

Promote Your Event (For Free!)

Promoting your event has never been easier. With a few simple clicks of the mouse you can notify hundreds if not thousands of people about your event – for free! Of course the catch is that you will be competing for people's attention with thousands of other media messages the average person receives in one day so be original and clear about your message. Here below is a series of tips to help you promote your event - for free!

WORD OF MOUTH/PRINT MEDIA

Despite the wave of free Internet-based tools now at your fingertips, the age-old medium of word-of-mouth is still extremely useful in promoting events. The more convincing your pitch, the more people will bring it up in conversation. Post your event poster at key spots strategically related to your event. Issuing a media-advisory to relevant media outlets and journalists can help increase exposure as well. Not to be confused with a press release, a media advisory includes only the most pertinent information about your event.

How to write a Media Advisory

Writing a Media Advisory is quick and useful for traditional and web media outlets. A Media Advisory answers the basic questions: Who, What, When, Where and, on occasion, Why. The idea is to only give basic information so that your audience and the press will feel compelled/curious to show up.

There is also a basic format to follow. Lets take a look at an example:

Media Advisory For Immediate Release

Media Advisory – Democracy Now Fundraiser

(Vancouver, Tuesday, 1 November 2012) – Democracy Now's annual fundraiser will be held Saturday November 26th from 8pm to midnight at Bar None Nightclub, 1222 Hamilton Street (between Davie and Drake).

Event: Democracy Now Fundraiser

Date: Saturday, 24 November, 8pm-Midnight

Place: Bar None, 1222 Hamilton Street

Admission: \$50 (tax deductible)

The fundraiser will feature comedy acts by comedians such as Will Ferrell and musical performances by very popular Canadian bands. All proceeds go to Democracy Now's fight against dictatorship.

Admission is \$50 for adults and \$30 for seniors and students.

Please visit www.dnfund.bc.ca for more information and to download the event poster.

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For more information:

Your Self, Executive Director

[250.111.1111](tel:250.111.1111) / yourself@dnfund.bc.ca

Media Advisory and **For Immediate Release** are standard at the top right corner of the page. Notice the correct format of indicating date and location for the Media Advisory in parenthesis. A recap of the information is presented in point form in the middle while the text at the end is superficial and could have been excluded. The **-30-** denotes the end of the communication and your contact info is, of course, essential at the bottom left of the page.

Media List

You now need a media emailing list in order to send out your Media Advisory, your invitations and other information pertinent to your event/meeting/press conference. This list will also include listings in which you have to type in your event each time (sort of like you do when you create a Facebook event). This is time consuming and you may consider recruiting virtual volunteers (i.e. your facebook friends and bloggers) and dividing the task among them.

Rather than building a media list from scratch you can easily piggyback on your organization's media list or get one from a non profit organization by asking nicely. You can then enhance that media list with your own knowledge of local or specialized media outlets and personal contacts (like your neighbourhood newspaper or a special email listing that your friend runs, etc...).

Another task you can give your would-be disciples is phoning the media organization you have just emailed in order to make sure the information has reached the desired destination and in order to create a contact. Media is all about creating one-on-one relationships whether real or virtual. These relationships of trust rely on the consistency and quality of information that you are sending out as well as the originality and interest level of your event. So go out there in the real world and cyber space and build long-lasting relationships with people in the media, don't just spam email them all the time.

Finally, fewer and fewer media outlets are using faxes but they do still exist. Luckily you don't need one in order to send one as there are many services that convert emails into faxes, here is a list of free (and pay) services: <http://www.roadnews.com/html/Articles/a4.htm>

EMAIL

A media advisory may not be suitable for many types of email sendouts. Email is probably the single most important tool for spreading the good word about your event. Personalized emails work the best but if you're short on time, a brief generic email starting with a personal message to the recipient can cut through email traffic to reach your would-be audience. Link to your website for more information and incorporate within your message a sexy and small version of your event poster (make sure the email remains under 5 MB). Only attach a full version of the event poster if you are sending it out to a website/media outlet/blogger friends that will publish it, everyday Internet users have no time or desire to download and open your event poster. If you do not have an event poster, consider including within the email an image or photograph that catches the eye and illustrates what the event is all about.

* **Helpful hint:** Every organization should record the email addresses and telephone numbers of all its members and supporters in order to relay important messages like upcoming events.

FACEBOOK

With over 750 million active users, Facebook has taken the world by storm. Facebook allows you to reach your friends and colleagues directly as well as indirectly through the friends of your friends. Facebook builds upon the tendency of people to flock to things that interest the people around them. The tools are free and easy to use but a few simple tricks can help maximize your promotions.

Create a Facebook 'Event'

Creating a Facebook 'Page' or Facebook 'Event' is a great way to group together would-be participants and post pertinent information about your event such as links, photos, videos, and links. Facebook is engineered to build momentum around things that interest its users so the more people start to click, comment, and interact on your page, the more exposure you will generate in the Facebook community.

The 'Like' Button and Comments

Facebook introduced the 'Like' button in 2009 to maximize its advertising potential. As a Facebook user, you can also benefit from the 'Like' button by employing it in your outreach strategy. Provide a 'Like' link on your website and get your friends to 'Like' and 'Comment' on your Facebook 'Event'. Facebook users will see the comments in their friends' profiles and so on.

TWITTER

This social networking site is currently experiencing explosive growth. Its capacity to incite involvement and induce responses among web users is higher than that of Facebook. It is

therefore an ideal tool to monitor consensus and trends, and especially in forging relationships with outspoken users who draw attention from other users.

How It Works

Once you've created a Twitter account, you can easily begin to grow your network by following other Twitter accounts. Generally, this kind of networking works like a handshake: I follow you, so you follow me back. Once you have a reasonable base of followers, Twitter can act as a mouthpiece for making important statements or announcements such as an upcoming event.

Thought Leaders and Brand Ambassadors

An effective Twitter user connects with other users that have a large number of followers. These 'Thought Leaders' can act as catalysts for spreading information about your activities. Make sure to follow politicians, journalists, bloggers, and other high-profile individuals who share your goals. Going one step further, you may enlist prolific Twitter users as 'Brand Ambassadors' to help promote your event.

WEBSITES/BLOGS

There is a plethora of options to launch a website or blog for free. Content management systems (CMS's) like Blogspot or Wordpress are free and extremely easy to use. Even the most elementary web-user can learn how to setup and operate a basic website within several hours. Instructions are simple and easy to follow. An effective event webpage is succinct and up-to-date.

Link to your website

Use your website or blog as the go-to spot for information about your event and link to it from your emails and social networking presence (Facebook and Twitter). This will save you the hassle of having to explain and re-explain details of your event over and over again. Just point people to your website but make sure it is up-to-date. Going one step further, you may provide a link on your website to your Facebook event, email and Twitter accounts to increase networking opportunities.