

UNLIMITED...

Unlimited's PR and Marketing Resource for Artists

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Intro

PR and Marketing connect you and your work to your audiences, which includes viewers, press, critics, buyers, and potential new collaborators, supporters, programmers, funders and partners.

PR stands for “public relations”, and refers to managing the spread of information between an individual or an organisation and the public. This is often done through the press and media.

Marketing is the action or business of promoting (and often selling) products – in this case yourselves as artists, and your work – or services, including market research and advertising.

Adhering to these guidelines helps with the recognition of your work, which will help you to get promoters and programmers, as well as building up your own identity and presence as an artist.

Promoting Yourself and Your Work

Make a marketing plan. Start by outlining your:

- Objectives – what is it that you want to achieve through your communications? Your objectives should be “SMART” – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timed. Do you want to be more “known” as an artist? Is there a particular way you’d like the public to think of you – an experienced professional or an interesting newcomer, a leader or a collaborator, a hippie or a yuppie, a pillar of the community or a mysterious lone wolf? Do you want to be featured by a particular type of publication? Do you want a large, national audience, or a smaller, niche, “cult” one? Are you looking to position your work within other sectors, such as children’s entertainment, women’s art, or BAME theatre? Do you want to get gigs for your work?
- Audiences – who do you want to connect your work with? Who are you talking to? Be specific and realistic (i.e. ‘everyone’ is too broad!). Remember the difference between ticket-buying audiences and those that may book your work for their festival and venue – and that both are very important.
- Activity – what will you be doing to market your work? Is print necessary? What digital channels will you be using?
- Timing – look at your timescale and work backwards from your event or launch to work out when you’ll need to undertake what activities.

- Budget – how much can you set aside for all of your “activity” – websites, printing, advertising, social media boosts, photography etc?
- Success measures – how will you know if your marketing efforts have been working? Targets should relate to your objectives.

Writing and talking about your work (artist bios, copy, presentations, etc.)

It’s important for artists to know how to talk and write about themselves and their work. Strange as it might seem, you as an artist are a “brand”, so it’s not just your work that you should be promoting, but also yourself; a great start is to decide upon a set ways of describing yourself, your practice, and your piece professionally and in a way that generates interest, and then to stick to it consistently. **Consistency is key.**

A useful way of starting to go about this is by noting down answers to the following questions: what themes are in your work? Which aspects of the arts do you make use of? What media and materials do you normally work in? Would you say you have a genre? Who or what are you influenced by? How does your work make your audience feel and what does it make them think?

It’s good to write some copy (words) about each of your works or projects – it’s fine to update this as the work progresses, but you should try to always stick to it whenever you’re talking or writing about the work to ensure that you’re always presenting it in the best light. The way you present your work should support the content of the work itself.

Marketing Materials

- Creating digital materials (website, video, social posts, etc.)
 - Nowadays it is a good idea for artists and creatives have websites of their own. If you choose to have one, your website should serve as the hub for all of your artistic activity, with contact details and a short biography; it can also feature content such as blogs which help people to form an interest in you and your work. Keep it simple, and make sure your work features prominently. There are plenty of “how-to” guides and free or cheap website builders online – try Google (www.sites.google.com), WordPress (www.wordpress.com), Weebly (www.weebly.com) or Squarespace (www.squarespace.com)
 - Images are a very strong way to generate interest in and exposure of your work as they are far more engaging than text alone. Take high-quality, sharp, well-lit, professional, dynamic images of your work – you may want to ask a professional to do this - one of which should be your “lead image” for the piece. The lead image should be something which really embodies the work, and it would be good if you could also share it with us. Many people are also interested in seeing behind-the-scenes or “work in progress” photographs of creative work, which you can share through blogs and social media channels.
 - Films are also a good way to showcase yourself as an artist, particularly when you’re working on a large-scale or important work which is being developed over time. They also have a lot of potential to generate press interest in the work’s “story”.

- Ensure all of your digital materials are high-quality and professional – the sort of thing you’d expect to see on the website of a big cultural institution or in a magazine. High-quality images and video will help to present your work as high-quality; low-quality ones can have a negative impact on your work as fewer people will want to engage with or share them
- Creating printed materials
 - Posters are a good way of spreading information about any upcoming events you are holding, and just one can reach many people. Make them bold, eye-catching, simple, clear and try to ensure that they accurately reflect the “feel” of the thing that they are promoting – your lead image(s) would work well here. They shouldn’t overwhelm the viewer with information, but should instead contain the bare bones – think what, who, where and when – as well as a short and snappy text description of the thing you want to promote, which should be taken from the copy you created
 - Leaflets are also a great way to promote your events, and have the benefit of being able to be given to people, so they work well in conjunction with posters. These can include more information than posters, but again it should be concise and interesting and not too overwhelming or “busy”!
 - Business cards, like websites, are a useful tool for creative people to have as they help you to make connections with other individuals and organisations in the sector which can benefit you and your work in future
 - Websites like Vistaprint (www.vistaprint.com) are easy to use and can provide cheap but good quality printed materials.

- Many places will agree to display posters and leaflets for you providing they are relevant, including galleries, venues, theatres, community spaces, universities, cafes and pubs – just email them to ask.
- Using digital channels
 - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, Audio Boom and other social media channels are a key way for artists to market and promote themselves, their work, events and opportunities, as well as building well-engaged audiences. Try not to stretch yourself too thin and stick to channels that suit your work and skills.
 - ❖ Twitter (www.twitter.com) is a fantastic all-rounder as it allows you to engage closely and directly with other individuals and organisations, but make sure that what you post serves to support your presence as an artist and promote your work. If you decide to use it, we'd recommend that you create a professional Twitter account for yourself as an artist, instead of one specifically for your awarded work. Ensure that you follow plenty of similar, relevant Twitter accounts – other artists, venues, cultural and arts organisations, journalists, critics and key influencers in the arts – so as to network and build your presence. Hashtags are a key feature of Twitter and play a big role in helping those who may be interested in it find your work, as long as you use the right ones.
 - ❖ Depending on whether you use it more personally or professionally, your Facebook (www.facebook.com) profile can help you keep your friends list up-to-date with what you're doing, bear in mind though that a Facebook profile is not a very efficient way of making new connections. You can, however use it to create...

- ❖ A Facebook page for yourself as an artist, which can be viewed by the public and used either as an extension of or in place of a professional website. You will need to do some work to maintain it and make sure it's working well for you, such as sharing content you've created (think blogs, images, films and short updates) but these will all serve to enhance your online presence as an artist. Your page will also allow you to create Facebook events to promote your own real-life events related to your work.
- ❖ Instagram (which is downloaded to your phone or tablet as an app) is primarily for sharing images and now, also, short video clips. If your work is going to be producing lots of bold and interesting images, then Instagram is a great place to showcase these! As with Twitter, following others and using hashtags are key features of Instagram and the same guidance on these goes for Instagram as that which we gave above for Twitter.
- ❖ Youtube (www.youtube.com) and Vimeo (www.vimeo.com) are the best places to host film and videos online, and are very easy to use. If you have any films (anything from short clips to long features), once you've uploaded them here you can then embed them on your own website and/or share them across other social media channels.
- Blogging, either on your own website or an external one, creates a strong depth of engagement with your audiences and can generate long-term interest in your work and practice. Remember, arts audiences aren't just interested in the "final product" of an artwork but also the creative process and development / build up, and often an artist's thoughts and opinions too. There are plenty of blogging sites out there – we recommend Blogger (www.blogger.com), WordPress (www.wordpress.com) or Tumblr (www.tumblr.com) if you want something more visual. You can also blog for A-N (www.a-n.co.uk) and Disability Arts Online.

- E-newsletters are a good method of keeping your audiences up-to-date with your news, particularly if you want to promote events. You can use websites like Mailchimp and Getresponse to easily send e-newsletters and manage your list of recipients; these channels will also allow you to add a “sign up to my newsletter” button to your website in order to turn web visitors into lasting audiences.
- External websites, such as ArtRabbit (www.artrabbit.com), Cargo Collective (www.cargocollective.com), It’s Nice That (www.itsnicethat.com) and Disability Arts Online can all help by showcasing you or your work or listing your events
- If you are a disabled artist, Shape Arts may also be able to help push your events out through their digital channels (websites, e-newsletters, social media) – get in touch with them at info@shapearts.org.uk or 020 7424 7330

PR

- All artworks have fantastic stories behind them, as do their artists. Don’t make the mistake of thinking that interest in your work would only be about the final, finished piece – the press and your audiences will also be interested in the process, and you can also harness this to drum up further interest in the final piece.
- Depending on who your target audiences are, make a list of the media sources and platforms which you think would be interested in covering your story (or future stories to do with you and your work); don’t be afraid to think big, and don’t only stick to local sources – do some research into all the different media outlets that are out there! You can often find the

email addresses you'll need to send your press release to on the media platform's website, or even in the Twitter bios of the journalists you want to reach.

- Use the press and media to spread major news about your work by sending a press release. A press release should cover one big central "story" – it helps to think of what you could encapsulated into an engaging headline and then follow with a gripping article. You can find many templates for how to write press releases and what sort of information you'll need to include online, but make sure you make the story something you'd expect to see a newspaper, magazine or website shouting about.
- Once you've created your press release, you'll need to send it and pitch the story to your press list. Email them your press release with a brief, concise, polite but to-the-point explanation, paste the release in the body of the email so that recipients can easily scan it, and keep the subject line snappy, relevant and interesting – make the recipients want to open your email and read more. Maybe you could also offer a free ticket?
- Send another email to follow up with them a few days later if you've not heard back. Don't be afraid to chase press leads up on the phone or on Twitter – in fact, this is almost essential! There is a lot of competition for media space.
- You might be asked by the media to give an interview about your practice and your work. It helps to have beforehand a good, strong list of what points and thoughts you would like to put across about yourself and your piece, and make sure that they are positive and in line with your marketing plan's objectives.
- Positive press coverage and reviews can provide you with quotes which are very useful for future promotion of your work – a five-star review is sure to lead to ticket sales, and if venues and funders know that your work has been well-received by critics and audiences they'll view it - and your future works - much more favourably.

Advertising

- Advertising, if used, is generally something handled by a venue hosting your work rather than you yourself, but they may require additional or slightly different marketing materials from you if they do
- If you do decide to undertake some advertising, Facebook boosts (on a post made by a Facebook page you manage) work very well – they're cheap and you can target your audiences by location or interest

Networking

- Make sure you attend events where you'll meet people who might be interested in your work and could help you promote it. Private views, workshops, talks, meet-ups, conferences and previews are all good examples. Here's where your business cards come in handy, too! It helps to really learn about the sector and how it "works", particularly when it comes to your art form. Don't just focus on promoting your work either, but also on building a bit of a presence for yourself as an artist.

- Sign up to e-newsletters of galleries, theatres, arts centres and cultural organisations which are relevant to your work and practice is also hugely helpful for letting you know what's going on and what events and opportunities might be coming up.
- Social media is a great way of networking online – make sure you follow and get to know other artists and organisations, and don't be afraid to engage with them directly through these platforms. Twitter in particular is also a fantastic place to find and follow journalists and members of the press – you definitely want them to be aware of your presence!

All of these methods and materials should be able to sit cohesively together within your marketing plan, and ultimately work together to create strong, lasting, beneficial audiences and networks. Plan them out in advance and try to invest time and resources into them alongside doing so for your work itself to achieve maximum impact. Good luck!

Some Useful Resources

- Culture Hive's Accessible Marketing Guide: www.culturehive.co.uk/resources/an-accessible-marketing-guide
- Arts marketing for beginners: www.culturehive.co.uk/resources/arts-marketing-for-beginners
- Making your arts events accessible to deaf people: www.shapearts.org.uk/blog/deaf-inclusive-arts-events

- Making your arts events accessible to visually impaired people: www.unlimitedimpact.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Unlimited-Impact.-Creating-Accessible-Events.-AD-TopTips.pdf
- Exploring the links between art and audio description: www.issuu.com/shapearts/docs/shape_2017_tateexchange_book_final
- How to engage underrepresented people in the arts: www.creativefuture.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Things-to-consider-when-trying-to-engage-under-represented-artists-and-writers-2.pdf
- Graeae resources: www.graeae.org/about/resources
- How to write an effective art press release: www.artsy.net/article/elena-soboleva-how-to-write-an-effective-press-release
- Join A-N for professional development and networking: www.a-n.co.uk/network
- Promotion and networks resources: www.artquest.org.uk/how-to-category/promotion-and-networks
- Business Survival Toolkit: www.business-survival-toolkit.co.uk
- Be Smart About Art: www.besmartaboutart.com
- Learn how to tour and grow your audiences abroad: www.cvan.org.uk/news/2015/9/24/the-art-export-guide

- Toolkits for artists and non-arts partners to aid the development and delivery of arts projects: www.cvan.org.uk/news/2016/8/22/artist-and-partner-toolkit
- How artists can use social media: www.huffingtonpost.com/carlota-zimmerman/how-artists-can-use-social-media-4756824.html
- Helpful networking tips for artists: www.artworkarchive.com/blog/7-helpful-networking-tips-for-artists
- Unlimited Impact's blogs: www.unlimitedimpact.org.uk