



Marketing Toolkit for Artists and Arts Organizations

This toolkit incorporates basic outreach strategies and marketing methods to help artists and organizations reach a wider audience and improve public awareness of their programming. While not comprehensive, people who are new to marketing can use this toolkit as a jumping off point; choose the marketing strategies that are most appropriate for your programming. Marketing strategies that are included in this toolkit include: social media, posters and flyers, e-newsletters, press releases, and print and digital advertising. Each section offers strategic tips and guidelines for using these communication mediums to expand audiences effectively.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Platform Options

- Social media platforms commonly used for digital promotions include Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Set up accounts on the platform(s) that are best aligned with your audience, intended use, and that you can keep activated on a regular basis. Consider what methods you have to grow the audience on your social channels. Measure the engagement your content receives to determine where you direct your resources and effort.
 - Facebook is the most popular social media platform in the United States, and is used most commonly by people over the age of 30. Facebook is a useful platform to share both visual and informational content.
 - Instagram is the most commonly used social media platform for individuals under the age of 30. Instagram is useful for sharing visually engaging content such as videos or photographs, and has the ability to share up to ten slides of visual content in a single post. This feature makes Instagram a good option for promoting your artistic portfolio or photos of programming in a digestible format.
 - Twitter is a social media platform designed for informational content. It is useful for promoting programming and updates about your organization. It has fewer options for displaying visual content than Facebook or Instagram.

Brand Consistency

- Consistency is a fundamental aspect of creating a recognizable brand across social media platforms. The profile picture, biography, and username should be similar (if not identical) for your Instagram, Facebook, and/or Twitter accounts.
- Links to your website and other social media accounts should be included in every social media profile. For example, your Twitter handle can be included in your Instagram bio. This is especially important if there is a large follower disparity among your social media platforms.
- If your work is based out of a studio or shared creative space, or you are working in collaboration with other artists or organizations, include that in your branding. If the studio, artist, or organization is active on social media, tag them in your posts and bio. This will increase your social media exposure, as your posts can now be viewed by users who visit the tagged account. This will also give your collaborator an opportunity to share your post, bringing exposure to their audience.

Content Creation

- Posting unique and creative content on a regular basis (2-3 posts per week) is the best way to increase your social media following.
- Photos and short videos are the best way to quickly make an impression on a passive social media viewer. Long captions and cluttered formatting are especially distracting from posts featuring visual art.
- Use short, active sentences and spacers to break up paragraphs. Prioritize the most important information at the top of your post.
- Develop different series for your social media posts. For example, you can have a series of regularly scheduled posts that highlight your creative process, including photos and videos of current and unfinished projects. Designate these posts with a specific hashtag such as #WorkshopWednesday.
- Find what makes your programming unique and express that through social media posts. Content is supposed to be personal and authentic.
- Interact with followers if they comment on your post. This will humanize your social media platforms and will keep a positive impression from your followers.
- Use simplified links and camel case on hashtags to improve readability. Examples:
 - Bit.ly/TacomaArtsMonth instead of cityoftacoma.org/arts/misc/long/f@ke_link_54908751394832
 - #TacomaArtsMonth instead of #tacomaartsmoth
- When possible, provide image descriptions for photos and closed captioning for videos

Promotional Strategies

- Turn your social media accounts into a business profile that links your professional Facebook and Instagram accounts and allows access to Instagram's "Professional Dashboard." This will allow you to engage with the analytical tools that Instagram and Facebook offer and is useful when creating promotional content and paid advertising. This [link](#) offers a step-by-step tutorial on how to create a business profile.
- The Professional Dashboard allows users to track their most impactful posts and further promote them using paid advertisements. This strategy is relatively cost-effective and is a simple way of quickly reaching a larger audience.
- Hashtags are a useful way to connect your content with similar posts. The Office of Arts & Cultural Vitality uses #TacomaArts on all posts to create consistency and link content together. Using #TacomaArts and Tacoma centric hashtags is a good way to reach receptive audiences through social media promotion.
- When it makes sense, be sure to answer questions and respond to comments that people make on your posts.
- Ask other artists and arts organizations who have a connection to your programming to share your posts and/or to post their own videos, updates, and pictures related to the programming.
- Consider boosting your social media post for a small fee to reach more people. You can tailor the audience of your boosted post to reach your intended audience.
- If time allows, plan a social media campaign/strategy by pre-planning post – picking out specific dates and times on when to post. You can use Word or Excel, or use a social media management platform like Hootsuite to schedule future posts.

POSTERS AND FLYERS

Generating Local Interest

- Posters and flyers allow you to communicate with your audience on a local level while creating a multi-faceted platform for your creative work or programming to be recognized.
- Posters and flyers are particularly effective in generating interest for a specific event, program, or exhibit. Neighborhoods in proximity to your in-person programming can be made aware of your event or program through posters, flyers, and handouts.
- Many local businesses are willing to hang posters and flyers in their storefront. Just ask for permission before hanging up a poster/flyer at any location.

Content

- Select imagery that is particularly thought-provoking, eye-catching, or surprising to the casual viewer.
- The content for your poster/flyer should be simple and eye-catching. Imagery is more important than words, however it is important to include the name of the programming, the artist(s)/organization(s) involved, dates, and location. Website URL and social media handles should also be included.
- Often small local print shops will provide better deals than larger chain companies for printing posters/flyers.
- Quality posters can be created with easy-to-use Adobe, which is available for free at Tacoma Public Libraries. The library offers free [Digital Media Lab](#) classes to learn new software, video editing, and photography programs.

E-NEWSLETTERS

Platforms and Engagement

- Build an email list over time by having a sign up list at events where you present, perform, or show your work
- If you have a website, add in a pop-up window that encourages and easily allows visitors to sign up for your newsletter
- There are many newsletter platforms available – pick one that has the capabilities you need considering the size of your mailing list and how many special features you want your newsletter to have. Check to see if your website platform has newsletter functionality already built in to it. Alternatively, some common platforms are Mad Mimi, MailChimp, and Constant Contact.

Content

- Send out newsletters periodically, only when you have relevant content to share; sending out newsletters too often or with content audience members don't find relevant will lead people to unsubscribe
- Share out relevant updates or opportunities that your audience would be interested in knowing about (e.g. launch of a new product, upcoming public event you are participating in, etc.)
- Determine what your goal is for using a newsletter – selling your work, promoting an upcoming event - and craft content to meet that goal.
- Craft the content to sound like it is coming from you as an individual – someone the reader can connect with.
- Personalize the subject line with the recipient's name and make it enticing to open
- Break content in to short paragraphs. Keep content brief and get to the point.
- Include visuals to break up the content and draw attention to specific areas.

PRESS RELEASES

Media Engagement

- Press releases inform the media about your programming.
- Local newspapers, radio stations, or television channels can expand your audience through media coverage or publishing a calendar listing for the programming.
- Press releases should be professional and authentic. Do not “oversell” your programming as you want to be a reliable and accurate source to the media. Avoid superlatives except when provided as a quote/statement within the release.
- It is important that your press release is not only accurate but well written; there is a higher chance of getting published through a small media outlet if they can print your writing verbatim.
- Consider timing for the release. Align with newsworthy topics if possible and avoid other major news cycle stories to have your story noticed.

Format

- Press releases should be double spaced, with the name of your artist or organization at the top of the first page along with the website, address, and contact information (phone/email) for the media contact.
- Include a headline that conveys the program in a few words and is intriguing enough for people to read the rest of the release for more details.
- The first paragraph should include who is presenting what, where and when. Why should people attend? How can tickets be purchased?
- Subsequent paragraphs can include details about the programming or the artists involved. Quotes from artists or key people involved in the program are a useful way to convey your message first-hand.
- If the press release is longer than one page, write "-More-" at the bottom of each page. At the end of the last page, include "# # #" to indicate the end of the release.
- This [link](#) provides additional information on how to properly structure a press release.

PRINT & DIGITAL ADVERTISING

Target Audience

- Traditional advertising strategies are functional and cost-effective when the target audience for your organization can be reached consistently. It is important to choose the right advertising platforms related to your programming.
- News outlets that include specific coverage of local arts and culture are an ideal platform to share your promotional material.

Content

- Select imagery that is particularly thought-provoking, eye-catching, or surprising to the casual viewer.
- The content for your advertisement should be simple and eye-catching. Imagery is more important than words, however it is important to include the name of the programming, the artist(s)/organization(s) involved, dates, and location. Website URL and social media handles should also be included.

- Quality advertisements can be created with easy-to-use Adobe, which is available for free at Tacoma Public Libraries. The library offers free [Digital Media Lab](#) classes to learn new software, video editing, and photography programs.

Media Platforms

- Tacoma has a variety of local media platforms to advertise and promote programming including:
 - PeachJar - an electronic newsletter that is sent to the parents of Tacoma Public School students. It is a good way to market youth-oriented programming. See the PeachJar [website](#) for pricing, info, and FAQs.
 - TacomaArt Listserv - a two-way email list where subscribers receive and can post information regarding upcoming arts and culture events and opportunities. The list reaches 1,100+ artists, arts organizations, and art supporters. For information on how to subscribe and easily share information about your arts programming with other subscribers, visit this [link](#).
- Following is a list of local/regional media outlets you may want to consider when communicating about your programming.
 - Crosscut – margo.vansynghel@crosscut.com
 - Evening Magazine – eriddle@king5.com
 - Fort Lewis Ranger - editor@ftlewisranger.com
 - FOX TV – tips@q13fox.com
 - Grit City Magazine – editor@gritcitymag.com
 - KING5 - newstips@king5.com
 - KIRO Radio – newsdesk@973kiro.com
 - KIRO TV News - newstips@kirotv.com
 - KNKX - news@knkx.org
 - KOMO TV News - tips@komo4news.com
 - KUOW - newsroom@kuow.org
 - Northwest Public Broadcasting – news@nwpb.org
 - Parent Map – editor@parentmap.com
 - Showcase Magazine - calendar@showcasemedialive.com

- South Sound Magazine - info@premiermedia.net
- South Sound Talk - submit@southsoundtalk.com
- Tacoma News Tribune - newstips@thenewstribune.com
- Tacoma Weekly - news@tacomaweekly.com
- Travel Tacoma - april@traveltacoma.com
- TV Tacoma - fyomes@cityoftacoma.org