

RAISING YOUR PROFILE



For any voluntary organisation, getting your name known is often the first step on the road to success. Here are a few simple things you can do to kick-start raising your profile.

Write press releases



Being featured in local newspapers is an excellent (and free) way of drawing attention to your organisation. Local press reaches a large proportion of the community and a newspaper article can give your organisation legitimacy.

Aim to produce a regular supply of news – every 1-2 months – and make sure you get to know your local journalists.

- ✓ Good for: sharing achievements and human interest stories – events, successes, case studies on people your organisation has benefitted
- ✗ Not so good for: reaching younger audiences and in Solihull, the north of the borough

Come top in Google

Around two thirds of the UK population now view the internet as their most trusted medium for information (*Oxford Internet Survey, 2009*) and the vast majority use Google to navigate their way online.

So at the very least your organisation needs a simple website that outlines what you do and how you can be contacted. Even better, if you can use your website actively by publishing news stories, key dates or new information regularly, Google will see it as more relevant and up the ranking it will go.

- ✓ Good for: helping new clients or supporters find out about your organisation quickly and easily
- ✗ Not so good for: reaching some parts of the community such as older people and those on lower incomes



Inform in print as well as online

Alongside your website, use information leaflets or brochures as a staple method for providing an overview of what your organisation does. Acting as a physical reminder, a professional looking leaflet can help to build confidence in your organisation's capabilities.

Leaflets are a handy thing to take to events, meetings and to display in relevant public spaces. But don't make the mistake of just sending your leaflet out in the hope that people read it. Think very carefully about where your leaflet needs to be displayed and remember that this type of marketing is often more effective when coupled with some form of personal contact.

- ✓ Good for: delivering comprehensive information about what your organisation does
- ✗ Not so good for: capturing someone's attention

Give people a taste of your organisation

Seeing you in action can be a very effective way of getting people interested in what you do. Open your doors for a taster session or open day and you'll find that making personal contact can really help to get your message across.

- ✓ Good for: showcasing your work and creating an impression that will last
- ✗ Not so good for: reaching large numbers of people

Keep in touch with newsletters or bulletins

Retaining people who have already engaged with your organisation is less costly and time-consuming and can be more fruitful than recruiting new ones. Draw up a list of the key stakeholders you need to keep on side – volunteers, funders, partners, members – and tell them about your latest activities with a quarterly newsletter or a more frequent but shorter email bulletin.

- ✓ Good for: keeping your supporters up-to-date with latest developments and achievements
- ✗ Not so good for: capturing a new audience

Get talking

Make contact with similar organisations and other partners to increase awareness of what you do. You may find that another organisation's clients could also benefit from what you offer and there may be opportunities to work together.

- ✓ Good for: building your reputation and discovering new openings
- ✗ Not so good for: getting your message to supporters first-hand



Make the most of new media

New forms of communication such as social networking sites and video can be incredibly powerful tools for getting your message out, especially to younger people.

Video offers an immediate and interesting 'taster' of what your organisation is about. And social networking sites such as Facebook enable you to connect directly with supporters and are a great form of word-of-mouth publicity.

- ✓ Good for: interaction, dialogue and spreading your message on the ground
- ✗ Not so good for: organisations keen on having a tight control over their communications

Consistency and planning

The secret to being really effective in raising your profile? Planning. Create a timeline of promotional activities you intend to undertake and make sure you have a 'drip feed' information. Also be consistent in the messages you put out; include your logo on every piece of communication and have a clear idea of what you want the audience to understand about your organisation.

If you would like free advice on using any of these techniques, contact Jayne Scarman, PR & Marketing Manager at SUSTAIN on **0121 711 3148** or promotion@solihull-sustain.org.uk