|  |
| --- |
| **Marketing Your Group for Free** |

The help sheet [Tips on Getting Free Exposure for Your Event](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketing/marketing_article.jsp?articleId=1612) looked at how to get the message out about your group or organisation's special event without having to pay a mint for it. But what about when it comes to marketing your group as a whole?  
  
While some of these methods work much more effectively when marketing a special event, many can easily be adapted for use in marketing your group. Rather than repeating that list, this help sheet will highlight nine of the easiest and most achievable ways of marketing your group for nothing.

Being able to market your group without it costing the world is vital given the tight budgets many community groups and not-for-profit organisations run on. So, not only should your group jump at the chance for some free publicity, it should actively seek it out.

**Word of Mouth/Name Dropping**

These two approaches are often great places to start when it comes to marketing your group for free.  
  
Both involve your group – its members, supporters, donors, helpers, volunteers and stakeholders – spreading the word about your group and what it does through speaking to people and dropping your group's name into conversation.

**Community Service Announcements**

Radio and television stations often donate time to allow community groups and not-for-profits to "advertise" themselves for free. This can be an effective way of getting your group some free exposure in the electronic media.   
  
More information on Community Service Announcements can be found in the Marketing, Media and Post help sheet [Getting a Community Service Announcement](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketing/marketing_article.jsp?articleId=1543).

**Community Calendar Listings in Major Newspapers**

Many major newspapers have a community calendar or upcoming events listing   
  
Major papers have "What's On" sections, either in the body of the paper or in special weekend supplements, or both. This is an option that is often overlooked, but it shouldn't be – it is cheaper than an advertisement and conveys all the information you need to a wide number of readers.  
  
It also appeals to an important target audience – people looking for things to do. Maybe some of those people could join your group or help your organisation.

**Community Calendar Listings in Suburban or Regional Newspapers**

Even better than marketing your group in the major daily newspapers is the idea of placing a community notice in your local paper.  
  
Again, these community notices are free and can often attract people looking for something to do.  
  
And if your group or organisation is from a specific town or area, targeting that area's people through a notice in the local newspaper could be more effective than placing the same notice in a larger metropolitan daily.

**Links through other Websites**

Your group could talk to similar organisations, your local council or local businesses to include your contact details on their websites.  
  
Those details could simply be a listing of contact information at the site, or actual links to your web page or e-mail contact. These sorts of links and referrals are free, but your group could be asked to reciprocate and include a link to the business, council or other group in return.  
  
**Online Community Portals**

Like newspapers, these sites have general Calendars of Events or "What's On" listings.   
  
Some of these are aimed at particular markets, such as tourists, and some are put up as a public service by municipalities or government agencies.

**Let your E-Mail Market your Event**

Look at your e-mail signature – if you send out an email, does your group get a plug?  
  
Ensure it does by altering the signature - it can be as easy as adding the name and contact details of the group – and possibly when it next meets - under your name in the signature at the bottom of the e-mail.

**Newsletters from Local Councils or Politicians**

Most politicians put out regular newsletters detailing what is happening in the electorate, and most councils put out regular pamphlets or newsletters to do the same thing.  
  
These newsletters can end up quite detailed, and most have a section on upcoming events or community groups in the area.  
  
Given you pay council rates – and pay the politician's wages – why not hitch a ride in these publications and get your group or organisation some exposure.  
  
It could be as simple as listing the name of your group or organisation, what you do, and how people can contact you.  
  
One thing to remember though is that some of these publications come out only every three months, so you might need to get your copy in early to help ensure its inclusion.

**Shop Windows**

Your group can get a plug for itself through a well-worded poster or notice in your local shop window.  
  
The wording should be catchy, but direct – "Are you interested in helping the environment? Join our group and find out how!"  
  
You can then include further contact details in the notice.

**Source:** [www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/)

http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/marketing/marketing\_article.jsp?articleId=1588