Getting the Word Out

A practical marketing and publicity guide
for promoting your humanities events

NEW JERSEY COUNCIL
FOR THE HUMANITIES

Marketing Your Humanities Events

Getting the Word Out provides marketing and publicity basics to help recipients of New Jersey Council for the Humanities (NJCH) grants and other nonprofit organizations better promote their cultural and community programs to the public. This publication is designed to enhance your awareness of marketing fundamentals and skills to help increase the success of your humanities event. This booklet is built around five informative topics on how to plan, create and execute specific marketing tactics and tools.

This information is intended to enhance the visibility and awareness of your programs to promote greater event attendance and support for your organization. We want your programs to be as successful as possible, and we believe these tools will help you better achieve that goal.

To request an electronic copy of this manual, contact NJCH at grants@njch.org.

Segmenting Event Audiences

Few successful non-profit organization (NPO) program marketers think of their audience as "the general public." In reality, the audience(s) for your organization's public cultural events and community programs are different segments of the general public who are united by demographics, common interests, geography, lifestyles and enthusiasm for personal enrichment, as these characteristics relate to your program topics.

- By first determining the most likely target audiences of your NPO's cultural or community events, you can better develop event programming choices to best meet the needs of those audiences and ensure the greatest program participation.

- Audience segmentation should align with your organization's overarching strategic goals to leverage public programs as a means of growing membership or expanding use of your organization's overall services.

- Each event will likely have one or two dominant target audiences, which may change from event to event based on the program's topic. You may also seek to target a secondary audience that has the potential for greater growth and representation in your organization.

There are two main ways of segmenting your audiences:

1) Demographics: age group, gender, marital status, income level, education level, occupation

2) Psychographics: personality types, attitudes, values, interests/hobbies, lifestyles

   a. Audience segmentation is all about balance. If you try to reach everyone you will likely appeal to no-one, but if your target audience(s) is only a handful of people, you have broken your audience(s) down too far.

   b. The Internet can be quite helpful in helping track down research others have already compiled on your targets as well as articles and survey results relating to those audiences.

   c. You also might consider creating a survey of your own and asking your current membership or event patrons for feedback.

Audience Segmentation Worksheet

Event name: _____

Event date: _____

Event theme/topic: _____

What are the demographic attributes of those most likely to attend the event?

• Age Group (e.g. 20-30, 40-50, etc.) _____

• Gender (male, female, both) _____

• Marital Status (single, married, divorced) _____

• Age of Children (pre-school, pre-teen, teenage) _____

• Education level (graduate of high school, college or post-college) _____

• Income Level (lower class, middle class, upper class, etc.) _____

• Occupation (professional, blue collar, retired) _____

Note: Though you may consider "ethnicity," we advise against it. In most cases, openly targeting a particular ethnicity creates more pitfalls than benefits.

What are the psychographics of those most likely to attend?

These attributes are sometimes harder to identify, but should be considered in building an audience profile.

- • Personality types
- • Attitudes
- • Values
- • Interests/Hobbies
- • Lifestyles

What needs or challenges do they have that your event/topic addresses? *Thinking about this question helps shift the conversation from how they can help you ("attend our event") to how your program will help them. What would be their motivation(s) for attending?*

_____

_____

What will drive them to attend? *What influences them to take that final step? What obstacles might be in their way?*

_____

_____

What media are they most likely to interact with? *Radio, television, newspapers, social media, etc.*

_____

_____

How can you best reach your target audience? *Brochures in library, poster at senior center, newspaper ad, press release, etc.*

_____

_____

Based on the above, identify and profile your target audience(s):

_____

_____

Key Messages

Regardless of your goals and audiences, it's important to shape two or three key messages about your cultural event that are simple, relevant to the target audience(s) and consistently communicated in your publicity promoting the event.

• Your event (or event series) messaging should be crafted from the audience's point of view—what's in it for them? Why should they participate and attend? What insights, knowledge, skills or enjoyment will patrons gain or experience? What's the benefit!

• The answers to these questions shape and drive the key messages, headlines and copy in your event brochures, press releases (*see Worksheet Three*) and other promotional communications. Inspire their imaginations and motivate participation and attendance with memorable messages targeted to their needs and wants.

• Use message repetition and consistency: An audience is more likely to remember a message if it is consistent and reiterated in different types of communications. Your message(s) should be repeated in all event publicity.

• Consider branding your event series to achieve greater public awareness. Develop a name, logo and short slogan based on key words or ideas in your messages. Doing so creates a recognizable brand umbrella for your event series so that, over time, the program will be branded in the public's mind as a valuable and beneficial community resource.

• When crafting titles for individual events, pay attention to the words and phrases used in describing a program as they can have a major impact on attendance. Replace the event title "Nutritional Facts About What We Consume" with "Good Eats and Why." Which event title is more motivating?

Key Messages

Complete this worksheet to develop key messages for your event. You can also use this process to develop key messages for your entire event series or your NPO.

• Who is the target audience(s) for the event? _____

• Why is this event relevant to them? _____
_____

• What benefit(s) will they experience by participating/attending? _____
_____

Review and simplify, where possible, your above responses. One or two key messages will emerge.

• Key message 1: _____
_____

• Key message 2: _____
_____

Positioning

• Audience segmentation helps NPOs achieve stronger positioning. Positioning is creating a distinct perception in your customers' minds about what makes your event different and better. Having defined audience segments makes it easier to develop effective messages that convey the benefits and value desired by that distinct segment.

• Simply put, positioning is determining how you want others to perceive your event. Your market position can be described by your positioning statement.

There are four elements or components of a positioning statement:

- **Target Audience:** the attitudinal and demographic description of the target audience to whom the program is intended to appeal; the group of patrons most likely to attend the event.

- **Frame of Reference:** the category (i.e., free cultural/community events) in which your event series competes.

- **Benefit/Point of Difference:** the most compelling and motivating benefit you can deliver to event patrons *relative* to the other organizations' event series.

- **Reason to Believe:** the most convincing proof your programs deliver what you promise.

Template for a Positioning Statement: Complete this worksheet to develop a positioning statement for your event. You can also use this process to position your entire event series or position your NPO.

For *(dominant target audiences)*, *(event series name)* is the *(frame of reference)* that delivers *(benefit/ point of difference)* because only *(event series name)* provides/is *reason to believe)*.

(3B)

Positioning

Example: For workers, shoppers and seniors in downtown Anytown, the Anytown Cultural Commission's Brown Bag-It for the Arts series is a mid-day venue that delivers free performing arts because only Brown Bag-It for the Arts provides the opportunity to watch arts events while enjoying lunch outdoors.

NOTE: Sometimes there is no "only-ness" or uniqueness to the event, i.e., the event topic is one which could be or has been presented by other organizations. In such cases, include the main benefit that the target audience will experience by participating/attending.

Referring to the descriptors above, create a positioning statement for your event:

Target Audience:_____

Frame of Reference: _____

_____

Benefit/Point of Difference: _____

_____

Reason to Believe: _____

_____

Simplify and fill in your responses below:

For **(dominant target audience/s), (event series name)** is the **(frame of reference)** that delivers **(benefit/point of difference)** because only **(event series name) (provides/is reason to believe).**

Event Publicity

Publicizing your program is just as important as planning its content. Proactive and consistent publicity is essential to the success of your event series. Include your key messaging developed in Worksheet Two in all your event publicity communications.

Event Flyer Development

- Depending on the frequency of your events schedule, a quarterly or monthly flyer highlighting upcoming events over the next three months provides a versatile reminder of your cultural event series. You may also choose to develop flyers for individual events. Always include any social media icons and links in all communications as well as www.njch.org.

- Graphics and one or two photos should support the copy by visually flagging down readers and grabbing their attention. Never use more than two fonts or font sizes less than 10 points.

- Use design or desktop publishing software templates, if available, or a freelance graphic designer. The flyer's professionalism sends a message about the quality of the event(s).

Four Easy Steps to a Simple Flyer

Step 1: Compile Images

- Clip art is very outdated and cheesy.

- Use images you already have that you have taken yourself from previous events.

- If you have no images, the internet is a great place to look. Be careful however, some images may be copywrited so it is a good rule of thumb to always give credit or make sure to use royalty free stock photography (vs. rights managed) or do an advanced search on google for free images. Stay away from water-marked images as they usually cost money.

- If you have two images you like; the top image should be the main image and the second image will simply serve as reinforcement.
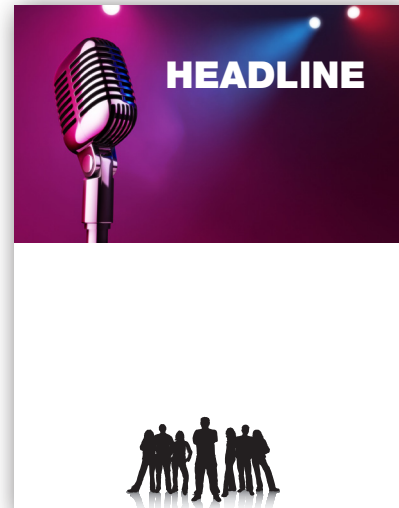
Step 2: Create and Add the Headline

- Lead your flyer with a benefit-driven headline.
- Prospective event patrons must quickly conclude that attending your program will be beneficial, entertaining or relevant to them in some important way.
- Less is more so keep copy brief and don't crowd the space with excess verbiage.


Step 3: Remember Your W's

- Sub-headings and copy need to be both informative and persuasive.
- Use bullets in your body copy for a quicker read. You can repurpose any content from other print and digital marketing materials.
- Brief descriptions of event topic(s), time(s) and location(s).
  - Who
  - What
  - Where
  - When
  - Why
- Use accent colors that are subtle in the main image above to tie the piece together.
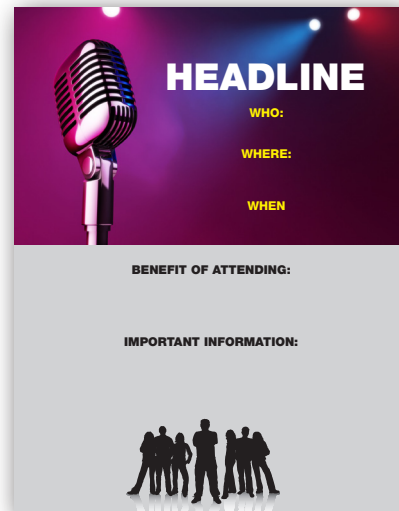
Step 4: Fill It In!

- Conclude possibly with a short "boilerplate" paragraph about your cultural event series and your organization.
- Include a phone number, email and website URL for registration, if necessary, or further information.
- Always recognize the support of your funders. For NJCH: "This program was made possible by a grant from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, a state partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations in this program do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities or the New Jersey Council for the Humanities."
- Don't forget social media icons!
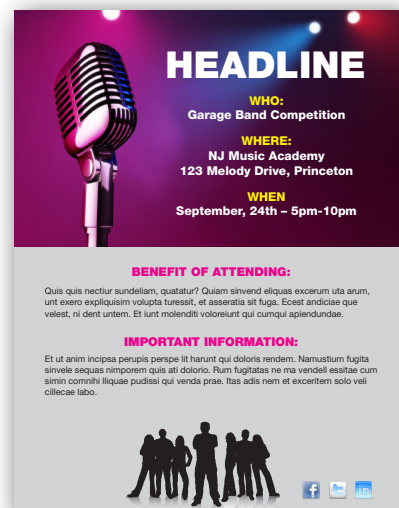
Social Media

Online social networking tools are increasingly used by NPOs as effective promotional tools for events. With these platforms, you can reach a wide audience to announce the details of your event, get the conversation going before and after your event and reach new audiences.

- If your organization is active in social networking through Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter, be sure to post event information to those venues when promoting your upcoming events.

- Use language that is authentic, conversational and enthusiastic. Give your audience some *sense* of the experience they will enjoy. Posting pre- and post-event photos is a great way to achieve this.

- Include relevant information about date, time and location and also add a brief preview of the subject of the program.

- When promoting an event using social media, add a link to your website to each post. Ideally, the event should have its own dedicated page with a unique URL.

- Consider creating a short video or podcast to preview the subject matter to be discussed and provoke conversation.

- Remember to include your organization's electronic network icons, not just through the promotion period, but through the programming period as well. Sites such as Facebook and Twitter can be the logical place for participants to continue any post-event conversation about your cultural or community event.

- Update your social media pages with new content on a regular basis. Mine the media kits provided by your program speaker, performing arts group or exhibition for nuggets of information that you can incrementally use to update your pages. Don't be static. Be dynamic. Constant engagement is what social networking is all about.

- Frequency of social media posting recommended:

	Frequency		
Platform	**At Least Daily**	**At Least Once a Week**	**At Least Bi-Weekly**
Twitter	Yes	No	No
Facebook	No	Yes	No
Linkedin	No	No	Yes

Your Digital Event Marketing Toolbox

Begin promoting your event using social media a minimum of three weeks prior. Check off the activity circles as you complete selected tactics:

Event Name: _____

Event Date/Location: _____

Facebook

Users expect to:

• Keep up with friends
• Connect with peers or organizations with whom they have something in common
• Share photos

Promote your event by:

❒ **Inviting** fans of your page to your event
❒ **Linking** to an event page on your organization's website for event details
❒ **Linking** to news articles about the event or other relevant content
❒ **Posting** on your page's wall about your event
❒ **Refresh** event information two weeks before
❒ **Refresh** event information one week before
❒ **Sharing** post-event photos

Twitter

Users expect to:

• Share timely news and opinions
• "Follow" or listen to information and opinions they are interested in

Note: If you don't have a Twitter handle, we recommend creating one. It only takes a few minutes and is an easy way to share events with a younger, broader audience. Sign up at www.twitter.com.

Promote your event by:

❒ **Linking** to an event page on your organization's website for event details
❒ **Linking** to news articles or other content relevant to your event
❒ **Sharing** a picture or video from your event press kit or that was taken at your event
❒ **Refresh** event tweet two weeks before
❒ **Refresh** event tweet one week before
❒ **"Live tweet"** about your event you are hosting or attending (i.e., send out updates during the course of the event so your audiences feel as if they are there)

LinkedIn

Users expect to:

• Foster professional connections
• Participate in group discussions

Promote your event by:

❒ **Posting** brief event information on your organization's page and any relevant LinkedIn group pages your target audience(s) may be a member of.

❏ **Linking** to an event page on your organization's website for event details
❏ **Refresh** event information two weeks before
❏ **Refresh** event information one week before

Additional Social Media Tips

This all might seem like a lot to do, but you can benefit greatly from a social media dashboard such as "Hootsuite." Hootsuite, (www.hootsuite.com), allows you to sync all of your social media platforms into one place and manage the posts accordingly. You can create one post and have it sent out through all of your platforms you have hooked up. Additionally, you are able to schedule posts for a later time. If you are fortunate enough to have a smartphone, they offer an app that is downloadable and you can access all of your content on the go as well. We highly recommend taking advantage of Hootsuite!

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