add all of them to your media list. Websites like Eventbrite are a great way to sell tickets for your event and promote at the same time to a broad audience.

Australian Tourism Data Warehouse

Do not forget to list your event on [Australian Tourism Data Warehouse](#). It is free and gets your event listed on [Visit NSW](#) as well as feeding through to various other directories including the appropriate Federation Council Information.

Word of Mouth

This is the number one way to generate interest in your event and for no cost at all. If you get people talking about your event, and you will be surprised how quickly word will get around.

Online Ticketing and Registrations

There are a number of free online ticketing systems. Most let you customise your tickets, have options to allow for different fee structures, group discounts and early bird specials. Some of them are free to use, while others take a fee from the customer on each ticket sale. It is worth asking other event organisers what system they use.

3. Marketing Messaging

Marketing is all about getting your event to your target audience through seamless material designs and event messaging across all of the platforms you have chosen to use and that your budget allows – this means creating eye catching, relevant designs and a consistent message for your event.

This could mean that all different formats i.e. social tiles, posters, community noticeboards, mail drop flyers etc. look the same and verbalised messaging i.e. media releases in the paper, radio ads, social media videos, interviews have a consistent message that's conveyed throughout the promotion of your event, all with the same tone of voice.

This is so at any time a potential event attendee is seeing or hearing about your event, it reminds them of all the relevant, exciting information and connects your visual marketing, with your verbal marketing and thus to your event.

Having a planned message to convey and all the same graphics, potential attendees are more likely to remember to purchase their tickets and attend your event, every time they cross your different promotional material.

There are a number of free avenues you can go down to advertise your event, there are also free, low cost design websites you can use to create your event graphics.

Graphic design isn't everyone's strong point and the good news is, it doesn't have to be, all you need is a creative mind and know what your event material should look like. There are a range of free online graphic websites such as, Canva.com, befunky.com and snapper.com, just to name a few, Each of these websites also have the option to pay small monthly fees to upgrade to a wider access of stock images and templates to use, ranging from \$6 p/month - \$20 p/month.

Alternatively, there are a lot of local and surrounding region graphic designers that are available to take this part out of your event planning – this will incur an increased cost but the quality is much higher. Many local graphic designers are happy to chat through, your ideas, your budget and discuss what can work within that.

Free advertising is something every event organiser should try to take advantage of, if you can limit costs here, it means you have money spare to spend elsewhere.

Sending media releases to radio stations, newspaper outlets or news stations is free. It is important when doing this that your messaging is consistent, has all the relevant information about your event, highlights why people should attend and give a bit of insight into who you are as an event, in your relevant tone of voice. It is also important to include a relevant image that can convey your messaging and tone of voice included in the media release, especially when sending this to a newspaper.

Sending a media release about your event does not guarantee your event will be advertised. Media will use their most intriguing/sellable media releases, so make sure you really sell your event.

4. Tone of Voice

It is important while marketing/advertising your event through any of your chosen channels that your tone of voice stays the same. You may have heard this term before and thought “what does that mean”. So we are here to let you know, what it means and why it’s important.

A tone of voice is an expression of your events values and way of thinking. Just how the tone of your partner's voice when speaking can instigate hurt feelings, or even an argument, the wrong tone of voice in your content and messaging can also put off potential customers. It is important to establish a tone of voice, from your initial event concept and event plans. For example if your event is a conference for business men and women, all your messaging (on any marketing platform) and your tone of voice would likely be more professional and informative, if your event is for youth/teenagers your tone is likely to be more light hearted and quirky through your marketing.

Having a consistent tone of voice throughout you event messaging, is what will help build your event and your attendees over time. It is important to convey who you truly are as an event through messaging, just don't lie about it – meaning if the event is a conference for serious business people, don't bring humour or jokes into your consistent messaging. That doesn't mean you aren't allowed joke at all.

A consistent tone of voice through social media, websites, written articles, any form or marketing of your event not only attracts your target audience but will also give your event its personality that attendees can identify with. The more your voice is identifiable with your target market, the more likely your attendance to your event is going to grow.

5. Communication and Scheduling

It is great to build the momentum for your event over the 9 – 3 months prior, depending on the scale of your event.

In event management, communication is the key. As such, developing a communication plan is a very important aspect of planning any event. It will ensure that you have clearly communicated all information to key stakeholders, staff, the community and participants both in the lead up to the event and on the day.

4.1 Before the event

To begin with, you should consider who you need to communicate with and what it is that you need to communicate. Key people may be;

- People affected by the event, such as residents, motorists, local business owners etc.
- The Council and other relevant approval bodies i.e. Transport for NSW, NSW Police etc.
- The media.
- Emergency Services.

- People supplying goods/services for your event (food vendors, performers etc.)
- Potential participants.

In addition to identifying key people and what information they require, your communications plan should also outline when this information should be communicated and how it will be communicated.

It is vital that you get the timing right. Be aware of what information you need to provide and when this information is required at the commencement of the planning phase. By doing this, you will eliminate the chance of missing deadlines (i.e. submitting documents to Council) which could then impact on the delivery of your event.

The most important communication line will be that between the event organiser and potential participants. Make sure you communicate all the key details of the event to the public (for example, date, time, location, cost, parking information etc.) There are a number of ways you can disseminate this information to effectively communicate with people (i.e. letters, websites, flyers, local newspaper, radio etc.)

Be sure to utilise avenues which are going to best reach your target audience.

4.2 At the event

Communication during the event needs to be well planned. It is important that the event team are able to communicate with each other effectively, as well as with attendees. For example, in the event of an emergency it is vital that organisers can inform attendees of what they need to do.

There are a number of tools that can be used to communicate during the event. Which method is used will depend on things such as the size of the event and the number of staff involved. Some of the devices you may like to consider are:

- PA systems
- Mobile phones – remember that signals can be affected in big crowds and certain locations
- Two-way radios
- Signage
- Information offices
- Runners
- Bulletin boards

There will be a number of key communication channels that will exist at the event. Communication will need to occur between:

- Staff/volunteers/service providers etc.
- Organisers and emergency services.
- Organisers and people attending the event.

Your communication plan should include a list of contact names and numbers. It is also a good idea to conduct a risk assessment of your communication plan, to ensure that it is capable of withstanding a variety of situations. For example, if a power failure was to occur then it would not be possible to communicate with attendees via a PA system. As such, alternative communication methods will need to be implemented.

Again, whilst preparing things such as a communications plan can seem like a lot of work, the benefits of undertaking this exercise can be significant. So persevere with this process and you will feel much more comfortable knowing that you have everything covered.

4.3 Evaluating your Communication

It is important to set measurable objectives for all communications activity in order to identify the success or failure of your efforts.

In order to measure the success of your event you could use the following:

- Attendance figures
- Number of telephone calls received regarding the event
- Positive/neutral media coverage
- Number of articles across all target media
- Number of competition entries
- Website visits

If you do set up a website, ask your web agent to supply traffic reports so you can ascertain when people viewed your site, what pages they visited and for how long they viewed them.

Further evaluation techniques could include comparing your peak visit times on the website against the communications or marketing activities that were conducted at the same time.

This will indicate whether a particular element of your campaign was successful or not and will also assist you with future planning strategies. Capturing and recording event data is also important when reporting successes back to current and potential stakeholders, such as sponsors.



Appendix

Media Release Template

MEDIA RELEASE

Date

Headline

The headline of a media release should summarise the key points but catchy, interesting and strong. It is designed to catch the attention and encourage further reading. Ensure you bold it.

Lead

Start with your town/city (ie Mulwala).

The lead paragraph is the key part of your media release.

It is essential that your lead is punchy and has the story hook.

Check that it includes: WHO did it?, WHAT did they do?, WHERE did they do it?, WHEN did they do it?, WHY did they do it?, HOW did they do it?

Body

The paragraph under the lead should expand on the lead and be the point where you start telling the story. The body of the media release it is important to prioritise messages from the most important to the least important.

Use short sentences and short paragraphs with vigorous, active language.

Always write in the third person.

Use quotes to make your writing more interesting but remember all assertions opinions must be attributed to a particular person, or the organisation.

The media are unable to use newsworthy assertions unless sourced, and they will often call to check on the quotes.

End

The last paragraph is the least important information and can include background information or summarises the essential background information about the organisation, event or person.

Always finish the release with –ends- so the journalist knows it has finished.

Contact information

Add for further media information contact: include a contact name, email, phone number.

Boiler plate (About)

Include background information about the business, art or exhibition. This information will give the journalist an overview and isn't necessarily needed in the release.