

STORYTELLING TOOLKIT



Marketing Your Project



Smithsonian
Institution



**MUSEWEB
FOUNDATION**

This handbook will guide you in marketing your project. Once your content is created and published, it's time to get the word out! There are so many ways to do so – traditional media, social media, onsite promotion, and more. Use the tips and examples in this handbook to help plan and execute your promotion.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MARKETING

Social Media	4
Traditional Media	6
Other Tour Promotion Ideas	8
Approaching businesses in your community	10
Sample Promotion Plan – Hometown Teams	12
Sample Promotion Plan – Continued	14
Social Media Plan Template	16
Sample Press Release	18
Code of Conduct	20

Social Media

It's time to get the word out and get people to use your content. One of the main ways you can market your finished project is through social media. Here are few tips to help you create effective social media posts.

1 Post insider information. Think ahead while you are creating your project. Take pictures and videos of the behind-the-scenes action while creating your project. Use this content on social media to promote your finished product.

2 Embrace the visual. Tweets, Facebook and LinkedIn posts with images get more engagement. Pinterest, Instagram, and Snapchat are based entirely on images. Create a branded “featured image” to share with your post, but also create separate images for each of the main points in your content so they can be shared when you repeatedly post them to social media.

3 Customize for the platform. When sharing content, utilize the customizable posting features on each social media platform – this includes the headline, image, and a description of the content you are sharing. The more optimized your post is for a particular platform, the more effective your promotion will be.

4 Share at the right time. For maximum engagement, the content you're sharing needs to reach as many people as possible, so you have to go where the crowd is – and when they are online and active. Keep in mind that different social media platforms may not have the same peak times.

5 Pay attention to anniversaries and current events. Make a list of special days (like World Water Day) and anniversaries of historic events so you can post related content on those days. Also watch the headlines for ways to link your content to what's happening locally and nationally.

6 Post multiple times. Numerous studies suggest you will be more effective by promoting the same content multiple times on social media. With multiple images and multiple headlines for your content, you can engage with your followers without them even knowing a link is to the same content you posted earlier. As social media users don't see most of your social media posts on any given day anyway, consider posting multiple times to social media as a way to ensure your audience has a chance to see your content.

7 Use keywords in your posts. Don't underestimate the power and effectiveness of social search. Sites like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and other social networks have search features that operate just like search engines.

8 Capitalize on hashtags. We've all seen hashtags in social media (#Rio2016 or #TheVoice). Hashtags are a way for you to categorize content on social media platforms. If you search for a specific hashtag inside a social media platform, you see every post that has used that hashtag. Hashtags are one of the best ways to organically expand your reach on social media. In order to expand your reach and get more impressions for your posts and tweets, start incorporating hashtags. Inserting random hashtags isn't going to be as effective as taking a strategic approach.

Traditional Media

When done well, traditional media can reach a wide audience – whether on TV or through other news sources like newspapers. Consider sending press releases to daily and weekly newspapers, radio and television stations, community and association newsletters, and school/PTA newsletters. Here are a few tips to help you reach out to these more traditional media outlets.

- 1 Pitch a compelling story.** If your story is not unique, there's no reason for editors and publications to cover you.
- 2 Provide a human connection.** If you have a human connection to your story – a success story, an impacted life, or another human interest angle – your story is more likely to get picked up.
- 3 Pitch to the right person.** Research the media you are pitching to to ensure you are sending your press release or calling the reporter that would be most interested in writing about your story. Don't pitch a human interest story to an investigative reporter or a social justice story to a fashion reporter.
- 4 Get to the point.** Most reporters get a lot of pitches and press releases in a day. Make sure your press release or email is clear and to the point. Tell the story of why it's important to the writer's audience within the first sentence.
- 5 Be prepared.** Be ready to answer questions. Prepare your pitch as if the reporter will run it immediately. The less groundwork reporters need to do the more likely they will use it. Give reporters facts, figures, photos, video, trends and your contact info.

6 **Be accurate.** Make sure that your story is accurate and not overhyped. Tell the story with nouns, verbs and facts, not adjectives. Inaccuracies or misuse of facts will likely damage your relationship with the journalist.

7 **Time your pitch appropriately.** Some media outlets need several weeks or even months notice to write stories. Don't pitch those outlets on the day of your event. Many media outlets, magazines and blogs publish annual editorial calendars of the topics they plan to cover. Check them.

8 **Practice.** Practice your pitch several times before contacting the reporters. Reciting your pitch aloud a few times to yourself or someone else can help you sound less scripted and more natural – and make you feel more comfortable in delivering your pitch to journalists.

Other Tour Promotion Ideas

Make sure your content is advertised to the people who would be most interested – your visitors. If your organization creates a local tour, or wants to promote a local tour to your visitors, here are a few suggestions:

Links on websites

Promote your stories on your website. The two best places to link to your tour are the homepage and the visitor information page. Ideally include a banner for extra attention. You can also create a separate page with links to your tour(s). If you do, include the word audio guide or tour in the url (like www.museum.org/audiotour) to improve the search results in Google.

Add online platform icons to your social media icons

Most online publishing platforms are forms of social media. After your stories are published, place the icon of the platform used next to other social media icons on your site and to the user profile where your stories are published.

News item or blog post on website

Announcing a free mobile audio guide is great content for your news section and for a blog post. You can link to your tour on the izi.TRAVEL website, but you should also link to the app in the app store, so people can download it and experience your content as they walk around with their phones.

Sponsors or Partner Promotion

Find partners to promote your guide/tour like hotels, local businesses, tourist organizations, etc. If your tour had local or national sponsors, ask those sponsors to announce your tour to their staff and customers. You can also ask your local tourist authority to promote your tour on their website, social media and place postcards in their headquarters.

Cross links

Cooperate with nearby museums/tours and link to each other's content from your content. This way, their visitors can see your content and vice versa.

Article in e-newsletter

Announce the tour in your newsletter. Remind your subscribers several times a year, especially if you add new content.

Landing page for WiFi

If your organization offers wifi, make a landing page – the web-page where the visitor will be forwarded automatically immediately after connection to the WiFi – that links to your tour.

Print Takeaways

Put your free mobile tour in all on-site materials - even your tickets! You can also create small, business card size cards to put on the counter that promote the tour and contain the tour's QR code and links to download the app. izi. TRAVEL has easily customizable designs: <http://academy.izi.travel/help/promotion/promotion-kit/>. Or you can use free software like *Canva* to create your own: <https://www.canva.com>

Floor sticker

You can also place a large sticker on the floor that advertises the tour.

Green graffiti

Looking for a creative outdoor idea? Try using green graffiti – like chalk graffiti – to advertise the tour. Perhaps even in the locations featured on the tour.

Approaching Businesses in your Community

Getting local businesses involved ensures that local businesses involved ensures project reach beyond the cultural field. While contacting random businesses may be daunting, here are some tips on how to start:

1 Know the business landscape. Ask yourself “Who are the top 20 employers in your city?” These are the businesses that rely on your community as a source of talent, for services for their employees, for word-of-mouth reputation, and for civic buy-in regarding their presence and growth. They likely want to be seen as part of their community.

2 Create your list. Make a two-column list: one column “B2B” and one column “B2C.” Sort each employer into the appropriate column by asking, “does this company sell its product or service to other companies or to individual people?” If a company sells to companies, its business model is called B2B (business to business). If it sells to individuals, it’s called B2C.

3 Undertand the relationships. It’s important to understand that an employer may have different relationships with its community based on its business model. Your job as a community partner or sponsored prospect/recipient is to determine what type of relationship(s) that company wants to have with its community.

A. B2B businesses’ products and services are sometimes less obvious to the community member than B2C products and services.

B. B2B businesses sometimes have higher profit margins than B2C businesses.

C. These two factors together can make B2B businesses better sponsorship prospects, provided you can figure out who you should speak with at the company, and whats in it for the company to sponsor community based projects.

Know the connections

We know the companies we want to target but who should we talk to?

4 Start with Connections. Go down the list and ask the group if anyone has a connection with that company. Warm introductions are the best place to start. Often, someone who works at the company can address these questions...

5 Community engagement officers. Find out if the company has a Community Engagement Officer or a Foundation? This is often the best point of contact for your “discovery” meeting.

6 Contact the marketing department. If you don’t have luck with step 4 or 5, would someone in the marketing department be willing to take a 15 minute meeting with you? In making the request, align your project’s values and their company values: positive community impact.

A. Practice the description of the BH Main Street project so that you can concisely describe it in 90 seconds or less. Time it! This is your elevator pitch (or in business speak, your “value proposition” in terms of how you impact the community.)

B. State that you are scheduling meetings with the businesses in your community as your “discovery process” in forming corporate partners and corporate sponsorships.

C. State that “you and your company were recommended because of (x, y, z).” Be sure to include any connections you made by going through the above process.

Sample Promotion Plan – Hometown Teams

Baseball. Soccer. Hockey. Bowling. Kickball. Surfing. People around the country are drawn to compete in these sports and many others. Still more gather on the sidelines to cheer for their favorite athletes and teams. Nowhere do Americans more intimately connect to sports than in their hometowns. The Smithsonian’s Museum on Main Street (MoMS) program will celebrate this connection in the new traveling exhibition Hometown Teams: Sports in American Communities.

A partnership of the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and state humanities councils, MoMS will travel five copies of “Hometown Teams” on simultaneous year-long tours of Idaho, Illinois, Nebraska, New Jersey and West Virginia beginning in January 2014. Over the course of six years, the exhibition will travel to 180 small towns in 30 states.

OBJECTIVES

- Generate nationwide interest and participation in national tour of exhibition
- Generate national exposure and visibility for MoMS
- Generate state and regional exposure for the State Humanities Councils

TARGET MEDIA	TARGET AUDIENCE
National Print/Broadcast – general, travel, family, entertainment, sports	Families – sports are a huge part of American life and family activities.
Online and social media – general news, travel, sports	Sports fans
Regional broadcast, print and online media in host museum locations	Young Professionals

MEDIA, TACTICS, AND STRATEGY

Story Angles

Identification of possible story angles for the exhibition, plus Smithsonian and exhibition curator for media interview.

- Sporting tradition, a family affair, backbone of a community
- Super Bowl – Feb. 2

Visuals

Selection of promotional imagery and film footage created by MoMS team

Promotional Materials

Development of materials including press kit contents (press release, PSA script, thumbnail image caption sheets, factsheets, calendar listings, etc.). A quantity of large-format postcards and will be supplied to host communities to ensure brand identity.

Long-lead Press Announcement

- Announcement of first venues on national tour
- Launch of social media outlets

Press and Public Opening at Host Museums

SITES will work closely with the host museum on their promotional plan to determine if any public programming or local stories can be expanded to a national story.

Sample Promotion Plan – Continued

Media Outreach

MEDIA TYPE	EXAMPLES
National newspapers	New York Times, USA Today and Wall Street Journal, Associated Press
National general interest, family and entertainment magazines	Good Housekeeping, Nat Geo Kids, Smithsonian
Special interest publications including film, youth, student and sports	Sports Illustrated, SI for Kids, ESPN, ESPN Deportes
National Broadcast Media	NPR, network morning news programs, CBS Sunday Morning, ESPN's The Garage, GMA (Lara and Josh both college past college athletes), Voice of America
Regional newspapers in host cities	including entertainment, lifestyle, arts, news, kids/family, sports writers

MESSAGING

Key Messages:

- Sports as metaphor for pride & community
- MoMS is the face of Smithsonian in small town America.
- 20-year-old outreach program that presents the SITES' museum quality exhibits in local community venues, with each exhibit celebrating and exploring local heritage within the context of a broad national theme.
- MoMS has collaborated with more than 900 institutions in towns across the nation. Each community rallies around the exhibit to bring it to life in a way that resonates with local and regional residents, celebrating their history and culture. Communities make discoveries and connections, bridges cultural gaps. Bringing people together, thinking in new ways, discovering their unique position within the U.S.

Sub messages:

- MoMS develops exhibits meant to stimulate thought and conversations that instill both pride and awareness about a community and its impact.
- MoMS carefully identifies and embraces broad exhibit themes that resonate in every community and reflect the spirit of America.
- In 2014, MoMS launched “Hometown Teams.” The exhibit showcases the connection between towns and their teams. The exhibit will showcase the sports, individuals and artifacts that have been an indelible part of every community, for well over one hundred years.

SPOKESPEOPLE

Smithsonian

- Carol Harsh, Director, MoMS
- Robbie Davis, Project Director, MoMS
- Bob Santelli, exhibition curator – Director, GRAMMY Museum

SCHEDULE

DATE	TASK
September 2014	Draft press release, fact sheets, image captions and other press materials
October 2014	Compile local programming information
November 2014	Announce launch of tour
January 2014	Press Preview and Public Opening at First Host Museum

Social Media Plan Template

Primary goal of campaign:

Secondary goal of campaign:

How will you measure the goal you wish to achieve?

Example goals: To drive traffic to your website; to sell tickets to an event; to raise awareness for an exhibition opening; to increase shares, likes, or comments on a specific channel; to build your membership base; to gain museum volunteers; etc . . .

Measuring your goals: Think about using tools like Facebook Insights or Twitter Analytics to measure overall reach, or new followers added, or the number of engagements—likes, shares, comments. If measuring web traffic, set up a Google Analytics account to track the users coming to your website from your social media posts.

Things to think about:

- Who is the audience? (Age, gender, location)
- Based on audience, what's the best platform for the campaign?
- Will multiple platforms be used?
- Who on staff will work on the campaign?
- What are the proposed dates of the campaign?
- Do the dates coincide with a local, state, or nationwide initiative?
- Will the campaign have a specific hashtag? Check the hashtag for previous use.
- Which local/national partners can you ask to share your content?
- Will you use paid ads from Facebook, Twitter, Google Ads or another service? (Facebook ads are effective and can be very inexpensive.)
- Share information about the campaign with staff members.
- Ask staff members and friends to share content on their accounts.

- What times make most sense to post for your intended audience?
- Do you have a specific url? Track it using sources such as bit.ly
- What's the tone of voice of the campaign? Serious, light-hearted, professional, socially aware, etc.

Resource links:

<http://blog.hootsuite.com/how-to-create-a-social-media-marketing-plan/>
<http://marketingland.com/4-components-best-social-media-campaigns-140715>
<http://coschedule.com/blog/social-media-strategy-template/>

Create sample posts for others to review:

DATE	PLATFORM	TEXT	IMAGE
February 18	Twitter	Missed our Valentine's series? Visit #TheCuddlyMuseum and swim in the adorable sweetness. http://sfy.co/u2qb	Valentine's image

How We Did:

GOAL	STATS	ANALYSIS	LESSONS LEARNED

Tips for Ensuring Success:

- Ask for help sharing the content from partners in your area.
- Write and schedule the content ahead of time using a scheduling tool such as Hootsuite or the Facebook scheduler.
- Collect your data as soon as possible after the campaign is over.
- Look at timing. When are most of your followers online?
- Be available to like, thank, or respond to people on social media.

Sample Press Release

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Inquiries: [Your Name]

Local Contact: [Your local press contact, phone/email]

Smithsonian Contact: Jennifer Schommer; 202.633.3121;

[Our local museum] to Partner with the Smithsonian Institution and the MuseWeb Foundation to Capture Local Stories

Date, 2017 (City, State)—The successful partnership between the [INSERT YOUR MUSEUM'S NAME] and the Smithsonian Institution will continue over the next year. The Smithsonian's traveling exhibition "Water/Ways", which opened [insert dates], is only the first element of a multi-tiered project that brings together [INSERT YOUR MUSEUM'S NAME], the Smithsonian, and the Maryland-based non-profit MuseWeb Foundation. Called *Be Here: Main Street*, the goal of the initiative is to record and publish local stories about Minnesota's abundant lakes, rivers, and streams.

Part of the MuseWeb Foundation's larger *Be Here* initiative which began in Baltimore, Maryland, earlier this year, the project's ultimate objectives are not only to collect rich stories about America's towns and waterways but also to connect people, businesses, communities, and cultural institutions through storytelling. MuseWeb, the Smithsonian, and their local partners believe that everyone has a story that's worth sharing—whether that story is about childhood memories on the water, a local landmark or business that relies on the bounties of water, a popular lakeside park or recreation area, a waterfront landmark or cultural site, the conservation and sustainability of local waterways, or simply a personal philosophy about a beloved river. These rarely heard, location-specific stories are likely to capture a "history" of America's waterways based on experience, knowledge, and memory rather than textbook dates and facts. In this way, the stories offer people a rare and authentic glimpse of the history, traditions, and culture of a community.

"This is particularly relevant since communities are looking for innovative ways to bring people downtown, out to historic sites, or to other points of interest. In many cases, a town's economic success is tied to natural resources and a thriving cultural sector," says MuseWeb Foundation director Nancy Proctor. *Be Here: Main Street* strives to forge new connections between government, local businesses and cultural institutions. Such partnerships create guided pathways between places in the community that stimulate culture, tourism, and economic activity.

The stories will be published on open platforms like YouTube and SoundCloud [INSERT ANY PLATFORM YOU PUBLISH STORIES ON]. On all these platforms, the stories are free to access, and it's also free for local storytellers to upload their own content, tagged with "*Be Here: Main Street*."

- MORE -

The Minnesota Humanities Center has also been involved with this effort and has already collected dozens of water-based stories that will be included under *Be Here: Main Street* umbrella. "So far, people have been sharing rich personal stories about camping on their favorite rivers, about conservation efforts in their communities, and about memories of sailing and picnicking," says Robbie Davis, Smithsonian project director for "Water/Ways."

The next time you hit the water, think about recording your own water story and adding it to the pool. Listen to a few of the stories from people like you at <https://izi.travel/en>. Search for "[insert state name]".

About the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES)

SITES has been sharing the wealth of Smithsonian collections and research programs with millions of people outside Washington, D.C., for more than 60 years. SITES connects Americans to their shared cultural heritage through a wide range of exhibitions about art, science and history, which are shown wherever people live, work and play. Exhibition descriptions and tour schedules are available at www.sites.si.edu.

About MuseWeb

The MuseWeb Foundation is a new nonprofit offshoot of the international Museums and the Web Conference (MW), which began in 1997. In 2014, Museums and the Web brought more than 600 leaders in cultural innovation to Baltimore for its annual North American conference. For the past 20 years, MW has showcased and documented leading work in the cultural field in a free and open archive of more than 1,000 conference papers. The MuseWeb Foundation was conceived as an accelerator of cultural innovation to help develop and fund some of the most promising projects and initiatives from the conference and the cultural heritage field at large. *Be Here* is the flagship project of the foundation. Learn more about the *Be Here* initiative: <http://www.museweb.us/behere/>

About [YOUR INSTITUTION]

[IF RELEVANT YOU CAN ADD A SECTION ABOUT YOUR OWN INSTITUTION OR ORGANIZATION HERE]

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Code of Conduct

_____ is dedicated to providing a harassment-free experience for everyone, regardless of gender, gender identity and expression, age, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, ethnicity, religion (or lack thereof), or technology choices. We do not tolerate harassment of participants in any form. Sexual language and imagery is not appropriate for any venue or platform, including talks, discussions, Twitter, Facebook, and other online media. Participants violating these rules may be asked to leave or have their comments and submissions deleted at the discretion of the organizers.

Thanks to The Ada Initiative for developing this open code of conduct and sharing it with a Creative Commons Attribution license.

Use the code of conduct on the opposite page (page 18) to set boundaries for any event or online discussion your organization hosts. You can put the code of conduct on your website and link to it from the social media profiles of your organization. You can also hand out a printed version or have a sign at any hosted event at your organization.

