



# How to Stand Out from the Crowd:

The complete marketing & media handbook  
for community organisations

**How to Stand Out From the Crowd:  
The complete marketing & media handbook for community organisations**

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**2020 Summit in Canberra**, 1000 Australians meet to discuss and come up with ideas for the future of Australia. Prime Minister Kevin Rudd visits the Australian Economy stream and stands out from the crowd by sitting on the floor to listen to the ideas and debate, that is helping to reshape Australia.

# Foreword

Our Community is often out there marketing marketing – that is, trying to convince community groups that marketing is really an essential part of the work that they do.

Community groups don't often think of marketing as part of their core business but it's actually very hard to do anything well if people don't know you exist.

You can't attract members and volunteers and supporters, you can't bring in the dollars that you need to survive, and you can't have an impact on your own local community (or the state, or the nation, or the world), unless you're known and respected.

You're also missing important opportunities to renew, recharge, and bring in new ideas and new energy.

This handbook is designed to help bring the sometimes baffling world of marketing down to the grassroots and make it accessible to community organisations of all sizes and all types.

It covers a wide range of marketing topics, from working with the media to preparing for mail marketing efforts to using Web 2.0 tools to spread your message.

Effective marketing can act as a magnet – drawing people to your group, encouraging them to support what you do and convincing them to take an active role in helping you achieve your aims.

Don't let your community group miss out.

**Denis Moriarty**

**Managing Director, Our Community**

# Project Partners

This guide has been produced as part of a unique partnership between Our Community, The Alcoa Foundation, Leader Community Newspapers and Australia Post.



## The Alcoa Foundation

The Alcoa Foundation aims to improve the quality of life in the communities in which Alcoa operates. For almost 60 years, the Foundation has invested in the community, providing a wide range of grants, fostering an active employee volunteering program, working with communities to strengthen their emergency and disaster preparedness and endeavouring to improve the financial sustainability of groups through its global Social Venture/Enterprise Forum.



locals love Leader

## Leader Community Newspapers

Leader Community Newspapers is Australia's largest suburban community newspaper group, with 33 papers covering the breadth of Melbourne's suburbs and reaching more than 1.8 million people each week. Leader has long and established links in the areas in which it has its newspapers, and continues to support a wide variety of community and grassroots events and causes.



## Australia Post

Australia Post has a long and proud history of supporting the community through community investments and partnerships focussing on three key areas – education and literacy, environment and rural and regional Australia. Among the programs it supports are National Literacy and Numeracy Week, the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal and Planet Ark's recycling efforts. Australia Post proudly partners Our Community in supporting the Marketing, Media and Post Centre.



[ourcommunity.com.au](http://ourcommunity.com.au)

## Our Community

Our Community is a world-leading social enterprise that provides advice, guidance, training and tools to Australia's 700,000 community groups and schools, as well as practical linkages between the community sector and business, government and the public. With support from Australia Post, Our Community established the Marketing, Media and Post Centre ([www.ourcommunity.com.au/mmp](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/mmp)) in 2004. The site has helped tens of thousands of Australian community groups improve their marketing efforts.

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## **Section One:**

# **Starting Out**

# Introduction to marketing for community groups

Community groups often overlook the importance of marketing, but the truth is it's difficult to achieve anything significant without it.

You can't attract members, volunteers or supporters, you can't bring in the dollars that you need to survive, and you can't have an impact with your work if people don't know you exist.

You will also miss the chance to improve your group, bring in new ideas and new energy.

But being known is not enough – you need to be known by the right people, those who can help your cause with their money, support and influence, or those who can help make your group stronger by becoming members, volunteers or supporters.

View marketing as an integral aspect of your group's work. Rather than steering you away from your group's goals and mission, marketing should go a long way towards helping you achieve them, and then helping you tell everyone about it!

## The benefits

Many people think of marketing as being solely about advertising campaigns, promotional activities or sales efforts. But that isn't the case; nor is marketing solely about getting donations or attracting more members.

Certainly, these can be components of a wider marketing campaign, but they should not be the only components.

At its core, marketing is about examining the world in which you operate, and your place within it.

It involves finding out what opportunities and threats exist, what needs your current or potential stakeholders have, and how you do and can meet those needs.

It's also about looking at your "competition" – other groups in your sphere – and what you are or could be doing differently, or better.

Putting in place a more structured, effective marketing strategy will offer a huge range of benefits for your community group. It will help you to:

- **Find new friends** – Marketing will help attract new people to your group as volunteers, members, donors, fundraisers, service users or participants in your activities.



- **Stay in touch with old friends** – Just as importantly, marketing will help your group stay in touch, or get back in touch, with old friends.
- **Reach new audiences** – Thinking more strategically about how you get your message out will help you target and reach new audiences – people from different age groups, cultural backgrounds, geographical areas or interest groups.
- **Build legitimacy** – Marketing will help your public standing, increasing your profile and in turn increasing its standing and legitimacy.
- **Build confidence** – Telling people about your achievements helps to show current and future supporters that you are doing what you have promised; that their work and financial support are paying dividends.
- **Leverage more support** – People prefer to give money and support to those they know and trust – and to those that *others* have already shown that they know and trust.
- **Foster goodwill** – “Goodwill banking” is the term that’s applied to the process of stocking up on positive stories – something that’s good in itself but becomes even more important if bad times hit. A good standing in the eyes of the community can earn you a better hearing if things do turn sour later on.
- **Spread knowledge** – Many community groups see the dissemination of information as an important part of their role. Marketing helps that happen.
- **Encourage participation** – There is now much evidence to suggest that the social connections that come from belonging to a community group are good for your health. By marketing your group effectively you can draw those people to you like a magnet.

## Marketing methods

There is much more to marketing than just advertising.

There are many communications media – paid and free – you can use, but to use them to the best advantage of your group is the key.

It’s important, therefore, to think through your marketing options before starting your campaign.

*“There is much more to marketing than just advertising.”*

## Your message

The communications methods you use will hinge on the messages you want to convey and your potential audience. You can frame your message or messages by working through the following points:

- **What** message are you conveying? Is it a general message to raise awareness of your group, or a more specific message?
- **Why** are you conveying the message? (To encourage? To lobby? To recruit? To gain support? To raise funds? To raise awareness?)
- **Who** are you trying to convey it to? It could be a specific audience or a number of different audiences. Try to be specific about who you're trying to reach.

Once you've worked out the What, Why and Who, you can move on to the Where and When.

## Disseminating your message

There are many ways you can spread your message to your audience:

- **Paid advertising** – There are many benefits to paying for ads, not the least being that you get to control the message.
- **Free advertising** – If your budget's too tight for paid ads, free ads (through community service announcements, "What's On" columns, etc.) are a good option.
- **News media** – Appearing in the news section of your local, metropolitan and regional newspapers is one of the most powerful ways of spreading your message. An article with a picture is even better.
- **Other media** – Don't forget magazines, and magazine-style TV and radio shows (commercial and community-based).
- **Letters to the editor** – Letters to the editor are among the most-read pages of a newspaper, so they're a great way to spread your message.
- **Opinion pages** – If you're well-known, or have something particularly interesting to say, you may be able to secure some space to do an opinion piece on a current issue. This marks your group as an authority on the issue, and spreads the word about the work your group is doing.
- **Direct mail** – Direct mail remains an extremely effective way of reaching a large number of people with a message that they can hold in their hands and examine at their leisure.
- **Speeches** – Happily accept any offers to present information about your group in the public arena. If you're super-confident, or have a

super-interesting story to tell, contact groups like Lions and Rotary and offer to come along, entertain and inform their members.

- **Word of mouth** – Word of mouth is one of the most potent forms of marketing you can get, because it involves a personal recommendation.
- **Flyers/Brochures/Posters** – You can have brochures available in your office or reception, with a PDF copy on the internet so people can find out quickly who you are and what you do. Flyers can be used to promote your events to a targeted audience, and posters can be placed in shop windows and on community noticeboards.
- **Newsletters** – Newsletters, both hard copy and electronic, are a great way to stay in touch with existing supporters and potential new ones. Once you've established a loyal newsletter audience, you have an easy way to get your messages out quickly.
- **Annual reports** – Your annual report should be more than a reporting tool – it should be used help establish your group's credentials to a wider audience, and reassure your current supporters that you're still on the right track.
- **The internet** – Your website, as well as other people's websites, can be used to great effect to spread the word and get your message out. The greatest advantage of the web is that it's available to audiences 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- **Email** – Email is a great way of spreading a message to large numbers of people quickly and cheaply. Email signatures can also be used to ensure every piece of electronic mail that leaves your office includes a reminder of your work and how people can contribute.
- **Blogs** – Blogs can be effective in spreading your messages as well as allowing people the chance to interact with you, have their say and "feel a part" of what you are doing.
- **Social Networking/Media** – Facebook, MySpace and Twitter are among the best known social networking sites and applications. And each can be used, in different ways, to spread the word about what you are doing and market your group to the public.
- **Text messaging/mobile devices** – While a number of organisations have started getting their message across via SMS messaging, others are linking new-generation mobile devices like iPhones to messages they deliver on social networking sites or via email.
- **Letterhead, envelopes** – Every piece of stationery that leaves your office can be used to spread your message.