



## Marketing your event

**This information is to assist those new to putting on events or who are looking for hints, advice or new advertising ideas!**

When you put on a show on at the Theatre Royal you need to know you have done as much as you can to secure yourself the audience you deserve.

During this competitive time you will have to work harder to get people to notice your production. Marketing is where it starts whether you have a huge budget or none at all, you will have to be cunning and original with your ideas.

### **Marketing Plan**

It's important to have a well thought out marketing plan. It should include realistic time scales, costs for print, design, distribution, direct mail, sponsorship, advertising, promotions and press.

Work out who your target audience is and how you will reach them (i.e. mail-outs, leafleting, posters, etc).

From your target audience – work out what areas they reside/work in, this will help reaching this audience.

***Hint: For print production you will need to allow time for copywriting, design, proofing, printing and subsequent distribution or mailing.***

Put together an overall show budget. Think about your predicted income and outgoings. Income might include sponsorship (contra or monetary value) and a forecast for ticket sales. Outgoings might include design, advertising, print, mail out costs, venue costs, performer costs, travel, equipment hire, insurance, administration costs etc.

***Hint: When you are planning your marketing or publicity activity, work at least eight to ten weeks backwards from the date of your event. Allow yourself plenty of time and keep a copy of your marketing plan for future reference and evaluation.***

You may want to do a (S.W.O.T = Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis by making lists of your production's strengths and weaknesses. Then make a list of the

opportunities and threats presented by your situation. This method will help you develop a clear indicator of where you are with your plans at present.

### **Sponsorship**

Sponsorship is a competitive area; to be successful you must put forward a well-developed proposal and package. Think about what you want the sponsor to give you and what you can give back in return. Also consider how you want the sponsor to benefit you i.e. in-kind (contra) or in cash.

Create an attractive sponsorship package. List benefits for the sponsor (what's in it for them) i.e. their logo on your print, posters, flyers, tickets to your show etc, a board in the venue promoting them, a mention to them in your press release. It has got to be a realistic and appropriate swap. Don't give them too much (i.e. over benefit them) and always ask for the maximum, you can go down from that, but you can't go up.

Cash sponsorship is harder to secure than in-kind support. It is easier to get a company to donate their products or their services (such as printing) at a reduced cost.

When working out what extra support would benefit you create a wish list of everything from the materials you need to the number of man-hours your team puts in. If you find it hard to get cash sponsorship then you could get donations of materials and expertise or help from someone who would appreciate the work experience (time is money).

Write a list of potential sponsors. You need to determine these by suitability; this should include their size, their location and what they produce. Always call before you write to make sure your letter goes to the right person. Also sometimes a phone call isn't as easy to ignore as a letter is. If you call make sure you have the bullet points or a script written down so you know what you are going to say. If they say yes to sponsoring you then make sure you get confirmation in writing. Also a letter should follow up the agreement outlining the deal.

It's also a good idea to send your sponsor an evaluation report after the event outlining what both parties achieved by the partnership. Try and record the material with their logo on (or whatever was agreed) so they can visualise their part in the package. This could stand you a good chance of getting repeat sponsorship.

### **Tickets & special offers**

Ticket offers are a good idea when building up audience's as they encourage extra sales. Promotions could include discounts, vouchers, competitions; discounts to the first 50 people who book, buy 4 get one free etc. You could even go out in the street and give out one free ticket to a group of people; this could encourage the rest of the group to buy tickets for themselves. Be imaginative but at the same time make sure you don't undervalue yourself by offering too much, you could end up losing money this way.

***Hint: Word of mouth is an invaluable ticket seller or visitor encouragement; why not invite influential people in the city to come along, do personal invitations.***

## **Design & Print**

The most important thing for your print is to make sure it stands out from the crowd during this competitive time. "A good image - is everything" Consider what it is you are trying to say and to whom. What will catch their eye?

Define the event description. Make it simple and clear. Give out a positive message directed to the audience you want to attract. Keep your copy simple (not too boring, not too academic or too wacky).

***Hint: Proof read very very carefully!***

## **Design**

If you are not equipped to do your own design you will probably need some help. There are a few ways of doing this; employ a designer (if there is enough in your budget), ask a graphics/art student do it as a project or approach someone you know that may be able to help.

Brief your designer thoroughly about what you want the print to convey. When looking at the design people should know immediately if it is something they might be interested in. It should include where appropriate; Title of show, company, artists/performers, playwright, composer, dates, times, venue, ticket price, box office phone number, sponsors, press quote, strap line.

***Hint: No print should be produced without a very clear idea of the audience it is intended to attract and how it will reach them.***

Choose your image carefully and make it clever (photo, illustration, typographic), one that can be used in a press release (visual association). Make sure it's a strong clear image that will represent your show; it's got to look interesting and be very good quality i.e. good colour, eye catching and sharp. Remember the image is to work on small and large scale. (If you have a designer get them involved in the discussion). Where will you display it? Imagine your print there. Think about format, size etc. Sometimes novelty print is a good idea; the extra investment could pay off when it comes to ticket sales or number of visitors. e.g. A postcard or bookmark will be kept longer than a flyer.

***Hint: To cut costs you could organise some in-kind sponsorship from the designer and have their logo on print in return for free design or a lower fee.***

## **Printers**

Printers can be expensive so always get a number of quotes from as many different companies as possible. Make sure your final costing includes GST, and also secure a delivery date before you commit. Most of the time you will find it is cheaper to use standard formats. Research the difference in cost between different weights and sizes of paper. You don't want it to look cheap. Most common print includes, card flyers, full colour leaflets, A4 & A3 posters.

## **Advertising**

As well as your listing on the theatre's website and social media we offer a window and box office placement of posters.

All display advertising (Nelson Mail or the Leader) will give your event the chance to stand out. You should pay as much attention to your display advert design as you do to your leaflets and posters. Make it as eye catching as possible. It is a good idea to have the same or very similar design in all your print. This will enable the public to make a quick and definite visual association between them.

The Theatre Royal has a discounted advertising rate with the Nelson Mail – this rate is offered to companies and the cost of advertising is deducted directly from your box office settlement.

## **Distribution**

Before you decide to have lots of print produced make sure you have planned what you're going to do with it. The cheaper option would be to distribute the copy yourself or combine your efforts with another group. To do this you would have to have a good knowledge of Nelson and the surrounding area. If you want to use an independent company contact PHANTOM Distribution.

If you are distributing print yourself, remember to always ask the management for permission first before you put anything up.

When putting posters up, be aware that their shelf life is relatively short and people will cover them up with their print pretty quickly.

The same goes for your leaflets and brochures they will always disappear quickly. Places to consider putting your print: arts venues, tourist information sites, visitor attractions, sandwich shops, food shops, music shops, hotels, guest houses, bookshops, leisure centres, pubs, libraries, restaurants, gift shops, newsagents, fast food outlets, clothes shops, galleries.

When putting up posters please remember that fly posting is a criminal offence and permission will have to be sought to put up posters in certain places, such as on vacant buildings, walls and bins.

***Hint: For theatre events distribution should begin between 3 & 4 weeks prior to event.***

## **Leafletting/Street Marketing**

Try to be original; it is sometimes good to have some kind of representation of the event with you (an artist from the production). This should reflect the atmosphere or the subject of your event. You could perform a snippet of the show in the street or stand with an A-board. You could have a poster of work on a placard. Try and create hype, shout about it and let everyone know who you are and that your event is special! Don't be embarrassed about doing something crazy to attract attention... this might be the only time of year you'll be brave enough to do it.

*Hint: Please remember however there is by laws and regulations that we all have to follow – if you are doing anything in a public area you are best to check with local council or the venue first to make sure you aren't breaking any laws or upsetting someone.*

### **Develop a database**

A contact database is an important way of building an audience and keeping them up to date with your movements. One way to build a database is to ask audience for information as they visit your event (survey). Another is to collect data from specific target areas and communities. Think about what people you think would be interested in your event and where they live. Alternatively you could find out if a local newsletter or paper goes to the selected areas and pay to have your leaflet inserted in their paper or added to their newsletters. Make sure it goes out to relevant audiences who are likely to be interested in what you are doing.

### **Direct Mail & Mailing lists**

If you have a database of contacts that you would like to send a targeted direct mail to, you will need to plan carefully and allow time to write a letter that is punchy and to the point also highlight essential information. Think about everything you could possibly let them know about, the less mail outs you have to do the lower the cost. Don't forget to consider the package cost, weight & posting time.

**E-mail** outs are cheaper and sometimes more effective. Always **BCC** other people email addresses so you don't send out your whole list of emails to everyone.

***Hint: If you do decide to include a special offer it is a good idea to monitor the take up and how successful it was for market research purposes. Also don't forget to consider the data protection act when contacting your database.***

If you don't already hold a mail out database or you decide against direct mail then it will be important for you to concentrate harder on where you put your print.

Talk to TicketDirect at the theatre about e-mail out options, databases and costs.

Ticketing companies have great databases and (for a price) can organise emails and add show information on their e-newsletters.

### **Radio**

Radio advertising on the major stations can be expensive but if you have money in your budget for radio advertising it can really boost your marketing campaign. Once again think about who your target market is and the key times they will be listening to the radio e.g. in their car during to and from work – so try and get your advertising on Breakfast, Drive shows etc.

The Theatre Royal has a partnership with Mediaworks Nelson and they will support your event with an artist rate.

### **Website**

If you have a website for your show or group, make sure that the address is listed on all your marketing material. Ensure that your website is always up to date, and carries that latest news, reviews and performance information. Facebook, Twitter and You Tube are

also extremely good ways of promoting your show and promote among your online friends. Get them to invite their friends to join your event's page.

If you have a video clip for part of your show, why not upload it to YouTube – if you actively promote the link to your video, it is a free and effective way of showing people a taste of why they should come along to see you live. The Theatre Royal can include YouTube links in our website and social media marketing if you provide them to us.

We also promote shows with Eventfinder make sure your show is listed and included.

### **Remember To Think Laterally**

Nobody knows your show better than you – so think about the show, the people involved in the show, and your family and friends.

Who do they know? Maybe they have a great contact for a staff database, print partner and even just someone who is a great talker / social butterfly. Have a look at the elements in the show - is there a great angle for a potential sponsor or a great story for the media.

**Word of mouth** Marketing and Publicity is about getting out there and letting people know you have a show coming up!!

**LAST WORDS:** Nothing sells tickets as quickly as a great show and show people know is happening!

### **PUBLICITY**

**It is the role of publicity to place stories in the media surrounding the project to increase public awareness of the event. These are newsworthy stories – not paid advertisements so your publicity person will look for 'the angle' to secure the stories.**

### **Contacts**

We have a list of Nelson Media to contact – make sure your publicity person gets in touch.

### **Interviews**

Be punctual

Prepare what you want to say and how you are going to win this specific interviewer over. Be familiar with the media you are attending – the style of their presentation and their audience.

Perform! If the reporter wants to interview a one of the starts of the show – make it lively. It is not appropriate to assume the interviewer will make it fun and lively, it is up to you to present this as you are presenting your show. Treat every interview as a performance. This is your chance to “sell” your show. Take along a flier in case the interviewer has misplaced the dates (especially important for radio)

## **Media Release**

The media release is one of the most effective ways of communicating your show information to a reporter. It should be lively and interesting so reporters will want to interview you and come to your show.

The first paragraph of your media release is the most important. Reporters refer to it as the intro or lead. It will determine whether the reader is 'hooked' and wants to read on or whether your release will end up in the editor's rubbish bin.

To get all the necessary information into a news story, reporters follow these golden rules... HOW & WHY - the juicy bits of information which will really 'sell' your show to the reporter

## **CHECKLIST**

### **Potential Number of Tickets Required:**

**Show synopsis:**

**Key quotes to use:**

**Any other marketing tools available:** eg You tube clips, reviews, previews etc, Awards

### **Key Information**

Dates:

Venue:

Duration:

Ticket Prices:

Call to Action: (Ticketing agent details)

**Key Marketing Messages are:** e.g. Bringing together of Musical Theatre and Comedy in one smash hit feel good show (musicals have strong emotional responses from audiences).

### **Target Audiences**

Who are the audience? Where do they reside? How will the marketing attract them to show?

**Strengthens of the show**

**Weaknesses of the show**

**Opportunities of the show**

**Threats** - Competition other events on at the same time

## **Following amounts examples and concepts only**

### **PRINT AND DISTRIBUTION**

#### **Flyers – bookmarks – postcards etc e.g. 2,000 produced Timeline -**

500 distributed through Phantom's retail outlets across Nelson & region

500 through the theatre (Ticketing and ticket wallets distribution)

1,000 distributed eg sports clubs, musical, theatre societies, community networks

#### **Posters**

200 x A3 posters for distribution

### **ON-LINE MARKETING**

Webpage tiles for ticketing and theatre websites

Ticketing and theatre E-news mail out

Listing on event and gig guide sites e.g. It's On – Eventfinder etc

YouTube clips – be creative with ideas here do a campaign using Youtube for your production

#### **Facebook**

Events are a great way to get people on board with your show. We've seen a few that lack crucial information so make sure you include:

- A link to ticketing information
- Show dates
- Location
- A great image

#### **Twitter**

- Twitter messages are only 140 characters long so make them count
- Link to somewhere where there is more information
- Use to mention quirky bits of information, casting news etc
- Log in regularly and interact with your followers and people you follow

#### **Youtube**

We have a Theatre Royal You Tube page – if you create any video, please let us know and we can post it for you.

#### **Competitions**

If you'd like to offer us free tickets or tell us about any special offers that we can promote through social media, let us know.

#### **Questions**

We can't do your social media for you, but if you have a good idea for a story or interesting things we can talk about, please let us know!

[tickets@theatreroyalnelson.co.nz](mailto:tickets@theatreroyalnelson.co.nz) or [manager@theatreroyalnelson.co.nz](mailto:manager@theatreroyalnelson.co.nz)