

Marketing your event at The Meteor

How to use this guide

This guide is a collection of tips to help you market your event. It is intended to be read and used in conjunction with The Meteor User Guide, which is available for download from www.themeteor.co.nz/resources. This guide is adapted with permission for The Meteor from a Creative Waikato general guide to marketing Waikato events, which can be accessed (along with some other fantastically useful resources) at www.creativewaikato.co.nz/52/resources/marketing-communications.

Help!

Marketing your event can be hard, even for seasoned pros. For people new to producing a play or putting on a gig, getting people to your event can be utterly daunting. Having the best show in the world is fine, but what's a great play worth if there's no-one around to hear it? Luckily, there are some steps you can take to make your job much easier. Also, we're here to help – if you've got any questions at all about marketing your event, please feel free to contact joshua@themeteor.co.nz, or phone 027 529 447.

Starting out

Starting out can be the hardest part. If you are new to marketing and graphic design we recommend you come to us and brainstorm how best to go about marketing your event.

Have a marketing plan

Have a read through this document. Brainstorm and collect your ideas, then draw up a marketing plan. A draft marketing plan is available to download from www.themeteor.co.nz/resources. Once you've got a marketing plan, be sure to share it with us so we know where you're at. It'll help us help you.

Your brand

Branding is an unfortunate term that's been tarred by association with heartless corporations. But there's no reason why it can't be used for good. All we're talking here is how you want people to perceive your event. Have a good think about this. When you're producing material for your project, you want everything to be based off one unifying vision – the brand. Poster images, press release, photographs, programme blurbs and all other promotional material should reflect this. Use the same language, fonts, logo, colours, images, across all of your material. This will help increase recognition of your event. For example, if someone sees your posters, they should then be able to immediately recognize your flyers or your website as being the same event.

Graphic design

Applying your vision to graphic design is where a graphic designer can come in handy. If you know one, you're in luck. Otherwise, if you've got reasonable computer skills and a few design chops you can manage a lot of this yourself. You don't necessarily need a copy of Adobe Photoshop, either (although

it's great if you have one.) There is a programme called The GIMP (no, really – it stands for the GNU Image Manipulation Program) available for Windows, Mac and Linux. It can do nearly everything Photoshop can and best of all it's free. Download it at www.gimp.org/.

Graphic design will encompass printed media like posters, flyers, postcards, business cards, as well as images for websites.

Do's:

Do Come up with something original and/or eye catching. This could be as simple as a single word on a whole lot of white space. It needs to grab the attention immediately.

Do use someone who knows what they're doing, whenever possible. It will save you time and many headaches. If you don't know where to start, there are some useful contacts in this document, and you can always ask us for help.

Don'ts:

Don't use MS Paint, MS Word (unless you know something about MS Word that we don't) or similar programs to design your poster. It looks cheap. You want your show to look like a special event, not an office coffee-room flyer.

Don't use clashing colours on bright backgrounds, or red-on-black, or red-on-green colour schemes. Not only can they look bad, but colourblind people can't read them.

Don't use fonts that have been done to death. Comic Sans and Papyrus are obvious villains here: They can be hard to read, make your event look silly, and graphic design snobs will hate you.

Photography

Many events may require a photo of a performance (or of the cast, or band, etc) to really sell the play, for use in a poster design, and/or to accompany a media release. If your play needs a photo, make sure it is a good one. As well as needing a high-resolution image for big posters, the quality of your photograph says a great deal about how good or bad people will perceive your event to be.

Again, if you don't know a good photographer, or even someone with a decent camera, make sure to refer to our list of useful contacts, or ask us for advice.

Print materials

Try to make your material really stand out. Think bold and intriguing – as well as visually consistent. With all of your printed material, shop around for prices – they can vary a lot. Don't be shy to ask for print sponsorship – a print company may be honoured to have their logo on your poster and be associated with your event.

Posters

If you are making a poster, remember that you have about 2 seconds, if that, to grab someone's attention as they walk by. Resist putting a lot of text on your poster as people will not read it. People will generally just read the heading, byline, and then if they are interested they will look for dates and cost.

A byline is a snappy (a few words or a sentence) bit of text which alludes to what the event is. i.e. *Songs From The Ratpack*, or, *The Broadway Musical*. You may not need a byline. Generally speaking you want to include title, an awesome image, a sense of what it is, dates, venues, cost, your website, and sponsors logos.

If you are putting on an event at The Meteor we require that you include our logo on the poster. If you're using iTICKET as your ticketing provider, iTICKET requires that their logo and disclaimer to be featured as well. These materials may be downloaded from www.themeteor.co.nz/resources.

Cafes and some shops are usually happy to have posters up, provided they are not too huge (A3 is usually OK). Usually to put posters up in public spaces you need to pay a company like Phantom Billstickers as they own the rights to use the walls. If you don't, or if you paste onto private property then your poster will usually be ripped down pretty quick. Arrangements with real estate agents can often be made to use the inside of windows of buildings that are for rent.

Flyers

Ideally these should be DL (envelope) size, or smaller. This makes them easier to get into cafes, music stores, bookshops, libraries etc as they tend to have limited space. DL or smaller can also fit into pockets easier and can be posted for the cheapest cost. These are like a mini version of your poster that you hope people put on their fridges / office walls etc as a reminder.

Leading up to your event carry flyers with you at all times. You'll bump into all sorts of people and just telling them about your event isn't enough – they will forget. Give them a postcard and they are much more likely to come and to invite others.

Postcards

Some people do postcards instead of flyers. They pretty much do the same trick, so it's up to what you prefer.

Business Cards

If you are working on a big event involving lots of people, then you may want to get yourself some business cards to help with your networking. Printing costs have come down a lot in recent years, so you may be surprised how cheap (and useful), some cards can be.

Media releases

It is always worth trying to get into newspapers and on to radio. If they choose to do a story or interview with you then it costs you nothing and is more powerful than an advertisement as it is seen as being endorsed by the media by being news-worthy.

Press releases are a good way to try and get yourself into the newspapers. Journalists are looking for an easy, interesting story to be handed straight to them and a great way to get coverage is by showing the story behind your work.

The Meteor can help you get into local papers. If you write a press release and send it to us at marketing@themeteor.co.nz, we'll brand it, make any edits necessary, and send it out for you. We have

an excellent working relationship with local media. However, we do recommend that you follow up any contact we make yourselves.

So... what to include in a press release?

- A catchy clear headline (think like a news editor. What would **you** want to read?)
- Open with a simple paragraph – who, what, where, when and why. Keep your language plain and simple.
- What is your 'hook'? Look for a quirk that will “sell” your story. What makes your event interesting, different, relevant?
- The body paragraphs (two is a good number) are the place for bio, background etc and to extend on your point of difference.
- Quote yourself – people do this all the time so it’s not going to seem weird to the press and it saves being misquoted and misrepresented!
- Include contact details and make sure it is no more than one page
- The press release should also be in the body of the email itself in plain text, not as an attached document. It should begin clearly with the author’s name, the date, and full contact details for any follow up. It should begin with *****BEGINS***** and end with *****ENDS*****.
- Any pictures should be attached to the email as .jpeg files. Make sure to say you have more on hand/are available if they are interested in coming to take some of their own. If you have very high-resolution versions, offer to send them separately, or offer a link to a cloud-sharing service like Dropbox, which is less likely to get zapped by an overzealous virus checker than a .zip file.
- Make sure that that your’re spelling and Grammar is as correct as you can, possibly get it. An Journalist is more likely to use your writings if they dont have to spend ages re-writing or paraphrasing It. Bonus point if you caught all the errors in the previous two sentences. There are at least 10.
- Most importantly, make sure your event includes all relevant details – when is it, where is it, what age is it intended for, how much are tickets... Promoting an event is pointless if no-one knows when or where it is! Include this info, and everyone will be happy.

This leads us to photographs. It is preferable to create your own image and to provide this along with any press releases you may send out. This way YOU can have some control over how you and your event are seen. This also helps to make things easy for the media. This could be the image you have been using on your poster and flyer, however many newspapers insist on having a photo of a person.

[Event listings websites](#)

The Meteor lists your event for you on several event listing sites, as detailed in The Meteor User Guide. We encourage you to find more sites to list your event on!

[Radio](#)

Radio are often looking for interesting stories, local content, and most importantly, stuff to give away to listeners. Get your pitch ready and give them a call (on their off-air number). Again, think about what it

is that sets your event apart from the others. Like all media, they are looking for things that are unusual and interesting (and free.)

The Meteor will send on your media release to radio stations, but as with newspapers, we encourage you to get in contact with radio stations yourselves. A full list of radio station contacts is available at the end of this document.

Networking

Look out for local networking opportunities. Often the best way to meet people you can work with, or who may want to come to your event is just to get out there and socialize. Invite people to your event personally. Always have your flyers (and business cards if you have some) on you. Don't be pushy, and don't try to hijack other people's events.

While will be busy on your project, it's still important to do your networking early and to be organized. The people who can help you most like lots of notice and manners. Late, pushy requests for help go down like a lead balloon.

If appropriate, distribute complimentary tickets to the movers and shakers. Give free tickets (early) to people who influence others with their opinions and are rampant social networkers.

The Meteor has several lists of people who can be useful to offer complimentary tickets to for an opening or preview event. If you have a long season, this can be particularly useful. We also have some rules about what's allowed when it comes to complimentary tickets, which must be adhered to. Full information on this and much more can be found by downloading **The Meteor User Guide** at www.themeteor.co.nz/resources.

It could also be useful thinking about local businesses, organisations and groups who may have a particular interest in your event i.e., useful networks for a Youth Music Festival could be music stores, cafes, youth radio stations, local schools/university etc.

Schools

If your event is youth-oriented or has educational value, we encourage you to contact schools with details about your event. A list of school contacts is available – please email joshua@themeteor.co.nz for more information.

Social media

Social media. Brilliant, right? Yes and no. Social media can be a very useful tool but over-reliance, particularly if it's at the expense of other media, can doom your event. If you have an existing social media presence, particularly on Facebook or Twitter, it can be incredibly helpful to utilise these networks. However, setting up a fresh network for a new event is likely to be an uphill grind.

The Meteor has quite a good social media presence on Facebook. We will do our best to promote your event through our own social media channels. We also have an email list which we will be happy to add your event to, with a minimum of six week's notice.

Facebook events: We encourage you to set any Facebook events up through us, and then administer them yourself – see The Meteor User Guide for more information. A note of caution: often, people don't notice Facebook events, or they click "going" then forget about it. Regular reminders, posts, and interaction with people who've RSVP'd are all vital, but the most important thing is to have people who are deeply vested in the production (a sort of "street team") to personally invite people to the show via an email or instant message.

Facebook advertising: putting a small budget (say \$50) and creating a Facebook ad for your event is quite easy to do and will get it seen by quite a few people. It can be very helpful.

Email list: if you have an existing mailing list, or you have access to someone who does, make good use of it. Don't overdo it (everyone hates spam!) but an attractive, concise email with a nice picture or a video will tend to get read. Getting someone with a large mailing list to feature your event is a coup – give it a go.

Think different

Chances are that if you are reading this then you are a creative person. This means you are in an excellent position to promote your event creatively. Here are just a few ideas, but the possibilities are endless

Stickers and magnets: print a sticker or magnet with a logo/image/text which is easily recognizable/funny/striking as being related to your event. Place the stickers anywhere and everywhere.

Chalking: Chalk up the name and dates of your event on the footpath.

Projection: possibly for the more tech savvy among us (or at least for those with techy mates), project a logo/images for your event onto buildings around town at night.

Stunts: free and easy. Create a stunt to draw attention to your event be it performing in a public place, dressing up and parading through a public place, utilizing a loud hailer... the masters of this are Improv Everywhere <http://improveverywhere.com/>. If you come up with a good visual stunt idea, be sure to tell the media, or at least get photos taken, and send the story to the media.

Props and Objects: place props and objects (relating to your event) with event details written on them in weird and wonderful places all over the city.

Teaser Performances: perform a short section of your show in a public place at a busy time. You may also want to put up some teaser videos online.

Other marketing tips could be using sandwich boards, leaving printed promotional material in unusual locations, human signposts and large scale public "spectacles".

Creative Waikato

Creative Waikato, as their name suggests, exist to help creative projects in the Waikato. They are an especially useful resources for all creative events and are approachable and friendly. Contact them by visiting www.creativewaikato.co.nz, emailing hello@creativewaikato.co.nz or calling 0508 427 892.

Media Contacts

This is by no means an extensive list. Other media contacts can and should be found!

Waikato Region

Waikato Times (publishes daily)

News desk – news@waikatotimes.co.nz 07 849 9666

Arts reporter – Mike Mather mike.mather@fairfaxmedia.co.nz Phone 07 849 9666 or after hours 07 849 6180 (general stories contact numbers).

Hamilton

Hamilton Press (publishes weekly on a Wednesday)

News desk Geoff Lewis geoff.lewis@fairfaxmedia.co.nz 07 849 9583

Hamilton News (publishes weekly on a Thursday)

Editor – danielle.nicholson@nzme.co.nz 07 834 4652

Nexus magazine Waikato University (publishes weekly on a Monday during term time)

Editor, Rachael Elliot editor@nexusmag.co.nz

Waikato District

Raglan Chronicle (publishes weekly on a Friday)

Newsdesk – raglan.chronicle@xtra.co.nz 07 825 7076

North Waikato News (published weekly on a Wednesday)

Editor – Julie Kaio – julie.kaio@wrcn.co.nz 09 237 0400

Waipa

Cambridge Edition (publishes weekly on a Wednesday)

Newsdesk – Cambridge.editor@wrcn.co.nz 07 827 3840

Te Awamutu Courier (published on Tuesdays and Thursdays)

Newsdesk Editor – grant.johnston@teawamutucourier.co.nz 07 871 5151

Hauraki

Hauraki Herald (published weekly on a Friday)

Editor – Clint Fletcher - hauraki.editor@wrcn.co.nz 07 868 8850

Matamata Piako

Matamata Chronicle (published weekly on a Wednesday)

Editor – Teresa Hattan - teresa.hattan@fairfaxmedia.co.nz 07 888 7011

Piako

Piako Post (published weekly on a Wednesday)

Editor – Steve Edwards – steve.edwards@wrcn.co.nz 07 889 7099

Ruapehu

Ruapehu Press (published weekly on a Wednesday)

Editor – Mary McCarty – taupo.editor@wrcn.co.nz 07 378 9060

South Waikato

South Waikato News (published weekly on Wednesday)

Editor – Florence Kerr – swaikato.editor@wrcn.co.nz 07 886 9159

Radio

Hamilton

Contact FM contact@contactfm.co.nz 07 858 5050

Free FM (formerly known as Community Radio) info@freefm.org.nz 07 834 2170

Yak FM (Wintec) blair.dowling@wintec.ac.nz 07 837 7019

Waikato District

Tractor FM (Raglan) tractorfm@gmail.com 027 8668 444

Hauraki District

Brian Gentil Gold FM 96.4 info@goldfm.co.nz 07 863 9644 www.goldfm.co.nz

Coromandel

Coromandel FM cfm@mediaworks.co.nz 07 901 0100 www.coromandelfm.co.nz

South Waikato

Fresh FM 88.3 www.facebook.com/FreshFM88.3

National

Radio Network craighobbs@radionetwork.co.nz 07 858 0700

National Radio rnz@radionz.co.nz 04 474 1876