




An Australian Government Initiative


Inspiring
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HOW TO GENERATE PUBLICITY FOR YOUR NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK EVENT

INTRODUCTION

This guide has been developed to help you to promote your National Science Week event.

If you have already run a National Science Week event in the past, this may be familiar, but you may find some new suggestions to try this year.

If you have never run a National Science Week event before, this guide will provide a range of ideas for helping to promote your activity. Even just taking up one of these ideas will help to attract a larger range of people to your event and help make it a success!

STEP ONE: FINALISING YOUR EVENT

Prior to working out your publicity plan, you need to have all of the details of your event finalised. This includes:

- Date
- Time
- Venue
- Topic
- Speaker
- Target audience

If you have not completed these details please refer to the "How to run a National Science Week event" document for support in this area.

If you would like some further support as you coordinate these details, you can contact your local coordinating committee chair or the Department of Industry and Science. Contact details can be found at www.scienceweek.net.au.

STEP TWO: ALLOCATING A PUBLICITY OFFICER

You may wish to act as the publicity officer yourself, or you can nominate another member attached to your event. You want to allocate someone who is a good spokesperson and would be comfortable talking to journalists. The publicity officer will need to be available in the weeks before, during and after your event and will need to be enthusiastic and willing to try a range of promotional concepts.

Tip – Find out what other National Science Week events are going on in your area. You may be able to combine forces to issue joint media releases or create joint promotional campaigns.

The publicity officer may expect to undertake the following tasks:

- Designing and distributing posters and flyers.
- Arranging listings in community papers and radio programs.
- Talking to the media.
- Keeping a record of all activities conducted, and journalists they have contacted.
- Thanking the media for their coverage.
- Monitoring media, before, during and after your event.

STEP THREE: RESEARCHING YOUR AUDIENCE

Having decided on your event, you should already know who your market is. In order to market your event effectively, you need to know what the habits and interests are of your target audience.

Some questions to help in establishing this may include:

- What media are they most likely to use? Would they be more likely to read a specific paper or listen to a radio station?
- Where do they congregate? Do they work in a specific place or visit a venue after hours?
- What typically interests this age group?

STEP FOUR: WORKING OUT YOUR MARKETING PLAN

Once you know your audience, and you have determined the ways in which your audience best receives their information you can begin your marketing plan.

A range of different promotional ideas are included in the next few pages for you to consider as part of your marketing plan. You may choose to do one promotional activity or try them all – your marketing plan can be as simple or detailed as you like!

If you are short on time, it would be worthwhile prioritising your activities, from the absolutely essential activities through to your wish list of actions.

STEP FIVE: DRAFTING YOUR EVENT INFORMATION

A useful next step is to spend some time writing up a few short paragraphs about your event that can become the basis for your publicity.

Try to keep the sentences short and to the point, without difficult words or jargon. Remember, people need to be able to understand what your event will be about and it should appeal to your target audience.

Also think about the way we read – left to right and top to bottom. You want to put the most important information at the top and the least important information at the bottom. Try to come up with a first line that captures the reader's attention and makes them want to read to the end.

Once you have your basic text you can then adapt this for use in posters, media releases, community announcements, advertisements, mailouts, invitations and even on the National Science Week website.

STEP SIX: MAKE IT HAPPEN!

Now you know your marketing plan, it's a matter of getting out there and making your event come alive.

Tip – There are resources designed by the Department that are available to help you promote your event. Go to www.scienceweek.net.au to obtain a range of promotional material.

PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

The following section will provide you with some ideas to consider for promoting your National Science Week event. Some of these ideas will require funding, whereas others won't require any money, just your time.

Look through and choose the concepts that best suit your target audience and the resources you have available.

National Science Week website

An extremely quick and easy way to get your event out there is to make sure you have registered it on the National Science Week website. Anyone visiting the website is able to view events that are running in their state/territory so this is an easy way to reach your local audience.

Make sure you enter your event as soon as you have confirmed the details – the earlier the event is listed, the greater the number of people who will be able to view your event.

Visit www.scienceweek.net.au to list your event.

Invitations

Invitations are a good way to reach target audiences like schools, colleagues, university students, clubs and friends. Invitations can be sent by themselves, or if you have other material like a flyer, it is a good idea to send those as well.

Invitations can be sent via e-mail, Facebook or Twitter in electronic form or in hard copy through the mail. As email is now used by the vast majority of Australians, this can be a very effective and simple way to get your message out.

To help you out, we have included an invitation template with the event kit that is available on the National Science Week website. You can add your event details to this template and then either:

- Print the invitation to send through the post.
- Save the invitation, attach it to an email and send to your audience.

Networking

A great way to promote your event is through networking. A few quick phone calls can soon lead to an ever-expanding number of people attending your event. Apart from your own contacts, organisations are sometimes willing to promote your event in their own marketing material, for example through email or company newsletters.

Some people that you might want to consider approaching include:

- Personal contacts
- Professional contacts

- Local schools and universities
- Science/educational associations
- Community groups
- Local businesses
- Local council

Mail-outs

If your target audience is a small, such as a local community or school, you might want to consider conducting a mail-out. If you can, the mail-out should be personally addressed to your audience, however even doing a letter box drop will work.

In your mail-out, it is a good idea to write a cover letter as well as including a flyer or other promotional material.

Flyers

A well-designed flyer that is visually exciting can easily capture that audience's attention.

Flyers can be distributed through:

- Mail-outs.
- Hand-outs.
- Displays in prominent places such as libraries, shops, schools, universities and clubs.
- Business cards.

Tip – Make sure to do a thorough spell check before you print your flyers. If you are unsure, get someone else to double check.

Posters and banners

Posters and banners should be displayed in as many prominent places as possible. Consider the places where your audience is most likely to visit as these will be the best places to display your material.

Approach local businesses, clubs or organisations who might be willing to display your poster or banner in their buildings. You might want to consider:

- Churches
- Libraries
- Shops
- Clubs
- Sporting facilities
- Local schools
- Universities

The National Science Week committee have posters available for your use. An electronic copy of the annual National Science Week poster is included on the National Science Week website. For further information visit www.scienceweek.net.au.

New media

A great way to target younger audiences is through Facebook and Twitter. If your event is aimed at this group, it might be worth listing your event on the National Science Week pages of these networking sites.

Media

If your target audience is the general public, or a large group, local media may be a useful promotional tool. Newspapers, online websites, radio and local television stations may be interested in running a story on your event or taking photos and attending on the day.

Here are some steps for dealing with the media. There are also examples of each recommendation provided with the event kit.

1. Prepare a media list

Look at the media that is available in your local area and make a list of what is available.

You might want to consider:

- Local papers.
- Free community papers.
- Local AM and FM radio stations.
- Local television stations.
- Websites about your local area.

The next step is to identify the right contact. Most media have their own websites set up and this is a good starting point. Look for an email address and phone number for “Editorial”. If it is a small newspaper, you can look for the news editor or features editor. If you can’t find details on their website, call the switchboard and ask for the email address to submit press releases.

Timing is crucial, so always check when the deadline date is. For example, many weekly newspapers will have a Tuesday deadline to make their Friday edition. Also television and radio may need longer lead times to put together a story. Find out the deadlines for each media on your list and work to those.

2. Draft media material

There are various ways to let the press know about your event. These include:

- Media releases.
- Media alerts.
- What’s On and Community listings.

Depending on how confident you feel, you may wish to undertake any one of these activities. We have also provided you with templates and examples for each of these activities in the event kit. You can adjust these and use them as you would like.

Keep in mind that you will need to choose the activity that is most suitable to your event. A lecture might not be the most interesting photo opportunity for the media. A group of school children undertaking experiments will make for a more exciting photo.

Tip – Remember that the journalist is looking for something different than your audience. They want an interesting story that comes with a good photograph – that will grab their reader’s attention.

MEDIA RELEASE

The media release serves as the journalist’s introduction to the story and it needs to stand out from other news items. It usually runs for one page and contains basic facts about a story.

Take a look through the media release example in the event kit to get more of an idea about how to draft your own media release. Here are a few other points to consider:

- Use the National Science Week media release template supplied.
- Try to keep paragraphs to one or two sentences.
- Refer initially to people by title, first name, surname and designation, for example Doctor Christopher Montgomery, Head of Science, University of Tasmania. After the first time, refer to them only by their title and surname.
- Avoid technical terms, jargon, exaggeration and flowery language.
- Put the date at the top of the release.
- Make sure to write the words ENDS after your text, followed by your contact details so the media can reach you.
- The title and first paragraph are very important. They need to be concise, brief and capture the reader’s attention. The first paragraph should answer the questions: who, what, where, when, why and how.
- Make sure to include a short quote from someone closely involved in the project.
- Include any relevant images – the media always look for photos to go with their story and it will increase your chances of getting a run. Make sure the images are interesting, high quality and clear.

Once you have completed your media release, attach it in an email and send it to the journalists you have listed on your media list.

MEDIA ALERT

A media alert is a shortened version of the media release. It should be sent out a few days before your event, and acts as an ‘invitation’ to the media to attend your event and to capture photos.

An example of a media alert is contained in the event kit. You will notice that the top part of the alert contains details about the event, what photo opportunities will be available and sets up a meeting point for you to meet with the media on the day. The second part of the media alert contains a shorter version of the media release.

As with the media release, always make sure to put the date at the top, and the word ENDS and your contact details at the bottom.

Tip – Have the media arrive 15 minutes before the event so they can get ready before it starts and you have enough time to talk to them and make sure they have everything they need.

PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES

Arranging a photo opportunity is a good way to ensure coverage, both prior and after your event. Whether or not you arrange a separate photo shoot before your event or invite the media to attend the actual event to take photos, a good photo set-up will help to get your story in the paper.

If you choose to arrange your own photo opportunity, you will need to make sure that the photo is visually interesting and relates to your event. Also, if using children, make sure that you have their parent's permission.

To arrange for the media to come to the photo shoot, you need to draft a media alert, detailing the logistics, as well as outlining the photo opportunities available. This can then be sent out to your list of local media.

WHAT'S ON & COMMUNITY LISTINGS

This is the easiest way to get your National Science Week event into the press and requires very little discussion with journalists.

A sample listing and a National Science Week template for you to use have been included in the event kit on the National Science Week website. It is simply a matter of filling in your event details and sending the listing to the newspaper and radio stations, marked attention to "Community listings".

With What's On listings, the key is timing. You will need to get your listing into the newspapers a few weeks in advance to ensure that there is enough time to run it. For radio, getting your listing in two or three days before the event is a good move, as they will usually only discuss timely events.

3. Releasing your media material

Timing is very important when it comes to the media.

Anything sent to magazines and television needs to be submitted up to 6 weeks prior to the event. You should also send out listing information as early as possible. Newspapers should receive information the week before the event, whereas radio only needs to information 2-3 days prior to the event.

It is best to send your media material out in a personalised email. If you decide to send a bulk email, make sure that you blind copy the other recipients.

4. Dealing with the media

HAVING THE MEDIA ATTEND AN EVENT

If you have issued a media alert or lined up a photo opportunity there are a few things that you need to do to ensure success.

Before the media arrive:

- Ensure the set up is complete and all of the people involved are ready to go.

- Be the first person at the media meeting point to meet and greet the journalists.
- Prepare any material you want to leave with the media.

During the photo opportunity/event:

- Be prepared to talk to the media and give them some quotes.
- Thank the media for their time.
- If the media are attending your event, ensure they have all the information they need and have a seat available in your venue.

INTERVIEWS

You may find that you are asked to give an interview, to either print (newspapers) or broadcast (radio, television) media. Here are some tips for getting through the interview.

Before the interview gather some information:

- What is the main message you want to get across?
- Is it a live or recorded interview?
- Who is the audience?
- How long will the interview take?
- Where will the interview take place? By phone or in person?
- Discuss and confirm the subject of the interview. Check what the questions will be about.
- Ensure that the phone line is free at the determined time, so that the journalist can get through.
- Will they call you or will you need to call them?

During the interview itself:

- Speak slowly and clearly, keep it simple and avoid jargon.
- Be relaxed and treat the interview as a conversation.
- Be positive and enthusiastic.
- You can explain how your event is part of National Science Week – Australia's largest national festival.
- Don't forget to mention the time, venue and details of your event.