

Digital Communications: Top Tips



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In October, representatives responsible for marketing & communications in 11 Aerowaves Partner organisations met during the Annual Partner Meeting at La Briqueterie, Vitry-sur-Seine.

Together we drew up this list of Top Tips for Digital Communications based on our collective experience of communicating about contemporary dance and our knowledge of good practice in the area.

We hope you'll find this useful to improve the impact and efficiency of your activities online!

Websites - your online “shop window”

- Dance is VISUAL - lead with great images & video, not dense text!
- Is the text on your website BENEFIT led and READER focused?
- Make it obvious what you want visitors to your website to do - use clear CALLS to ACTION and easy-to-see brightly coloured buttons and links
- Update your content regularly i.e: news/blog/events - and make it rich (include video / images => make sure they're properly sized & optimised)
- Is your site responsive to mobile & tablet viewing? Check what your visitors will find when they visit you!
- Is it easy to navigate and find basic information (like: next events / your address / how to buy tickets)?
- If you have lots of events, having a searchable programme is helpful - you can make themes to help audiences find shows they might like
- Is translating your site into English important to your online audiences?
- Do you have Google Analytics (or similar) installed on your website? It's quick and easy and gives you LOADS of information about how people use your website!

Search Engine Optimisation: help people to find you online

- Search Engine Optimisation sounds scary - but isn't... The basics are easy for anyone to get right. NOT DOING the basics means search engines (like Google) won't know what your website is about — and that means people can't find the exciting things you do!
- If you do ONE thing: make sure you have unique Title Tags on EVERY page of your website. They should be about 55 characters long and tell a reader what's on the page.
- Google your organisation — any surprises? Now, research what keywords/phrases your site currently ranks well for - is this what you expected?
- Use keywords/phrases (wisely and without needless repetition!) in your page headings / Meta Descriptions / Alt Tags on images
- Is your website quick to load? If you haven't properly optimised images/video for your website it can take too long to load your site and you will annoy/lose visitors
- Find out more here:
 - <https://www.hallaminternet.com/2014/essential-seo-checklist/> - Susan Hallam is a digital guru!
 - <http://www.a-m-a.co.uk/page.aspx?id=461> - Watch Video 9 - Heather Maitland gives great advice & knows both the arts & dance context.
 - <http://culturehive.co.uk/resources/digital-channels> - Daniel Rowles is a Digital Media specialist - this is a super-quick intro to writing good Title Tags

Social Media: or digital ‘word-of-mouth’

- Be human & invite interaction, don't just sell your shows => think of social media as a way to share your organisation's personality... and don't just talk about yourself either!!
- Decide what your purpose is on your social media platforms - who are you trying to reach? What communications “job” can that platform help you do? You won't have time to be active on all channels, so pick what's working best for you & your organisation!
- Use a content calendar to plan what & when to post - be strategic about it and don't overwhelm your fans!
- Use insights & analytics to learn more about your followers - When are they most active online? What kind of content do they engage most with? Do they reflect the kinds of people who come to your shows?
- Make it easy for artists coming to your venue or your event partners to interact & share content with you/about you!
- Make a list of online ‘influencers’ connected with the audience you're trying to target to reach new people - start conversations with them
- Try boosting some posts to help your best content reach an even wider audience
- Here are a few more guidelines:
 - <https://www.theaudienceagency.org/insight/using-social-media-to-build-an-engaged-online-community>
 - <http://www.keepandshare.com/doc/7294757/maximising-audience-engagement-on-social-networks-final-pdf-1-0-meg?da=y>
 - <http://culturehive.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/The-Social-Media-Dance.pdf>

Email marketing: not dead yet!

- Make sure you can sign up to your mailing list easily from your website & ask visitors to your foyer / buyers at the Box Office if they would like to sign up
- Plan the timing of your emails according to your audiences' habits
- Don't underestimate the lifespan of your email - if you include listings, people will return to it more than once to check info before they make a visit
- Keep your emails short - link back to your website for longer items & vary the content - with images & short video
- Use video screenshots with a play button rather than plain text links if you have a video in your email... and encourage click-through with big buttons for links like "Book tickets now"
- Can you offer benefits / exclusive news to your mailing list subscribers? Or to the ones who always read your emails? They are your loyal fans!!
- If you can, target different audience segments with different email content
- Make sure you have some text at the top of your email so that readers don't just see a blank space while your images are loading
- Test your subject lines - see what people are more likely to open!
- Make sure your email software makes responsive emails for mobile & tablet viewing - and test it!
- Find some more tips here: <http://culturehive.co.uk/resources/ten-top-tips-on-how-to-grab-your-audience-with-email-marketing>

Online advertising: making it targeted & cost effective

- Think about who you are trying to reach online before you decide where/how to advertise
- Google Display Network ads allows you to target visitors to your website with multiple exposures of your ad elsewhere on the internet
- Google Adwords offers free advertising to registered charities, but there are limitations
- Be **VERY specific** about what your goal is!
 - => Raising profile of organisation vs. selling tickets to a show
 - => Trying to find new followers on social media vs. trying to get current followers to come to an event
- Experiment with small budgets to test campaigns / interaction and watch your stats
- Always include a **Call to Action** - tell people what you'd like them to do next!
- Use moving images if you can - GIF / video / photo
- Use trackable links so that you can test how effective your ads are at driving traffic to your website - you will need Google Analytics to do this
- This article from Kiss Metrics offers a good introduction if you're thinking about using paid online advertising: <https://blog.kissmetrics.com/paid-internet-advertising/>

Resources

Need more help? There are LOADS of useful guidelines, articles and how-to lists here:

- <https://www.hallaminternet.com/> - UK digital strategy agency - really clear, up-to-date info library
- <http://www.a-m-a.co.uk/page.aspx?id=160> - the Arts Marketing Association in the UK has lots of resources - especially on it's online library: <http://www.culturehive.co.uk/>
- <http://artsaudiences.ie/> - Arts Audiences Ireland has some useful resources & case studies - incl. Digital Marketing training guides

You can also ask your Aerowaves marketing & communications colleagues for advice by joining our Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/AerowavesCommunicationsGroup/>



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This document was compiled by Eleanor Creighton
Communications Manager for Aerowaves
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