

# How to promote your group or activity

From The CLEAR GUIDE v1, written by Les Robinson for Mission Australia March 2009

[www.enablingchange.com.au](http://www.enablingchange.com.au)

Good promotion means communicating more than just facts. It's a good idea to start with a positive solution that creates hope, illustrate it with a brief story, and have someone credible and trusted to support your message. Then, do the rounds and get your message out to as many people and places as possible.

## 1) Start with a positive solution

People usually don't need to be reminded about problems. It's solutions they are looking for. So stories about what works – especially what *similar* people have tried and proven – will get people's attention and inspire hope. Before you communicate, ask yourself: Do I have something that will give hope? Do I have something people will *want* to talk about?

## 2) Have a story

Base your communication around a simple, emotionally-touching story. Stories beat facts any day because people can imagine themselves as part of the story. Stories of people triumphing over difficulties by using particular skills create a sense of empowerment and optimism. People sharing personal stories with their peers creates a sense of community. So, before your communicate, ask yourself: What's the story?

## 3) Include a visual image

Have a photo or illustration to grab people's attention.

## 4) Include a quote from a similar or trusted person

Usually, the only way people can decide whether to believe a piece of news is if they think the person telling it is trustworthy. When the person issuing an invitation is similar, respected and connected, then they are likely to be taken seriously. So, invitations and communications should come from people who are similar to the listeners ie. peer leaders, respected community workers or community leaders from the particular community you are targeting.

## 5) Use plain English

Be ruthless in replacing welfare-speak with plain English. Words NOT to use include: access, partnership, program, unit, isolation, consult, engage, collaborate, committed, stakeholder, indigenous, CALD, develop, community, enriching, enhancing, outreach, meaningful, network, learning, inclusion, at risk, marginalised, referral etc...

## **6) Don't forget the call to action**

Be specific about exactly what you want people to do: "Come to the Southside Baptist Church at 6.30pm on Tuesday 9 May."

## **7) Clearly identify your organisation**

Clearly state the name of the organisation that's running the event. That helps create credibility.

## **8) Build a mail/email list**

Your group's mail/email list is one of its most important assets. Start with the members and then add everyone you can think of who would be interested in your group's work. Keep adding new names as you think of them. Add local groups, organisations and decision-makers who could help get the message out to their constituents, or who could become supporters in future.

## **8) Do the rounds**

Now you've got your message perfectly clear, get it out through as many channels as possible. Put your flyer on community notice boards, put items in the local paper, and see how many people you, and your committee, can personally meet and give the flyer to.

- Distribute to your mail/email list.
- Talk to people at local functions.
- Have a cake stall at fairs and festivals.
- Go along to and talk to other community groups (and give them an item for their newsletters).
- Put an item in the *What's On* page of your local paper.

Get into council's newsletter.

Put the flyer up at shopping centres, service clubs, neighbourhood centres, health centres, hospitals and child care centres.

### **9) Repeat, repeat, repeat**

These days, the level of distraction in people's lives is fantastic. People may need to receive a message from several sources before they start to pay attention to it – a poster, a letter, a conversation, a news story. They'll also need repetition over time. If you're promoting an event, you'll need to let people know at least a few weeks in advance, then remind them a week later, and a week before then event...and maybe a few days before as well!

Example of a promotional flyer:

**"I learnt how to read stories to Kiesha, now she smiles whenever I talk to her."**

– Lynda, Blacktown

Come along and learn how to read out loud to your child. Nursing sister Susan Grace from the Blacktown Childrens Centre will give you the tricks you need to read out loud and strong.

Call on 9643 5678, or stop in for a coffee and chat at the Blacktown Children's Centre, 112 Railway Street Blacktown, from 9 to 12 any Wednesday or Thursday.



Read-out-loud sessions are the first Monday of the Month from 10 am to 12 noon. It's easy, fun and your child will love it.

- Blacktown Children's Centre -

[TO GRAPHIC DESIGNER: ARROWS POINT TO THIS SAMPLE FLYER...]

Story (the quote)----->

Visual image----->

Positive solution ("tricks you need to read out loud and strong.") ----->

Similar or trusted person ("Lynda") ----->

Call to action----->

Your organisation----->

## ***Useful resources***

### **A Beginners Guide to Starting a Network**

The Local Community Services Association

[www.lcsa.org.au/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=474&Itemid=51](http://www.lcsa.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=474&Itemid=51)

### **Peter Kenyon's Tips for Maintaining Community Interest and Involvement**

[www.bankofideas.com.au/Downloads/Maintaining\\_Community\\_Interest.pdf](http://www.bankofideas.com.au/Downloads/Maintaining_Community_Interest.pdf)