

# Event Tool Kit

## 001: Promotional Planning





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# Chapter 1: Why Promote?

Effective marketing is about creating a successful marketing mix - getting the right blend of a variety of components - to ensure that an enjoyable and attractive event is delivered for customers.

This blend is about considering carefully each of the following "P's" and delivering them appropriately for any specific event.

## PRODUCT

The quality of the event.

## PLACE

The venue/place that it is being held in.

## PRICE

Considered, set and packaged.

## PROMOTION

Raising awareness of the event and activities.

## PROGRAMMING

Fitting into an activity and/or calendar.

## PACKAGING

Fitting together with other events or activities.

## PEOPLE

The key delivery factor.

Whilst following the all important "P's" one must also keep in mind the equally important "C's"

## CREDIBLE

A well thought-out event that appeals to its intended audience.

## COST EFFECTIVE

A set budget that it is maximised to its full potential and adhered to.

## CONTROLLED

That every step of the way each element of the promotion conforms to the plans laid out.

Good promotional planning and execution are fundamental to a successful event. Simply putting on an event and distributing a couple of flyers will no longer be enough; in today's media savvy world, where leisure time is scarce and at a premium, your events will be competing against long established attractions and seasonal calendar events.

It is essential to plan in advance, to cover every angle and to use every available avenue in attracting visitors to your event. There are many elements to promotion that can be learnt, however nothing replaces enthusiasm and organisation.



# Chapter 2: Implementation

The preparation of a marketing strategy is essential to any successful event and should take account of the planning and budgetary planning timetables. Your strategy should include:

## 1: A Mission Statement

What is the essence or vision for the event? This should be no more than a paragraph and should be agreed on by all those organising the event.

## 2: A Marketing Audit

To include the external and internal environment, existing audiences or potential audiences. Look at the catchment area to your event, means of transport to and from the event, local businesses and most importantly the residential mix; age, sex, occupation, willingness to travel to the event.

## 3: SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis looks at internal Strengths and Weaknesses (e.g. the number of people with relevant skills within your group) and external Opportunities and Threats (e.g. other events that you can use to promote your event and other events taking place at the same time which may impact on attendance at your event) that may impact on your event. This is called a SWOT analysis and will help you determine which areas need more attention or which areas you should worry about less.

## 4: Aims and Objectives

What do you hope to achieve? Is this event a one-off, or do you hope to build on its success and continue with events in years to come?

## 5: The Plan

Plan out your promotional tactics, work out your budget, and look at sponsorship. Set all these items out to a time frame which can be cross-referenced when needed. You will find explanations of these 'critical paths' further on in the toolkits.

## 6: Implementation

Quite simply, this is all about who does what, when and how. This strategy should be a working document used by all involved in the event and actioned by all individuals who are allocated specific tasks. The strategy should be monitored, updated and rewritten whenever necessary.

### For Example:

- Programming the event
- Direct marketing
- Press releases
- Finances
- Communication with local authorities
- Distribution
- Monitoring.

A consistent and well defined image creates credibility and then instant associations in the minds of your potential audience.



# Chapter 3: Image and Brand

Every time you communicate with someone you create an impression of your event and your friends group. Everything you commit to paper therefore will dictate somebody's perception of your event, so a clear message and image will save time, money and effort in addition to generating a greater response to your work. Although you may not have a huge budget it does not mean that you cannot give the impression of quality.

## Think About:

- :: How you want to say it
- :: How you are going to present it
- :: How it could be improved
- :: Where it will be seen
- :: On what different formats it will appear
- :: Who it should appeal to.

Key things to remember when organising promotional literature:

### 1: Keep it Simple

There is nothing worse than busy-looking flyers or posters, crammed with information and colours. Simple, clear and concise.

### 2: Consistency

Consistency is one of the most important elements in marketing and communication, especially in the use of written styles and how you choose to display dates, numerals, spelling etc.

### 3: Message Delivery

Does your message fit in with your event's overall marketing strategy?

### 4: Spelling and Accuracy

As simple as this sounds this is often a key area that lets people down. Spellcheck, double check, get a friend to proof read and triple check. Take the time to get it right.

## Theme

A themed event, i.e. eco fair, historical fete, picnic in the park, provides a brand for the event and is the one of the most visible aspects of marketing.

A themed event can:

- :: Create a distinctive and memorable image
- :: Encourage higher levels of participation
- :: Increase attendance
- :: Assist in attracting sponsorship, donations or gifts
- :: Raise the profile of the park and its community.



# Chapter 4: Press and Media Relations

When dealing with the press or media there are many important things to keep in mind. It can be quite daunting, with many elements to remember and can easily become unfocussed and therefore ineffective. However if you take each stage one at a time, and present your information concisely and correctly then you will be able to get the most out of all the different media outlets.

## Remember:

Be professional at all times

Be reliable - always send the information when you have promised to

Be punctual - deadlines are crucial to journalists

Be accurate - no one likes to publicise false information

Be friendly - work at cultivating relationships with media contacts

Be first - the 'first' of anything is always news

Be a bit controversial - it doesn't have to be 'bad' news, just interesting news

Be personal - follow up by phone call to the journalists you have contacted

Be visual - a good picture is vital to increasing your coverage

Be innovative - new ideas get more coverage

Be interesting - feature the most novel aspect in your press release headlines

Be positive and enthusiastic - it's infectious!

## Objectives and Key Messages

Your key messages should convey your objectives in a manner that will be understood and will motivate your target audience - which means they should be phrased in plain, jargon-free language.

It is common to select between three and five key messages for a press release or media interview. These will be the most important points that you want to get across to your target audience. Any more messages and you run the risk that your key points will become confused or lost.

## Audience Targeting

What do they read?

What parts do they read? Letters pages are widely read as well as editorial content

What do they watch and when?

What do they listen to and when?

Where do they go regularly? (e.g. the local gym, library, schools, supermarkets).



## Vehicle

In order for the message to reach the target audience, a communications vehicle is required. There are several vehicles that can convey your message to your target audience. The choice of vehicle will depend on what your message is and whom you want the message to reach.

### Opportunistic/Reactive Press Releases

Press release issued in response to recent events (new laws in environmental reform, local events etc)

### Feature Articles

In depth articles that expand on the reasons to put on events/the elements that run through these events.

### Case Studies

Local groups who have been working on smaller scale community based projects, involvement from local councils in the past, similar events from other cities

### Spokespeople

Either yourself or somebody else in your group that can speak comfortably to the media about your work

### Key Points

Key points that would make a story popular with regional newspapers include:

Human interest element: journalists prefer to feature local people in their newspapers, sharing their experience, as this makes compelling and newsworthy reading.

Reproducible elements such as relevant quotes and photography.

News factor: newspapers are always keen to bring their readers relevant information that is new or surprising in some way.

## Media

For your messages to reach the appropriate audience, targeting is essential. When a journalist receives your press release they will initially ask themselves four questions:

- 1: Is it relevant to my readers/listeners/viewers?
- 2: Is it new or surprising?
- 3: Is it helpful to my readers/listeners/viewers?
- 4: Is it credible?

Make a note of local journalists who specialise in leisure or entertainment, especially if they have an interest in community-based projects.

Keep a file of their articles and refer to these before you call journalists to ensure that you do not ask them to repeat articles. By doing this, they are more likely to respond favourably due to your knowledge of their previous work.

### Key tips include:

Exploit milestones - for example, anniversaries, or key dates associated with the park.

Use annual opportunities and promotional days - for example, World Health Day (7 April) or International Dance Day (29 April).

Highlight human-interest or success stories - for example, three generations who regularly support park events together.

Prepare a list of local groups and case studies, noting their availability for media interviews.

Keep an up-to-date record of facts and figures about your event.



## Spokespeople

Remember that people make the news, so it is important to have spokespeople and case studies available to bring your story to life. It is essential that you talk in person to your potential spokespeople to:

Profile what they feel comfortable saying about the event. This includes briefing them thoroughly, agreeing key messages with them and providing them with copies of all the media materials.

Every time you receive a request from a journalist to interview somebody, you should call the spokesperson and explain which newspaper/radio station would like to speak to them, outlining what questions they will ask and when the news story will be published.

Live interviews are the best way to ensure that radio stations include your key messages, as pre-records may edit them out.



## Press Releases

In general, when communicating your messages via a press release, ensure that the first paragraph encapsulates your news and that you only include essential background. Overall the story should be brief and self-promotion subtle.

Make a list of your key messages (between 3 and 5 is usually sufficient).

Imagine that you have 30 seconds to relay these messages and prioritise them accordingly

Use these message points as a road map for a press release, summarising the news element in the first paragraph then detail who, where, what, when and why.

Use short quotes to support your story, including full titles of spokespeople.

Shooting out a press release the week before your event and hoping for great publicity is largely a wasted effort.

Do not mail large packets of information unless specifically requested as it will get immediately tossed in the bin.

Always provide a name, phone number and email address on all press releases.



## Take a Look at Your Story, Is it News or Not?

### NEWS is...

- New
- Credible
- Conflict
- Controversial
- Shocking
- Sex, money, death, corruption
- Funny
- Personalised.

### NEWS is not...

- Opinions (unless they are surprising or from someone important)
- Policy papers (unless influential)
- Meetings (unless unlikely pairings)
- Letters (unless they are leaked from a credible source)
- Visits (unless they are from famous person or celebrity)
- Theoretical
- Predictable messages.

## Top Tips for Selling In Stories

There is more to getting your story covered than simply sending out unsolicited press releases. Investing time in talking directly to journalists about your story can be much more productive - it can also give you a chance to match your story more closely to the journalist's interest. This is known as 'selling in' your story.

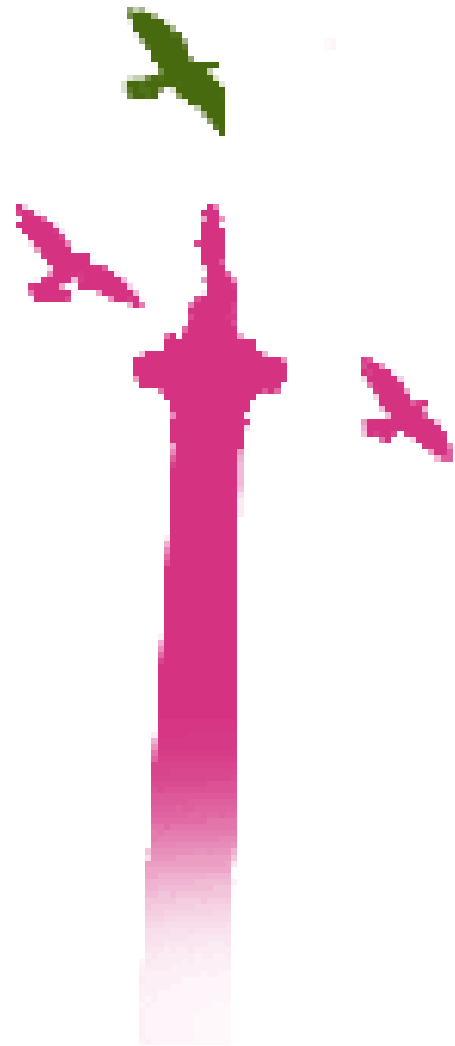
Watch, read or listen to the media before you make contact. Try to understand where your story may feature in the publication, for example, the health page, event listings, what's on guide, women's page, or the success story of the week.

Wherever possible, vie your news into an emerging trend or opportunistic news item. Be prepared to push your position as there will be many other events competing for space in local publications.

Unique Selling Points (USP's) are all about what makes your event different from the rest? What will it give the community? Why will it be the best? Why should people attend?

Call the correct contact. Relevant correspondents for press release distribution include news desk reporters and entertainment editor/reporter. Feature ideas should be sent to the features editor.

Be wary of voicemail, it is always better to call back. Only leave a message if you have a truly irresistible story, leaving your name and telephone number at the beginning and end of the message.



## Checklist - Have you...

Agreed your event objectives and target audience?

Listed your key messages/activities/outcomes?

Identified local and regional media that are in tune with your target audience?

Developed a news hook that will be of interest to your target audience?

Identified appropriate journalists to contact?

## Evaluating Your Coverage

It is important to check the outcome of your media work - did the story get covered? If so:

Were your messages conveyed properly?

Did anything unexpected crop up in coverage of your story for consideration next time?

Did any journalists seem particularly interested - or cynical?

Keep a file of your cuttings with copies of the press releases and press lists you used, and review them to improve future releases.

If your story doesn't get covered, consider some of the following range of reasons:

### Was there competing news?

Even the best stories can get swamped if big news breaks at the same time.

### Were the wrong journalists or publications targeted?

Example to go in here.....

### Was the timing of the story/feature wrong?

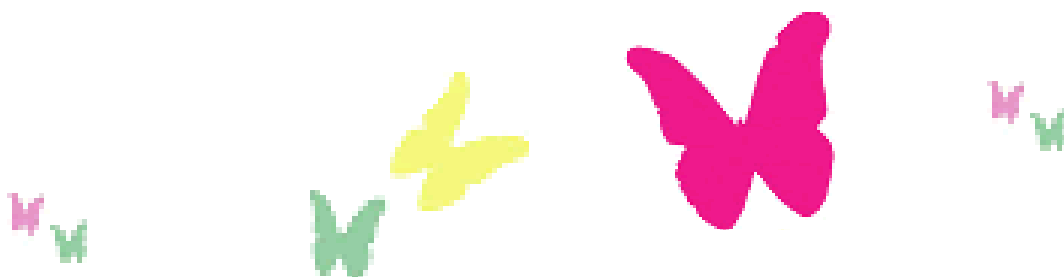
Example to go in here.....

### Was the story presented not interesting enough?

Looking back at your press release, would you be interested in reading this if you came across it in a newspaper?

## And Finally...

Effective media work can really increase your event's success, giving you a proper lead in time with effective coverage, ensuring high attendance by a maximum amount of people from a multitude of backgrounds and ages.



# Chapter 5: Publicity Tactics

Listed below are a number of tried and tested publicity tactics highlighting a number of marketing opportunities, particularly with regard to PR and promotion. This list is meant to help stimulate the thought processes for maximising PR and promotional opportunities.

Stage a press call in the park with all the event organisers, local authority members performers and other partners. If possible, aim to provide some hospitality - alternatively, stage a press call for the performers and stall holders.

Wherever possible, ensure that the programme of events on the day caters for specialist interests and under-represented groups.

Give out free promotional items before the event, these can be sponsored by local businesses which will cut costs and bring you closer to the heart of the community.

Contact TV production companies to create a behind the scenes documentary of the making of the event.

Engage a local celebrity to talk about the event or put their name to it.

Involve local charities, or well-meaning community groups.

If you do succeed in getting sponsorship, use their names as frequently as possible in publicity materials.

Use the local college or university art departments to design banners, or flyers or run a competition with them.

Link the event to an an important local anniversary date or special event.

Engage local primary schools in competitions in conjunction with the local press.

Produce an event newsletter to be distributed to promote your event.

Produce a supplement for inclusion within the local newspaper.



# Chapter 6: Advertising

If you have appropriate funds, then advertising can be a great way to promote your event. Ideally, try to get as much free publicity as possible through PR work and unusual tactics as sometimes adverts can be lost within the multi-media jumble. However, well targeted and cost effective advertising can make the difference to attendance at larger events.

When organising advertising, do remember to plan well in advance as this will make a real difference not only in the costs, as much advertising placement is booked in on a sliding scale of costs, but also in the actual placement within the printed media. With time on your side you can plan and execute a realistic and effective campaign.

Advertising is not something that should be rushed into as you could be throwing your money out of the window. Instead, think: who are the target market, what do they read, or see on a regular basis. Also keep in mind that most local newspapers like to link themselves to a good community cause, and therefore may be talked into sponsoring the event and therefore giving you heavily discounted rates.

## Places to Advertise

There are lots of places where you can advertise your event. This includes: Local and regional newspapers; free magazines; newsletters; buses; taxis; railway stations; local radio; local television; whats on guides; school notice boards; doctors' and Dentists' surgeries, local cinemas; reverse side of pay and display car park tickets; reverse side of bus tickets; reverse side of supermarket receipts; leisure and sports centres; local shops and businesses; colleges and universities; pubs; bars and cafes.

## Best advertising places or ideas

Wrap around - a banner advert which goes around the bottom of the local paper. Best in colour, and kept simple this is an excellent cost-effective form of advertising when used in conjunction with flyers and posters in the local area.

When placing an advert try, if possible, to get it placed on the right hand side of the newspaper pages. This is the page that gets most attention by both casual and detailed readers. Again, a colour advert is always preferable.

Getting an advert placed next to a significant part of the paper is also a good tip. The television pages are often earmarked or kept open by readers, a feature on a strong local story, or within a supplement that readers can take out and keep long after the paper has been thrown out.



## Web Partners, Local Businesses and Newsletters

Alternatively, there are many other ways to advertise your event. These may take more time to organise but they will give you a different breadth of coverage whilst keeping your costs to a minimum.

### Community newsletters

By linking up with local community groups you will gain more than just extra advertising. A community group will have a database of members, and by extension friends and family who will be connected to it. If you can include the group at your event, by having a stand or performing a workshop, you will not only increase the diversity of your event, but you will also attract more people. From this will come coverage in their newsletters, round - robin emails and by word of mouth. You will find that in working together, promotional literature like flyers will go further and to a different cross section of the community. Go to your local tourist information centre, chamber of commerce or on your local authority website for details of local groups which may be suitable to link up with.

### Local businesses

There are two types of local businesses that can assist you in your quest to publicise your event. Local retail, corner shops, post offices, independent traders, are normally all more than happy to help you by putting up posters or displaying flyers. These businesses are funded by the community and need to show commitment to those around them. Unfortunately, multiple chain retail outlets feel no obligation to do this and will for the most part refuse to stock promotional literature.

However, to reach the most people by using the minimum amount of hours there is a more effective way. Get a list of the top ten companies in your

local town; this can be obtained from the internet or your local authority. Speak to the company social secretary or events organiser and ask if for a short period they are willing for you to have a presence within their building. This could be posters in the staffrooms, flyers in the canteen etc. However, by far the most effective way is getting onto their intranet, which is their internal computer system. This is where the staff find out about local events and activities. By getting your event listed you will be able to reach far more people than before and will have a captive audience.

### Web partners

By searching on the internet you will be able to find out which local businesses have a strong online presence. Quite often there are local 'what's on' sites, recruitment sites and services sites which local people use daily. Also, look at national businesses such as organic food suppliers for a greater reach. These businesses may be willing to advertise your event on their websites in return for being mentioned on your promotional literature, having a stall at your event or even just out of the kindness of their hearts. Links to and from websites is proving to be a very popular method of cross advertising.

Summer Celebration info goes here.....



# Chapter 7: Promotional Materials

## Printed Materials

As mentioned before, the style and content in which you present your event is one of the most important elements of the promotional strategy and will determine how you are perceived by the general public and may effect your attendance figures.

When you are at the planning stage, make sure that you ask yourself these questions:

What do I want to say?

How will I say it?

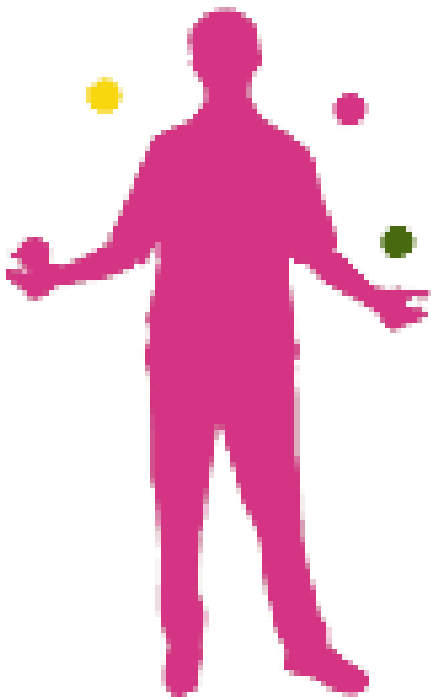
Which formats will I use?

Where will my promotional materials be seen?

What is my budget?

How will the materials be distributed and displayed?

Be realistic when producing promotional materials. There is no point in having 25,000 flyers printed to promote an event that can only accommodate 300 visitors. Also, make sure that you consider the resources that you have available to distribute the promotional materials - if you only have two volunteers will you be able to distribute 25,000 promotional flyers?



## Promotional Literature

### Flyers

Keep the info to a minimum, people have very short attention spans. Make the design bold and inspiring, without looking childish.

Best size is A5 which is the size of half a sheet of A4. It doesn't take up much room on shop counters or in a handbag, but gives you enough space to have one side for the logo and main info, and the other for the more detailed copy.

Flyers come in all shapes and sizes and you should investigate which is most cost effective for you. There is no need to use colour on the back as this area is reserved for information only, it is only the front that needs to be colourful.

### Posters

As with the design of the flyers, keep the rule of simplicity in mind when drawing up ideas for posters. The most unobtrusive size is undoubtedly A4, which you will be allowed to put up in the majority of public areas. However for impact consider the next sizes up which are A3, A2, A1, A0. Each of these have the benefit of being large enough to attract real attention, however not everywhere will have the space for them, and they can prove costly.

### Banners

A well designed banner, strategically placed can be a really strong promotional tactic. Lush looking colours and a few key words can entice bored motorists or passers by. Approach your local authority to find out where you would be allowed to place some short term banners. Sizing will be determined by location; however a good rule of thumb is 1.5m wide by 3m long.

# Chapter 8: Copy Writing and Printing

## Copy Writing and Printing

It's all about the message, that we know. So what is the best way to put across your event details?

### The Traffic Light Test

1: Write out the copy for your poster or flyer on a piece of paper, putting down all the information that you want to get across to the public.

2: Get some marker pens in red, yellow and green.

3: Highlight all the strictly factual information, such as where the event will be held, what time it will be on to and from etc with the green pen. This is called the 'features'.

4: Next, highlight all the copy which tells people about what's going on at the event, such as children's entertainers, food stalls, flower show etc. with the yellow pen. This is called the 'benefits'.

5: Finally, highlight all the most exciting information. For example, anything that is free, celebrities that may be attending, TV or radio that will be there, prize giveaways and competitions with the red pen. This is called the 'offers'.

6: Now look at your page. Anything that is not highlighted, discard.

7: Rearrange your copy so that it reads like a traffic light, with all the red text at the top, then the yellow and finally the green. There will be some minor adjustments to make, so that the text flows properly.

What you have now is a piece of copy that is attention grabbing and quick to deliver the key facts. On average, people read a flyer or poster for no more than four seconds. If you follow this method you may double, or triple, that time.

### How many?

When it comes to printing, people can make huge errors in judgement, there are those that err on the side of caution, that are scared to spend some of the event budget on something they have little understanding of, and then there are those who will spend recklessly in the hope of flooding the market with tonnes of promotional items.

### So who do you want to reach?

#### What is your budget?

Flyers are only worth having if you're going to use them wisely and effectively. Make sure whoever you have delivering them is trustworthy and understands their purpose. Dumping a handful of flyers in the corner of a grotty pub where they will be cleaned away at the end of the day is a waste of everyone's time and money.

A general rule of thumb is that you can expect between 5% - 12% return on any promotional literature handed out in the lead up to an event, if they are distributed properly. For an event trying to attract 500 - 1,000 people you need to be looking at around 15,000 flyers and 150 posters.



# Chapter 9: Direct Marketing

## Don't Worry - Don't Panic!

Whilst this sounds like a lot, and you may wonder how on earth you are going to distribute all of this it breaks down very simply.

### Local Services

Bus stations, train stations, bus stops, taxis, parking, leisure centres, ice rinks, swimming pools, inside jungle gyms, sports centres, gyms, hotels, hospitals, doctors' and dentists' surgeries, cinemas, theatres, art centres, playgroups, schools, colleges, meeting rooms, civic centres, tourist information centres etc.

### Retail Outlets

Grocers, butchers, tanning salon, beauticians, independent clothes shops, post office, corner shops, hairdressers, furniture shops, toy shops, flower sellers, bakers, cafes, bars, pubs, restaurants, takeaways, fast food outlets etc.

When asking people to distribute your flyers or put up your posters, remember to be polite, courteous and grateful. They are not obliged to help you, and will feel less inclined to do so if they are asked by someone with a miserable face and a bad attitude. Smiling goes a long, long way; you could also invite them to your event. Another tip, don't leave a huge pile of flyers in the centre of the counter. They will only get in the way and eventually will be discarded. Instead, give them a stack of between 1 to 1.5 cm high and place it to the side on the counter, the right way round and facing the customer.

### Door to Door

For events that are centrally located, or near to a residential area, door to door direct mailing is a fantastic method of getting the attention of the local community. The best place to start is by printing out detailed maps of the area, big enough to see individual streets. Decide how many volunteers will be distributing the flyers, and divide the map with highlighter pens into sections per person. Once everyone knows which streets are their responsibilities you can get going. A record bag worn horizontally across the chest is the easiest method with which to transport large quantities of flyers. As the flyers are going individually through peoples letterboxes you will find that they don't get lost in masses of junk mail. Alternatively, you may find that you do not have the man power to perform a door to door operation. If this is the case then the local newspaper will usually distribute them within its pages for a fee of around £20.00 per 1,000. Maybe a combination of both methods will suit you.

### Direct Mail

If your event is large, and you have sponsors, you may be able to secure funds to buy a data list from a company like yell.com or Thompson's. Prices vary, but they do supply either labels or printed envelopes specifically targeted at whoever you choose. For example, you may want to target people living within a certain postcode or young parents. You could even sell sponsorship space on the envelope. This is expensive but can get you close to the heart of your event market.



# Useful Contacts

# Useful Websites



# Event Tool Kit

## 001: Promotional Planning



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