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HOW TO GENERATE PUBLICITY FOR YOUR NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK EVENT



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www.scienceweek.net.au



INTRODUCTION

So, you've planned an awesome event... now you just need people to come!

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 the details of your event finalised. This includes:

- Date/s
- Time
- Venue
- Topic
- Speaker/s
- Activities/key drawcards
- Target audience
- Accessibility information

If you have not locked in these event details yet, please refer to the "How to run a National Science Week event" guide for support.

STEP TWO: ALLOCATING A PUBLICITY OFFICER

A Publicity Officer is the main contact that members of the media can reach out to, to discuss promoting your event, and the person who drives promotional plans for your event.

You may wish to act as the Publicity Officer yourself, or you can nominate another person who is helping organise the event. Look for 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 scale of promotional work you undertake will depend on the scale of your event, and how much time/capacity you have to promote it.

Publicity Officer may undertake the following tasks:



- Designing and distributing posters and flyers.
- Arranging listings in online community noticeboards, local papers and radio programs.
- Talking to the media to invite them to report on the event.
- Keeping a record of all activities conducted, and journalists they have contacted.
- Monitoring media, before, during and after your event.

STEP THREE: RESEARCHING YOUR AUDIENCE

As you planned your event, you will hopefully have considered your target audience (who the event is for). You may have considered the demographics of your intended audience (their age, gender etc.) and/or their interests and values (sometimes called psychographics).

Knowing your target audience is also important when considering how to promote your event. You'd likely promote an event about building websites for seniors through different channels, and in a different tone-of-voice than you would an event for high school students about future careers in AI.

To market your event effectively, you need to know the habits and interests of your target audience, and where/how they generally access information about events.

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, or use social media? What social media platforms are they most likely to use?
- Where do they congregate? Do they work in a specific place or visit a venue after hours?
- What typically interests this 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 why it's worth their while to attend.

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 a listing on the National Science Week website.

Also consider images you could use in promotion. Remember a picture is worth 1000 words! Do you have photos from previous similar events? Try to find images that show action and showcase what people will get to do at the event. These are generally more engaging than just headshots of speakers. If you are looking for images online, remember to attribute them to the people who made them. It's a good idea to filter image searches to images that can be used through Creative Commons licences.

Also check that you have photo permission to use images you've captured at previous events. This is especially important if the images include children.

SEE ALSO: Our online guide [How to write a great event description](#).

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.

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. This is also a place where journalists look for story ideas.



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, and the better chance you have of it being included in the official media and publicity campaign.

Visit www.scienceweek.net.au to list your event(s).

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 LinkedIn in electronic form or in hard copy through the mail. Email is 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 associations like Rotary or CWA
- Local council

Mail-outs

You might want to consider conducting a mail-out:

- if your target audience is a small, such as a local community or school,



- if your target audience is used to receiving printed mailouts from your organisation, or
- if your audience is less comfortable using computers or email, such as senior audiences

If you can, the mail-out should be personally addressed to your audience, however even doing a letter box drop can 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.

Social media

A great way to target many audiences (especially younger audiences) is through social media channels such as Facebook and Instagram. It's worth tagging your event with #ScienceWeek on these sites. Facebook generally has an older audience than Instagram. TikTok has a younger audience than both platforms.

As well as making posts about your event on your own social media channels, you can look to cross-promote it on 'what's on in X TOWN' style pages.

SEE ALSO: Our online guide [Using social media to promote your National Science Week events](#).

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 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 and Photo Opportunities
- What’s On and Community listings

Depending on how confident you feel, you may wish to undertake all or just 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 to suit your own event.

Keep in mind that you will need to choose the promotional 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 or video that will grab their reader’s attention.

Media Release

A media release serves as the journalist’s introduction to the story. 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 provided on the website. 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 media 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:

- Send out **community listing** information to newspapers and websites as early as possible.
- Printed **magazines**, including those inserted into weekend newspapers, are organised well in advance. Send them information 2-4 months ahead of the event, depending on how regularly they're published.
- Pre-filmed **television** magazine/lifestyle shows, such as *Postcards*, need information 2-4 months ahead. Live **morning TV shows** need story pitches and guest suggestions 1-3 weeks ahead.
- **Newspapers** should receive information the week before the event if you want them to come to the event and report on it, or earlier if you want them to cover your event as an upcoming event in order to increase attendance.
- **Radio** needs information a few 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 (BCC) the other recipients.

4. Dealing with the media at your 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 – one of Australia's largest festivals.
- Don't forget to mention the time, venue and details of your event.

SEE ALSO: Our online guide [Media coverage for your Science Week event](#).