Your guide to promoting community recreation programmes and events
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Welcome to the Spread the Word Promotions Guide. This guide is a resource for anyone who wants to promote art, music, culture, sport, social or club events and programmes. These events have so many benefits for individuals and communities, but if no one knows about your programme or event, they won’t be able to participate. Spread the Word has been designed to really help you “spread the word”.

Spread the Word includes:

**HOW TO PUT TOGETHER A PROMOTIONS PLAN**

1. Targeting your audience
2. Choosing your message
3. Choosing the best ways to communicate
4. Putting your plan into action
5. Evaluation

**CASE STUDIES**

To see how others have successfully promoted their events and programmes, we talked with four community leaders. Their experiences and insights are included in this guide.

**PLANNING SHEETS**

There are planning sheets for you to fill in as you go. Use these, and you will have done most of the thinking and planning needed to be ready to promote your programme or event.

**FURTHER CONTACTS AND RESOURCES**

We have included further contacts and resources to help you network.

This guide was prepared by the Christchurch and Wellington City Councils. Many thanks go to all the community groups that assisted in putting Spread the Word together.
1. Background: Know the history of your project

2. Objectives: Know what you want to achieve

3. Target audience: Know who your potential participants are

4. Key messages: Develop simple and effective messages

5. Actions and tools: Find the most effective ways to reach your participants

6. Budget and resources: Work within your budget resources

7. Timetable: Get the right message out at the right time

8. Evaluation: How well did we do?
Case Studies - Raising Awareness in Your Community

To see how others have successfully encouraged people to participate in their programme or event, we talked with four community leaders about their promotional plans. You can follow their progress in this guide and learn from their experiences and insights.

Craig Ireson Word Collective

The Word Collective is a loose grouping of people who stage spoken word performances (e.g., poets, storytellers) throughout the year in Wellington. "Anyone can use the ‘Word Collective’ moniker, but we have a kind of code of practice," says Craig Ireson. "It has to be an open event, participatory, and community-focused. Everyone’s agreed on the kaupapa of this."

Lesley McMillan Gentle Exercise Programme

Lesley McMillan, a community development worker at Avebury House in Christchurch, set up the Gentle Exercise Programme after people told her that they needed a keep-fit programme that suited older people. "People love it. Last year, even when it snowed, people still turned up – one of our women came through the snow on her walking frame!"

Ken Howat Ethnic Football Festival

Ken Howat and the other organisers of the Ethnic Football Festival wanted to find a way to celebrate the diverse ethnic and cultural communities that live in Christchurch. They chose football – soccer – because it’s the world’s most popular sport, and this year more than 3500 people watched 20 teams compete. "Next year we hope to have a higher profile and attract even more people."

Peter Frater Newtown Community Festival

People in the Wellington suburb of Newtown came up with the idea of the Newtown Community Festival more than a decade ago. The festival is now famous for its global range of food and performance, which reflects the diversity of the Newtown community. It now attracts more than 35,000 people. Peter Frater is the festival’s co-ordinator. "If you want to do something, then just do it,” he says. “But once you’ve decided, make sure you do it well.”
So you have a great programme or event planned. For it to be as successful as you hope, you will need to be sure that people hear about it and decide to participate.

Many people say they don’t participate in things because they don’t have enough information.

The number one reason for promoting your programme or event is to give people the information they need so that they can decide whether it’s right for them.

The purpose of your promotion is to get people to take action – to register for your programme and/or to participate in your event.

This includes:

- **Spreading the word** – making people aware that something is going to happen
- **Creating interest** – communicating the ‘flavour’ of what’s happening
- **Providing information** – so people can decide whether it’s right for them
- **Inviting action** – giving people the tools to participate, such as where, when, what, how and who to contact for more information and booking details.

**WHEN IS THE RIGHT TIME TO PROMOTE?**

As soon as you know what your programme is, and when it will happen, it’s time to start thinking about the best ways to promote it. It will probably take longer than you think to put all the pieces in place for a successful promotional campaign.

“Don’t be scared, it’s not hard to pull it off! Make sure you plan ahead, go straight to your Council for advice, and get the local community on side.”

**PETER FRATER**
**Newtown Community Festival**

“Initially the idea to stage the football festival was raised in October, with the event to be held the following January. With Christmas, that gave us just six weeks to put it together. It was a scramble. Now we start planning in August, which allows plenty of time.”

**KEN HOWAT**
**Ethnic Football Festival**

“Getting your message to the right people at the right time will require a well thought out promotional campaign, and this will take time to develop.”
To publicise your programme or event effectively, start by writing a promotions plan. It’s not hard, and it can save you time and money.

**WHAT IS A PROMOTIONS PLAN?**

A promotions plan is putting on paper the steps you will take to promote your programme or event so that everyone involved in the planning knows what to do.

**WHY DO A PROMOTIONS PLAN?**

- to be clear about what you’re trying to achieve
- to be sure that you’re getting in touch with the people you want to reach
- to make sure you’re putting your money, resources and time into the most useful places
- to make sure that things get done.

**CHECKLIST FOR A PROMOTIONS PLAN INCLUDES:**

- some background information
- your promotional objectives
- who your target participants are
- what your key messages are
- your promotional strategy
- your promotional action plan
- budget
- evaluation.

**WRITING YOUR PLAN**

An outline of the process for *Creating a Promotional Pathway* is set out on page three.

“At this stage, you may find *Spread the Word Planning Sheet 1 – Writing a Promotions Plan*, useful. You can use it to put together your own plan as you work through this guide.”

“A promotions plan is putting on paper the steps you will take to promote your programme or event so that everyone involved in the planning knows what to do.”
ARE YOU READY TO PROMOTE?

First, let’s check that you’re ready to promote. Before you do anything else, it’s useful to step back for a moment and think about your programme.

<table>
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BACKGROUNDS

Now that you’re ready to get started, let’s take a good look at the background to your programme or event and why you are doing it.

For example:
- What is the ‘back story’ to your event? (Has it run before? Why was it developed? How does it fit into local and national issues?)
- Describe the programme or event.
- What people and resources are available to run it?
- Who is it for?
- What needs are being met? What do we want people to get out of it?
- What work has been done already?

When you developed your programme or event, did you or your organisation carry out any research or consultation? If you did, talk to the people who undertook the research. This information may be useful as you develop your promotions plan.

Is this the first time your event has taken place? If it has been run before, it will have been promoted in some way.
- Did you have a plan for your promotions?
- What specific promotional tools did you use?
- What worked, and what didn’t work so well?

Gather as much information as you can from previous years. You will be able to incorporate much of this into your promotions plan.

Make a checklist of what you’ve done in the past, and the resources and contacts that you used. Is there any other relevant information that might help you to develop your plan?

Now you should have all the information you need to complete the first stage of your promotions plan.
WHAT ARE YOUR PROMOTIONAL OBJECTIVES?

If you set some objectives at the start of your planning, it will help you to ensure that your promotions plan stays focused on the things you want to achieve.

The clearer you can be at the start about what you want to do, the easier it will be to plan how to do it.

When setting objectives, try to:

- make them simple, easy to understand and easy to achieve
- think about the time, funding and people that you have to promote your programme
- think about what you want to achieve, so that you will know when you succeed.

When you think about what you want your promotions plan to achieve, there will probably be two kinds of objectives:

- **Programme objectives:** What are the objectives of the programme, or what do you want it to achieve? Your promotions plan is an important part of achieving these objectives. (See Get Set Go Planning Sheet 3 – Setting Objectives)

- **Promotional objectives:**
  - how many people do you want to come along?
  - who do you want to come along?
  - do you want to increase participation/raise awareness of your organisation or event?
  - do you want to raise money?

Once you have decided on your objectives, write them down in your promotions plan.
WHO ARE YOUR TARGET AUDIENCES?

When you are planning your programme or event, you’ll probably spend a lot of time thinking about how to put your great idea into practice. You already know it’s a great idea, and that people will get real benefits from participating. In fact, probably no one knows more about it than you!

However, when you are developing your promotions plan, you need to approach things from a different perspective. To promote your programme successfully, it’s not enough to simply tell everyone how great it is. You have to understand who your potential participants are, what they want, their needs and preferences, and then do your best to satisfy them.

To see your programme from the participants’ point of view, you’ll first need to spend some time working out who they are likely to be.

- What benefits will people gain from participating in your programme?
- What kinds of people are most likely to appreciate those benefits?

Defining your target audience:

A useful way to find out who you are trying to reach is to work out what characteristics they have in common. Marketing and advertising companies spend vast sums of money trying to find answers to these questions. You won’t have anything like their resources, but by thinking up answers to the questions below you should be able to build up a clear picture of the kinds of people you want to appeal to.

Who are they?

Information that can be useful here includes:

- Gender
- Age bracket
- Ethnicity / nationality
- Income level
- Where they live
- Transport they use
- Occupations
- Education levels
- Family make-up
- Religion

What do you know about their lifestyles and values?

- Leisure interests and hobbies
- Cultural values that may impact on the programme/event
- Priorities they share (eg family, friends, culture)
- Values they share (eg environment, freedom of choice)
- How do they get information about what is happening in the world (be specific here, eg families get a lot of information from schools, young people get a lot of information from their peers. What papers do they read? Do they surf the internet? What radio stations do they listen to?)
What benefits are they looking for?
This could include things like:
- fun
- learning new skills
- social interaction
- group/community involvement
- health/fitness

What is it about your programme that will appeal the most?
What is it about your event that will most appeal to the people you are trying to reach? How does your programme fit with your audience’s needs and expectations?

Think about all aspects of your programme. Factors such as timing, location, venue, cost, feeling welcome, cultural appropriateness, childcare availability, accessibility and quality of experience may be crucial to whether people decide to come or not.

You may find Spread the Word Planning Sheet 2 – Who is your audience? useful.
What are your key messages?

To help decide how to promote your programme or event, consider what you want people to think and know about your programme. These thoughts or reactions are called key messages.

Key messages will stimulate your audience’s curiosity, and curiosity is the first step to raising awareness.

The best kind of key message will simply combine the name of your programme or event with the benefit it will bring for the participants.

A brainstorm of volunteers and/or staff could help to define the key messages. Start by finding answers to these questions:

- What is the programme or event?
- What is unique about your programme or event?
- Who do you want to participate?
- Why will they benefit from participating?
- How can they get involved?

The last two questions are the most important. Find your key messages by asking ‘Why?’ and ‘How?’ until you come to the most basic reasons for your event. By asking yourself these questions, you will uncover the information you probably take for granted, but that your audiences need to know and understand if they are to take part.

Key messages are:

- **concise**: avoid jargon and acronyms
- **active**: make each sentence active
- **positive**: talk about what you can do, not what you can’t
- **short**: one memorable line
- **specific**: address a particular challenge and audience.

Keep your messages as simple as you can. Three key messages should be enough, certainly no more than five.

Try them out on some people to test their reactions. Of course, you’ll want to be sure that these people belong to your target audience.

Once you know what your key messages are, write them down in your promotions plan.

An example: SPRAY campaign to promote a new indoor water play area at Wellington Regional Aquatic Centre.

Key messages were:

1. There is a new indoor water play area at Wellington Regional Aquatic Centre
2. Opening day is Monday 25 February
3. Fun for the whole family
Using your key messages

Once you have agreed on your key messages, make sure they are included in as many of your communications as possible. This will include posters and flyers, website, media releases, and even ‘word of mouth’.

When it’s appropriate, for example in a media release or when you are talking about your event, expand on your key messages like this:

- **Key message:** This is the claim you are making about your programme.
- **Fact:** Use facts to back up your claim.
- **Example:** Give your key message a personal dimension by using a quote or speaking from your personal experience.

For example:

*Gentle Exercise enables older people to stay active and in contact.*

*For many of our members, the programme becomes a “must-do” part of their weekly routine.*

*“Last year, even when it snowed,” says organiser Lesley McMillan, “people still turned up – one of our women came through the snow on her walking frame!”*

What’s in a name?

Deciding what to call your programme or event is very important. The name you choose should quickly give people an idea of what your event is about, but it should also be distinctive, so that your event stands out from all the others.

Your group has probably already given your programme a name. However, before you start telling the world about it, check whether your name fits with your key messages, and whether it is likely to appeal to the target audiences you’ve identified.

Do your best to find out whether your name has been used before. This may confuse people, or worse, you may run up against issues of copyright or trademark. Ask people in your group, other community leaders or advisors, or search the internet.

Would a theme be appropriate?

A theme may help to reinforce your key messages and identify your programme or event as unique and memorable. A theme can:

- give your event a recognisable underlying concept
- engage people’s senses
- create an emotional connection.
Promotional tools

There are many different ways to get your message across to the people you want to reach. Let’s look at the various options in turn.

PUBLICITY – IS FREE!

Don’t think that the most expensive option will necessarily be the best for you. It may be possible to effectively promote your programme or event without spending much money.

THINGS YOU CAN DO IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Word of mouth is probably the most powerful way to let people know about your programme. It comes with a reliable, credible endorsement (from you!). Encourage your team of volunteers, members or supporters to speak to their family and friends about the event and invite them along.

Talk to as many local groups as possible about what’s happening, and use your networks and other contacts to spread the word. Your networks and contacts might be as diverse as local churches, sports clubs, schools or organisations you work with.

If you have a flyer, invitation or other promotional document (for example, donation slips for auction items) make sure you distribute these so that people can hand them out when they are talking about the programme or event.

Public speaking: A charismatic and competent speaker can be a great way to publicise your event or programme. Arrange to speak to groups such as school assemblies, church groups, or other organisations.

Piggy-backing: Other local groups, schools or sports clubs may agree to include information about your programme in their newsletters and flyers for free or for a small charge.

Some festivals and events organised by local councils or others allow groups to promote their event within the festival – the promotional opportunities can be enormous.

Community noticeboards in libraries, cafes, local schools, recreation centres, pools, community centres, supermarkets and shopping centres are available to display information promoting your programme.

Newspaper community notices: Many newspapers, especially community papers, include a free events calendar where you can list your event.

Radio community notices: Many radio stations have a free on-air community noticeboard.

“What’s been most effective? Word of mouth, definitely.”

KEN HOWAT
Ethnic Football Festival

“Some doctors noticed our advertisement in the community paper and recommended the class to patients.”

LESLEY MCMILLAN
Gentle Exercise Programme

“There are some key community people who can help in getting the word around. In most suburbs there are faith groups, where the local church ministers meet. Social workers meet once a month. Put up a sign at the school and a notice in every doctor’s room.”

PETER FRATER
Newtown Community Festival

Wellington’s Push Play trailers provide their own moving billboard
**Letterbox drop:** Think about which people are most likely to want to participate in your event and target your flyers in their area. Commercial companies charge for this service, so see if you can get some volunteers to help out.

**‘Feeling Great’:** Wellington City Council’s monthly events guide offers free listings to community groups. Call 499 4444 and ask to speak to the Recreation Wellington Marketing Co-ordinator.

## ELECTRONIC PUBLICITY

People are using the internet more often to find things to do. You can also promote your programme or event using email and text messaging.

### Electronic social networking

An increasing trend (especially among young people) is electronic social networking and journaling. This is where people can record and update information about themselves and what is going on in their worlds via an internet networking system. People use these networks to stay in touch, find new friends and, in the case of young people, stay connected with youth culture.

Some popular sites include:

- www.myspace.com and www.facebook.com – great for profiling yourself and connecting with others
- www.youtube.com – this is a public site where people post videos, photos and stories of things they want to share and publicise
- www.bebo.com – generally used by people under 25 years for public journals

If this idea is new to you, you might like to ask a young person you know to help you create your own site (it’s very easy). You can then use this as a vehicle to promote your programmes and events to selected friends who also share the site.

Several event websites offer free listings. Think about which sites are most likely to be visited by the people you want to attract. Some sites are aimed at visitors and tourists, and some are run as a community service by government agencies or local councils.

These Wellington-based websites offer free listings:

- www.feelinggreat.co.nz
- www.nzlive.com
- www.wellingtonnz.com/events
- www.wotzon.com

These Christchurch-based websites offer free listings:

- www.bethere.co.nz
- www.whatsonchristchurch.co.nz

The best way to get your information online is to log on to the sites above or email them. If you don’t have internet access, most libraries offer free access to some sites and you can visit other sites for a small fee.

Many newspapers and radio stations also list events and programmes on their websites. Don’t forget to ask when you call them.
You can use your own website, if your organisation has one, to add a page that has information about your programme or event. Make sure that it is mentioned on your home page and has a link from there.

If you don’t have a website, you could consider setting one up. It is quite easy to set up a website for your organisation or group, and often can be done for relatively little cost. This is a simple and effective way to communicate to a wide audience and can reduce your photocopying or printing costs. If you want to create your own website, try googling How to design a website for a range of resources.

Remember to keep your website up to date. There’s nothing worse than a site that has last year’s event details.

You may have people in your organisation with the skills to create web pages. Alternatively, you can ask a professional web designer to do this for you.

The Wellington Community Network website at www.wcn.net.nz is an electronic community network that provides access, content, support and training to community groups and people in the Wellington region.

Active Canterbury People organising physical activity events in the Canterbury area can make their own professional-looking flyers, posters and certificates with the Easy Promotion Tool on the Active Canterbury website. Go to www.activecanterbury.org.nz and click on “Info for Physical Activity Professionals” to register and create some eye-catching promotional material with the Active Canterbury brand as well as your own logo and organisation/group title.
If you are in the greater Christchurch region and want your programme to be searchable on the Active Canterbury website, get it listed on the CINCH database. Pick up a “CINCH form” at a Christchurch City Library or go to www.activecanterbury.org.nz and click on “Info for Physical Activity Professionals” to access the CINCH form and make it easy for people to find out about your programme or event.

**Link from other websites:** Talk to your local council, businesses, schools and community groups about having a link to your website on their site. This could be as simple as listing your website with a hyperlink, or you may be able to include contact information, an email link and your logo, if you have one.

**Email:** If your organisation regularly distributes an email newsletter to members, supporters and sponsors, include details about your programme or event. Don’t send out mass emails to everyone on your email list indiscriminately. Unasked for mass emails, or spam, clutter most people’s inboxes and are more likely to irritate than inform them. Email groups, which people join to discuss common interests or share information, are a good option if your programme or event is relevant to them.

Change the wording of your email signature so that every email you send promotes your programme or event. You can list the date, time, location, cost, reason for the event and other attractions involved.

**Texting** on mobile phones is becoming a very popular way of communicating – and not only among younger people. It’s a good way to remind people of upcoming events or programmes. The length of your message is limited, but using ‘txt’ language can help you to fit everything in.

You can set up a group in your phone contacts list to make it easy to send messages to several people at once.

**MMSing** takes texting a step further by sending video, sound or graphic files.
Sponsorship

You might be able to attract some sponsorship (money, products or services) to help promote your programme or event.

When you talk to a potential sponsor, remember that you are not seeking a donation – you are offering a promotional opportunity for the sponsor. In other words, they will give you resources to help promote your programme or event, and in return (because they are now linked in some way with your event) you will also be promoting the sponsor.

Five steps to a successful sponsor partnership:

1. **Matching:** Seek out companies whose image and customers have a good match with your programme and participants.

2. **Benefits:** Consider what benefits you can offer sponsors. These could be naming rights, sponsor’s name on printed material, promotion on the PA, displaying sponsor banners and information including using audio-visual equipment, if available.

3. **Be professional and personal:** Put it in writing. Find out who the manager is and make an appointment to meet with them.

4. **Look after your sponsors:** Keep sponsors well informed. Make sure they feel part of the event – send a personal invitation to the sponsors and their family.

5. **Follow up:** Remember to send your sponsor an event report including copies of newspaper clippings and other publicity you gained, brochures and your thanks.

“Our local community radio station has been a key partner since the festival started. They provide free advertising, an MC for the opening ceremony and throughout the event. In return we offer them numerous opportunities to promote themselves.

“The event has gained significant leverage in terms of profile and sponsorship from having the police as key partners. The benefits for the police are the opportunity to develop relationships with the ethnic communities and to target new recruits.”

KEN HOWAT
Ethnic Football Festival

Support your sponsors! Wellington Kiwi Tri placed their sponsors’ banner at the finish line.
Other promotional tools

GIVEAWAYS AND COMPETITIONS
A competition, for example a colouring contest or a lucky draw, is another way to attract attention.

Offering two admissions for the price of one may encourage new participants to come along with a friend.

Gimmicky (free) items with your organisation’s name or logo on them can be popular among some groups, for example, children and young people. These may be limited by your budget.

‘HAVE A GO’ DEMONSTRATIONS AND FUNCTIONS
Think about whether there are any groups that would have a lot of people who might want to participate in your programme or event.

Find out if you can attend a meeting, or set up a stall or demonstration, to promote what you are doing. Choose your friendliest, most knowledgeable people to be on site.

A launch or pre-event function might target community leaders, media, sponsors or funding agencies to help spread information by word of mouth.

PROFILE DURING THE EVENT
If your programme or event is ongoing, or likely to be repeated, think about how you can keep your profile high during the event itself.

Printed programmes or a public address system may be useful. A uniform worn by the team running your event can be as simple as a coloured T-shirt or sunhat with your event name on it. This will make your team highly visible to the public and enhance the event’s image. You could try to get sponsorship for this.

Local radio stations may also do live broadcasts from your event site as a form of sponsorship.

DISPLAYS
An attractive display or public demonstration will encourage passers-by to stop and look. You could put up posters, photos from previous events and information about your organisation. An enthusiastic volunteer standing with the display can answer questions and hand out flyers and promotional freebies. High foot-traffic areas, such as shopping centres, building foyers, libraries, recreation centres and community fairs are all good options. For some displays, in public libraries for example, you will need to book several months in advance, so think ahead.
Flyers, posters and brochures

Flyers, posters and brochures can be a cheap and effective way to promote your programme or event.

**Make sure you include this information:**
- Is there a host?
- What will happen?
- When will it happen? (include date and time)
- Is there a cost or is it free?
- Where will it happen?
- Do you have sponsors or other supporters?
- What is it?

**FLYERS AND POSTERS:**
- Use one design and print it at smaller and larger sizes, or
- Use two different designs. Make sure your poster has only essential information, with more detail in the flyer, because people can take the flyer away with them
- The design of each should be consistent, so that people instantly know it is promoting the same event.

**WRITING TIPS:**
- Remember your key messages! Well-written copy that is focused on the wants and needs of your target audience is vital.
- Be specific, be personal and be brief.
- Space is always limited. Keep it simple. Cut out everything that isn’t essential.
- Include answers to the ‘what, where, when’ questions, and include your contact details.
- Use a headline of less than ten words.
- Ask someone with good writing skills to proof-read it before getting it printed and distributed.

“**It’s important to have a unity of imagery when promoting an event. Everything about the way you publicise your event gives people an indication of the kind of event it is.**”

**CRAIG IRESON**
Word Collective

“**Taking good photos at the festival is important. We use them for preview promotions and also to try to get a news photo story after the event in the local paper.**”

**PETER FRATER**
Newtown Community Festival
DESIGNING YOUR FLYER, POSTER OR BROCHURE

If you can afford it, it may be worth using a professional designer. Don’t be afraid to ask designers and printers about reduced prices or sponsorship deals.

Whether you are designing your poster, flyer or brochure yourself, a volunteer is doing it, or you are paying a designer, it’s important to work out exactly what you want before you start work. Do this by putting together a design brief. Getting your design right the first time will save you time and money.

If you use a professional designer:

- **decide** on exactly what you want beforehand – extra changes and corrections will be charged for and the cost goes up quickly
- **proof-read** all the text carefully
- **agree** on an upper cost limit to the design work
- **ask** an independent person to look over the proof for you.

If you have access to a computer, you might want to try making up a flyer or poster yourself, or you may have the resources to do this within your group. For example, there may be people with graphic design, proof-reading or computer skills. Others may have contacts in the photocopying or printing industries.

Design tips:

- The design needs to be relevant and appealing to your target group.
- Have plenty of blank space (don’t try to pack too much text in).
- A picture or graphic often tells a story better than lots of words.
- Photographs, if you use them, should be appropriate and good quality. Be sure the person in the photo gives their permission to use it. If you are using digital photos, make sure that they are taken using the highest quality setting on the camera.
- Have a font size big enough for everyone to read.
- Avoid using all CAPITAL LETTERS, too many different fonts, and lots of different sizes.
- A word processing programme such as Microsoft Word or OpenOffice can deliver a good result, although photographs or graphics can be difficult to position exactly. More sophisticated alternatives are Microsoft Publisher on a PC, or the Pages programme on Apple computers. A professional designer will probably use a combination of a graphic design programme such as Photoshop, and a desktop publishing package such as Quark or InDesign.
- Most printers, photocopy shops or newspapers want files supplied in pdf format. A Google search using the terms “convert to PDF” will find many free software sources and online PDF creation services. Be sure that the layout of the converted PDF is correct before sending it to the printer.
DISTRIBUTION

Think about where the best places to distribute your flyers will be. Who is your target audience? Where do they live, shop, work or study? Give all your volunteers and supporters some flyers, so that they can hand them out to people when they talk about your event.

DIY distribution: This is the time to call upon your volunteers and supporters. Create a distribution list to record where you leave flyers. Note where the flyers were picked up fastest from, and where participants tell you they saw a poster or picked up a flyer.

Letterbox drop: You may decide to target a particular suburb or area if your target audience is in that area. Commercial distribution companies charge for this service, so see if you can get some volunteers to help.

Shop windows and poster kiosks: Posters are great publicity – but only effective if they are displayed prominently. Either get volunteers to ask in shops and paste up posters on kiosks, or ask a commercial distribution company to do it for you.

SIGNS

Well-placed road signage can be invaluable. Traditionally, signs were painted on timber or made from canvas banners. Today, signs can be laser-cut vinyls on canvas or corflute (a type of corrugated plastic). If you store it well, a sign can last several years, enabling dates to be changed for future events. A volunteer may be willing to test their painting skills, or a local business may donate a sign in return for some publicity at your event.

Hot tips:
- keep it simple, only include essential information
- make sure the sign can be read at a distance and when driving by at a speed of 50km/h
- some councils have bylaws about signage including size and location
- keep a record of the location of each sign, and remember to take them all down after your event
- store it well if you will be using it again.

“The flyers were distributed around targeted areas including the venue for the prelims and final and the university where the opening ceremony was held.”

KEN HOWAT
Ethnic Football Festival

“It’s important to choose where you put flyers. If you allow enough time, you might be able to persuade the local supermarket to put a flyer in every checkout bag.”

PETER FRATER
Newtown Community Festival
Working with the media

Using the news media to promote your programme or event can be very effective, and provide publicity that you can’t buy.

There is a wide range of media companies, so it’s important to focus on the ones that will reach your target group.

ATTRACT ATTENTION

The news media are always looking for stories they think will appeal to their target audiences. Read through local papers and listen to the radio to find out more about the kind of stories they use.

In particular, look for examples of other community groups who have gained publicity for their events and programmes, and the ways they have done this.

Next, work out how to make your information more interesting. Find an angle that will attract attention.

Get to know the journalists who cover the area of your programme or event, or the leisure sections of free newspapers, or who report for the radio stations. Find out what they’re interested in and how you can give them the information. Check their deadlines and requirements.

Remember your key messages, and be sure to repeat them when talking to journalists.

NEWSPAPERS

Community newspapers are most likely to cover your event. You may be able to spark interest by setting up a photo opportunity that will allow them to take an interesting photograph. Also target ‘what’s on’ columns and reporters who specialise in your programme’s area (for example, arts, sports or community reporters).

RADIO

Again, think about which stations your target audience listens to and approach them.

Community radio stations may be willing to interview you about your event and your group, or to give your event a plug through free announcements in the week before it takes place.

Phoning in to talkback shows is another way to get your event some coverage – especially if it has some relevance to the topics being discussed.

“Publicity is not just a necessary chore, it’s an integral part of the event. You can have fun with it and if you do, it’ll enhance the event.”

CRAIG IRESON
Word Collective

“The big papers generally want an angle rather than simply focusing on the event. For example, with the 2006 event, the local daily paper ran a story about a new team that had registered. The point of interest for the paper was that team members were all recent arrivals (refugees) to New Zealand and were using the event as a way of integrating into the city and to make local contacts.”

KEN HOWAT
Ethnic Football Festival

“Five or six years ago we decided to get radio advertising. We needed money to do that, but the effect was that we were absolutely swamped with people – far more than we expected!”

PETER FRATER
Newtown Community Festival
TELEVISION

This is the most difficult media in which to get coverage. There are very limited opportunities on national television for coverage of community events.

It’s still worth sending a media release to One News, TV3 News and TVNZ 7 – especially if you have an interesting angle or an unusual event. Weather bulletins also occasionally feature community events.

Specialist programmes that target groups who would be interested in your event are worth contacting.

Local television stations may be more interested than national stations in reporting what your group is doing or in covering your event.

SPECIALIST MEDIA

If your event is targeting a particular interest or ethnic group, there is probably at least one magazine or website that is also trying to appeal to them. You, or people in your group, are the best placed to know what publications these are.

COVERAGE OF YOUR EVENT

If you plan to repeat the event, a news story about it helps to build greater public awareness. Positive media exposure will highlight your organisation and may encourage greater participation in other ways.

CRAIG IRESON

Word Collective

“When you are promoting an arts event you have some liberty to fly off the hook. When I was interviewed on Nightline I was playing a character. They wanted a good story, so I put on my circus performer’s hat. You might make a fool of yourself, but it’s not about you, it’s about selling the event.”
Media releases and publicity

A media release is the first step towards getting free publicity in the media about your programme or event. Remember that reporters see hundreds of media releases each week, which means that yours will need to be well written and relevant if it is to be published or used for a story.

Hot tips:
- use an interesting headline
- include basic information: who, what, where, when, why and how
- use clear, straightforward language that is easy to read and understand
- get straight to the point
- include an interesting quote from a key person in your group/organisation
- include your contact details at the end
- make sure there are no spelling or grammatical errors before it is sent out
- get someone with good writing skills to proofread it
- follow up with a phone call to make sure your media release has been received and to ask if they have all the information they need
- if your event has a website, link to it in the media release
- keep a copy of your media release.

KEY MESSAGES

Use your key messages when you write your media release. It may be useful to follow this format:

Claim: this is your key message.
Fact: this backs up your key message.
Example: this makes your message real and believable.

See Spread the Word Planning Sheet 4 – Writing a Media Release for a media release template
Advertising

Because you are buying space or time for an advertisement, you have total control over what it says and looks like. Advertising has clear advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand it guarantees space and allows the organisation to say exactly what it wants to say. On the other hand, it will be expensive, especially in metropolitan newspapers.

NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING

The best place to start when deciding on a newspaper advertisement is probably your flyer. If you don’t have enough space to reproduce your flyer – which is likely – then it’s important to try to keep the same design elements while reducing the information to absolute essentials. Think about letting people know where they can go for more information, for example your website or a contact phone number.

NEWSPAPER ADVERTORIALS

Often newspapers will run a page or more of advertisement features based around a theme. Suggest that your paper looks for local businesses and other organisations in your community to place ads around a feature on your programme or event. You may be asked to provide the story yourself.

If you are paying for an advertisement in the newspaper, it may offer some editorial space. If not, don’t be afraid to ask. You will get more publicity for less than the cost of an equivalent-sized advertisement. Use the article to inform your audience and encourage them to respond through the advertisement.

RADIO ADVERTISING

Radio can be very effective in promoting events – the act of listening stimulates the imagination. Radio works best close to the event. If you are buying radio time, carefully consider the schedule, timing and target audience to avoid making costly mistakes. Just because the station offers you a great deal, it doesn’t necessarily mean it’s right for your programme or event.

BUTTONS AND BANNERS

Create a button and banner as electronic images and ask sponsors, other community groups and media to add these to their websites. Buttons and banners can provide basic information for your event and, as a link, direct people to your event website.
### Which methods work best?

The table below may help you to decide what forms of media promotion will be best for you. If you have limited resources, it will be more effective to use one medium well, rather than two or three poorly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Editorial coverage</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Hard to get unless you have a good ‘hook’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More likely to be seen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greater credibility than advertising</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper advertorial</td>
<td>Cheaper than an advertisement</td>
<td>Costs more than editorial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More information and higher profile than an advertisement or editorial on their own</td>
<td>Less credibility than editorial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>Wide readership</td>
<td>Short lifespan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Usually a short booking time</td>
<td>May be cluttered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Credible</td>
<td>Extensive coverage is costly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Segmentation possible</td>
<td>Fleeting impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>Wide audience</td>
<td>Often cluttered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Segmentation is possible</td>
<td>Fleeting impression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allows repetition</td>
<td>Limited creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cost can be reduced through deals or sponsorship</td>
<td>Low credibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>Can be costly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>Large audience</td>
<td>Costly (both production and airtime)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cross-section of population</td>
<td>Longer timeframe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some targeting possible through timeslots, channels etc</td>
<td>Cannot communicate in depth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can be repeated</td>
<td>High competition for space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Audience may be distracted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web</td>
<td>Cheaper</td>
<td>Effectiveness is relatively untested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Targeting possible</td>
<td>Initial set-up costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunity to sell advertising space</td>
<td>Must be kept up to date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Easily updated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Actions

It may seem daunting to try to decide which methods will be the most effective for you. But there is a simple question to ask about each method to decide whether it will be appropriate: Is this the best way to reach our target audience?

There may be particular ways of communicating with your target audience that work better than others. For example, some groups prefer face-to-face meetings, while young people may look to the internet for specific information. If you’re not sure, ask advice from community leaders in the groups you want to work with.

Use this advice to appeal more effectively to your target audience

Maori have a cultural preference for kanohi ki te kanohi or eye-to-eye communication. Texting is popular with teens.

Pacific Islanders value word of mouth and have strong family networks.

New settlers value word of mouth from families, community networks, religious groups, or refugee and migrant centres. Use simple English or provide translated promotional material. Check if there are publications or community radio stations in their own language.

People with disabilities: Organisations such as Disability Information Service, Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind and CCS Disability Action all have regular newsletters. Think about which communication methods are most appropriate, for example, radio may work best to target visually impaired people. Many councils and sports trusts have an advocate in this field that could assist.

Women: letterbox drops, newspapers (especially fashion and food sections), local schools, playgroups, women’s groups, coffee groups, book clubs, libraries and community centres.

“Our promotional strategy consisted of billboards at the venues, radio advertising, media releases, a listing in the local ‘Summertimes’ event directory, council website, plus we printed 500 A2 posters and 20,000 flyers.”

KEN HOWAT
Ethnic Football Festival
Older adults: flyers in the letterbox, community newspapers, organisations such as Age Concern and Probus, healthcare providers, libraries. Poor eyesight can be an issue.

Children: target parents through school newsletters, child and family magazines, community newspapers, noticeboards, radio, ‘what’s on’ columns, websites, word of mouth, kindergartens, preschools and Plunket.

Young people: consider sponsorship with brands targeting young people, record shops, radio, word of mouth, websites and texting.

People on low incomes: community newspapers, word of mouth, radio, city housing complexes, community agencies such as church groups and food banks.

Sedentary people: consider healthcare providers, employers.

When you’ve decided which promotional tools are likely to work best, make a list in your promotions plan. Be as specific as you can – explain how you will use each method.
The amount of money you have to spend will be an important factor in deciding what mix of promotional tools you will use. Your aim will be to get the best result – the most success in attracting interest and participation from your target groups – given the promotional budget you have available.

The promotions budget will be just one aspect of the total budget for your programme or event. You will probably need to work closely with the people who are responsible for the programme budget in setting and spending the money.

A budget is also a way of being clear with everybody involved about what they can spend. If you have sponsors, they will be interested in seeing a realistic and accurate budget.

**THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN PREPARING YOUR BUDGET:**

- Prepare your budget when planning the programme or event
- Involve others from your organising group (they are more likely to take responsibility for sticking to the budget)
- Include all the expenditure you can think of
- Be as accurate as possible, and include some money for unexpected expenses
- If you are registered for GST, always use GST exclusive figures (to calculate the GST exclusive amount, divide the total by 1.125)

“When we started this event in 2004 we were on an absolute shoestring budget. Since then, through Council support and commercial sponsorship, we now have a more workable budget.”

KEN HOWAT
Ethnic Football Festival
Draw yourself a timeline for your promotions plan. Break your plan down to each promotional tool that you plan to use. For each one, work out what needs to happen and how many people you will need at each point to get things done.

To be sure that you allocate enough time for each step, it may help to work backwards from the date of your event.

How early you begin to promote your event or programme will depend on what it is. For example, a school holiday programme may need to be promoted quite early (at least four weeks beforehand) as parents appreciate being able to plan in advance and registrations may be required. A fair or festival may need most of the promotion to occur two to three weeks leading up to the event.

> “Our planning starts about six months out.”

**PETER FRATER**  
Newtown Community Festival

> “Word of mouth starts immediately, while the posters and flyers come out closer – the week before. The week of the event is when you want to hit it all guns blazing.”

**CRAIG IRESON**  
Word Collective

See page 3 of the *Spread the Word Planning Sheet 1 – Writing a Promotions Plan* for a timeline template including tasks, deadlines and who is responsible.
The easiest and most effective way to evaluate your promotions is to incorporate it into the evaluations you will do for your whole programme or event. (See Get Set Go Planning Sheet 21 – Evaluations Plan)

**WHY EVALUATE YOUR PROMOTIONS?**

- to find out how well your promotions plan worked – did you achieve your objectives?
- to learn how people found out about your programme or event
- to get information for planning promotions in the future – which methods were the most effective?
- to make changes and do even better next time
- to appeal to potential sponsors or funding bodies with evidence of a successful event
- to gain information that shows how you met your sponsors’ expectations, which will help to attract future funders and sponsors.

**HOW TO DO YOUR EVALUATION**

As part of your programme/event evaluation process, you can include a question about how people found out about the event or programme.

Keep a record of any publicity/promotion obtained including radio coverage. This will be useful background material for evaluations and future sponsorship proposals.

Talk to as many participants as you can throughout the event or programme.

Ask about the promotion of the event or programme as part of a debrief meeting with staff and volunteers.

“After every event we sit down and ask ourselves, how did we do?”

CRAIG IRESON
Word Collective

Art as promotion: the Word Collective uses a large poetry banner to advertise

**FINALLY**

Promoting your event or programme can be a lot of work, but it can be very rewarding. You’re creating opportunities for people in your community to participate in something that will give them enjoyment and satisfaction. You may learn new skills and meet new people. Follow the steps in this book and be confident that you’ll do the job well. Good luck!
Running your programme or event read: Wellington and Christchurch City Councils, Get Set Go! Your guide to organising community recreation programmes and events.

Sports marketing:

Texting:
Try googling – “texting for dummies”

Creating your own website:
Try googling – “How to design a website”
For further information try your local library.
SPREAD THE WORD IS PART OF THE GET SET GO FAMILY OF PUBLICATIONS