

Plymouth Art Weekender 2020

PR and Communications

workshop toolkit

PR and comms

Intro

- | | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. | The Power of the media | 4-5 |
| 2. | Media sell in | 5-7 |
| 3. | Power of image | 8 -10 |
| 5. | Press Release | 10-11 |
| 6. | Media Photocall | 11-13 |
| 7. | Let's get Social | 13 - 14 |

Workbook prepared by **Excess Energy Communications**.
For questions, please contact: Sarah@Excess-energy.co.uk

INTRO

Artists often get so consumed with the detail of their craft and creative concepts that they find it hard to take the time to promote themselves, or they simply do not know how. We have developed this toolkit to help those involved in the 2020 Plymouth Art Weekender event learn how best to market themselves and share information about their work, aspirations and projects.

Now and over future months, it is more important than ever to be communicating with your audiences, keeping them up-to-date with information, news and updates surrounding your work and your plans.

We hope you will find this PR and communications toolkit useful for doing this.

1. The Power of the Media

The National Picture

Depending on your opinion of what constitutes a national newspaper, radio station or TV station, at the moment in the UK there are around ten national daily and Sunday newspapers, five national radio stations that are largely available across the country and a huge host of TV channels depending on your chosen service. Added to that are all the satellite TV stations that are available for subscribers.

These outlets have a major part to play on a daily basis in shaping the national agenda. They keep a 'watch' on the Government and companies and deliver information to the nation which they perceive to be in our professional and personal interest.

The UK's Local Media

There are many local and regional daily and weekly newspapers in the UK, over 75 local BBC and commercial radio stations and a number of local variation TV stations for the BBC and ITV. Add to this the proliferation of local and regional wide magazines, local news internet sites and the English, Welsh, Scottish and Irish daily and Sunday 'national' dailies and you can see that as Brits, despite the rise of the internet, we have a voracious appetite for our local media.

Influencing the influencers

An influencer is someone in your niche or industry with sway over your target audience. It could be a local person with a large following on Instagram that aligns with your brand values of sustainability or beauty or it could be a national person, known for a specialist sector or interest. Their pre-existing presence in a niche makes them a useful launch pad for brands/artists in search of credibility, or for companies or operations looking to spread awareness about their product or service.

So what's in it for you?

Public relations – be that media coverage or influencer postings can be amongst the simplest and most cost-effective way to promote your product, service, shop, outlet, event or activity. It's important to keep your newspapers and radio and TV stations (particularly local) involved with any news you have as they can be powerful allies. Good media relations can contribute to longer term strategic objectives such as:

- Create a higher/better media profile
- Communicate/engage with new and existing audiences
- Change and inform attitudes of target audiences
- Improve relationships with communities
- Influence government policy at a local level
- Provide support and endorsement for other neighbouring or community businesses or organisations
- Provide support and endorsement for campaigns or initiatives

Reach a mass audience

National press, including newspapers, online platforms, blogs, TV, radio and magazines (and influencers) is consumed by vast amounts of people daily. To get your work out there in the national sphere in the right way is hugely influential and will no doubt lead to awareness.

Trust

Regional media is far more trusted by people than the national press. People tend to like their local paper and read more of it for enjoyment and local journalists are often well known and respected. Local media is the most trusted medium for dissemination of information as it is central to community life across the UK and remains the first port of call for people looking to find out about local events, buy goods and find services in their own community.

So how can you utilise the media to help support your work?

2. Media Sell-in process

So what is PR and media relations?

Media relations relates to the part of PR which informs and educates by means of a whole variety of promotional activities which result in editorial coverage in newspapers and on the radio, TV and Internet. The majority of readers have no knowledge of the PR industry or how it works with the journalistic community so still believe that their reporters find out every bit of news through a thorough investigative procedure. This therefore means that people reading, listening to or watching a story unfold really believe that is the hard news style factual status of the world around them, therefore attribute a great deal of importance to what they are seeing, hearing or reading.

Stories that appear in any media therefore have solid influential value (in a positive way!) and your business, service, event or story can therefore utilise the skills of the everyday PR practitioner to great effect.

So how can you create your own PR and get your stories into your media?

PR informs and educates by means of a whole variety of promotional activities which result in media editorial coverage. Before you can get news into print or on air, you need to have a story that is newsworthy or interesting. Take your time to educate yourself about the media outlets you are targeting, their style or writing or presentation and the things that appeal to them.

Your unique selling points for media

You also need to focus the materials you send to help the editors or producers. This means anticipating and answering their questions, labeling photographs and explaining why your story/proposition is worthy of coverage. Local journalists are always looking for local success stories—either the 'first of' something, the 'most

significant' of, the 'biggest' of or the 'most exciting' of.

Getting media coverage

The best way to get media coverage, is to gauge the types of stories that are hot and tie your story in with them. If you can think of a way to use a human-interest link, you'll increase your chance of coverage. Being aware of how your story will hit their agenda and interest their readers is the main factor that you should concentrate on. For example, if you are expanding your premises and employing more local people, that has a great local human-interest story.

Learn about the media outlet before you contact them

In defining your target audience, you will also know what they read, what radio programmes they listen to, what TV programmes they watch and what websites they visit. Take your time to educate yourself about the media outlets you are targeting and get an idea of the geographical areas that they cover and the age group that they are created for and then create your plan of action and the things that you will say based on this.

Press trips, product drops and experiences

There is no better way to get authentic coverage that will be trusted by readers than allowing the media or influencer to experience what you offer first hand. This provides an honest, transparent review.

Deadlines

Find out deadlines for each outlet in relation to your event or activity. For newspapers and TV prepare your press release at least two weeks in advance of when you would ideally like a story to run. This gives the journalist time to absorb the story and plan plenty of space/time for it. Magazines often work a couple of months in advance so be well organised if you're keen to get in there. Deadline for local press differs from publication to publication so it is worth contacting them to determine this. If you miss a deadline then you won't get any coverage.

Create and review your materials

After digesting this toolkit, you should be aware of what a press release is and how this important piece of material works. You should e-mail your press release (or if you are creating a photocall, your photocall notice) in plenty of advance time to the right journalist, and you should have a colleague or friend proof it for you to make sure it is as error free as possible.

Follow up

Many people send press releases and then moan that they never get published. Journalists have some of the most blocked inboxes in the business world! They get hundreds of e-mails every day and many just don't get read. The only way of ensuring that yours gets noticed, and potentially covered, is to go through what is known as the 'sell-in' process. You effectively become a mini salesman and you call up and 'sell' your story to the journalist.

“A good PR can certainly influence how much coverage is received for a story or client. As a journalist I am often under a great deal of pressure and a good PR can alleviate this by presenting me with a complete package. PRs do all the research, check names and facts are correct, provide good quality photos or photo opportunities, arrange for interviews and answer questions. A really well written press release probably won't need much rewriting - maybe just a change in headline and a slightly different angle to fit the publication. The better the initial package and the information I receive, the more likely I am to allocate more space for a story.”

Jackie Butler, Features Writer, Western Morning News

Making that all important sell-in call

Before you make the call, you should read through the press release again and have a quick practice of what you're going to say to them. You should also make sure you've read an article that the journalist has recently written, and be sure they're the right person for you to target.

Here's a suggested script, just relax and try not to sound like you are reading. Be as friendly, positive and enthusiastic as possible:

'Hi my name's (your name) and I wondered if I could take two minutes of your time to tell you about a great new art performance that's going to be happening/launched in the next few weeks/is happening at the moment?'

Hopefully they'll say yes here, then that's your cue to explain:

'Great. It's completely different because it's (details of the project) and it's all been organised by XX. The team are....(then a couple of lines about what they are doing that's new/different/the biggest or most significant of etc...)

Take a breath and hopefully they will say 'that that sounds interesting!' Then you say:

"I sent you over a press release a couple of hours ago and photography and I wondered if you'd be able to give us some really nice coverage."

Hopefully they'll say yes! Then you can ask if they need anything else and then send it to them if they do.

3. The Power of the Image

Getting your PR Photography Right: An overview by Kirstin Prisk www.kirstinprisk.com

Visual stimulus counts for a huge percentage of our perception, making it a key component to any marketing campaign. This is why it is paramount to spend time considering every aspect towards creating a PR photo which will have maximum effect in minimum time (usually no longer than a glance).

What makes a good photo?

This is a very grey, very subjective area. A photo that is technically correct can be perceived to be "not good", by some people for their own reasons. At the same time, a blurred overexposed photo can be judged as being "good" depending on the type of image that it is and the purpose of the picture.

Making photographs

Avoid simply taking a photo and step into the creative realm of making a photo. This may simply be a matter of finding a leading line or even dropping down to one knee and asking your subject to move their hand. This activity and effort all adds up to make a difference to the impact of the image.

What do Editors want?

In general, it is important to please the Editor whilst also making sure nothing that you want is compromised in the process. Find out who you're shooting for! Have a good look at the photographs in the local paper or magazine and think about what seems to appeal to the picture editors. Do they go for creative angles, interesting compositions, use of light or are they more straight up and traditional. You should ensure that with your shoot you create a range of photos for them to choose from but always be sure and take as many shots as possible in the style that they generally go for.

Rejected press photography

This image was rejected by a national daily paper due to the arm crop. This is why composition and editing should be carefully considered.



Good press photography

Good photography can really help to get your story in your newspaper so think about possible photographs before the event - THINK PICTURES!

- Images should always reflect what you are saying in your press release
- Avoid going for the obvious and be imaginative i.e. try to avoid standard cheque presentation shots and cheesy grins
- Use props and think of something quirky if at all possible
- Images must always be good quality and high resolution

The image below is an example of good PR photography.

Composition: Leading from the front policeman, down across his colleague and into an identifying sign. Shot looking up, which delivers an authoritative, powerful image.

Lighting: The photographer has underexposed the scene slightly making the backdrop darker and full of colour. The two Policemen have been lit by a harsh flash that delivers a dramatic, high impact image.

In general shots should be delivered by e-mail and should be in jpg format and you should always have at least one portrait and one landscape for them to choose from for page layout purposes. Try not to make emailed images or several images in one mail bigger than 5MB as this will clog up journalists' inboxes and they may well be rejected by their server.

For print media:

- Jpg format
- At least one portrait and one landscape image
- 300dpi

For web media:

- Jpg format
- 72dpi
- 800 pixels wide for landscape
- 650 pixels high for portrait

Crediting the photographer

At all possible times, you should ask for a credit for you or for the photographer.



4. WRITING YOUR OWN PRESS RELEASE

Once you have made contact with the media and know who your contacts are, you should send them a press release to give them all the details.

A press release is an article written for the media in a journalistic style to inform them of a launch or story that is newsworthy i.e. is interesting to people who will read that newspaper or listen to that radio/TV bulletin. The whole idea of a press release is that it can be immediately and easily converted into an article that will sit in the paper or be used for a piece of broadcast coverage.

Press release top tips

- Write an eye catching title
- The headline and first paragraph should always contain the most important information to draw the reader's attention and enable them to find out quickly what the story is about
- The five Ws should be in the first paragraph. This means that the first paragraph should tell the reader who is involved in your story, what is happening, when it is happening, where it is happening and why it is happening. This should be as clear and concise as possible

Who What When Where Why

- Press releases are best sent via email. Always make sure that the subject heading of your email is clear. Don't title it 'Jukebox Café Press Release', instead write something along the lines of: 'JukeBox Cafe Big Draw Project' or 'Over 500 Volunteers take part in biggest beach café beach clean.'
- Send the release well in advance of your event or activity. We recommend at least two weeks to ten days before so they can plan to allocate journalists to cover the event and save a space for it within their newspaper or news show.
- After you've sent your press release to the media, give them a call to ensure they have received it and to assess their interest
- Follow up your event with a post event press release and photos. Let the journalists know what happened, who was there, how many people etc.

Use the press release planner that we have developed to help you get started.

4. Press Release Planner

Date: (X)

For immediate release [OR Embargoed until: X]

[Heading: make it an eye-catching one]

[Sub heading: One full sentence that expands on heading]

[**Paragraph 1.** Intro must have who, what, where, when, why. What's unique about the story/event/activity? Is it the first of its kind, the biggest, the cleverest etc. Include a local angle pull, mention local place name and if relevant how many people are involved.]

[**Paragraph 2.** More detail, mention any partner organisations, who's involved, what the story means and why it's exciting.]

[**Paragraph 3.** Expand details about how the story has come about or why it's happening.]

[**Paragraph 4.** Future plans and any new phases/news coming up. Give brief information about involvement of key leaders or people, historic elements of other elements of significance. Dates of future events or exhibitions should be included here as well as targets and challenges.]

[**Paragraph 5.** Quote one of the key people involved in the project or organisation – why they got involved, why it's exciting, what they hope to achieve, why this will mean something for the future. Introduce the quote e.g. John Smith, Director of Beetlejuice Ltd., says, "x"]

[**Paragraph 6.** Quote from another representative (if appropriate and relevant – perhaps the Arts Council). Use this quote to bring all the strands together with an inspirational finish]

[**Paragraph 7.** Reiterate times, dates, website details, venue, contact name and number/email if relevant (for event contact not for press contact)]

ENDS

Images attached: xxxx.jpg - 'Caption of photo', name of photographer and owner of copyright

For more information please contact: [PR contact's name, email address and telephone number]

Notes to the Editor: Drop in info from your business and other useful info.

6. Media Photocall

A photocall is an opportunity for journalists from your local papers to come along all at once and get the photographs and interviews they want all in one go. It is essentially a call for photographers and an ideal option if you're launching something especially new or exciting.

Media Photocall Top Tips

- Send out a photocall alert to your local press at least two weeks before your event.
- It should be a very short version of the press release just to alert the media to your event. It should include information about the event or presentation; **why** it's taking place, **when** it's taking place (the exact time and date), **who** will be attending, **where** it is (the exact location or address) and **what** will be there
- Consider and plan all photo opportunities / possibilities well before the shoot
- Be prepared. Be clear about what you want to say before the photocall. What is the

event, why is it so important, what is it going to mean and who is it going to affect?

· Introduce your spokespeople to the media so they know who to go to for questions, always make the journalists life easier!

· Take spare copies of the press release to the photocall in case a journalist asks for it

Media Photocall template

MEDIA PHOTOCALL

EYE CATCHING HEADLINE (SHORT, SWEET AND INTERESTING)

DATE: Day / date / month / year

TIME: Time (24h or remember to put am or pm)

PLACE: Venue address – meet at xxxxxxxxxx

VISUALS: Explain what there will be to take photos of e.g over 500 men dressed as seagulls will adorn Plymouth Hoe in protest

INTERVIEWS: Artist John Berry (you can name people if you are sure they will be there)

One sentence to introduce the scenario (adapt the first sentence from your press release)

In one paragraph explain what will be going on and why

Photography and interviews are available.

Issued on behalf of John Berry by (your name). For further information please contact (your name) on (your email address) or (your mobile number

7. Let's Get Social

Why would you use social media to promote your art/work/projects/initiatives?

- Social media of all types is a vital platform for ongoing communication with all of your target customers and audiences, as well as with local media.
- Social media is global and gives you access to literally millions of people, significantly expanding your reach far beyond that of traditional media
- You can directly engage with people who are potentially interested, answer any questions they might have in real-time and ultimately recruit them to sign up online.
- Building a community of people who are interested in your art and keeping them updated on happenings will encourage them to spread the word to their own networks
- It is cost-free – only requiring your time, creativity and expertise!

Before we go any further we need to think about what you are trying to achieve through social media platforms.

Your objectives:

Whatever your objectives, whether it is to inspire change, or to inform, using social media effectively requires a strategic, joined-up and consistent approach. Too many organisations and individuals jump into social media without thinking about what they want to get out of it, which can waste time and resources, as well as having negative effects.

Here is an example of how an arts organisation is successfully employing this kind of strategic approach:

<http://www.straight.com/arts/593931/vancouver-arts-groups-harness-power-social-media>

Arts groups in Vancouver, including the Vancouver Opera and Ballet BC have dedicated digital strategies to engage new and younger audiences with the classical performing arts. Using a mixture of Facebook, twitter and especially Instagram, they promote performances by giving people insight into what's going on behind the scenes. A few years ago, Ballet BC was on the brink of bankruptcy—since then it has seen an 150-percent boost in potential audience members actively seeking to engage with the company on social media.

Vancouver Opera launched its social media strategy in 2008 and has a successful blog, Facebook, twitter, You Tube, Vine and Instagram accounts where they post regular updates and behind the scenes information. Its Twitter account currently boasts more than 10,100 followers. The company also offers “tweet seats” a specific section of the audience for those who want to live-tweet the event, which compliments their regular “Blogger Nights”.

Some social media usage tips:

1. **Get planning** - Consider in advance how to best promote yourself on social media. Create a monthly content grid, draft few days' content, select suitable imagery, consider engaging and powerful hashtags
2. **Become a 'Thought Leader'** - Write about your topic, film it, sing about it! Let people know what you're doing and why it helps you succeed
3. **Experiment** - Got Facebook? Been wondering what Instagram is all about? Try these new platforms and see how they can work for you. Don't be afraid that you don't have 10k plus followers or a blue tick by your name. It takes time to build a following on a new platform. Be bold, be consistent and most importantly.... Be creative.
4. **Collaborate** - Tap into organisations which share your values or post similar content – BBC Art amongst others. Engage with campaigns such as #Museumsfromhome, Leach Pottery's #PotteryandPeople campaign amongst others
5. **Invest** (both financially and time) – discover Facebook/Instagram/Twitter ads and spend some time liking, sharing and commenting on others' content to build up your following and engagement stats