

13. PUBLICITY

This section

- (a) sets out the rationale for publicity;*
- (b) explains the need for planned, consistent publicity;*
- (c) provides examples of publicity activities and highlights issues to be considered when planning publicity.*

Rationale

In order for the public to avail of the services provided by a Youth Information Centre, they must first be aware of its existence. You must ask yourself "Do people know that we exist? Do they know what a Youth Information Centre is about?"

It is said that public relations is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organisation and its public. The purpose of publicity is to ensure that the public are aware of your Centre and its activities, and that your target group is aware that you exist for their benefit and know the type of services you offer. A variety of issues and opportunities should be used to publicise the Centre, through a variety of media, in order to keep interest high and prevent public boredom. You need to sell your services, making people want to use your Centre. The more creative and consistent you are, the better.

Need for Planning

Publicity for your Youth Information Centre should be part of a planned process, and not occur on an ad hoc basis. Therefore, you should plan a clear and effective annual publicity / promotional strategy. This process should be accompanied by the allocation of a specific publicity budget. How much can you spend on printing and on radio or newspaper advertising? If you have a large event, what will the venue costs be in addition to the publicity, and is it a venue people will want to visit?

Publicity Ideas – Issues to Consider

1. Initially, consider your Centre's public profile:
 - ♦ Does the public know the basics - who you are, where you are, what you do, how you do it and when you are open? Do you have good external signage and sign posting? While you may

think you are doing well on this point, never get complacent, and acknowledge that promoting a basic public profile is an ongoing process.

- ◆ So where are the promotional posters about your Centre placed? What places do young people and their parents frequent? Put them there e.g. in schools, libraries, supermarkets, post offices, banks, chip shops.
 - ◆ Schools provide a captive audience. The outreach you do by visiting schools and giving talks is an ideal promotional opportunity. Developing a relationship with the school can result in your being allocated a special section on a noticeboard, not just for your general poster, but also for notices concerning any topical issues you are promoting.
2. Then take a long look at your stationery and brochures; use them as promotional tools, also. Do your letterheads stand out? Do they list your services along the side? Do you have compliment slips, in addition to your brochures, which you can give out with information? Are your brochures colourful and inviting? Have you considered a user feedback system? A simple idea like asking users to fill in a comment card shows that you care about their opinion and are interested in improving the service. It also gives a good impression. If the findings are good enough, you can publish them in the local newspaper!
 3. Identify what issues or activities arise regularly, on a weekly or monthly basis, within your Centre e.g. information topics, and use them as part of your strategy. Then identify what media you will use. As a good starting point, you should look at the recommended *Updating Timetable* at the end of *Section 6* so that you can tie in your publicity with topics you want people to be aware of at a particular time.
 4. Consider forthcoming information activities e.g. the launch of a new publication or an information evening, which will require publicity and promotion of your service.
 5. What media to use - preferably free ones!
 - ◆ Start with those in your Centre e.g. posters, fliers, which you can design. Arrange attractive displays on the noticeboards, in the windows and in any other display areas you might have. Then arrange for external displays in e.g. schools, libraries, as suggested earlier.

- ◆ *Newspapers:* It is highly recommended that you try and arrange for a regular column in the local newspaper, for which you can write articles on topical issues and forthcoming information events. Examples of relevant topics are *Applying to College*, *Filling in the CAO form*, *Summer Work Abroad*, *Summer Activities*. Another idea is to design a regular Question and Answer section/session for both (or either) the local newspaper and radio.

(See tips for writing press releases further on in this section).

- ◆ *Parish Newsletters:* Never underestimate the wide readership, which can be reached through the local Church newsletter, particularly in rural areas. One thing to be aware of, though, is that some newsletters have so many requests for inclusion, that they may not be able to include as big an article as you would like, and you may have to adapt your information, accordingly. So check out that point first to avoid disappointment.
 - ◆ *Youth Service:* Some Youth Services have a youth newsletter. What better way to get free advertising and the publication of topical articles - all going direct to your target group?
 - ◆ *Radio:* Again, you may consider regular slots on the local radio, either pre-recorded or live, possibly with a phone-in question session. Certainly, consider a radio interview for a significant activity such as the launch of a publication. If you do not feel comfortable with such interviews, find out if your local station has a community bulletin board on which short notices submitted by you will be read out.
 - ◆ *Internet:* If your Youth Service has a website, ensure that Youth Information is prominently featured. Similar information material can be prepared for newspaper, radio and Internet. It is just a case of having someone capable of updating the website, regularly. The Internet is a highly visual medium so attractive presentation is essential in keeping a young person's attention.
6. Always remember that *word of mouth* is the most effective marketing tool of all. The most expensive promotional campaigns will be ineffective if your service lets you down, and users have a bad experience in your Centre and leave with a negative impression. QUALITY of product / service can almost sell itself, so the maintenance of high standards is essential.

Publicity, as previously stated, is an ongoing process of selling your service. The methods for doing so are varied and more numerous than described here.

Tips for Radio Interviews

One thing you should be aware of when preparing for a radio interview is that, no matter how you practise the sequence in which you say things, it usually won't go the way you plan. There is another person to consider and that is the radio interviewer, who will have a set of questions, which affects how you answer. The following tips will guide you, no matter how nervous you are!

1. **Know your facts.** Don't make anything up, just aim to get your message across.
2. **Be personal.** Any opportunity you have to tell a story, USE IT. Remember people relate to pictures, to real experiences.
3. **Don't use jargon, abstract words, or words that only people in your area of work understand.** Talk like people do.
4. **Listen.** Pick up on things said by the interviewer or somebody else on the programme and use to prove your point or promote your topic.
5. **Remember, you are the professional!** You've been invited on because you know about the subject. The same applies if you have to defend an unpopular decision.
6. **Don't read.** Have notes by all means, but only to guide you.
7. **Listen to what's being asked.** Don't be rushed into an answer.
8. **Speak slowly.** If you speak fast, you'll lose the thread of what you wanted to say.
9. **Relax.** You can only do better if you do.
10. **If you don't know, say so.**
11. **If something is indefensible, don't defend it!**
12. **Laugh if there's an opportunity.** Being funny and being a serious professional are not mutually exclusive. You won't be 'blacklisted' for levity.

One thing to know, the more you do interviews, the better you get.

Tips for Press Releases

- Use the 5Ws and How when writing the paragraphs of your press release.

WHO	who are you?
WHAT	what is happening?
WHEN	when is it happening?
WHERE	where is it taking place?
WHY	why this event?
HOW	how will it be done?

- These should, ideally, be in your first paragraph;
- Your second paragraph should have 2 or 3 sentences;
- The third one should have a quote from e.g. the Co-ordinator or Director;
- You should aim to be factual and correct rather than emotive;
- Have an angle;
- Give people their correct title;
- Find out when the newspaper goes to print and ensure that your press release is submitted in good time;
- Ideally, more than one person should look at the press release before it goes out to avoid spelling errors and to provide a different view.

(A useful resource is the Media Awareness Pack produced by Gearóid Ó Maoilmhichíl, National Youth Federation)

Sample Informal Text for a Press Release

So you think you know it all

Maybe you do know it all, but then again, maybe you don't. Maybe you could tell us a thing or two, but just maybe, we could inform you of more than a thing or two!

Do you know where your local Information Centre is, and when it's open? Well, Roscommon Youth Information Centre is on Castle Street, Roscommon Town, and open Monday to Friday 9.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. But if you aren't able to call in you can always phone us at 0903-25395 or e-mail us at yicrosc@eircom.net.

Do you know that we can help you with travel ideas and travel plans, and issue you with travel cards, which allow you discounts? Where would you stay if you've never been in Cork before? Do you want details of career choices and college courses? Are you aware of employment rights for under 18s? But

would you prefer to find out where to go go-karting? Or maybe you're ready to go job-hunting and want your C.V typed and to be given tips on doing interviews?

We have information on all of this, and even, believe it or not, much much more!!!

But we don't think we know it all; we just know how to help you and, of course, help you to help yourself!!

So why don't you come in to us and check it out for yourself. Maybe after that, you will just know it all!!

(The service provided is free and confidential).

YIC Logo - A Key Promotional Tool for all YICs

Guidelines for Use

All written communication from a Youth Information Centre, including advertisements and publications, should carry the Youth Information logo. The Youth Information logo gives the service a uniqueness and individuality. It ensures that we present a clear and distinctive image, and highlights the fact that the YIC is the source of the particular communication.

The logo can be presented either in full colour, black and white or in a monochrome colour from your current publication. If you are presenting it in colour, please ensure that the colours are correct. A correct version of the logo is available on disk, or by e-mail, from the Youth Information Resource Unit. The Pantone reference colours are: Star – Red 485C, Background & Text- Purple 274C, Figure-White.

If using the NDP (National Development Plan) logo, guidelines on its use can be found at www.ndp.ie

(Further information on Publicity/Promotion is available in the accompanying Course Handout Pack)

Opportunities for Publicity

January

CAO
Organisations
Nursing Applications
Summer Work in U.S./ J1 Visa

February

Countries
Summer Work/ Travel Abroad
Voluntary Work Abroad
Visas/ Work Permits

March

Post Leaving Cert. Colleges
Post Leaving Cert. Courses

April

Postgraduate Courses
Summer Activities
Publications

May

Youth Group Activities for Summer
Funding/ Grant Forms/ Applications
English Language Courses

June/ July

Tourism in Ireland
Hostels
Events/ Festivals

August

Leaving Cert. Results/
Repeat Leaving Cert.
Evening Classes/Distance Education
Accommodation List

September

Local Information
- maps, timetables
Part-time Work
Sports/ Leisure Groups

October

Irish Prospectuses
UCAS, Study in U.K

November

Careers

December

Spring Evening Classes