

COMMUNICATION

The goal of a communication campaign is to make noise and be loud, to make sure the right people know about the event, and to make sure that everyone will remember it. This chapter is intimately related to the one about [Documentation](#).

Planning the communication campaign is typically the last step on your “to do” list. Something you can start working on after you have solved all the previous items: goals, location, audience, content, format, narrative.

An effective communication campaign will address your diverse audiences via different tools and messages, according to each one of them. The size of the communications team should be proportional to the magnitude of the event. With a large event ideally you will work with someone with a PR background and someone with particular social media skills. But if you have to tackle this on your own, here are some tips:

A communication campaign should be guided by **What, When, Who, Why, Where, How. What** Define what to communicate. It may sound obvious, but this is a tricky question to solve. When planning a communication campaign you should always think bigger than the action itself. There are tons of events happening simultaneously; what does your event have to stand apart? That is the first thing you should focus on: what makes it special? Are you communicating about an event or something bigger? Are you planning long term? Think in terms of agenda-setting. Provide interesting and valuable info in order to get the media and the people interested.

When This refers not only to the specific dates of the event but to the whole campaign. You should plan three stages: **Prior to the event / During the event / Post-Event**

- Prior: Get the audience interested. Think ahead. There are many printed media that have early deadlines, you should contact them with time in advance so they can plan their articles; the same happens with TV.
- During: You could have a PR/press calendar set for this stage with special activities just for them, invitees and schedule reminders.
- After: Follow up, be sure to gather all the articles covering your event; this will be helpful for next events.

Who Who is running the event? Who is taking part? Who is it for? Who should you be speaking to? Who will be visiting/participating? Think of related info that you could add. Coordinate interviews with the developers/artists/speakers. Engage them in the communication process.

Why Why is this event taking place? Why is it relevant for the community? Is it something truly new and unique? Why is it worthy of being covered by the press?

Where Where is it taking place? Any relevant info related to the location? Any special links or history to consider? Why is that place ideal for this kind of event? Does the location/surroundings/atmosphere add value to the overall experience?

How How will the event unfold? How can the audience participate, interact and engage? How can the press relate to the different activities going on?

Consider the following:

- **Setting the right communication channel.** TV, Printed media, Internet, Radio, Non-formal. Think on the content and its best fit, based on the typical consumption behaviour from your audience
- **Choosing the best tools.** You don't have to be everywhere, decide the tool (e.g. Instagram vs Twitter vs Facebook...) based on your target audience and adjust the content to each of those tools. The "one size fits all" typically doesn't work and you need to adjust and adapt for each tool
- **Establishing a tone.** Is this a professional/formal/academic event? Is it more like an informal hang-out? Should you be using technical language or make it easier to digest for a larger public? Always remember to think about your audience.
- **Identifying influencers.** This will be particularly handy for broadening the scope and spreading the word. Which kind of audience are you aiming to? Who do they follow? Is it a Youtuber, someone on Twitter, a specific journalist? Get those people interested in your event.
- **Mailing lists and community groups.** Owning the contacts from your audience could be very valuable, both for current and future events. Create your own mailing list, but avoid spamming your contacts. Use it wisely.
- **Defining your target audience:** Identify your event community.

Where are they? Which Social Media do they typically use? What are they interested in? Are you planning an event just for gamers? will you be mixing different audiences (ex: art, technology, others?) How about the age of your audience? Are you thinking of families, students, professionals..? Once you have narrowed it down think on which media do they use: how do they find out about events? That's where you have to be. Think now about the location of your event: If it's (for instance) a gallery, do they have an existing audience? Is there a way to engage them with your event? Think of a message specifically for them and take advantage of the tools they are already using: do they have a mailing list, a web page, a Twitter or IG account? Check the "Audience chapter" for more info.

- **Make your competitors your allies.** Working in conjunction with related events and personalities is always a good idea. Check which other events with similar audiences do, and discuss ways you can support each other and do cross-promotion.
- **Press.** If you can't afford working with a specialized PR agency, then you should create an updated and annotated press contact list. Identify the right journalists, know them and get them to know you. They should have you as first contact in their mind when they think of video games. If your event is related to other field, you have to apply the same logic. Are you working on an art-games related event? Then identify the journalists writing about that.
- **Create engagement.** Make your audience feel part of the event. Interact with them, offer them activities or the possibility to get involved in some manner. Produce frequent call-to-action messages.
- **Create momentum.** Start working in advance to your event preparing the audience for what is about to come. Generate hype and excitement!
- **Provide useful information.** There has to be content in your communication. Make sure not to miss the key data points you want to communicate, each time you have a chance. When is it taking place, where, what makes the event so exciting that you shouldn't miss it?
- **Work on a complete press kit** and have it ready preferably a month before your event. It should contain a press release with all the practical info, folders with high resolution pictures, logos, trailers, reels or videos that could be useful for TV and web, plus the different press releases documents and a summary of the event.
- **Avoid using only one social media,** (especially Facebook). You will miss many people not logged on there and it might creates issues about the documentation of the event. If you have a mailing list, probably it's a good idea to make sure key info is also delivered there.

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