

# **telling** your story



**this** section contains the following guides:



**how** to calculate the impact of your work

**how** to communicate the impact of your work

**how** to leverage your brand for fundraising

**how** to pitch to investors, media or sponsors

**how** to run a social media campaign

**how** to get media coverage

Click on the guide and follow the links throughout the text for more information. Links to related guides and websites are highlighted in this section in **bold orange**.



# how to calculate the impact of your work



Calculating the impact of your organisation's activities is vital, but can be hard to measure. This article explains how to define your key performance indicators and the data you'll need to measure them.

## Go back to your purpose

Before you can calculate your impact, you need to be clear about what the difference is you're trying to make. Any measures of impact will only be relevant if they relate to what you or your organisation is trying to achieve.

For example, if your organisation's purpose is to provide training opportunities for young creatives, then measures of impact are likely to be number of opportunities provided, amount of time taken from training opportunity to job placement and participant satisfaction with the service provided.

Revisit your organisation's purpose (or mission) to consider the activities which truly demonstrate the value of your organisation. When you do, the measures you need to track will focus on those activities.

## Quantitative and Qualitative

The impact of creative practitioner or organisation will rarely be encapsulated by hard numbers only. Meaningful measurement of creative impact will require a mixture of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Quantitative metrics are often an expression of outputs divided by inputs – what you got for how much you put in. A typical example in performing arts work is to take the number of attendees and divide it by the amount of funding provided. This gives us the widely used "subsidy per seat" measure.

Following this basic formula, you'll find many ways to express your impact based on whatever outputs are important for your creative work or organisation. In the example of training opportunities for young creatives, the quantitative outputs of that organisation – participants assisted, training courses delivered – are easily compared to a range of different inputs – funding, earned income, sponsorship and philanthropy. Generally speaking, the lower the ratio, the better.

However, these numbers will tell only part of the story. The full story needs to capture non-numerical data which demonstrates the human impact of your work.

## Collecting qualitative data

You can capture some of this "soft data" and turn it into metrics to track on an ongoing basis. This can be done by running surveys on your key stakeholders.

The example training organisation could survey their students' attitudes to the quality of teaching. This could lead to an easily-expressed metric, along the lines of "80% of students rated the quality of teaching as very good." Movements in this metric from year to year could prove very useful to shaping future curriculum.

That method of capturing soft data could be as long or as short as you want. In the example above, the survey could include questions on course design, industry engagement, job prospects and professional networks. All of which could be good measures of the organisation's impact.



Don't track too many. Doing so dilutes the message about your impact and makes it difficult to collect. Choose 4-5 of these soft data metrics to track and commit to tracking them over time.

### **Capturing stories**

Some qualitative data can't be condensed into a percentage point or a ratio. These are the stories from your stakeholders which bring the impact of your work to life.

Collecting testimonials is a great habit to get into and can be practiced by individual practitioners and creative organisations alike. Conduct mini-interviews with your attendees or participants, focusing on the areas of impact you want to track. Do this in a targeted way; choose people that have a powerful story to tell about one of the measures related to your purpose and ask them to speak about that.

Then – document and disseminate. You should do this in a **range of different ways**. A written quote is great, but will have much more impact on social media if it's backed up with an engaging photo. Capture your testimonials on audio and video and share them widely. The cumulative effect of these is reinforcing the message that your creative practice excels in specific ways, which can only be expressed in human terms.

### **In summary**

1. Revisit your purpose
2. Think about the elements of your work which demonstrate your commitment to that purpose
3. Think about the combination of three types of metrics to help calculate impact:
  - Quantitative (hard numbers)
  - Qualitative converted to quantitative
  - Qualitative (brilliant stories)

### A NSW EXAMPLE: **SYDNEY STORY FACTORY.**

The Sydney Story Factory collect stories from their participants, parents, volunteers and supporters to tell their impact story. For example:

“ Briana has travelled so far from where she was before she joined Story Factory. She is no longer depressed and displays [a] happy outlook on her face all the time. She also feels very confident and her self-esteem improved dramatically. There is no word can express my gratitude. ”

Carina, mother of Briana.

*Sourced from their 2016-2017 Annual Report.*

### **TIP.**

**any** measures of impact will only be relevant if they relate to what you or your organisation is trying to achieve.

### **FURTHER READING**

**Culture Counts** – A digital evaluation platform for measuring cultural impact

**Google Alerts and Analytics** – Free tools to help measure engagement and impact of your website and web presence

**Surveys 101** – Free best practice help sheets – Tips on survey creation from Survey Monkey

# how to communicate the impact of your work



Communicating the impact of your activities is an essential tool for spreading awareness and inspiring support for your work, business or organisation.

Once you have **calculated the impact of your work**, it's important to communicate your impact with the world. From media releases to case studies, this article summarises a few of the communications methods at your disposal.

Tailor your communications to suit your audience by thinking about what will matter to them about your work. What are the things they care about? What examples, statistics or stories in your work relate to these? What do you want them to do once they understand the impact of your work?

When communicating impact, avoid jargon and include relevant qualitative and quantitative data.

## Methods of communication include:

### A MEDIA RELEASE

Many news outlets and websites won't start the reporting process without a media release. A good **media release** summarises the facts about your impact so that journalists can write a compelling story. Use quantitative data to tell the story of who – what – where – when – how. Use qualitative information such as quotes, feedback, testimonials and images to add colour to the story.

### TALKING POINTS

Create a list of 'talking points', which are a set of clear and easily remembered phrases that outline the impact of your work. They are agreed upon beforehand by spokespeople who are your champions and can clearly communicate your story, and used by anyone speaking about the work, whether publicly or privately. The 'rule of three' is often used by speechwriters when creating talking points – if you were limited to three important points to describe the work, what are the main ideas that you would highlight?

### CASE STUDIES

Use the quantitative and qualitative data to create stories or case studies about the work. Go beyond the facts and figures to communicate the human impact. Gather quotes, feedback and testimonials as part of your follow-up. Did someone report that your film festival helped them to gain confidence in themselves as a filmmaker? Was someone in your audience so moved by the work that they made a large donation to your organisation? Did a client report an improvement in their marketing or turnover as a result of sponsoring your event? When telling the story of your impact, case studies can be far more memorable than dry facts and figures. Once written, they can be used everywhere from your website and social media channels to final reports.

### IMAGES

Collect photographs and video that help to tell the story of your impact. A photograph of a riveted audience or video of people giving feedback after a screening can be used widely across a range of platforms.

### ONLINE COMMUNICATION

Tell stories across all your social media platforms and on your own website using testimonials, positive feedback, compelling statistics and images.

### INFOGRAPHICS

*Infographics* are visual presentations of information or data. Use infographics to express your impact by presenting complex data in a way that is eye-catching, easily understood and shareable.

### PERFORMANCE REPORTS

A performance report contains all of the previously mentioned elements, as well as more in-depth analysis of the work, the measurement strategy, lessons learned and goals for the future. Even if it's not required by a funding body or investor, it may be worthwhile creating a performance report. It can then be shared with any stakeholders who could be interested in working with you in the future.

Communicating your impact validates your work, reassures stakeholders that you're meeting your goals and helps to win over supporters. Your communications strategy needs to be part of the **measurement** process from the start. This will help you collect the right data for each communications method as your project unfolds, so you can share it with the world.

### TIP.

**the** 'rule of three' is often used by speechwriters when creating talking points – if you were limited to three important points to describe the work, what are the main ideas that you would **highlight**?

### FURTHER READING

**Writing a Media Release** – Free help sheet from The Our Community Group

**Writing Effective Talking Points** – Article from The Writing Centre

**Infographicmaker** – Canva has a free tool including templates and ready-made design elements

**Case Study: BAMB - Bank Art Museum Moree**

# how to leverage your brand for fundraising



Having a strong brand presence helps your creative work stand out and builds trust and confidence with your donors. This article outlines how to build a brand that supports your fundraising.

Most supporters go through a journey before they decide to donate to you. That journey consists of several stages: awareness of your brand and organisation, considering alternatives, selecting a preferred option, deciding to donate and hopefully repeating that decision again and again.

Brand awareness is the first stage on this journey. Think about the awareness of your brand within your target market. Have they ever heard of you? Have they been to see your work? Once you know who you want your brand to speak to, you can undertake activities to build brand awareness within that target segment.

Brands don't build themselves. Look for opportunities to get your brand in front of your target market. This may mean giving presentations, speaking at conferences, staging showcases or gaining media coverage. The goal is not to reach people who already know and like your brand. Building brand awareness means introducing your work to new potential supporters.

## Reinforce your brand

Your staff, management and board members should be ambassadors for the brand. Donors, sponsors and customers want to hear from them and have contact with them. Give them all opportunities to connect.

If you're an individual creative, this is just as important. You embody your brand and contact between you and your supporters is vital.

## Take care of your brand

If you've put money and effort into designing your brand, you don't want it sabotaged. Treat it with respect. You don't want to see it printed in the wrong colour, or in a size which makes it unreadable, or emblazoned on a shoddy piece of merchandise. Take time to review the expression of your brand so that it looks great wherever it's reproduced.

Ensure your web presence is well branded and up-to-date from your website to your social media accounts, your blog and anywhere your brand gets mentioned online. This can be difficult to control, but make sure that wherever someone chooses to visit you online, the brand is well represented. Your online presence should make it clear that you're looking for donors, linking your brand to fundraising.

Your donor appeals need to be consistent with your brand. Your brand is probably *not* desperate, disorganised, aimless or ill-considered. Your campaigns shouldn't be either. If your brand is about creativity, quality and passion, then that's what your donor appeals should reflect.

## When to use a sub-brand

Consider creating sub-brands for specific fundraising appeals. A well-designed brand can be adapted to appeal to different market segments. If your main brand is Firebrand Theatre and you want to raise money for a youth theatre troupe, a sub-brand might be Firebrand Youth. Consider a separate brand for your regular annual campaign: the Firebrand Christmas Appeal, or similar. A good brand is diverse and you can use it in a number of ways to enhance your fundraising.

## Consider a refresh

If you feel your brand is not working as effectively as you would like, consider a brand refresh or a complete re-branding exercise. It can pay to get professional advice on your brand's expression and design. While this can be a considerable investment, it can be of long-lasting benefit. During this process you should identify your purpose, your values and your personality. All these underpin a strong visual brand that should connect with your audiences and help you to stand out.

### TIP.

**brands** don't build themselves.  
Look for opportunities to get your brand in front of your target market.

### A NSW EXAMPLE: **STUDIO A.**

Gabrielle Mordy, CEO and Artistic Director at Studio A, explains how a rebrand in 2015 has bolstered the organisation's fundraising efforts:

“ In 2015, we embarked on a rebrand that would counter perceptions about disability and the arts. Our logo is confident and not too stylised, which means it can represent the diversity of our artists. The strength of our brand certainly helps in our fundraising efforts. Last week I met a major arts organisation and was told we got the agreement over the line because they love the way we present ourselves. I consistently get this kind of feedback – particularly from newly introduced people saying how much they love our brand and website. ”

### FURTHER READING

**The challenges of branding and marketing the arts** – Interview with Georgia Rivers, Sales and Marketing Director Opera Australia, by NSF Consulting

**Survive in the art world: market the brand, sell the product** – Article from The Conversation by Kim Lehman and Ian Fillis

**Storytelling Basics: How Creatives and Brands Can Build a Following** – Online course from Kickstarter

**Case Study: BAMB - Bank Art Museum Moree**

**Case Study: Studio A**



# how to pitch to investors, media or sponsors



Pitching is inevitable when working in the creative industries and can be nerve-wracking. Follow the steps below to master the art of pitching.

A pitch is any presentation that communicates your ideas or organisation to potential investors, sponsors or media. It can be delivered in person, digitally, in writing, formally or informally.

The aim of any pitch is to communicate the benefits of working with you in some capacity. You need to gain the listener's approval so they take direct action by hiring you, giving you money or media exposure.

## Step 1: Do your research

An influential pitch starts with the listener. Do your homework and find out as much as you can about what they are looking for, their criteria for support, what language they use and what they've supported before.

Ask yourself, 'What's in it for them?' Why would they support you, this idea, or your organisation? Demonstrate empathy for the wants and needs of their organisation and an understanding of their position.

## Step 2: Plan your pitch

Your pitch needs to answer four questions:

1. Who are you?
2. What's your idea?
3. What can the listener do for you?
4. Why should they engage with you?

Think about how you will engage the listener's curiosity. Draft a pitch that is engaging and persuasive. Never make unsupported claims in your pitch. Include evidence to back up your claims.

## Step 3: Create an elevator pitch

An elevator pitch is a mini-introduction that's so concise, it can be communicated between floors of an elevator ride. People are busy, so your pitch should be brief. Creating an elevator pitch forces you to edit: 50 impactful words are much harder to create than 500 words of content.

## Step 4: Step back

Once you have done your research and refined your elevator pitch, step back and let the words and ideas mature for a day or two. When you return, look for ideas or language that are vague, clichéd or rhetorical. Does your pitch convey the brand or personality of your organisation? Will it light a fire in the listener? If not, go back and rewrite your elevator pitch until it's perfect.

### **Step 5: Create your collateral**

A pitch is much more compelling if you have collateral to demonstrate your idea, business or project. Think about creating:

- A 'pitch deck' or slide presentation that demonstrates all your key messages in a punchy visual way. A great presentation can be used by itself, without your presence, or in conjunction with a verbal pitch
- An executive summary or 1-2 page explanation of your organisation and elevator pitch
- A digital credentials folder that contains more in-depth material about your business, organisation or idea. This will be given to the listener if you get to the next stage, but preparing it in advance helps you work out what to share now
- Marketing material to support your pitch such as a website, social media campaign or brochure
- Visual material including videos, photos and infographics
- Don't forget to include your contact details

### **Step 6: Practice**

Practice makes perfect. Write your pitch script and practice to the point that you can throw the script away. Rehearse everything, from the way you introduce yourself to possible questions afterwards. Try it out for friends or peers, especially if they're unfamiliar with your work. Ask for their constructive feedback and try not to take any criticism personally.

### **Step 7: Don't be afraid to sell**

The aim of a pitch is to influence someone to become engaged with what you have to offer, and that means selling. Think about the benefits of what you're pitching and what will make someone want to 'buy'.

### **Step 8: Be compelling**

Even if you're terrified, do your best to be compelling and entertaining. If you seem interesting and confident, you are more likely to influence the listener.

### **Step 9: Protect your intellectual property**

Pitching can put you in a tricky legal situation. Without a clear confidentiality agreement the information you disclose could be used by anyone listening. Educate yourself about how confidentiality works. Talk to the listeners about their confidentiality arrangements, and discuss the situation with a lawyer if you feel the need. You may want listeners to sign a confidentiality agreement or non-disclosure agreement beforehand, if appropriate.

### **Step 10: Be patient**

Engagement takes time, so don't expect an immediate response. Even if the listener doesn't make a decision on the spot, the pitch could be the beginning of a long and fruitful relationship.

## **FURTHER READING**

- **How to Plan the Perfect Pitch** – ArtsHub and Creative Partnerships Australia article by Andrea Simpson
- **Perfect Pitch: How to Nail Your Elevator Speech** – Article by Laura Karen
- **Pitching Your Idea** – Information sheet from Arts Law Centre of Australia
- **Case Study: Studio A**

# how to run a social media campaign



A successful social media campaign begins with planning and preparation. This article summarises the elements of an effective social media strategy.

Social media changes so quickly that there's no right or wrong way to run a campaign. Having a social media strategy in place will help your campaign run more smoothly.

## Understand your audience by creating personas

Your social media campaign is not going to appeal to the whole world. Spreading your message too wide can make it boring and generic, so tailor your message to your target audience.

Creating marketing personas is a helpful tool for understanding your audience. Personas are characters created through a combination of market research, available data and best guesses.

Describe them by thinking about:

- **Demographics** – their gender, age, income and the area they live in.
- **Psychographics** – their personality type, values, family and lifestyle.
- **Work Life** – where do they fit in business/work? Are they self-employed or an employee? What kind of company do they work for? What kind of job do they do? Are they a business leader?
- **Behaviour** – their likes and dislikes, hobbies and interests, especially online.

Group together shared characteristics to create a character, and give that persona a name. Your persona can help you make assumptions about your audience that can guide your campaign. For example, the audience for your new web series might be best described as mostly male, early to late thirties, professional and well educated. You've called him Dave. Dave will be found via LinkedIn and Facebook. He is very unlikely to be using Snapchat.

Personas can help you to focus on your audience and share the most compelling information via the right channels.

## Create relevant, sharable content

The content you create needs to be relevant to your audience and shareable.

For example, your persona Dave might enjoy 10-second snippets of your new web series that he can share with his friends on social media. He might share behind-the-scenes photos and bloopers from your shoot.

Brainstorm content ideas by talking to friends and family, researching your chosen persona's favourite types of content, and looking at what your competitors and peers are doing for their campaigns.

Make sure your content is not "all about you". The main goal should be "what's in it for them"? Why should your audience engage with your content on social media, and share it with their friends?

### Limit your campaign to a few platforms

Targeting every social network without looking at their demographics is a waste of time. With new platforms entering the market constantly, market research will help you to choose the best channels. Websites such as **Social Media Examiner** and **Statista** can give free, up-to-date demographic information about each platform, as can the platforms themselves. Use your personas to choose which platform is best to reach your chosen audience.

Limit your campaign to one or two social networks. This makes it easy to tailor your message to the audiences on each platform.

### Timing is critical

When will you release this campaign and for how long? Decide if your target audience is local, national or international and time your campaign accordingly. Allow for holidays in Australia and globally, important dates and times when people are most likely to be engaged with social media. Read articles about the **best times to post on social media**.

Social media messages have a lifespan. Consider the lead-up to launching your strategy, the launch itself, and how long your campaign will run.

- What marketing messages will be shared at which stage?
- What's the best content for each stage?
- Are there different offers or benefits to share at key points in the campaign?

If your campaign is ongoing, then ensure your content is constantly being refreshed and reinvented.

### Map your strategy

To map your strategy, start by:

- Writing the posts you'd like to share;
- Creating photos and video;
- Organising your assets and vetting everything for errors and tone;
- Timing each piece of content to the overall timing of your campaign; and
- Working out how often you will post, across which platform.

Your audience needs to be aware that your campaign is taking place, but not feel bombarded by messaging from all sides.

**Create publishing schedules.** Some platforms allow you to easily schedule posts based on a calendar. Social media management tools can schedule posts, recycle your content, manage network engagement and report on the analytics of your campaign.

Consider how you will track your campaign:

- Create and use #hashtags to track your themes and ideas across a range of platforms;
- Follow clicks on posts, retweets, mentions and shares;
- Learn how to use the analytic tools for each platform;
- Encourage comments and reviews; and
- Use a social media engagement tool to report on reach, engagement, response rate, conversation rate, and online community growth.

## Set goals

Before you launch your campaign, work out your goals. What exactly would you like to achieve? How will you know your audience has engaged with you? Your goals for the campaign will influence the content you share.

With each goal you choose, devise a few ways to measure success. Page likes, post reach, total views and engagement are all metrics that can help you to analyse and review your campaign, figure out what worked and what didn't and inform your next social media campaign.

## TIP.

**personas** can help you to focus on your audience and share the most compelling information via the right channels.

## FURTHER READING

**Facebook Blueprint** – Free online training in how to best use Facebook, Messenger and Instagram for your business or organisation

**Social Media Examiner** – The world's largest social media marketing resource, featuring free reports, online magazines, blogs and podcasts about all social networks.

**8 Best Social Media Management Tools To Save You Time** - Article by David Hartshorne.

# how to get media coverage



Whether it's a mention in your local newspaper or a review from your favourite blogger, media coverage can raise your profile, boost your credibility and attract more clients or supporters.

An extraordinary announcement, a great project, fascinating story or important research doesn't always equate to news coverage.

The starting point for media coverage is your goals. What are you hoping to achieve from media attention? Do you want to grow your audience, influence people to buy, attract sponsorship, or recruit new talent? Think about what you want, and then research which media channels are going to link you to the right people to meet your goals.

## Be targeted

Your news is unlikely to appeal to the broadest possible audience, so think carefully about the group you want to reach. Is your arts program specifically targeting young people? Is your app going to make life easier for people who are hearing impaired? A precise target will help you to decide which media channels, publications or programs are going to work best. Sometimes local media is more valuable than media outlets with a broad reach.

## Create a media list

Do your research and find out all the ways your target audience experience the media. Use that information to create a media list. Include notes on each publication, media outlet, news website and freelance journalist you can find. Use the media outlet's website and LinkedIn to find out the most relevant journalist to contact for each channel. By understanding what kind of topics journalists are interested in, you'll have a better chance of getting the coverage you need.

## Be new and newsworthy

Journalists look for elements of your story that are worthy of attention and up-to-the-minute. How important is your story to your target audience? How topical is it? Is there a good story to tell, such as the resolution of a conflict or a triumph against the odds? Does it take current media trends and spin them in a different direction? Most importantly, is it new?

## Choose your channels

Think about what sort of media coverage you want. Do you want local, state or national coverage – or a combination of the three? Are you focussing on television, radio, newspapers or magazines? Would you like to be featured in a niche publication or specific website? Choose a few favourite channels that speak to your chosen audience and start there.

## Write a great media release

Most TV, print, radio and digital networks still require a media release: a presentation of the facts about your project's impact that journalists can use as their starting point. Craft a clear and concise written summary of the basic information and quotes, and incorporate **quantitative and qualitative data** that brings your story to life. Include relevant contact details, suitable images and a link to your website.

### **Make it visual**

Quality images, such as photos of your subject matter or key players, are far more useful to media outlets than words alone. Video is even more compelling. Print and digital media are always looking for images to help drive content and television or web platforms love video.

### **Include quotes**

A catchy quote or captivating sound bite, especially from someone important, can help push your media release to the top of the pile. Media outlets are looking for something that will make a story unique and quotes help ideas to stick.

### **Write a gripping subject line**

Journalists receive an enormous amount of email, releases and pitches every day. Many emails get deleted unopened, unless the subject line catches their interest. Find an interesting spin to your story and make this your subject line for emails. Irrelevant and dull subject lines will be deleted immediately so be creative.

### **Understand lead times**

All media outlets have different lead times, which is the time between a journalist writing an article and when it is published or broadcast. Consumer magazines can have a lead time of six months, but a website may only need a few hours. When researching media channels, find out the lead time and give them adequate time to consider your pitch.

### **Work out a follow-up strategy**

If a journalist is interested in your pitch, they'll usually get back to you quickly. Make sure you have a plan in place. Work out in advance who should be your spokesperson for interviews and what they will say to the media.

### **Be realistic**

Securing media coverage, especially broad coverage at a national level, is not easy. Building a media profile and creating relationships with outlets and individual journalists can take a long time. Be persistent without being annoying and be consistent in your approach. Follow up politely and be willing to learn from your mistakes.

If you are successful, make sure you share any stories across your own media platforms. Feature articles on your own website within a 'press' or 'news' section. Use Facebook or Instagram to re-post stories and encourage people to engage with your news.

## **FURTHER READING**

**Media - Preparing a Winning Strategy** – Help sheets from The Our Community Group

**How to Get Press Coverage** – Article by Janet Murray in The Guardian

**How to write a press release** – ArtsHub article by Fiona Mackrell

