

LEEDS INFRASTRUCTURE CONSORTIUM RESOURCE PACK

SECTION 2 – MARKETING & PR

Introduction

This section on **Marketing and PR** is part of an 8-pack series of resource materials that has been produced by the Leeds Infrastructure Consortium. For further information, please go to www.leeds-ic.org.uk.

1. What is PR?

An important part of any marketing strategy is the use of PR or Public Relations. This is quite specific and refers to how community groups can encourage the local media – newspapers, radio and television – to promote their work. Knowing how to write an effective media release could make all the difference to information appearing in the local paper, or not!

The key to getting good media coverage is having the ability to identify a good local news story when you see it. Local media prefer stories that contain genuine human or local area interest.

The best way of informing the local media about your news / event / group is by issuing a “media release” and sending it to the appropriate media organisations. This needs to contain key pieces of information such as who, what, why, when and where. There is an accepted format for releases to be sent in with a heading, short and concise paragraphs, good use of quotes, double line-spacing. Don't forget to include your contact details in case they need more information.

If you have something that is worthy of photographing, you can issue what is called a “photocall notice” which invites the media to send a photographer along. This needs to have very specific information about what they are able to photograph and exactly when and where they need to be. Newspapers will sometimes accept digital photographs that you have taken yourself but these need to be of sufficiently high quality.

To find out more about PR and how to write effective press releases, see Section 2a.

2. What is marketing?

Before you embark on a project or activity, you need to think about how to get your message across. The way in which you use communications and promotional activities to convey the right messages to your target audience is called **marketing**. It is very important because it helps people form an image of your organisation - who you work with and their needs. How you portray your image can affect the demand for your services, the level of support from the local community and funding for your work.

There are a number of things to think about when preparing a marketing strategy:

1. **Image:** what kind of image do you want to portray via your name, logo, premises / meeting space?
2. **Audience:** who are you aiming your message at – users, professionals, volunteers, funders, members? They may each need a different message and, in some cases, it will need presenting in a slightly different format.
3. **Objectives:** what do you want to achieve – increasing the number of volunteers, spreading knowledge about your work, sharing key information.
4. **Process:** how are you going to start marketing and who is going to do it.

5. **Message:** is it a general or specific message you want to convey.
6. **How:** what means can you use – social media, posters, adverts, newsletters, emails.

To find out more about marketing and how it can help your group, see Section 2b for further details.

3. Social Media

There is a growing interest in the use of social media (blogs, twitter, Facebook etc) to help get messages across but you need to learn how to use this effectively in order for it to work.

Leeds Social Media is a free advice session for community and voluntary groups, clubs, societies and small arts organisations. They provide regular drop in sessions where you can find out more and ask for advice. Go to <http://socialmediasurgery.com/surgeries/leeds> to find out when the next one is available.

4. Other Useful Resources

<http://www.volresource.org.uk/briefing/market.htm>: more information on marketing strategies

<http://www.mediatrust.org>: useful information media related issues

http://www.communitymatters.org.uk/resources_details.aspx (and search for marketing)

LEEDS INFRASTRUCTURE CONSORTIUM RESOURCE PACK

SECTION 2a – MARKETING – Public Relations

Background

Leeds Infrastructure Consortium has produced an 8-pack series of resource materials to help local community and voluntary groups. For further information, please go to www.leeds-ic.org.uk.

1. WHAT IS PR?

PR stands for Public Relations and is a way that community groups can encourage the local media – newspapers, radio and television – to promote the group's work.

Getting good media coverage is all about having the ability to identify a good local news story when you see it. The stories that the local media like best are those that contain genuine human or local area interest. They like to hear about anything that involves people doing things that are slightly out of the ordinary or are helpful for people to know about, and are connected in some way to the local neighbourhood. Your project is likely to be all of these things: it has direct benefits to local people as well as the wider community.

There are two main ways of capturing the interest of the media:

- **A photocall notice** (Appendix A) gives local media details of a forthcoming story with a good photographic opportunity. This should be issued to the media at least one week in advance of the event. It should be sent to the news editor or picture editor of your local newspaper and regional TV stations. Do not send a photocall notice to a radio station!!
- **A media release** (Appendix B) gives additional information on your grant or event. This should be sent to the news editors of your local media, including radio stations. You can issue a media release before an event, at the event or afterwards to any media who were unable to attend.

It is always important to follow up the issue of either notice with a phone call to check they have received it and have the information that they require. You can use this opportunity to answer any questions that they might have. Send the release, wait for a couple of days and then give them a ring but be careful not to call them too often, as this may be counter-productive and put journalists off. Busy newsrooms will receive hundreds of phone calls and emails a day.

2. PHOTOCALL NOTICES

When you are planning your photocall, think of creative images that will give readers an immediate idea of your story and will make a photographer want to attend. The more unusual, the better – remember a picture can speak a thousand words. Consider the following points:

- Are there any props you can use to tell your story visually?
- What is the best location? – a local landmark or specific place unique to your project?
- Can you incorporate any branding? – do you have branded t-shirts or caps?
- Backgrounds? – don't forget about the background - this can add to the local angle of the story
- Cheese! – happy faces will give your project a positive image

If you think your story is particularly relevant for a specific media outlet, you might want to contact it in advance to check what times might be mutually convenient. It may have more photographers during the day mid-week, than on the weekend, for instance. Clearly if it is an event you want covered, you won't be able to change this just to suit them, but may be able to stage a photo call at another time.

Even if you send out your photocall notice in time and follow it up with a phone-call, there are no guarantees that a photographer will attend. If a story breaks on the same day you may find that you lose out. Also, before you decide on a date, it is worth checking to make sure the event does not clash with another local event taking place in the area.

If a photographer fails to attend or another news story breaks, hold the photocall anyway and take your own photographs. Use the best quality camera available and vary the shots you take. Where possible, use a digital camera. If not, you will need to make sure the print is high quality. Send the print or a digital photo to the newspaper with the names of everyone in the picture attached and don't forget to include details of how they can contact you.

See Appendix A for a sample photocall.

3. MEDIA RELEASES

To help create publicity for your project, you can issue a media release to inform journalists.

Before you start to draft your media release, always answer the following five questions – the five questions a reporter will ask every time:

- **Who.** Who is involved in the story – the project and those who will benefit as well as the fact that the Leeds Community Foundation is awarding the grant.
- **What.** What is your project all about?
- **Why.** Why is it newsworthy? Your project will have various benefits to the local community. You can always refer back to our section about “what makes a good news story”.
- **Where.** Where exactly is the project taking place? Remember, your local press will always need a local angle.
- **When.** News needs to be current, so let the media know as soon as possible. If you're planning an event you can always do a follow up release after the day.

Always use real quotes to tell the media just how a project works or how much the grant has enabled you to undertake.

The first paragraph of the press release should contain in brief detail what the press release is about. The second paragraph should explain, in detail: who cares; why you should care; where one can find it; when it will happen. Also, included in the second 'informative' paragraph is generally a quote that gives the release a personal touch. Press releases and news stories are boring to journalists without a 'human interest'. The third and generally final paragraph is a summary of the release and further information on your company with the company contact information clearly spelled out. The reason for putting most of the information up-front is because your press release will probably be edited by a journalist before it goes to print and they may reduce it in length by simply using the opening paragraphs.

Release Layout

- Use white A4 paper and mark it up as a media release.
- Use black ink and double space your story so it's easy to read
- Try to come up with a catchy heading or title and put this in bold. It needs to capture the interest of the journalist and encourage them to read on.
- If it's a photocall announcement, mark clearly the date, time and venue so a photographer knows exactly when and where they have to be. Tell them a bit more about what they might see if they appeared i.e. what might be most visually appealing.
- Always include a contact name and telephone number so they can easily reach you
- Remember to find out the newspaper's deadline so you get your story in on time

Broadcast (radio / TV)

Local radio stations in your area may well be interested in your project. Broadcasters will also be keen to uncover "radio personalities" and if you are a good talker then they may come back for interviews on a regular basis.

Local TV coverage is the most difficult to obtain, but it is possible if you have a highly visual and newsworthy story to capture their interest. Your story must have a visual impact, be exciting to the viewers and involve some action to keep them interested.

If you are approached to do a TV or radio interview, take as much information from the caller as possible about what the interview is about, when it will be broadcast etc. Remember, you will need to convey your message in a concise and accurate way. It is not uncommon for only one statement (or sound bite) from an entire 10 minute interview to be aired on television or radio.

Similarly for newspapers, a single statement (or quote) might be drawn from a longer interview and used in the report involving your group. It is vital to have the message (or messages) you wish to convey ready to go in the form of a tasty sound bite or quotable quote.

See Appendix B for a sample media release.

4. LOCAL CONTACTS

You need to think, very carefully, whether your news story is the right thing to send to radio and TV stations. Is there something they can record and play on air, someone to interview, something really different that stands out? A single film crew can have a huge geographical area to cover and they can often only do one or two features a day, so yours will need to stand out to get noticed. Don't think yours will be the only release they will receive that day. The newsdesk for the Yorkshire Evening Post, for instance, receives hundreds of press releases a day so sending a media release in does not guarantee it will appear in the newspaper.

The Yorkshire Post tends to focus on community stories with an unusual angle or that have particular significance. Whilst the Yorkshire Evening Post does cover more community-type activities, they are looking for those human interest stories that their readers will find most interesting. Neither paper is likely to cover a standard cheque presentation or community event so you need to do what you can to find an interesting angle or approach.

You don't always have to wait for a big story and photo opportunity either. The Yorkshire Evening Post, in particular, is happy to accept shorter stories about your work, achievements and activities – you may only get a paragraph but recognition for your work is always worthwhile.

Online

The Yorkshire Evening Post has a growing online presence with lots of information now available on its website. If you have a good quality, short video clip of your work you can send this in and see if it is interested in using it on its website for a period of time.

The Yorkshire Evening Post also has a popular "Community Hubs Online" section on its website, featuring news from different areas across Leeds – recognising that life is local. When organising your event you can make the most of this facility and promote what you are doing in the community. On the websites you will find ultra-local news, sport & entertainment, as well as debate on community issues. In addition, there are local planning applications, video, audio and slideshows and lots more - and all updated on a daily basis.

Andrew Hutchinson, Yorkshire Evening Post's Digital Community Editor, said: "We want these sites to be your daily source of news, sport and entertainment for the very latest on what's going on in your community. You might be a long-time resident of your community; you might only just have moved in - or perhaps you live out of the region and simply want to catch up on news local to you. Whatever your situation, if you are interested in life in your community, these are the websites for you."

If you have something that you think will fit well on the Community Hubs, send the release to Andrew directly on andrew.hutchinson@ypn.co.uk.

To find out more about the hubs, log onto your local one today.

www.crossgatestoday.co.uk
www.garforthtoday.co.uk
www.bramleytoday.co.uk
www.farsleytoday.co.uk
www.roundhaytoday.co.uk
www.headingleytoday.co.uk
www.horsforthtoday.co.uk
www.calverleytoday.co.uk
www.armleytoday.co.uk
www.wortleytoday.co.uk
www.beestontoday.co.uk
www.middletontoday.co.uk
www.pudseytoday.co.uk
www.rothwelltoday.co.uk
www.seacrofttoday.co.uk
www.woodhousetoday.co.uk
www.kippaxtoday.co.uk
www.moortowntoday.co.uk
www.chapelallertontoday.co.uk
www.guiseleytoday.co.uk
www.harehillstoday.co.uk

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you need specific help or advice about PR, you may want to contact the Media Trust who provides national and local training and support. Its website is www.mediatrust.org.

APPENDIX A

****PHOTO OPPORTUNITY****

CHANGING ROOMS UNVEILED

WHAT: The opening of the new Resource Centre

WHERE: Address

WHEN: Friday, 18th March 2011

10.00am	Hot drinks and bacon butties
10.15am	Welcome Speeches
10.30am	Photo Opportunity

WHO: Local residents from xxx
Chairman of the xxx Group (put name)
Other members of the audience xxx

WHY: The group is celebrating 100 years of using the Centre, based in a former school, that now houses 20 different community groups and activities each week

WHAT: A visual display by young people aged 6-11 in colourful costumes depicting the history of Leeds through the ages.

For further information please contact

Name xx

Phone (including mobile if possible) xx

Email xx

APPENDIX B

For immediate release

(date)

LOCAL COMMUNITY EYESORE TRANSFORMED

The 50-year old xxx Community Centre on xxx Road has re-opened its doors today following a major refurbishment project that has seen the basement transformed into a new community hub.

The red-brick building, a former school, is already well-used by local residents in xxx area for a range of activities such as xxx, xxx and xxx. This much-loved community facility was beginning to look a bit tired and shabby and was in much need of a facelift. The opportunity to transform the basement has been made possible by a grant of £xxxx from local grant-maker xxx and now means that a further 400 people a month can benefit from the centre.

The Resource Centre Treasurer, ...(name)..... said: “The old pathway to the basement area at the back of the hall was unsuitable and unsafe for the elderly or those in wheelchairs. This award has helped us to provide easy access to that area and without it we simply wouldn’t be able to utilise this extra space for all local residents to enjoy.”

Suzie, one of the mothers whose child comes to the Mums & Toddlers session at the Centre said “the basement used to be very damp and smelly and could not be used for any activities but it is now a lovely, bright space which is easy to get to with prams and pushchairs. My 2-year old son, Josh, loves coming here and the new facilities are just fantastic.”

Xxxx (name, title, name of funder) explained: “We’re delighted to make this award as we know it will be a real benefit to local residents. Community Centres lie at the very centre of local communities and act as a central point for people of all ages to come together, share experiences and have some fun. We are sure it will be very well-used for many years to come.”

ENDS

For further information and interview opportunities please call xx on xx.

APPENDIX C

Media Name	Phone	Email
Regional Daily Newspapers		
Yorkshire Evening Post	0113 243 2701	yep.newsdesk@ypn.co.uk
Yorkshire Post	0113 243 2701	yp.editor@ypn.co.uk
Local Newspapers		
Leeds Weekly News Series	0113 238 8771	
Morley Advertiser / Observer	0113 252 3456	editorial@morleytoday.co.uk
Wharfe Valley Times Series	01943 850272	
Wharfedale & Airedale Observer	01943 465555	malcolm.hoddy@gazetteandobserver.co.uk
Ilkley Gazette	01943 607022	
Radio / TV		
The Pulse of West Yorkshire	01274 203040	
96.3 Radio Aire & Magic 828	0113 283 5600	
BBC Radio Leeds	0113 244 2131	radioleeds@bbc.co.uk
Galaxy 105	0113 213 1053	
Real Radio (Yorkshire)	0113 307 1444	
Sunrise Radio	01274 735043	Info@sunriseradio.fm
BBC TV (N, S and W Yorkshire)	0113 244 1188	leeds@bbc.co.uk
ITV Yorkshire Television	0113 222 8750	

Voluntary Action Leeds also have a very information website and produce e-news bulletins twice monthly. These resources are very useful if you want to get a message out mainly to other voluntary sector groups. To submit information for the website or E-news please email news@val.org.uk. You can subscribe to E-News at <http://www.val.org.uk>.

For detailed information on newspapers, by area and publication, see the Newspaper Society database at <http://www.nsdatabase.co.uk>.

LEEDS INFRASTRUCTURE CONSORTIUM RESOURCE PACK

SECTION 2b– MARKETING – Marketing

Background

Leeds Infrastructure Consortium has produced an 8-pack series of resource materials to help local community and voluntary groups. For further information, please go to www.leeds-ic.org.uk.

1. BENEFITS OF MARKETING

Before you embark on a project or activity, you need to think about how to get your message across. The ways in which you use communication and promotional activities to convey the right messages to your target audience is called **marketing**. It is very important because it helps people form an image of your organisation - who you work with and their needs. How you portray your image can affect the demand for your services, the level of support from the local community and funding for your work.

Many people think about marketing as relating only to a specific project or activity and so use it only "from time to time". Marketing is so important that it should, in fact, be a key and ongoing part of your ongoing activities. But why, what are the benefits?

Reaching and attracting new people. Marketing your community group and the work it does can attract new people to your group in a number of capacities - volunteers, members, donors, service users or activity participants.

Reaching different "target audiences". A thoughtful campaign can help you reach new groups of people. They could be different age groups, multicultural groups, interest groups, etc. This benefits your group by helping it grow and promoting diversity and new perspectives in your organisation. This in turn can energise your group - making it more attractive to further prospective new members, and making it more representative of the community it caters for.

Staying in touch with current friends. It can be easy for groups to overlook the fact that they need to keep marketing to existing "friends" as well as looking to attract new ones. Your group should start with contacting existing contacts before it starts marketing to potential new ones.

Building legitimacy. Good marketing helps your group become more visible in the public eye. When you are more visible and well-known to many, your community profile strengthens.

Building confidence. You need to show current supporters that you are doing what you have promised. Donors, in particular, need re-assurance that your group is committed to using their money in responsible ways. People generally prefer to give money to those who they trust. Volunteers and members want to be part of a group that is committed to achieving its stated aims.

Fostering goodwill. Positive public feelings can also result from an increased public profile - achievable through effective marketing. But even if your group is in the news for negative reasons, good marketing can neutralise these feelings or at least make the public more willing to listen to any explanations or counter points-of-view you may have.

Spreading knowledge. If your community group sees part of its role as educating the community about a cause, issue or problem in society, marketing your group also means your message is getting marketed. This can bring groups much closer to achieving their goals.

2. IMAGE

There are a number of key factors that help create the “image” of your organisation and this is key to your strategy.

Name: this should be memorable, meaningful or descriptive and, if at all possible, concise! Many name changes by larger, national charities have enabled them to use their name to be more descriptive of the service they offer or to be easier to remember. A good example is when the Marriage Guidance Council became Relate, to illustrate that they are about supporting relationships as opposed to “just” being about marriage.

Logo: what image does this convey? Do you need one or can you just use the name of your organisation?

Strapline: many organisations have a simple strapline of a few words that helps describe their work such as the WRVS – positive about age, practical about life.

Colour. If you can afford to use colour in your name / logo, stick to the same one so that people begin to associate the colour with your organisation.

Creating an image for your group is about much more than a name, logo and colour scheme, it also includes how you appear when people make contact with you. Don’t forget things like:

- Ensuring phone calls are always answered, even if by an answering machine
- Answer phone messages should be friendly and informative
- Your reception area / meeting rooms should be clean & welcoming
- Be polite and friendly to visitors at all times
- Have information about your organisation in the waiting area – use this to blow your own trumpet by putting up certificates, thank you letters, press coverage etc
- Answer post and email promptly, even if only with a “holding reply” until you have time to fully deal with the request
- Avoid jargon

3. MARKETING OBJECTIVES / STRATEGY

A simple marketing strategy will show how you intend to promote your services / activities / events by answering the following key questions:

- Audience - who is likely to be interested in your work?
- Objectives – what do you want to achieve through your marketing?
- Process – who are you going to start marketing and who is going to do it?
- Message - what is it that you want to say / market?
- Means - how are you going to do it – posters, emails?

Audience

The first thing you need to do is identify your target audience(s) – who you want to get your message over to. This might be

- Users: young people, older people
- Professionals: those working in your field of interest such as health visitors, youth workers etc
- Volunteers: with specific skills or of a certain age / background
- Funders & potential funders: charities, companies, individual donors
- Members: people who specifically support your work

Each audience may need a different message and, in some cases, it will need presenting in a different format so it means something to them.

Objectives

You need to agree what your marketing objectives are so that you can determine what you need to do in order to meet them. You might want to:

- Increase the number of people your community group helps
- Reach and attract new people (volunteers, donors etc)
- Spread knowledge about what your organisation does and hopes to achieve
- Build credibility and links in the community for your organisation

In addition to this, the process of writing good marketing materials also helps you (as the organisation) to focus on your objectives and how you expect to achieve them.

Process

You need to agree a **budget** for your marketing activities as this will have a strong influence on what you can do.

Who is responsible for undertaking which tasks – a single individual or a group of people?

When does the marketing need to take place – there is little point advertising an event the day or even the week before it takes place, as this rarely gives people enough time to plan it into their diary. A good rule of thumb is to give 8-10 weeks notice, if possible.

4. CHOOSING YOUR MESSAGE

Your group will always have messages it wishes to get across. Sometimes this will be to tell people about the work of your group in general, other times it will be to advertise a specific event. Knowing what messages you want to convey is vital. Your community group needs to be able to determine those messages before it hits the media, designs the flyers or compiles its news release.

General messages can be classified as those which you want to convey most of the time. They will most likely relate to your group or organisation's underlying themes, motivations, values and attitudes. For example - the general messages a community-based sporting club might want to convey could relate to:

- Participation in sport
- Physical fitness and fun
- Teamwork
- Fair play and sportsmanship

You may already be very clear about these or you might want to get your members together for a bit of a brainstorm. You need to think about:

- Your activities, what your group does and why.
- Your beliefs, stances or philosophies.
- Your aims - what your group is striving to do or be.

Once these general themes or messages are clear, your group needs to make sure they are included in as many of your communications as possible - through any slogans or logos, in your letterhead, in a statement on your website, in any press releases or public stances your group takes. These general messages also need to be kept in mind and conveyed when you are trying to communicate a more specific message.

Specific messages are those you wish to convey that are directly related to a certain situation, activity, occasion or event relevant to your group or organisation. Using the sporting club example again, some different types of specific messages could be:

- A "join up now" or "buy a membership" message if on a membership drive or before the start of the season.
- An announcement on funding for a new development at the club's home ground, or the opening of such a facility.
- An announcement of other special club activities - camps, award nights, raffles, etc.

When conveying a specific message, you need to be very clear what the actual information is that you want to get out. You can use the basic steps below – Who, What, Why, Where & When.

- **WHO** are you trying to convey it to? (Current members, supporters or donors, to past contacts or to possible new contacts?)
- **WHAT** is the specific message you are trying to convey? (For example - your group's annual fundraising raffle or a successful funding application.)
- **WHY** are you conveying this message? (To encourage, recruit, gain support, raise funds, raise awareness, etc).
- **WHERE/HOW** are you going to convey this message (newspapers, other media, posters or fliers)? This question should be looked at in conjunction with the "WHO are you conveying it to" question, as there might be specific communications methods needed in order to reach your target audience.
- **WHEN** do you wish to communicate this message (Is there a specific timeline you are working to? Are there deadlines for your message, or is it news that has to be conveyed quickly for it to be meaningful?)

By working through these steps, your group or organisation should be able to work out the best way to convey your specific message - a way which not only reaches your target audience, but which also is a "good fit" with your group's general message.

5. WAYS OF MARKETING

Think about the different aspects of what you want to do and identify the most effective ways of communicating. Examples may include:

- Posters in Community Centres
- Fliers delivered to every home in the area
- Advert and / or articles in the local press
- A newsletter to promote your activities
- Taster events and Open Days
- Website, e-bulletins & Text Messages (mobile phones)

5.1 Free marketing

Not everyone has a big budget for marketing – or any budget at all! Here are some things you can do for free.

Word of Mouth/Name Dropping. This is a great place to start when it comes to marketing your group for free. Both involve your group – its members, supporters, donors, helpers, volunteers and stakeholders – spreading the word about your group and what it does through speaking to people and dropping your group's name into conversation.

Community Service Announcements. Radio and television stations often donate time to allow community groups and not-for-profits to "advertise" themselves for free. This can be an effective way of getting your group some free exposure in the electronic media.

Community Listings in local Newspapers. Many major newspapers have a community calendar or upcoming events listing or a What's On section. This is an option that is often overlooked, but it shouldn't be – it is cheaper than an advertisement and conveys all the information you need to a wide number of readers. It also appeals to an important target audience – people looking for things to do.

Links through other People's Websites. Your group could talk to similar organisations or local businesses to include your contact details on their websites. Those details could simply be a listing of contact information at the site, or actual links to your web page or e-mail contact. These sorts of links and referrals are free, but your group could be asked to reciprocate and include a link to the business or other group in return.

Let your E-Mail Market your Event. Look at your e-mail signature – if you send out an email, does your next event or activity get a plug?

Social Media. Facebook and Twitter are gaining in popularity and are a really good way of reaching a larger audience. In Leeds you can get help by contacting Leeds Social Media Surgeries – a free monthly drop-in advice session for community and voluntary groups. Go to www.socialmediasurgery.com for more information.

5.2 Low cost marketing

Adverts / Posters

There is a rule known as AIDA when preparing adverts:

- A attract **Attention**, be eye-catching
- I arouse **Interest** in your product or service
- D promote **Desire** for your product or service
- A be persuasive enough to promote **Action**

First list the information that you need to include. A simple suggestion is to look at the 5 W's – Who, What, Why, Where and When – and include these details. If you are advertising the performance of a local theatre group, you need to include details such as the date, times, and location of the play along with its title and ticket prices, together with a phone number to call for tickets. If it is a fundraising event, you need to make sure that people know the cause/charity that is being supported.

Posters usually look good with one large graphic element that attracts the eye – perhaps a black and white drawing, a dramatic photograph, a diagram or some abstract design.

Then decide on the colour theme. If you can afford to print the text and image in colour, then this is often most effective on a simple, plain, white background. It also means it is easy to print directly from your printer, if you are doing the printing in-house. If you can only print in black ink, then perhaps you can make the poster more eye-catching by buying some brighter, coloured paper to print onto. Be very careful about printing words on top of pictures as they often become very difficult to read. In these cases it is often best to make the text white or a contrasting colour to the image behind it so that it stands out more.

The layout is also very important. Research has identified that people read adverts in a particular order by following the eyepath. First they look at the picture, then the headline. They then look in the bottom right hand corner (so site the name and logo of your organisation here). Sometimes they stop here and look no further but, if they read more, they then go to the caption on the picture, other illustrations and headings and then they read the body of the text.

Remember that the aim of the poster is to draw people's attention to it so make sure that:

- The words / writing are big enough to read
- The font used is easy to read, try to avoid too much fancy script
- The layout is attractive and the final product encourages you to read it

Decide how you are going to print it. If you have a budget, you may be able to work with professional printers / designers to get the posters done. If you only have a small budget you are likely to be producing it in-house off your own printer so you may choose black print on coloured paper.

You also need to think about where you are going to display them - schools, libraries, community centres, windows of homes of members, local shop windows. This will determine the size of your poster. Most are A4 in size as they are easy to print off a home printer and can fit onto notice boards, in windows etc more easily.

Invitations

Before creating your invitation you will need to take into account how many invites you need to send out, the theme you are using (if any) and whether you are hand delivering, posting or emailing your invitations.

Make a list of all of the information that needs to be included on your invitation. This needs to provide your guests with enough information to feel prepared for your party or gathering.

- Names of organisation or hosts.
- Type of event (birthday party, community event, meeting, fundraising event, etc.).
- Place, Date, Time.
- RSVP date and phone number.
- Any special dress requirements from black-tie to bathing suits.
- Be specific about who is invited, whether addressee only, with guest, or with family members.
- If guests are not from your local area, include a map to the location of the event.
- Send anywhere from 8 - 2 weeks in advance depending on formality of occasion. As a rule of thumb the more formal, the longer the lead-in time needed.

If you are using Microsoft Word you can select one of the ready-made invitation design templates. On the main menu click "File" and then "New" and then "templates on Office online". You can then select any option i.e. "Invitation Cards", download your preferred design and enter the details for your event. You can download a huge variety of templates and use them like this. Some groups use Microsoft Publisher which is desk-top publishing software that is quite easy to use. Or you can just simply use Microsoft Word and design your own invitation, insert images / pictures, change the font and add borders, too.

When you have finished, proof and finalise the invitation. You can print the document on paper, card or send it by email. Bear in mind that if you have done an invitation using a programme like Publisher, some people may not be able to open your invitation unless you save the document as a different file type. You can download free pdf software (www.pdf995.com) and use this to convert a Microsoft Publisher file to a pdf file that most people should be able to open, as long as they have the right software.