

# **Marketing toolkit for event organisers**

This toolkit is designed to help event organisers to promote their events in Bristol. It gives helpful hints about how to attract local audiences to your event as well as advise and contacts for the local media.

## **1. Know your event**

Before you start to promote your event it is helpful to identify what is special about it and who might be interested in attending. Understand what the main elements of your event are and identify anything that makes your event different or unusual. Check that there aren't any similar events taking place at the same time that might compete for your audience. You will need to allocate a budget for marketing your event, building in marketing, press and PR into your event planning from the start.

## **2. Know your audience**

It is important to identify who you think might be the audience for the event to help you to target your marketing effectively. Is it a family event or will it appeal to those interested in theatre, gardening or food? Think about where those people might visit, what kind of publications or media they might use. Keep your audience in mind in everything you do from arranging facilities and activities at your event to how you write about it in leaflets or posters or in a press release to local media.

## **3. Write a timeline**

Work backwards from your event and plan your marketing activity. You may need to set up a website if you haven't one already. You may need to print and distribute leaflets or posters which will need to be distributed several weeks in advance of your event and if you wish to make use of free listings in local monthly magazines you will need to send a press release out at least six weeks before your event (see further information below under media).

## **4. Media**

Use the local media in Bristol to publicise your event. Identify a spokesperson who can give interviews about your event and if there are any celebrities or local dignitaries involved in your event approach them to see if they will be quoted in a press release or are willing to be interviewed.

## **5. Press releases**

Write a press release to send to local journalists about your event at least six weeks before your event. You could consider setting up a media call to launch the event. You could invite performers to the media call so that there is some activity for the media to photograph or film and your spokesperson should be available for interview.

Remember when writing press releases to:

- Keep them to one page only
- Answer the questions: who? what? where? why? when?
- Keep the main message in the headline and the first paragraph
- Include contact details at the end of the release
- Include images
- Include a quote
- Follow up a press release with a phone call checking that the journalist you sent it to received it.
- Send an image if you can making sure you have the permission of anyone in the photograph
- Background sheets can give extra details to supplement the press release, for example:
  - A fact sheet with a list of 'points of interest' or 'notes to the Editor'
  - A list of some of the artists involved in an event
  - Biographies of the key players
  - Short profiles of the organisations involved
  - Maps
  - A brief history of the project

See appendix 1 'Writing a press release' and appendix 2 'Writing a media call' for further information.

## **6. Plan your PR**

Make a plan to set out other releases you may wish to send out. For example you may not want to release the whole programme when you launch the event so that you can send out another release a few weeks later to announce a headline act, celebrity endorsement or performer to keep your event in the news.

You may identify particular dates e.g. International Women's Day that you could link a press release to or you might want to react to something that has happened in the news that can act as a news hook for your event.

You may also want to encourage local magazines or publications to write a feature – this could be linked to the history of the event or a human-interest story of someone who is taking part in the event or school children who are preparing to take part.

You may want to consider offering a competition for free tickets with a media partner.

Start to feed your events and activities to free listings editors of key publications, both online and offline see appendix 3 for Local Bristol media contacts.

It is useful to have 40, 100 and 200 word paragraphs describing the event that you can send to publications or partners. See appendix 4 'Examples of copy for different media'.

It is also worth planning in case things go wrong for example if bad weather means that the event has to be cancelled. See appendix 5 'When things go wrong'.

## **7. Social media**

Consider social networking opportunities and set up a Facebook page and twitter account. Offer competitions to those that sign up and seek out other like-minded blogs and twitter feeds so you can start spreading the word about the event. Tweet pictures of people participating, and in the weeks before your event tweet about preparations.

## 8. Evaluation

If you're doing some visitor research at your event build a question into a survey asking them how they find out about your events so that you can track what activity has been successful. This will help you in future planning.

## 9. Website: top tips

- **Key information** should be at the top of the page.
- **Short sentences and paragraphs.** Break text into concise, manageable chunks. Not only will this make your site more accessible, but it will increase the usability as well.
- **Use clear headings and sub headings.** Use clear first and second tier headings, text highlights and summaries where possible.
- **Use lists.** Website text should have bulleted and numbered lists. Consider each paragraph to see if it could be a list instead.
- **Know your audience**, and how to write for them. Think of your users and do everything with them in mind. Avoid jargon and use plain English (See the Plain English website at [www.plainenglish.co.uk](http://www.plainenglish.co.uk))
- **SEO: Search Engine Optimisation.** Choosing the right words and phrases is important for keeping your website and web pages 'optimised', i.e. making sure that when users search for events and activities, your website will appear high up in the natural search engine rankings. Think about words that people might search for e.g. festival

Bristol or food events Bristol and include them in your site. Place your keywords in headlines and/or first sentences.

- **Be concise and keep it simple.** Reading from a screen is 25% slower than reading from a printed page. Writing for the web needs to be short, sharp and dynamic.
- **Choose a few strong images to attract your audience**

## **10. Promotional Material**

Events and festivals use many different kinds of promotional material from flyers and leaflets to posters and advertisements. If you are producing a package of materials, it's important to remember consistency of design across all types so that people will instantly recognise and connect the various pieces to your event.

## **11. Posters**

Posters need to be eye-catching enough to get noticed from a distance and to convey prominent messages quickly and effectively. Think about where your poster will be displayed and choose an appropriate size. Keep text to a minimum, stick to an eye-catching image and a small number of words. Include main event information: the organisation (if necessary), the event, location, date and time.

## **12. Flyers**

A flyer is a cost effective method of spreading the word about an event or festival to a wide audience. It quickly and effectively gets your event information out to audiences. Include a clear 'call to action' message, eg visit a website or book tickets

Flyers can be:

- Posted as a mail-shot
- Handed out at events

- Delivered door-to-door
- Inserted in the local newspaper or targeted publications
- Distributed to and displayed at Tourist Information Centres, libraries, shops, community centres

### **13. Advertisements**

You may need to advertise your event or festival in a news publication, arts magazine, community listing, or local 'listings' publication. Or take some advertising space with a bit of editorial. Space is at a premium, so treat these ads in a similar way to a poster design that captures the essential information in an eye-catching way and sets it apart from the surrounding competition.

## 14. Appendices

### Appendix 1 Writing a press release

#### **Title should be bold (and creative): something to catch the eye**

The opening paragraph should include the 'who, what, where, when, why'. It should be a distillation of what the press release is all about.

The release should be in a 'classic' typeface, either Arial or Times Roman – these are the easiest to read. There should be 1.5-line spacing. And the margins should be at least 2cms. These give journalists space to write notes in the margins and in between lines.

Press releases should fit onto one page of A4 and should not contain adjectives (you may think something is fantastic – others may not share your views) – press releases should be factual.

Numbers fewer than ten are written out in full e.g. eight. Over ten they are presented as numbers e.g. 25. Dates are written day, month, number e.g. Wednesday, July 26 – there's no need for th/nd/rd.

Try to include a quote from someone involved in the event/initiative. Quotes are personal and emotive e.g. Sally Jones, title, said: "This is the best thing since sliced bread. We're delighted to be involved and are confident the whole day will be a huge success."

Bullet points are useful when:

- You have a list of events/activities
- You have lots of facts and figures
- You have lots of points to get across

If possible add a web address or phone number where members of the public can get more information. Do not put personal details.

**ENDS** – this lets the journalist know your release has finished.

**Notes to Editors:** This is a useful tool to give more detailed or supporting information about your event/organisation. You can use case studies here to support the press release.

You can use this to invite journalists/photographers/camera crews to your event. Remember to give the date, time, and venue – even if this is in your opening paragraph.

Always give a contact name and telephone number. This will not be made public but will help the media get in touch for more information.



## **Appendix 2 Writing a media call**

**Title: this should be what the event is called**

Event	This could be the launch of a new initiative or an activity. Use this to say what is going to happen at the event e.g. cake-cutting, ribbon-cutting, official opening, demonstration, new display or presentation.
Who	Say who will be at the event. Use their title and their role in the event. It could be the cabinet member, the Lord Mayor, service director, local councillor, partners and the people directly involved.
Venue	Where is it all taking place. Give the full address. If it's in a park or large open space, try to be specific e.g. by the water fountains on The Centre, St Augustine's Parade. Postcode.
Time	The best time for the media is in the morning before 11am. This means the daily papers could make the late edition. Radio and TV will hit the lunchtime news programmes and will be able to use it again for the tea-time news.
Date	Day, month, number

### **Notes to editors**

This is where you give any additional information. You could say here who will be available for interviews and photographs. Don't forget your contact name and telephone number.

### Appendix 3 Local Bristol media contacts

Channel	Email	Details
<b>Radio</b>		
Radio Bristol	<a href="mailto:Radio.Bristol@bbc.co.uk">Radio.Bristol@bbc.co.uk</a>	Older audience profile. 'The Guide' features events on breakfast and drive time programmes. Saturday morning programme for features and interviews about events.
Heart	<a href="mailto:news.westcountry@heart.co.uk">news.westcountry@heart.co.uk</a>	Broadcasts across the greater Bristol region.
Kiss FM		Broadcasts across the greater Bristol region. Young audience profile.
Jack/Breeze	<a href="mailto:news@jackbristol.com">news@jackbristol.com</a>	Broadcasts across the Bristol region. Jack more male biased and Breeze more female biased.
Ujima Radio	<a href="mailto:info@ujimaradio.com">info@ujimaradio.com</a>	Community radio station
BCFM	<a href="mailto:news@bcfm.org.uk">news@bcfm.org.uk</a>	Community radio station
<b>Monthly publications</b>		
Bristol magazine	<a href="mailto:editor@thebristolmagazine.co.uk">editor@thebristolmagazine.co.uk</a>	Glossy A4 publication distributed in central Bristol and postcodes in Clifton, Redland, Cotham
Clifton Life	<a href="mailto:rosa.park@mediaclash.co.uk">rosa.park@mediaclash.co.uk</a>	Glossy A4 magazine distributed in central Bristol and to postcodes in Clifton

<b>Quarterly publications</b>		
Shipshape	<a href="mailto:info@shipshapebristol.co.uk">info@shipshapebristol.co.uk</a>	American A5 publication available around central Bristol and Harbourside.
<b>Weekly</b>		
Metro	<a href="mailto:news@ukmetro.co.uk">news@ukmetro.co.uk</a>	Daily. What's on feature on Wednesdays, distributed to commuters and locations around Bristol
The Post Picture desk	<a href="mailto:epnews@b-nm.co.uk">epnews@b-nm.co.uk</a> <a href="mailto:simon.galloway@b-nm.co.uk">simon.galloway@b-nm.co.uk</a> <a href="mailto:s.wright@venue.co.uk">s.wright@venue.co.uk</a>	Daily newspaper and on line.  Friday weekend magazine features event listings
<b>On line</b>		
Bristol 24/7	<a href="mailto:editor@bristol247.com">editor@bristol247.com</a>	What's on website
BBC on line	<a href="mailto:bristol@bbc.co.uk">bristol@bbc.co.uk</a>	Local news on line
Venue on line	<a href="mailto:editor@venue.co.uk">editor@venue.co.uk</a>	What's on website
Bristol Culture	<a href="mailto:bristolculture@gmail.com">bristolculture@gmail.com</a>	What's on, views & comment website
<b>Television</b>		
BBC Points West	<a href="mailto:pointswest@bbc.co.uk">pointswest@bbc.co.uk</a>	Local news programme
ITV West	<a href="mailto:westcountry@itv.com">westcountry@itv.com</a>	Local news programme

## **Appendix 4: Examples of standard copy for different media**

### **Twitter approx 100 characters**

We're holding a xxxx(event) @name of your event in #Bristol on xx day/month and time and we want you to join us at xxxxx

And link to appropriate web address <http://www.websiteaddress>

### **At least 40 words - ideal for Facebook/bloggs**

Name of event/activity is a new event, hitting the streets of Bristol on day/month/ from xxam to xxxpm. The aim of the (name of event) is to celebrate xxxxxxxxxxxx. Come along with family and friends and join in the fun. See [www.websiteaddress](http://www.websiteaddress)

### **Approx 100 words – ideal for websites**

Xxxxxxxxxx is a new and exciting xxxxxxxx event, hitting the streets of Bristol on day/month. The (name of event) takes place at 'full address of event', from xxam to xxxpm. It is organised by xxxxxxxxxxxx and will feature xxxxxxxxxxxx, xxxxxx and xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.

The aim of the event is to xxxxxxxxxxxx and you are invited to come along with your family and friends and join in the fun.

Visit [www.websiteaddress](http://www.websiteaddress) for the latest news on the project.

### **Approx 200 words - ideal for newsletters**

Family and friends are invited to come along on xxxx day at xxx time at xxx place to join in the fun and activities of xxxx (your event). We are busy adding the final touches to (name of event) which is planned to be a celebration of xxxxxxxxxxxx.

The day will see xxxxxx, xxxxxx, xxxxxx and xxxxxx (list a few of the activities : face painting, live music, children's races, competitions). There will also be xxxxxx and xxxx (refreshments, teas/coffees, homemade cakes, bar etc). So there's something for everyone and an opportunity to show your support for xxxxxxxx. All the activities are free/Tickets cost just £xxxx and are available from xxxxxxxx.

The (name of event) has been made possible thanks to generous support from (name your funders/sponsors) and lots of help from xxxx (names of community groups/organisations/volunteers).

For more information about the day visit [www.websiteaddress](http://www.websiteaddress)

## **Appendix 5 When things go wrong – and sometimes they do.....**

### **Dealing with a crisis**

Crises come in many forms

- The disaster where people are hurt or injured – and it could be your group's fault
- A big change that no one was expecting
- A story that dents your public image
- The dynamite revelation that's circulating like wildfire – but hasn't broken yet.

Be prepared. Take time out to think about some scenarios. Get ready for the ones you can do something about.

### **Have contingency plans**

Media calls can come in thick and fast. Who will help you? Will you be able to cope?

### **Say sorry**

You'll be looking to protect your group's reputation but there could be others worse off. Say sorry when people expect you to.

### **Keep talking**

The media want information. If they're not getting it from you they will go elsewhere and you'll have lost your role as messenger.

### **Be honest**

If you lie or hide facts, they will at some stage come out and the media will use your secretiveness against you. If need be keep the information brief, but always truthful. Issue a statement to the media, put this on your website and use social media channels to keep any information up to date.

### **Stay on top**

Keep on top of the key questions:

- What has happened? A summary from your organisation's perspective
- What are you doing about it? Right now, tomorrow and in the future
- Who is the spokesperson? Give the job to someone who is close to the crisis – and who looks and sounds calm.

ENDS