

MARKETING 101



MELBOURNE
FRINGE
FESTIVAL

Church of Burt, Melbourne Fringe Festival 2019.

Photo by Duncan Jacob.

Image description: A performer with short dark hair, wearing a white dress and dancing on a stage with blue lighting. A band is behind them.

Contents

You asked. We delivered. Here is a Marketing Pack for independent artists - chock-full of all the tips and tricks you'll need to market your event like a boss.

03

[Why does Marketing Matter?](#)

04

[Your Image](#)

06

[Your Blurb](#)

07

[Your Ticket Prices](#)

08

[Our Audiences and Opportunities](#)

09

[Deliver a Killer Campaign](#)

This resource is designed to help you put on an independent event. Please note that this document was created in April 2021 and all information was accurate at this date. If in doubt about the contents or if you have a question, get in touch with our Participants Services team at artists@melbournefringe.com.au.

WHY DOES MARKETING MATTER?



*Church of Burt, Melbourne Fringe Festival 2019.
Photo by Duncan Jacob.
Image description: A band all wearing white gowns and white wigs performing on stage*

It's important to put together a marketing campaign that tells your story and helps audiences to discover your event.

Think of marketing as an extension of the creative process. Look past the jargon: marketing is just the story you tell that links your event to its audiences.

A solid marketing campaign can:

- Increase ticket sales
- Get your work noticed by the independent arts community
- Raise awareness among potential funders
- Gather evidence of your work and its reception

Marketing campaigns might seem daunting, but we've put together this pack to guide you through each step of the process. You can also follow our [FringeMakers Facebook page](#) which is packed with resources for artists. If you're still feeling a little overwhelmed, we're always at the end of the phone.

YOUR IMAGE



Kick On, Melbourne Fringe Festival 2019.

Photo by Theresa Harrison.

Image description: An artist wearing a black and red costume, with two buns on their head. They are standing in front of a smoky blue background.

A picture is worth 1000 words. Which is good, as no one reads beyond 140 characters these days...

We really recommend you spend some time and dedicate some resources to creating an eye-catching, powerful image for your event. While it might be tempting to take a selfie and call it a day, our audiences often select the show they want to see based on the image alone. You could have the best show, but if your image doesn't reflect the unique vibe of your event, you might not get the right audience.

Here are some questions to consider when creating your image:

- What makes your work different?
- What is the tone of your work?
- What colours best represent your work?
- What is the best subject to represent your work?

Top Tips:

- Think about images that have captured your attention in the past - what is it about that image that made it so compelling? Have a flick through [our Program archive](#) for some inspiration.
- You might also like to bounce ideas around with a 'test audience' (friends, family, your local barista...) to make sure your image will really turn heads.
- DO NOT put text on your image. Under any circumstances. The media can't use it and it takes up precious space. Let your image speak for itself.

Examples from past Melbourne Fringe Festivals



Too Ready Mirror

The image reflects the dramatic tone of the work, while the mirror jars our reading of it, sparking intrigue.

Credit: Sarah Walker Photography



The Super Queer Murderess Show

The image draws on familiar cabaret motifs to create a sense of familiarity, while using bold colours to attract the eye.

Credit: Pier Carthew



Oliver Coleman: Poolside

The image reflects the playful nature of the work - a unique absurdist comedy and surreal stand-up.

Credit: Oliver Coleman

YOUR BLURB

You only have a few words, so make them count. Imagine someone who knows nothing about art heads to our Festival website or anywhere you may be presenting your event. Even if your event is abstract and experimental, it doesn't mean the language you use to describe it should be.

TOP TIPS:

- Keep things succinct and relevant
- Use concise language - short, sharp sentences
- Mention any relevant reviews or awards to give your work authority
- Address your reader, use words like 'you' instead of 'audiences' or 'people'
- Ask yourself: what will they experience? What will they think about when they leave?
- Avoid making the entire blurb a review of your event, i.e. "Everyone absolutely needs to see this saucy number. - Ballarat Bugle" will not, by itself, sell tickets.

Examples from Melbourne Fringe Festival 2019

La Nonna

La Nonna is a drag cabaret cum Italian cucina extravaganza about the relationship between Nonna and her nipote. Like a bowl of Nonna's delicious Sicilian pasta, it's salty, satiating and a hot mess.

Set in Nonna's kitchen, where strong women are always in charge and eating is non-negotiable, La Nonna is a joyous and unruly exploration of the Italian migrant past, a forgotten herstory and a musical tribute to a woman who never asked for one.

Join Nonna and her nipote as they navigate continents and identities, reveling in food, family and culture, the power of the feminine and the queer, all while getting down to the bangers of Italy's greatest divas: Arena, Imbruglia and Grande.

Passionate Machine

Call mum. Buy milk. Cancel free trial. Everyone writes instructions to their future selves – but what if the future starts writing back?

Rosy Carrick has to build a time machine – because her future self has already done so and is now stuck 100 years in the past. Given that her knowledge of quantum physics is limited to the works

of Arnold Schwarzenegger, Rosy must summon the help of science's greatest minds if she is to rewrite history and save herself...

Darting playfully between multiple narratives, this complex and emotional performance explores the realities of time travel and self-determination – taking in Bowie, motherhood and some most heinous hangovers along the way.

Winner of Brighton Fringe's Best New Play Award 2018 and The Infallibles Award for Theatrical Excellence, Passionate Machine is a hilarious and searingly honest story about obsession, salvation and finding yourself – literally.

YOUR TICKET PRICES



Bitch, I'm Madonna, Melbourne Fringe Festival 2020.

Photo by J Forsyth.

Image description: Two people in pink dresses and wigs standing on stage. One is licking food from their fingers, while the other looks forward into the audience.

Like mid-90s Larry Emdur, make sure the price is right.

Ticket prices aren't just about breaking even - they can often mean the difference between someone selecting your event over another.

We recommend using an average of 30% capacity houses over your season to work out what you need to make at the box office to break even.

The average ticket price for a Fringe Festival show is \$24.00. Remember: you set your own ticket prices, so have a think about what your audiences will happily pay. Don't undersell yourself either.

Discounts, offers and promo codes at Fringe

We recommend using a range of special offers, packages and promo codes to help you promote sales and awareness. For shows presenting in the Melbourne Fringe Festival, we suggest you consider these:

- Group Discounts: encourage audience to bring a group of friends.
- Early Bird Tickets: offer a discount for early purchaser – get some numbers on your sales reports!
- Member Discounts: Fringe members (Fringe Dwellers) are our loyal audience and can help you spread word of mouth.
- Fringe Binge: offer a discount to those who buy tickets to 3 or more shows in one transaction.
- Promo Codes: if you have a particular audience you want to target (football teams, university students), set up an online promo code that will allow them access to cheaper tickets.
- Cheap Tuesday: offer discounted tickets on a Tuesday to encourage mid-week sales.
- Many of these options may still be available to you, even if you're not presenting at Fringe. Chat to your venue to see what they recommend (they may have members or other regular ticketing specials), and if you're DIY ticketing, consider which options you can employ simply and easily without too much admin. Remember, prices, packages and codes not only make your work more accessible, they also tell the story of who you want at your event.

AUDIENCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Keep your friends close, keep your audiences closer.

You'll have your own target audiences, but it's good to know about the audiences of the festival or organisation you are presenting at. For instance, here's the typical Melbourne Fringe attendee:

- Female (64%)
- Under 30 (29%) or 30-39 (30%)
- Live in the inner northern and western suburbs
- Work full-time in the arts, education or health
- Identify as LGBTI (26%)
- Attend cultural events at least once a month (37%)
- Spend \$24 on tickets
- Have attended the Festival before (72%)
- Attend between 1 and 3 events (50%)

This is how they select their events:

- Artist/presenter (70%)
- Location (60%)
- Recommendations (56%)
- Cost (54%)
- Artform (45%)
- Fringe guides on website (28%)

Opportunities

Promotional opportunities are everywhere - it could simply be sharing a word with your yoga instructor, inviting your barista along to opening night or dropping show flyers in your neighbor's letterbox. Just remember, anyone you talk to is your potential ticket buyer. At Fringe we also offer a range of opportunities to promote your event:

- Festival publicist (keep reading for more info)
- People's Choice Award
- Early Bird ticketing
- Engage with Fringe on social media
- Posters and flyers at our Hub/Ticket Booth
- For advertising, printing and distribution check out our fabulous partners Triple R, Finsbury Green and Plakkit - many of which provide discounts to Fringe artists.

DEVELOPING A KILLER CAMPAIGN



*(I Am Going to Die in This Bracket), Melbourne Fringe Festival 2020.
Photo by J Forsyth.
Image description: two people in sparkling dresses performing in a garden.*

You've done most of the hard stuff by now (you go, Glen Coco). Now it's time to develop that killer campaign.

Follow these easy steps and you'll be on your way:

1. Define your objectives (what do you want to achieve?)
2. Define your audience (who will see your show?)
3. Define your message (what do you want to say?)
4. Determine your budget (how much can you spend?)
5. Determine your tools and tactics (how will you reach your audience?)
6. Make a plan (who's doing what and when?)

1. Define Your Objectives

What do you want to achieve? Be specific so you know what you're aiming for. You can't do it all, so know what you want to do and do it well.

- Are you trying to sell tickets? If so, how many?
- Are you trying to get reviewers into the show?
- Are you trying to raise your profile in the arts scene?
- Are you trying to grow your following?
- Are you trying to attract producers and programmers who may take on your work?

2. Define Your Audience(s)

Who is your event for?

Current audiences: This one's simple – people who already engage with your work.

Prospective audiences: People you would like to expose to your work that aren't engaged yet. While everyone is *technically* a prospective audience, you'll do best if you target your audiences a little more.

Here are some examples of audience groups:

- University students (undergrad, post-grad, international?)
- Artists (which type? Dancers, actors, directors?)
- Media and reviewers
- Touring delegates
- Interest groups (Is your show about a particular issue that might attract a particular group?)

Once you've narrowed it down, go even further and outline each group's demographics and behaviour.

Note: you might need to generalise and there may be some guesswork involved.

Demographics:

- Age
- Occupation
- Education
- Location

Behaviour:

- How do they receive information? (print, social media, online news, radio, podcasts)
- What other work do they regularly see?
- How do they spend their leisure time?

So now you have it: your target audience. The more you know about who you are targeting, the better chance you have of reaching them and getting them to your event.

3. Define Your Message(s)

Think about the kind of language that best communicates your work. Start talking about your event with those close to you - how are you describing it? How are other people interpreting what you're trying to do? Remember, your artistic rationale may inform your marketing message, but they are unlikely to be exactly the same. Your message should meet the needs of your current and prospective audiences.

Some questions to consider:

- What makes your event different?
- Is there a great story behind the work?
- Is there a relevant social aspect to your work?
- Why are you the best person to tell this story?

- How will you sum up what your event is about?
- What might convince an audience to come and see it?
- Is there any way of making the work more familiar (i.e. has it won an award? Does the artist have a profile? Is the content contemporary or reference current affairs)?

4. Determine Your Budget

You'll be creating an overall budget for your event, perhaps using our [budgeting template](#). Remember to include enough budget for marketing and include this in your total projected income. Don't spend everything you have on marketing, but make sure you have allocated some budget to telling people about your work. If you can, allow for some contingency. You're super prepared and have considered all your marketing actions, but if they don't work, it's worth having a little up your sleeve in case of emergencies. And if you sell all your tickets and don't need it, then great!

5. Define Your Tools and Channels

Now you know your objectives, your audiences and your message, it's time to figure out HOW you're going to reach them.

a) Collateral

'Collateral' is the collection of media used to achieve your objectives. Every show needs collateral... what you choose will depend on both your audience and your budget.

Types:

- Posters
 - Keep it simple - include show information including dates, times, venue, prices and the URL for booking. If you are presenting at Melbourne Fringe Festival, make sure you have our website and logo there.
 - Include relevant awards and reviews
 - Include one sentence that represents your event (see your key messages)
- Flyers
 - You can include a little more info here, such as the blurb and more reviews/awards
- Videos
- Images and graphics
- Advertising (we'll talk about that later)

Posters and flyers are great, if that's how your target audience receive their info. If you are presenting at Fringe, chat to our partners at Plakkit and Finsbury Green for advice and artist discounts. We also take your posters and flyers to distribute at our Festival Hub and Info Booth at Fed Square. Posters are great for catching people's attention while flyers are a good take-away reminder for people to book your event. But remember – if you print them, you have to get them out and about somehow. Make sure you have

considered distribution (through a company like Plakkit, hand-to-hand flyering, letterbox drops, etc.) before you press print. No point printing collateral then seeing it out with the recycling after your show wraps. If you're presenting outside a festival environment, consider where and how you would use posters and flyers.

Videos and imagery are also great ways to drum up interest and tell the story of your event, so make sure they reflect the feel and vibe of your event. They don't have to be elaborate or professionally produced - think about what you already have at hand. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Quick Q&A with the artist/s
- Behind-the-scenes shots at rehearsals
- Sneak peek/teasers of the show (particularly if the event is highly visual)
- Snaps/videos of media interviews
- Snaps/videos of prop shopping/set design - the elements that make your event unique

b) Digital

Digital channels are highly effective and often deliver the best bang for your buck, but don't waste your time being on all of them if they're not right for your event and audience.

Social Media

The first step is picking your channel. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Twitch, TikTok... they all have their place, so think about where your audience is likely to be, and the content you produce, and use that to help inform where you put your resources. Don't think you simply **MUST** be on everything... if you're time-poor you might like to stick to just one or two and do it really effectively.

The most important thing is to create a bit of a content plan so you're not just saying the same thing and grasping for content. Here's a simple, handy template:

Date	Channel	Media	Copy
15 October	Instagram	Story - artists at program launch, boomerang of artist opening and closing Festival guide, photo of event in guide	#melbfringe @melbfringe

15 October	Facebook	Link to event on website	<p>After months of hard work, we're finally ready to share our @melbournefringe show with you.</p> <p>Thanks to everyone who has helped us to get here, we can't wait for the Festival to start. Grab your tickets for cheap with our early bird offer!</p>
------------	----------	--------------------------	---

When selecting your channels and creating your content plan, it's good to know:

- **Facebook** is good for longer-form conversation, news and event updates.
- **Twitter** is where people get their news and have conversations. Follow the trends and see if you can work with them. Tweet at people who might be interested in your show.
- **Instagram** is where people go for short and sweet photos and videos, so make your messages visuals. It's not a place for long paragraphs, it's a place where you can generate interest and give people a real sense of your work.
- **TikTok** is good for video content, but keep it short and engaging (15 - 60 secs). This skews to a younger audience, and will work well if you have a teaser or snippet, which will allow your audience to get a sense of your work quickly.

Easy wins:

- Create a Facebook page for your event and/or production company. Invite everyone you know to like it.
- Create a hashtag for your event so that people can follow the journey and use it to share their own content.
- Remember to use relevant hashtags for the festival/venue you're part of - #melbfringe is what we use to build online buzz around the Festival. Also tag your festival or venue so they can more easily re-share your content.
- Have a think about what else is in the zeitgeist – maybe there's something you can hook into that will get your content seen. Check what's trending, use the appropriate hashtags and be topical! But don't just add 100 hashtags that aren't relevant... this can be irritating for audiences and may have the opposite effect to what you're after.

Here are some people who do a great job:

- [Reuben Kaye](#) (TikTok)
- [Hot Department](#) (Instagram)
- [Deafferent Theatre](#) (Facebook)

E-marketing

Emails and mailing lists:

Your email address book is your mailing list - don't be afraid to use it. Basically, send an email to everyone you've ever met – this is one of the most effective ways to get people to come along to your show. The more you can personalise these emails the better. Send an electronic version of your flyer (or

e-flyer) to your contacts a few weeks before your event opens, and again during the season. If you explicitly ask for them to forward it onto their networks, you'll be increasing your reach enormously.

Websites and blogs:

If you have the time and resources, you can try making yourself a free online home. There are loads of free and low-cost platforms to build simple, professional blogs and/or websites (we recommend Squarespace and WordPress).

Websites are great for hosting reviews, event information (including cast and crew members), videos and photos from the company/event. If you don't have a lot of content, it might be something to consider in the future.

Cross-promotion

Know other people/organisations in the art world? They may have connections to the audience you intend to reach. Speak to them about doing a bit of cross-promotion (you tell people about their event, they tell people about yours). Using Fringe as an example, many of our Festival-goers attend more than one event each Festival, so it's a great opportunity to tap into each other's networks. Giveaways are a good gateway when asking people to promote your event through their channels - offer a double pass for the organisation to run a competition, which will increase the awareness of your event (plus get two more bums on seats for your show!)

c) Advertising

You can't just rely on your image in the program to stand out and attract the audiences you're trying to reach. Advertising helps you to extend your reach and achieve those all-important objectives. Consider your audience's behaviour when selecting your advertising. What newspapers do they read? Do they listen to radio? Are they active on social media (it's pretty likely... who isn't?), and if so, where? These will help you decide where to place your ads.

Keep your objectives and audiences in mind when you're selecting your advertising, e.g. if you think the Festival audience is the best audience for your work, then it's worth advertising with us. If you think you need to reach people outside of our Festival, then social media is probably your best bet. If you have the budget, we highly recommend doing both.

Here are some types of advertising:

- **Advertise on social media:** Do it. Whether it's Google AdWords or Facebook advertising, it's really cost-effective and extends your reach far beyond your own networks. Facebook has made it quite complicated to navigate their advertising platform (and it changes all the time), but a quick Google should help you find the most up-to-date information on how to use the interface.. Wondering how to run a Facebook ad? [This video](#) will show you the 5 simple steps.
- **Advertise with other media:** Have a good understanding of your audience – what newspapers do they read? What radio stations do they listen to? This could be print (mainstream media, street press, local newspapers...), digital (websites, blogs, even engaging influencers on social media) or audio (radio, podcasts). It can be a great way to target the right people, but it can also be a bit pricey, so make sure the audience you want to reach matches your chosen outlet's demographics.

Performing as part of Melbourne Fringe Festival? You can also...

- **Advertise with us:** You can buy print, online and eNews advertising to help you stand out to our audiences. Consider your audience when selecting your package. If they're a little older, you might want to invest in the print option in our Festival Guide. If they're mostly millennials or Gen Z, consider your online options.
- **Advertise with our partners:** Our media partners offer a range of discounts to artists. These can change year to year – check the website and Festival artist resources for up to date offers.

d) Publicity

Publicity is coverage you get for your show in the media – reviews, features, What's On listings, event previews, interviews etc. Unlike advertising publicity is free, but it's good to be aware that the media control the messaging and how they write about your show. So, it's important to build good relationships with journalists, news outlets and bloggers so you can be sure you a) get coverage in the media, and b) receive coverage that will help you sell tickets and raise your profile. Publicity is a good skill that you can carry everywhere with you when producing your event independently.

Here are some sweet tips for you:

Step 1

Write your media release using our [guide](#).

Step 2

Determine your pitch and angle. What's the hook that makes your show (or you, as an artist) stand out from the crowd? Journalists are often time-poor, so the more information and story you can give them, the more they can work with. Does your show speak to a current political or social movement? Does it have an interesting or unusual back story? You can expand on your key messages to tell your story in a short, snappy and impactful way.

Step 3

Create your distribution list. A contact book of journalists, writers and bloggers is golden, and once you've built it, it can serve you a long time. Think about which media outlets would best tell your story, e.g. if you have yourself a music event, maybe radio is best (contact Triple R, JOY FM, SYN FM).

Think outside the box, too – as well as hitting up the big papers and websites, think about who else might be interested in your show/story outside the arts pages. 'Media' isn't just tv, print, online and radio, it's anyone who has a network - that's bloggers, arts organisations, online communities - anyone who might be interested in hearing about your work, whose network matches your target audiences. If your show is about that time you took a 46 hour train trip across Russia, try the travel writers. Does it speak to a specific community or cultural group? Look for local media in relevant geographic areas for those community groups. Look at the work of independent journalists that write across multiple websites and publications so you can spread the chances of your story being picked up across multiple platforms.

Step 4

Pitch. Be professional and personal in your approach. A cold, un-targeted email with an attached press release isn't going to cut it – make sure you consider each approach and tailor to the person you are

writing to. Research the journalist and see what they like and how your story could resonate with them. Email your release with a concise explanation of your work (remember those key messages?), and perhaps offer a free ticket to the show.

Step 5

Follow up. Give the media a few days to respond. If you haven't heard back, don't be afraid to chase them up (respectfully, of course).

Step 6

If you do secure media, make sure you have a list of points you want to cover - this will probably be your key messages, along with where people can buy tickets. And, when you're lucky enough to secure media opportunities, be sure to be prompt and professional. If you miss a deadline to return a Q&A or don't turn up to an interview, you may not be offered the opportunity again.

Step 7

Once the show is up and running, start targeting the right media to see and review your work, then leverage these reviews to grow your audiences.

Presenting in the Fringe Festival? Melbourne Fringe has a publicist dedicated to promoting the Festival as a whole, but with hundreds of events in the program, it's important for you to be proactive. Festival artists will receive a contact list of journalists closer to Festival time, which will help you to conduct your own outreach.

6. Make a Plan

In the lead up to the Festival, things can feel pretty hectic, particularly if you're also the person producing the event.

Now that you've answered the hard questions (above), we recommend using our [marketing plan template](#) to put everything into one handy document. Share this with the relevant people to make sure everyone is on the same page and knows what they're doing.

7. Make your marketing accessible

Don't forget it's important you make your marketing accessible for audiences who are Deaf or with disability. Check out our [Producers Guide to Access](#) for some tips.

Let's Talk.

Questions?

To chat more, please contact:

Participant Services Team
Melbourne Fringe

03 9660 9600

artists@melbournefringe.com.au

Hot Department at *Bitch, I'm Madonna*, Melbourne Fringe 2020.

Photo by J Forsyth.

Image description: a performer with red hair wearing a bath robe, licking her fingers on a dark stage, and there's a man standing behind her.