



# The Fringe Guide to Promoting Your Show

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The High Street (2014)  
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The Edinburgh Festival Fringe is the biggest arts festival in the world. It's a unique spectacle with well over 3,000 shows in the programme in 2015, representing a whole range of genres. With so much on offer, getting out and promoting your show can seem daunting. This document brings together all kinds of ideas, expertise and experience to help you promote your show at the Fringe. It is packed with advice for new performers on starting a media campaign from scratch, and hints and tips on how to make the 2016 Fringe work for you if you're a returning company or artist. From performing on the High Street to organising your marketing, everything you need to consider is covered in this guide, but the Fringe Media Office is open all year round and waiting for your calls should you need any more support. Also remember to keep checking the Participant area of [edfringe.com](http://edfringe.com). There's lots of useful information in the Marketing and Media pages as well as advice from expert panels in the Podcast section.

## Promoting your show at The Fringe: the basics

It's important to get as much in-depth information as possible about how to promote your show at the Fringe, so we recommend you find a couple of hours to go through this guide page by page. However, if you really don't have time to get stuck in and read the whole thing (which you should), here are your top Fringe promotion priorities:

- **Be organised.** It may feel like sorting a venue, programme registration and hunting for accommodation in August is enough to be getting on with, but the earlier you plan your marketing and media campaign the easier it will be.
- **Remember the 40 little words that count.** Getting your Fringe Programme listing right is a priority – the public, industry and media use this to decide what to see.
- **The show listing image** will live alongside your programme listing and on [edfringe.com](http://edfringe.com). It may seem early to determine an image for your show, so keep it simple to ensure it links in with your marketing at a later date.
- **Keep your marketing clear.** One logo, image or phrase appearing across the festival could be the simple marketing factor that underpins a successful campaign.
- **Ticket promotions** can be the way to start word of mouth with audiences early on. Think about Fringe 2for1 offers, Friends of the Fringe and the Half Price Hut.
- **Delegate amongst your team.** Bring someone on board to coordinate your media and marketing – as an actor, director or acrobat you'll have your priorities set during August, so you'll need someone else concentrating on promoting the show. It doesn't have to be a full-time job or managed by a PR professional. Ask around your friends, colleagues and family. You need someone with great writing skills, an eye for detail and who reads the papers regularly to get a head start on the sort of media content the Fringe generates.
- **Make sure that you have all your press materials ready** by the time your show goes on sale, that's when the media will start asking questions.
- **Bring your best work** and be ready to talk about it succinctly and honestly.
- **Keep your media release clear and brief.** Focus on anything newsworthy about your show and/or its development.
- **Don't panic!** The Fringe Media Office is here to help. They're full of advice, ideas and contacts and will tailor it all to fit your show and your situation.

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society exists to support the participants and audience at the Fringe through the provision of services such as producing the programme and organising a centralised box office. The Society is a membership organisation and all are welcome to join. See [edfringe.com](http://edfringe.com) for details of how to join the Society and get involved.

Your registration fee covers a certain amount of publicity and marketing coordinated by the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society.

## This includes:

- The production and distribution of the Fringe Programme – 395,000 copies published and distributed nationally.
- The official website [edfringe.com](http://edfringe.com) – over 1.6 million unique users and over 20 million page impressions from June - August 2015.
- Events we run to help you promote your show, including Street Events which in 2015 had three stages for performers to showcase their work on.
- The production and promotion of the Fringe's own app that hosted over 3 million user sessions in 2015.
- Fringe marketing initiatives including the 2for1 ticket offer over Monday and Tuesday in week one of the Fringe – opt in at show registration.
- Management and promotion of the Half Price Hut during the Festival – you can opt in daily during the festival.
- The running and promotion of the Fringe Box Office to sell tickets on your behalf.
- Fringe Society led social media campaigns giving you the opportunity to engage with audiences. @edfringe on Twitter has more than 108,000 followers and the official Facebook page, [facebook.com/edfringe](https://www.facebook.com/edfringe), has over 108,000 likes. The Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society is also on Pinterest with over 2,000 followers, Google+ with nearly 300,000 followers and SoundCloud with around 320,000 followers.
- The running of the Fringe Media Office to centrally publicise the Fringe and act as official spokesperson, as well as to assist companies and performers in their own PR and marketing activities.
- The Fringe Media Office are, however, unable to promote individual shows. As you know your show inside out, promoting it is up to you – their job is to get local, national and international media, Edinburgh residents and visitors from all over the world interested in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe as a whole.





## The Fringe Media Office

You're going to hear about them all through this guide, so consider this their official introduction. The Fringe Media Office is your one-stop shop for all the information you'll need to organise your promotional activity. Fringe guides are invaluable tools for all things Fringe, but there's nothing like the personal touch and support you'll get discussing your campaign with the team.

**If you are a performer or producer, go to the Fringe Media Office for:**

- advice on all aspects of your marketing and media campaign
- a list of PRs who operate at the Fringe, if you're looking to hire a publicist
- regular email bulletins with information, advice and deadlines
- help developing ideas for photocalls and stunts
- contact lists for media organisations and advice on the best publications/outlets to target
- support in following up on media tickets issued for your show
- help and support if you're having a crisis
- links to the media. Any information you give about your show will be passed to any press that ask for it via the Media Office. Remember, if you don't tell them, they won't know!

**If you are a performer or producer, get the most out of the Fringe Media Office by:**

- getting in touch as soon as you start planning your Fringe show – have a look at the timeline on page 8 for a clearer idea of what to do when
- taking time to read the email bulletins sent to your media contact
- sending in your media release and images to the Fringe Media Office by the start of June – extra information from you may mean more opportunities can be directed your way
- visiting the Fringe Media team when you get to Edinburgh to check they have all your details on file
- having one person working on your campaign who is the main point of contact, and making sure their contact info is correct
- communicating your plans for one-off events – they'll go in the Clash Diary
- thinking thematically about your show – who knows what feature writers are after!
- using the services!

You will see the Fringe Media Office represented at roadshows where you can ask questions and meet Fringe staff, venue managers and participants bringing their show to the Fringe in 2016. The Fringe Society hosts a number of roadshows around the UK and abroad, so keep an eye out for the Fringe team. More details can be found at [edfringe.com/participants](http://edfringe.com/participants)

## Testimonial

*Joe Sellman-Leava (Worklight Theatre, show Labels)*

The Fringe Media Office couldn't have been more helpful. I needed specific help with Worklight's show Labels which discussed the language and political rhetoric around migration and a worsening refugee crisis. News was changing fast (so much so we made adjustments to a script we'd agonised over for months) and every day the front pages showed people in misery and limbo we can only imagine, whilst our Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers threw around words like "swarm" and "marauding."

Conversely, I'd read a leading broadsheet article lamenting the lack of politically charged theatre at the 2015 Fringe, and was eager for the press to see what Worklight and the other small players were up to. The Fringe media team calmly listened to my caffeine-fueled/sleep-deprived rant and gave some sound advice on how best to (re) approach the press with this angle in mind. The Fringe Media Office made time for me and my queries amid the frenzy of thousands of shows asking for their help and advice and I really can't praise highly enough.

**Missed the roadshows? We hold How to Get Your Show Noticed and Marketing Your Show seminars with Media Office staff and guest speakers during the Fringe at Fringe Central.**

## Show registration media contact

At show registration you will be required to choose a show media contact. This is an important piece of information to get right whether that means remembering to update it when you hire a publicist or making sure the mobile number and email you enter are for someone who will be available to take calls and read the bulletins throughout the lead up to and during the Fringe itself. Getting this right means the media have your details correct for fact checking that all-important story or if we send out a unique media opportunity on a Fringe Media Office email bulletin, you receive it.

Check with your venue if they are supporting your show registration – and make sure your contact details are down correctly.

## Your venue

Some venues have press offices of their own, or a PR in charge of marketing and promoting the venue so find out what the setup is at your venue, and communicate with them regularly. Find out their campaign plans and discuss yours to ensure you're working together for mutual benefit and maximum effect.



Black Grace (2014)  
© James Ratchford [www.shoothemagic.com](http://www.shoothemagic.com)

## January – April

Register your show using the Fringe show registration system (edfringeware). There is more information on this in The Fringe Guide to Doing a Show and The Fringe Guide to Registering a Show. Part of the information you need for show registration is the 40-word listing that will appear in the Fringe Programme and this, alongside the 100-word listing for you web entry, is your biggest copywriting challenge.

Choose your image to go alongside your listing. How you choose to go about it depends on the show itself – a seemingly straightforward task for a stand-up comedian could become a mammoth task for a fifty-piece orchestra. Keep it simple and remember, the image in the programme and on edfringe.com must be a square.

If you can afford an advert in the Fringe Programme, book it. Audiences rely on the programme when choosing shows, so adverts here are widely considered the most effective ad spend on the Fringe. Alternatively, consider an ad on edfringe.com. Ads on edfringe.com exceeded 64 million impressions from June to August 2015.

## April

Design your print and marketing campaign including flyers and posters. Keep it clear and consistent across the board – this will apply to everything from the programme image right through to the flyers you hand out.

If your show is a children's show, speak to the Fringe Media Office now about how you can plan your campaign around term time and for ideas and contacts. If you plan in advance, your ticket sales are less likely to suffer when children go back to school.

## May

Keep an eye out for e-bulletins from the Media Office.

Hiring a publicist is a good investment if you can afford it, but it's not essential. Speak to the Fringe Media Office about your thoughts as the team have a list of PRs that operate at the Fringe.

Begin your research now. Look at which media covered what in 2015. What were the big launch stories? Which is the right publication/broadcaster/agency for you to be talking to?

The Fringe Media Office provide you with a media contact list in time for programme launch time.

## June

Get yourself a fan page on Facebook. Start tweeting about your Fringe build-up – if you can be witty and relevant, social networking is a great way to get word of your show into people's ticket buying plans.

## 08 June – launch day

The media get interested in shows once the Fringe Programme is launched, so get your media release to the Fringe Media Office and they can keep it on file.

## July

Quirky ideas for marketing and publicity stunts are common and do generate press – but make sure they're relevant to your show. Speak to the Fringe Media Office about holding a photocall in early August.

Time for further research on media outlets engaging with the Fringe – look at the launch coverage and see who is writing Fringe previews, start following arts journalists on Twitter and see what their plans are for the month. Be savvy and it will stand you in good stead.

## August

Cross-promotion is a great tool – flyer queues and seats for shows similar to your own and let them do the same in return. There is a lot of competition on the Fringe but often collaboration is key.

Find your audience and talk to them. Get your team out on the Royal Mile, around your venue and festival hubs. The personal touch really does work, so arm yourself with flyers and banter about the show and hit the streets. Costumes and gimmicks are great but enthusiasm is your number one priority.

**Keep in touch with the media and let them know of any updates or interesting stories.**

**Remember to come into Fringe Central and chat to the Fringe Media Office.**

## Show listing copy

Your 40-word show copy is a vital tool in promoting your show, and the best advice we can give you is to get hold of last year's Fringe Programme (which you can download from [edfringe.com](http://edfringe.com)) and have a thorough read to see what works best. Think simple, clear and informative.

Your [edfringe.com](http://edfringe.com) entry gives you the opportunity to extend your copy to 100 words. Use the extra space for further details about the show, reviews and quotes. Always ensure the 40 words in the programme give a clear picture of the show – the extra space online gives space for additional show information to complement the programme copy, not to replace it. Your 40 words include your show title.

Below are some examples of copy from the 2015 programme:

### T-Dance

#### The Place Presents: Vera Tussing Projects

London's boldest dance theatre brings hit shows to the Fringe. How do we touch without touching? Without leaving your seat, join us in an empathetic, exhilarating, imagined touch. Fragile, funny and interactive. #tdance

### Helen Duff: Smasher

#### Helen Duff / Free Festival

An explosive smash of storytelling, synchronised swimming and subversively simple songs. Smashing, guaranteed. 'A cross between Alan Partridge and Margaret Thatcher... bold, subversive and very funny' ★★★★★ (*Scotsman*) 'Superbly played' (*Times*) 'Enthralling' (*Time Out*)

### Paul Dabek Mischief

#### Paul Dabek / PBH's Free Fringe

Dabek returns armed with his box of tricks and razor-sharp wit to spread madness, mirth and mischief! Expect edgy quick-fire comedy, dirty shadow puppets and jaw-dropping magic with 'machine-gun delivery' (*Scotsman*). 'Superb showman' (*Time Out*)

## Here's how Helen Duff expanded her text for web entry:

Epic storytelling, synchronised swimming and subversively simple songs from this Fringe First nominated maker of mischief. Smashing, guaranteed. 'A cross between Alan Partridge and Margaret Thatcher... bold, subversive and very funny' ★★★★★ (*Scotsman*). 'Duff has a natural aura that makes her performance seem effortless' ★★★★★ ([RiptUp.com.au](http://RiptUp.com.au), Adelaide). 'A powerhouse performance ... hilarious experience' ★★★★★ ([BroadwayBaby.com](http://BroadwayBaby.com)). 'A very talented storyteller, clown, comedian and actress rolled into one wide eyed bundle of talent' ([FringeReview.co.uk](http://FringeReview.co.uk)). Judge's Choice Award VAULT 2015.

### Top tips

- Make sure your copy is simple and informative. Although including a star rating or a quote from a rave review is a good indicator of the success of previous productions, remember your audience wants to know about the show's content.
- Make sure your copy is clear. Even if your show is off the wall, going too bonkers is just as likely to persuade people to steer clear.
- Avoid slang and colloquialisms – the audience's first language may not be the same as yours.
- Show your copy to friends and family – get feedback from people who aren't as familiar with the show as you are.
- Remember that the programme is a free publication available to all, including children, so even if your show isn't appropriate for all ages, your copy should be.
- Take a look at the Fringe Style Guide, available from [edfringe.com](http://edfringe.com).

## Show listing image

Remember the marketing tie-in. If you're an existing company, go through all the marketing your company already has. If the production is in its early stages use your show logo. If you're starting from scratch, a new company or first production, find an image that will slot into future marketing.

### Illustrations are great:

- in place of a show image
- if your marketing will lend itself to continuing that style of design or illustration can be more effective than photos in capturing audiences' imagination.

### Be careful to avoid:

- using a stunning, but irrelevant illustration
- using an illustration that won't translate to flyers and posters
- using a low res illustration.

### Show/production Shots are great:

- if the image is striking
- if that image will also be used for publicity, including in print and online media
- to support branding, use the same costumes in the programme image as will be seen on stage.

### Be careful to avoid:

- an image that will not appear on any further print
- a production snapshot that is not representative of the show
- using a low res/unprofessional photo.

Your programme image must be a minimum of 343 pixels square (or 29mm square at 300dpi) and in a jpg format. The closer you are to that size before you start, the easier it is for you. Ask your designer to produce this to the spec and in CMYK and you'll find it easier to upload.



Most printers will want you to produce a 300dpi, CMYK PDF with a 3mm bleed if your artwork will take up the entire page or has a colour background. Check with your printer for exact requirements.

## Designers

Unless you have proven ability and talent in graphic design you should leave it to the professionals. It is not worth skimping in this area as your flyers, posters and adverts have a huge influence on Fringe audiences. You may be able to negotiate a reduction on a designer's fee in exchange for an advert or credit on your publicity. You could also contact a local art college or university, as they may be willing to take it on as a project or for a smaller fee. Put a call out for designers on social media and ask your friends to pass the information onto their contacts.

Often, it's difficult to develop briefs for designers if you are not used to working in this field. They'll be best suited to come up with the creative ideas but will need to know the dimensions and specifications of the artwork they will be creating. We've pulled together some information on the most common formats that can be copied directly into your brief.

Plan ahead to make sure you tell the designer exactly what you need (e.g., A4 posters, 29mm square image for the programme, A5 flyers). This will save them the time and frustration when they are suddenly asked to turn your programme image into a massive poster. If you have spoken to your printers about format, pass that information on right away.

If you have purchased ads for the Fringe Programme or another publication, get an exact specification and send that to your designer. The Fringe Society will send out a specification sheet to you, as should other publications. Where possible, produce your ads as pdfs, this will preserve the quality of your text.

Have all your copy or pre-existing images and logos (including funders or sponsors) ready and of a decent size. Don't ask a designer to produce something and then keep changing the text or adding information, if you do, expect to be charged extra.

If you have design ideas or a 'feel' in your head, let them know up front. But, don't be too prescriptive. You are hiring someone for their skills, let them design, but make sure you are happy with the result. If you are asking someone to do something for a low fee, they will want to design a 'portfolio piece', which is a compromise you might have to accept.

Don't trust your memory. Write everything down in a formal document that both you and the designer can refer to. This will help you avoid arguments.

## Show images

Talk to any PR company, professional group or promoter and they will tell you that one of the keys to a successful publicity campaign is a strong image or design. This will be the 'face' of your show and will 'talk' to your audience by communicating a message or concept relevant to your show.

At the Fringe you will be competing with lots of shows for audiences and the majority of people will rely on marketing to decide which shows to see. Keep the same image across the board and focus on clarity and continuity. The familiarity of one image, reappearing in the programme, online, in newspapers and on a flyer on the High Street, helps build trust in, and recognition of, your brand. You may decide not to use photography and opt for an illustration or strong graphic design to convey the personality of your show across your marketing materials. This is also very effective but the rules outlined above still stand – choose a single, strong image or design that will work in ads, flyers, posters and so on. If you go for this option, remember you will still need production shots for press purposes. You must also make sure you clear the copyright of any images or illustrations you choose.

Commissioning professional photography will be a good investment. If you can't afford that, try to enlist the services of a talented amateur from your circle of friends or from your local design college.

The Fringe Media Office can offer advice and feedback on your chosen images. Just make sure you choose a single image to use across all of your marketing materials (flyers, ads, posters, T-shirts, etc).

In addition to the photographs for your marketing campaign, it is important to have professional-looking photographs taken to help publicise your show. In some cases these may be the same photographs, but in other cases you may need two sets. The press sometimes prefer images that don't look like publicity shots, so get good quality shots either from the production or a photocall in Edinburgh. Take a look at arts coverage in the national newspapers to see which photographs are used and why. If you can't afford good quality shots, it is probably better to avoid photography altogether.

## Top tips

- Companies tend to have their production photographs taken during a dress rehearsal or actual performance.
- Head and shoulder portrait shots are not used unless you are well known.
- If your first Fringe performance is also your first full performance of the production, get these shots done during your first performance and make sure you send them to the Fringe Media Office and out to the picture desks of media publications.
- Unusual angles, dramatic settings, humorous approaches and even images that have been digitally altered work well.

## Flyers

The most popular size for flyers is either A5 (210mm x 148.5mm) or DL (99mm x 210mm) but we've seen flyers range from playing cards to business cards to hand-drawn photocopies. Your priority has to be clear information and eye-catching visuals. As soon as you arrive in Edinburgh you'll understand how flyering is a Fringe tradition integral to your publicity campaign.

## Getting the most out of your flyers

- Use striking, eye-catching visuals.
- Make sure you include all necessary information for the audience (dates, times, venue, ticket prices, age guidance, booking information). Don't try to pack too much in there – you can overdo it.
- Keep details clear and easy to read.
- Grab attention. If you plan on using a professional distribution company, think about how your flyer will look in the display racks. Use the top third of your leaflet to draw the eye.
- Avoid the Flop Factor. Use a good weight of paper so your flyer doesn't wilt in the display racks. Your printer should be able to give you advice.
- Talk to your printer. Avoid potential problems with handling format and colours.
- Ask for advice. For example, some inks rub off when handled or packaged and some paper formats may not be appropriate for the job.
- Handle with care. Ask your printer to package and deliver your print in secure bundles and strong boxes. This will protect your print throughout the various stages of transportation and distribution.

## Posters

While posters are less effective as sources of information, they are excellent for attracting attention and reminding audiences about your event. Many venues have poster display boards. Strong visuals are the key to a successful poster campaign as they must stand out on a wall full of other posters and work as a branding exercise for your show.

- Most posters are A2 or A3 in size. A3 is more popular at the Fringe as many places refuse oversized posters in August because there is too much competition for space.
- Paper for posters can be lighter than that used for leaflets.
- If your budget is really limited, consider the value of investing in posters.
- Don't fly-post. It's illegal! (See page 15 for further information about fly posting).
- Many UK suppliers offer special discounts for Fringe related print.



## Printers

Local Edinburgh printers are very familiar with the process and requirements of print for Fringe acts. They, as well as other printers around the UK, often offer special discounts for Fringe related print. Many printers will have advice and suggestions on keeping costs down. Discuss your budget and requirements with your printer and always ask for a run on price (how much will it cost to do an extra 100, for example). You will need to know roughly how many flyers and posters you will need when requesting quotes and this will be dependent on your budget and distribution resources.

## Things to ask

- What format should we send the artwork to you?
- Do you require a bleed on the artwork?
- How much will a run on cost be for 100/1,000? Is this the same as a reprint?
- Will these be printed digitally or litho? (Your designer may need this information and it affects reprint costs.)
- Is there anything I can do to save money or paper? (Some printers can run your print with another job to save money and off cuts, but may need prompting.)
- Remember to consider the environment – don't print more than you need and recycle what you don't use.

## Quantities

The number of flyers and posters you need depends on a few factors: the length of your run, who will be handing them out and, of course, your budget. Discuss costs with your printer: with digital printing doing an extra run is now relatively easy and not overly expensive, so negotiate deals that allow you to minimise flyers going to waste. Print is cheap and easy to organise during August in Edinburgh, so don't worry about supplies running out. Remember that you're the client, so ask as many questions as you need.



## Green tips

Use recycled or FSC approved paper for all print materials. Use an Edinburgh based print company and collect the fliers or have them delivered to your accommodation. As a rule, if you're using a local printer, you can arrange short print runs and print more if necessary.

Most print deals offer competitive packages and will try to persuade you that spending £10 more will get you double the amount of posters. Unless you are in Edinburgh a few weeks before and are approaching shops and bars, it's unlikely that you'll need 1,000s so save the cash and use it for something else.

## Distribution

Once you have your entire print set up ready to go, it's time to plan where and when to get it out there. General Fringe practice is to distribute flyers and posters every day you perform and to concentrate on getting your 'image' out in the public eye in the week leading up to your first show.

Most performers factor in a few hours of distribution into their daily routine. Doing your own distribution is a good way to cut costs, though it does take a lot of time, energy and resilience. If you have cast and crew who are available for a few hours a day, this will help with the taxing job of distributing your own print media. Come into the Fringe Media Office for a chat about good flyering practice. The main goal is to find your prospective audience and to speak to them directly – think thematically and consider the time of your performances.

Alternatively, you can allow for a distribution fee in your budget for a professional distribution company. There are pros and cons to this choice. While professional companies are trained, know the city well, have access to more sites and can keep track of your print and pick-up rates, they can also be expensive and won't know your show like the cast and crew do. If you have room in your budget, it can be a worthwhile choice, but do get the distribution team along to see the show, bearing in mind most companies will want your print in advance of the Fringe to organise your campaign.



## Where to distribute

### The High Street

Edinburgh's High Street has traditionally become the hub of the Fringe, concentrated outside the Fringe Shop and spreading up and down the Royal Mile. You can expect to find yourself spending a lot of time here. Part of the Fringe phenomenon, the High Street in August is a bustling, densely populated and spectacularly colourful space filled with performers, flyer-laden tourists and locals, rows of markets and performance stages (where you can book slots to 'trail' your show). All this makes it the perfect place for publicising your show. See [edfringe.com](http://edfringe.com) for more information about Street Events and trading.

The High Street has several large columns temporarily placed along the street edges which are especially designed for Fringe posters. These columns grow in diameter with hundreds of layers of posters as the Fringe goes on. This means your poster will have a short shelf life, but don't be disheartened, just get back out there with your sticky tape and ladder.

### Fringe venues

Most Fringe venues will not appreciate you handing out print inside their venues unless your show is appearing there. Many performers do, however, flyer queues outside other venues in the hope of attracting crowds from a similar kind of show. Some shows will let you flyer their seats as well – but do make sure you ask them first!

**Remember: Where there are tickets sold... there are ticket buyers.**

### Other areas of Edinburgh

Edinburgh's city centre has a number of areas that attract crowds during August. The Mound and the paved area by the Royal Scottish Academy on Princes Street are popular areas of Edinburgh for markets and street performers, attracting large numbers of people. Princes Street is Edinburgh's main shopping strip, and borders Princes Street Gardens (East and West), which are usually full of people picnicking or catching some sun. Bristo Square and George Square are also hubs of Fringe activity and Fringe crowds. (Your Fringe Programme has a map in it.)

Keep your eyes peeled for poster spaces in visitor attractions, cafes and restaurants, tourist information centres, hotels and guesthouses, bookshops, leisure centres, pubs etc. Always ask permission. Often, if they like your marketing – and you – they'll put your poster up!

## Outdoor advertising and fly posting

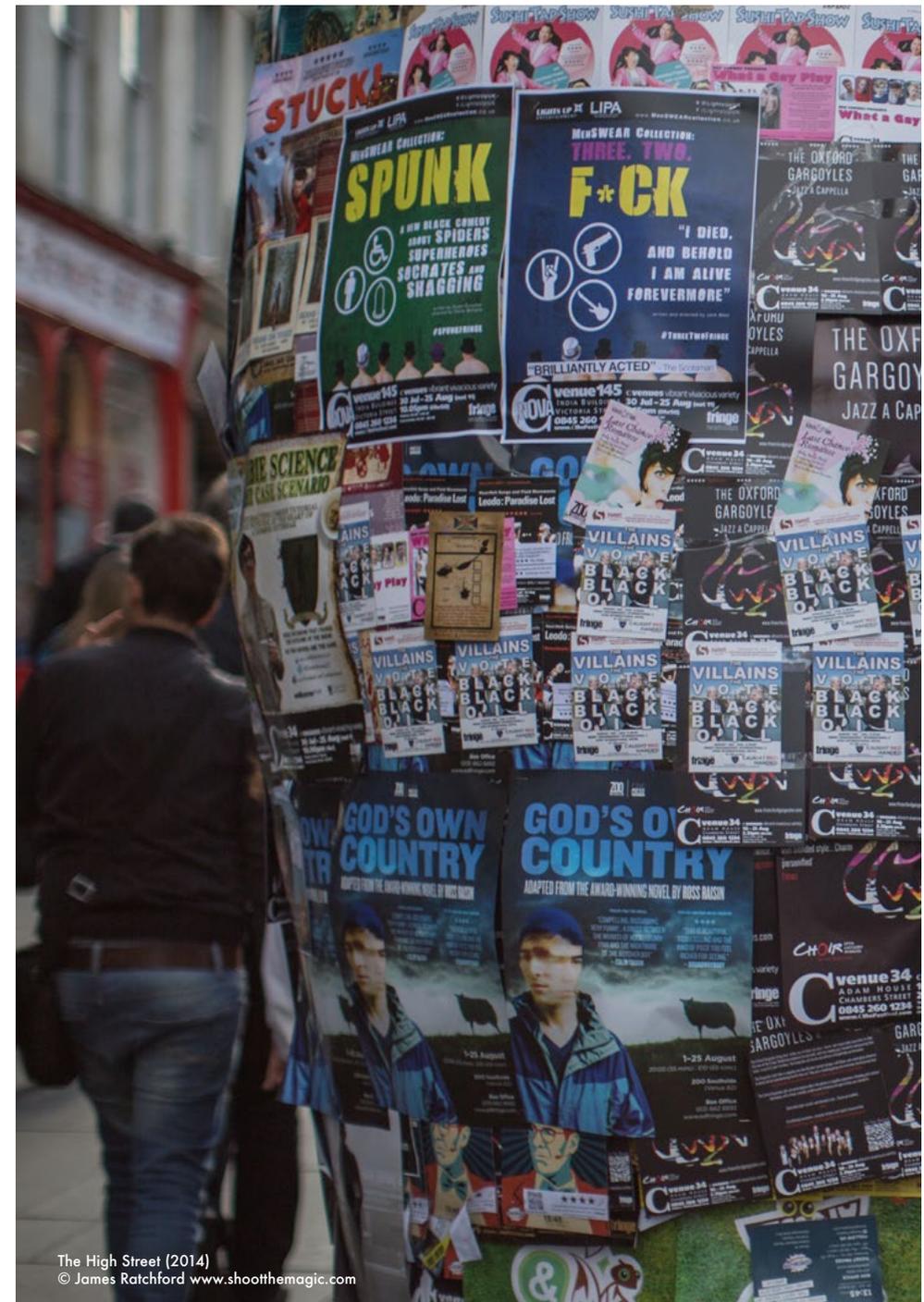
If your budget allows for outdoor advertising, speak to Out of Hand Scotland (the City of Edinburgh Council's official outdoor advertising contractor for 2016) about your ideas and requirements as early as possible.

Fly posting is a criminal offence. People fixing posters to publicly owned spaces (walls, hoardings, windows of vacant buildings, waste bins, street lighting columns, traffic signal control boxes, bridge parapets, trees, stairways and so on) are liable for prosecution. Many of Edinburgh's buildings are historical sites, which adds to Edinburgh being such an amazing festival city. While these public spaces might seem to provide a perfect blank canvas for your poster, it is both illegal and irresponsible to fly post anywhere unless it is explicitly approved for Fringe posters.

Remember: If you can't speak to whoever is in charge of the space – then you can't put your poster up. And given that you're advertising your show name and details, the authorities will know where to find you.

If you have room in your budget, display advertising could be another element of your marketing strategy. If you have a limited advertising budget, an advert in the Fringe Programme or [edfringe.com](http://edfringe.com) is well worth it.

We at the Fringe Society always like to help, but due to the sheer number of shows, you are not allowed to put your flyers in the Fringe Shop, the Fringe Box Office or Fringe Central.



The High Street (2014)  
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## Who covers the Fringe?

The great thing about coming to the festival is that many local, national and international publications and broadcasters are all raring to fill their pages and airtime with content about the Fringe and its shows. This means that all eyes are on the festival, and your job is to make sure they focus on you. It's important to realise that there are several different aspects to what the media want to cover. Here are some of the main types of coverage you can expect:

### Features

Many pieces will be written as general features about your show or including yours amongst a group of shows. These can often include quotes or interviews.

### Diary

To think diary, think gossip. There are gossip columns all over the place during the Fringe and anything funny, juicy, fortunate or unfortunate that's happening with you and your show can get your show's name in print and get people talking about you.

### News

News is a trickier beast for Fringe shows. Remember that a newsworthy story is not just in competition with other Fringe shows, but with everything else going on in the world. If you genuinely feel you have something to say that will make headlines then get in touch with arts correspondents at the festival.

### Podcasts

Podcasts range from extracts taken from live broadcasts through to curated shows for Fringe and national publications. These MP3 recordings are available for download all over the web. From the Guardian Podcast to BBC 6 Music there is a huge range of different broadcast output. To find out more, contact the Fringe Media Office who will let you know who's doing what and which broadcast media your show is best suited to.

## Media Office e-bulletins

Regular e-bulletins start in May with information, advice and deadlines to help you as you plan your media and marketing campaigns. This will include promotional opportunities, updated media contacts, clash diary info and anything else we think will help you sell tickets and get press attention. The e-bulletins will be sent to the media contact that was listed when you registered your show with the Fringe Society.

The Fringe Media Office is the first port of call for reviewers, feature writers and broadcasters, as well as for performers. Throughout the summer the media will come with specific requests – these will be highlighted in bulletins.

## Expert advice from Joyce McMillan (Senior Theatre Critic, *The Scotsman*)

The relationship with the media is most complex and unpredictable. Get it right, and you can have the experience of a lifetime; get it wrong, and your hunt for audiences and recognition can become an exhausting uphill struggle.

**So here are ten publicity dos and don'ts for aspiring Fringe companies.**

### Do

- Send out a press release that catches the eye. Never send email attachments to busy journalists unless they request them; put everything in the main text of your email.
- 'Novelty' press material – matchboxes, condoms, toy trains – can work, but only if it's simple, attractive, and relevant to the show and doesn't look as if it's cost a fortune. DO NOT send anything bulky.
- Keep your press releases short. One paragraph on who you are, one on what you're doing and why it matters, one on where you are and how to get hold of you. Never more than a page of A4 per show.
- Have a stock of excellent colour production shots ready to email to newspaper photo desks during or before the beginning of your run.
- Be careful in using celebrity names to punt your work. If your celebrity has had some serious creative involvement in the project and is willing to be interviewed, fine. If it's just a friend of a friend who's willing to lend a name, forget it.
- Aim for as long a run in Edinburgh as you can possibly afford. It takes time on the Fringe to emerge from the crowd. Shows that open early enjoy a strategic advantage, provided they're willing to be reviewed from day one.
- Aim for your publicity material to reach journalists around late May and into June. Earlier and it gets chucked into the bottom of the in tray, but any later and you may miss schedules.
- Put on a good show. One of the biggest myths about the Fringe is that quality doesn't count. It does. Both audiences and reviewers are desperate to find it and, if you provide it, your chances of success are fairly high. This means original material – or a truly original take on a classic – and the highest standards of performance. And if the product is good, your marketing job is also easier.

### Don't

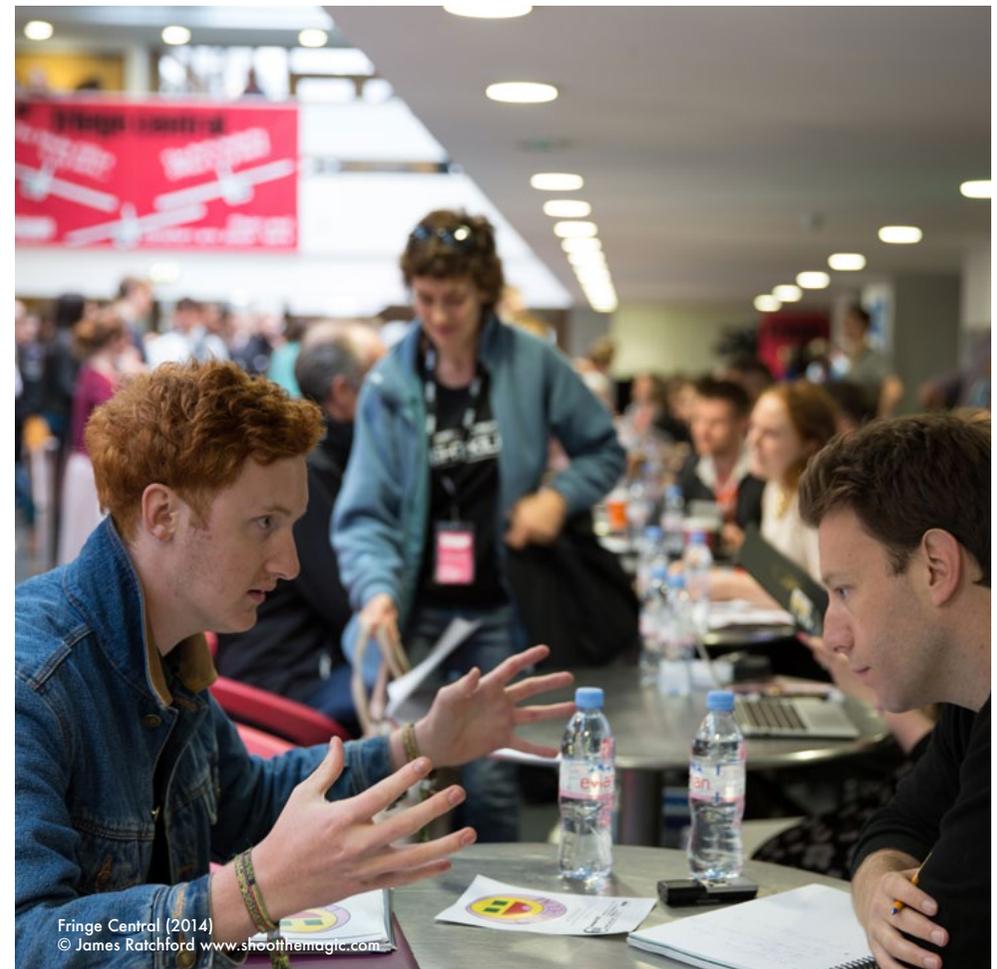
- Lead your press release with review style enthusiastic adjectives – sensational! hilarious! brilliant! – unless they come from real reviews.
- Expect critics/reviewers to attend press conferences or launch parties for individual shows on the first weekend of the Fringe, when more than 500 shows open in a period of two to three days.
- Obsess about the media. They are important, but they're not the only route to Fringe success. Fringe audiences talk to each other. If they've had a good time, they pass it on, and eventually the media hear about it. So if you fail to attract reviewers at first, don't despair. Focus on the quality of the work, give your audiences a good time and enjoy!



## Expert advice from Alex Hardy (TV and Comedy Critic, *The Times*)

### Building relationships with journalists

- Build interest early. If you can start promoting your show well in advance of the Fringe, your release is much more likely to get momentum than when the festival gets under way. If you're doing strong previews in June/July, or you're doing some short club sets in the run-up to the Fringe, invite journalists to come. Their timetables are likely to be much freer at that stage, and if they like the spirit of what you're doing they'll come again in August.
- Know journalists' tastes. Read reviews from throughout the year: if a journalist likes a certain act and you are similar to that act, you can tailor your message. I.e., "I read your review of XXX and though you might like what we do, too."
- Be realistic about what to expect. Even if a reviewer really wants to see your show, there are only so many they can get to in one day, and only so many they can write about. If it's your first Fringe, or you're early in your career, don't necessarily expect to get a national broadsheet critic to come to your show. Instead focus on building your coverage in Edinburgh-focused publications (*Three Weeks*, *Broadway Baby* etc). Or try to think laterally and build niche coverage: if your show is about food/politics/dance/whatever, are there food magazines/websites/clubs/bloggers you can approach for more specialist coverage? When you've built up some momentum with smaller/niche publications, you can always go back to the bigger ones.
- Think about the stages of building a relationship with a journalist, including: they know who you are, they see you in a short set, they tweet about you, they tell other people they like you, they review you, etc. Don't see it as a failure if they don't go the whole hog and review you this summer – you're still nudging them on to knowing more about you, and they will remember you when the time is right. Also, don't take it personally if journalists don't respond. There are a lot of reasons they might not be able to make your show: perhaps their editor wants them to focus on big-name stars, or they can't review any more character acts. You've still done a good thing by making them more aware of what you do.
- Don't chase too much – especially by phone or text. A reviewer's month at the Fringe is really, really busy, and persistent messages are unlikely to help. Only follow up if you've got new information, ie what you are doing is suddenly more newsworthy, or you have gained a lot of buzz through other publications.



Fringe Central (2014)  
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## Writing your media release

Your media release is your chance to convey to journalists what your show is about, why it's exciting and why it is unique enough to warrant a visit. Be original, short, snappy and to the point and use the advice and ideas offered below. Media releases can be broken down into distinct types:

A standard media release – your unique who, what, when, where, how and why message to the press.

A news release – sent out when something newsworthy happens (eg, stolen costumes lead to nude Hamlet, actors marry at Fringe, etc).

### The following guidelines apply to both types

- The media release should be clear but distinctive, conveying a tantalising and useful amount of information in the shortest space possible. The headline should capture attention immediately and convey the most newsworthy element of your show.
- Make sure you include the who, what, when and where as well as contact names and telephone numbers for your press representative (including your Edinburgh details so that journalists can make contact with you during the Fringe).
- Aside from the bare facts, you will need to sell your show with good copy that will inspire editors to sit up and take notice. No one can tell you what to write – only you know the unique selling points of your show.
- Journalists are likely to read only the first few lines of your media release, so make sure you put the main selling point of your show in the headline and opening line. Keep your media release to one page of A4 – any more is too much information.
- It's worth mentioning anything that will boost your credibility as a company or performer, for example, excerpts from good reviews on your media release alongside star ratings if they're good. Secondly, a brief history of your company mentioning past performances. If you want to include biographies, keep it to a maximum of a few sentences about each person involved in the production.

## Your media release title

Your media release title needs to capture the journalist's attention immediately, and intrigue them to read on. Imagine how many Fringe show media releases journalists receive - the name of a show just won't do! Find the most interesting or newsworthy element to your show and use it in the release title. Ensure your show name is included in the title, and bold every time it's referred to in the release. You can use your media release title in the subject line when you send out your release (more on that later).

## Top tips

### Include

- Famous names involved with the show in a genuine capacity.
- If you are the largest/youngest/oldest etc. company on the Fringe, plus any awards won.
- Links your show has to current affairs.
- Brief quotes from previous reviews or features.
- Your company or show social media info - there are many journalists very active on social media.
- Dates that media tickets are available.
- Dates of any access performances.
- Listings information (venue, ticket prices, preview dates, full run dates, time using the 24 hour clock, running time, box office details and website booking info, including the Fringe Society's Box Office details)
- The text must scan well. Each paragraph must give a clear summary of its content and the opening comment must sum up the whole document.

### Avoid

- Theatrical jargon – the information is ultimately for the consumption of the general public.
- Cramming the release with largely irrelevant details (eg, schedules, cast lists, biographies etc.). This information can be sent later if requested.

## Alex Hardy (The Times) on writing a comedy release

Be really clear about what your show is, why people should care about it, and where you fit in the comedy industry. Give a clear and appealing description in the subject line/first line of the release. Journalists receive probably hundreds of messages a day, and need to be able to filter them quickly. If it's stand-up, sketch, character, absurdist, mime, improvised; if it's about politics, your trip to Peru, or your Gran, say so straight away.

Don't feel the pressure to be funny: a media release is primarily for information and it's better to be clear about your show, rather than clog up your message with jokes or gimmicks. If you can, though, include a video or some links to places journalists can see your work. If they can get an instant view of what you're doing, it helps enormously.

## Targeting the media

Targeting the media is key, and it takes time. Think carefully about the genre and themes of your show and be specific about the media you contact. The Fringe Media Office have a contact list (available upon request) with details of journalists who are willing to receive media releases – take your time to go through it and when you have your list of media to target, tailor a short personalised intro to them to tell them why you think they in particular will be interested in your show. Keep it short and to the point.

## Sending your media release

### Do

- Target your media.
- Think carefully about your media release title and subject line - which can be the same
- When emailing to more than one person, use the Bcc field to cut and paste multiple email addresses. Type your own email addressed into the To field.
- Be careful not to duplicate - some journalists write for more than one publication.
- Always put the text of your release in the body of your email.
- Send images to media on request.

### Don't

- Send large attachments.

### Green tip

Always issue releases electronically. Printouts should only be sent if specifically requested.

## Sending images to the media

For information on the kind of images and photos the media tend to use, see page 11

### When sending images:

- only send images to media on request (unless you're sending to picture desks).
- all picture desks use digital images. Make sure your images are at least 300dpi, over 1MB and in an accepted format (jpg). You may want to send low resolution 72dpi versions initially and 300dpi versions only when requested to avoid clogging up journalists' inboxes with large files, especially if they're getting emails from every Fringe show. (Prioritise getting shots to the Fringe Media Office.)
- label all individual photographs with the name of your show. If a picture editor receives a file labelled 'JPEG1' there will be no way to link the image with your show even if your show name was in the subject line of your email.
- make sure you include any required photographer credits.

### Who to send images to:

- from June, around the launch of the programme, picture editors and journalists will be requesting images to act as 'fillers' and for festival supplements, so make sure they have your best shot sitting in their inbox. Get images across to picture desks in early June.
- some publications have special email addresses for festival pictures which are included in the media list we send out.
- do your research. There are publications whose Arts Editor will be scouting for images to use daily throughout the festival. Find out who they are and send them low res images with a contact number. If they want to run the image they will come back to you and request a high res image, or you can provide a link to a website with images available to download.

#### Green tip

High resolution images can be uploaded to file share sites and URLs emailed instead of CDs.

## Photocalls and publicity stunts

A photocall in Edinburgh during the festival can support your campaign in several ways. The main aim is often getting a photograph published, but the spectacle of a well-organised stunt alone can pull in the crowds and raise awareness of your show. The two key components of a photocall are the location and the visual. Prioritise creating an image first and then an event. Sit down with your company and brainstorm ideas. Always think about practical implications, so don't plan a photocall by the one o'clock gun within Edinburgh Castle – think of scenic but accessible areas of the city.

Send a photocall notice to the publications you want to target as well as entering the event in The Clash Diary. Remember to think about arranging your own photographer so you have a collection of images to send on to picture editors yourself and use on social media.

## The Clash Diary

The Fringe Media Office keep a diary of photocalls, publicity stunts, receptions and press launches on edfringe.com, which you should always consult before organising an event of your own. This diary is referred to regularly, particularly by photographers and picture editors – your event may not be a priority if it's scheduled alongside a major attraction, so plan around all other events.

#### Remember

It's important to acquire the correct permissions, and consider health and safety. If in doubt, speak to the FringeMedia Office for advice on permissions.

For advice on photocalls and publicity stunts, your first port of call should be the Fringe Media Office. You can email or call for advice and ideas on where to start.

## Expert advice from Jane Barlow (national press photographer)

- Make your photocall and picture idea link to your show in some way: be clear what you're offering photographers up front, but always listen to them - they'll have better ideas of what makes a good picture. If possible, run ideas past a photographer or picture desks first. Think about the visual impact, and what story you are trying to tell. There's no point setting up a picture which looks fantastic, but bears no relation to the product, show or purpose.
- Recce your location: again, ask photographers with local knowledge or people who have worked at the festival for location ideas. Interesting, relevant or simple backgrounds work best and, if possible, take the performers to the space beforehand to check how it would work for them.
- Make your press release concise: all photographers have to include captions with their pictures when they send them to the picture desks. It helps photographers and picture editors enormously if you can include a brief paragraph that summarises the show and has all the necessary information: who, what, where, why and when.
- Have flexibility in your shoot: consult The Clash Diary and speak to some of the picture desks to make sure there's nothing else in the diary on that date and time. If it's a quiet news day there is more chance that the papers will run standalone images the following day.

## Professional reviews

If you receive a positive review for your show, make sure you use it effectively. Get printing, stapling and gluing those star ratings onto your flyers and posters as soon as possible. Pick a key quote from the review and attach it to your print and use it to link to the review on social media.

Don't worry if you receive a review that's not as positive as you might have hoped. Remember, this is only one person's opinion and it doesn't automatically mean that your show will suffer. Do not bite back or get despondent – stay positive and put your efforts into getting more bums on seats.



### Programmes and cast lists

While programmes for individual shows are traditional in theatrical productions, they are not the norm at the Fringe. They may be necessary for you to give more information about the company or acknowledge sponsors and donors, but they are an extra expense in an already print-saturated environment and may not have the impact you would like. If you decide to provide programmes, general practice is to keep the costs low and distribute them to your audience for free. It is certainly worth considering that journalists may want a cast list, so make sure you get copies out to your venue box office or press office, as well as the Fringe Media Office. Always ensure that your contact details are prominently displayed on any programme or cast list you produce.

### Gimmicks

If your gimmicks are clever and relevant to your show, they may stack the odds in your favour. On the other hand, they are a gamble and usually expensive, so make sure that you have the necessary funds. The best advice is: be original. In previous Fringes, gimmicky flyers have included fake money, chocolate flyers, flyers that double as hand-held fans, souvenir postcards, daily planners and playing cards. You could also consider having useful freebies like branded matches or pens.

### Virgin Money Street Events

The High Street and Mound areas, with their professional street entertainers, buskers, craft stalls and countless Fringe performers, are hubs of festival activity for visitors to Edinburgh in August. The Fringe Society manages the performance arenas to ensure the safety of all those who use them.

Specific performance areas (most of which are purpose-built stages) are available for you to book for short performance slots. This can be a great way to give passers-by a flavour of your show and entice them to come see the full production. Booking forms are available at [edfringe.com/participants/street-events](http://edfringe.com/participants/street-events)

### Cross-promotion

It's a good idea to have a look through the Fringe Programme and identify shows with similar themes to yours. If you share a similar theme or style you're likely to share an audience so why not engage with each other and work together? You could exit flyer each other's shows and engage with each other on social media. The same goes for other shows in your venue. It's also worth remembering a great deal of potential audience members are Fringe performers themselves. The more you support each other and collaborate, the more your shows will benefit.

### Word of mouth

Fringe audiences talk to each other and love to discuss the best shows they've seen. Word of mouth is one of the most powerful ways to sell tickets at the Fringe so make sure your audiences have a good time. Encourage them to tell their friends, leave an audience review on [edfringe.com](http://edfringe.com) and give you a shout on social media – it all helps create that buzz around your show.

### Ticket promotions

The Virgin Money Half Price Hut on the Mound Precinct sells half price tickets on the day of the performance for shows that have chosen to be included. It's a great promotional opportunity for your show and will help boost audience numbers. You do not have to sign up for the whole run, and can decide on a performance-by-performance basis whether you would like to have tickets on sale in the Half Price Hut. All requests for the allocation of tickets to the Half Price Hut must be made by email to [hph@edfringe.com](mailto:hph@edfringe.com). Remember HPH tickets are 50% off and not 2for1.

### Audience reviews

Not all reviews have to come from professional reviewers. Audience members who have seen your show, can log onto [edfringe.com](http://edfringe.com) and submit a review themselves, and this can help generate great word of mouth for your show. If your audience have enjoyed your show, encourage them to leave a review on [edfringe.com](http://edfringe.com) and give you a shout out on social media.

Social media can and should be an important part of your marketing strategy. When used correctly, it's a powerful marketing tool that can help you reach new audiences for free and encourage them to find out more about you. It helps you to listen to what your audiences, peers and relevant journalists are saying and provides a platform to build relationships and network with them. Social is also an essential traffic driver, and can help improve search rankings to your website.

To be truly successful, social media needs time – don't set up the accounts two weeks before the Fringe and expect them to help you sell your show. If you're setting up social media channels for the first time, consider creating them for your company and not for your show: that way you can use the account year-on-year for new projects and give a backstage context to your preparations for the Fringe.

You should cultivate your chosen social channels consistently and regularly, planning your key content in advance and add in reactive updates and replies as you go. Decide what tone of voice suits your show/company and stick with it consistently: it should sound like what you would say if you were speaking in person to your audience and if multiple people are posting messages, your followers shouldn't be able to spot the difference.

The most essential, most obvious and most often-forgotten rule of social media is just that: it's social. Your channels are not a broadcast, but a conversation between you and your followers that should be interesting, helpful and engaging. Research relevant conversations that are already going on and who your potential advocates might be. Follow Fringe shows or performers you admire or who are similar to you or your show, monitor their most popular content and respond to them in a friendly way. Get your friends, family, cast, crew and venue on board by making sure that they follow you, share your stories and tag you in their own posts. If you don't know where to begin, start by asking a question and see where it takes you. Put yourself in the audience's shoes: what would they find most interesting about your show?

## Channels

Social media is a great way to gain free exposure for your show, but remember that it's time-consuming. It's better to pick a couple of the channels most appropriate to your show or company and cultivate them regularly than to have an account for every channel and no time to update them. Consider the type of content you're likely to have (e.g. short messages, longer text, video, photography, audio) and pick the channels that suit it best.

Various content types work well for different people on different channels and there's a social network for nearly everything, but the following are some of the biggest platforms and a rough guide to what works well on each.

### Facebook

1.59 billion active users per month

[www.facebook.com/edfringe](http://www.facebook.com/edfringe)

Facebook is a key platform for hosting images, videos and text updates that are longer than tweets. Although there's no golden rule for how frequently to post, it's best to stick to a maximum of two or three updates a day. If you're making a page for your show, consider making it an 'event' to enable ratings and reviews. Tagging the Fringe page (by writing '@Edinburgh Festival Fringe' in your posts) will increase your reach and help target Fringe audiences. Be careful when posting videos: YouTube links are penalised by the Facebook algorithm in favour of Facebook videos, so always upload video content directly. Experiment with what times of day and formats of post work best: a good place to start is to maximise the photo and video content you post, and to put it online in the evening, when most users are online. Customise the images and text associated with links to make it obvious what the user is being invited to click and to draw attention.

### YouTube

>1 billion active users

[www.youtube.com/edfringe](http://www.youtube.com/edfringe)

YouTube is a platform for video content. Owned by Google, it has close integrations with G+ (see below). If you think YouTube isn't worthwhile or relevant to your show, think again: it's the second largest search engine in the world, and the third most visited website after Google and Facebook. Marketing on YouTube will also improve your Google search ranking.

Don't be put off if you don't have high-budget footage: many of the most successful YouTube channels are run by amateurs.

## Twitter

320 million active users per month

[www.twitter.com/edfringe](http://www.twitter.com/edfringe)

Twitter is platform for posts of 140 characters or fewer (including links and picture links). It's an essential channel for community engagement, and possibly the easiest social network to grow a following, but also requires the most frequent updates. It's estimated that only around 10% of your fans will see your tweets, so you should be aiming to post between six and 10 times a day, not including tweet replies. Tag @edfringe and #edfringe in as many tweets as possible to make sure Fringe fans see your messages.

## Instagram

400 million active users

[www.instagram.com/edfringe](http://www.instagram.com/edfringe)

Instagram is a photo-sharing site that's sometimes used for micro-blogging. Don't be put off if you're not great with a camera: most Instagram users are amateurs posting straight from their mobile, and the platform includes straight-forward photo editing tools and filters that'll make your snaps look fabulous. Hashtags are essential: the more you use, the more likes you'll get. The optimum is 20+ but be aware the maximum hashtags per post is 30. Pick one for your show and use it in every post, along with #edfringe and @edfringe. It's common practise to share photo content from Instagram to other social networking sites, and you can connect your Facebook and Twitter profiles to your Instagram profile.

## G+

3.5 million active users

[plus.google.com/+edfringe](http://plus.google.com/+edfringe)

G+ is useful if you have a website, since it helps boost your ranking on Google searches. It's also useful if you have lots of blog content (there are thousands of communities discussing every topic under the sun), or lots of high-quality images from your show. G+ uses hashtags, but tags are generated with a '+' rather than a '@', so if you wanted to tag the Fringe page, you'd write '+edfringe'.

## Tumblr

550 million active users

[thisisedfringe.tumblr.com](http://thisisedfringe.tumblr.com)

Tumblr, billed by some as the "anti-blog" is a microblogging platform, where it's possible to share text, photos, quotes, links, music and videos, and to customise your page's HTML, removing the time-consuming nature of other blog platforms. If you have lots of rich content or are looking for a place to collate multimedia without using a website, Tumblr might be useful for you.

## Vine

200 million active users

Vine is Twitter's video-hosting platform that runs six-second footage in continuous loops recorded on mobile devices. Successful Vines mostly rely on humour, or provide useful information. Make sure before you start that you have a clear goal in mind, both for individual videos and for using the platform. Use the text of the tweet to give the Vine a context. Be careful not to condense a message that should be in a longer format into a Vine just for the sake of it – that's what YouTube is for!

## Soundcloud

175 million active users

[soundcloud.com/edfringe](http://soundcloud.com/edfringe)

Soundcloud is a sound and music hosting site. It's a must if your show involves a lot of music, or if you're considering doing podcasts.

## Vimeo

170 million active users

Vimeo is another free video hosting service and the closest competitor to YouTube. Although it's not an official distinction, Vimeo tends to attract high-quality video content by creators posting short films and animations, where YouTube is popular for amateur mobile content.

## Pinterest

100 million active users

[www.pinterest.com/edfringe](http://www.pinterest.com/edfringe)

Pinterest is an online pinboard driven entirely by visuals, where users can upload, save, sort and manage images – known as pins. The network's main demographic is strongly female and American, and lifestyle-related content often performs well. It probably won't be a huge traffic driver for a Fringe show but is still worth considering, especially if you have plenty of high-quality visual content or a website that you could consider making Pinterest-friendly. Pinterest for Business have a great set of guides on best practises: <https://business.pinterest.com/en/pinterest-guides>.

## Snapchat

100 million active users a day and 8bn video views a day

Snapchat is a photo- and video-messaging app. You can send content to your friends or add them to stories where they'll be viewed for a short amount of time and then vanish forever. In 2015, Snapchat did a worldwide story called "Our Fringe Story" featuring Snapchats from the festival which, should it happen again next year, could provide valuable exposure for Fringe participants

## LinkedIn

414 million users

[www.linkedin.com/company/edinburgh-festival-fringe-society](http://www.linkedin.com/company/edinburgh-festival-fringe-society)

LinkedIn is the social media networking site for professionals. More than just a job-hunting platform, it's a great way of connecting with arts professionals and fellow Fringe performers and of finding out about development opportunities. It also hosts groups with message boards for professionals in just about every industry which are useful for networking and advice. Because of its professional aim, the tone of voice on LinkedIn is more formal than other networks: if you're unsure, a good rule of thumb is not to say anything you wouldn't say in a job interview.

## Periscope

10 million active users

Periscope is a new live video streaming platform owned by Twitter. Appearing in your newsfeed, anyone who follows you on Twitter can view it and interact with you by commenting and asking questions as you go. The content is then available for 24 hours before being erased, after which point not even the user who posted it can see it.



The image shows a screenshot of a Twitter thread from the account 'Edinburgh Fringe' (@edfringe). The thread contains four tweets. The first tweet, posted 18 minutes ago, asks 'Market trader? Today is your last chance to apply for a stall at this year's #edfringe' and includes a link to 'goo.gl/O3w4gQ' and a photograph of a busy street market with colorful stalls in front of a large Gothic church. The second tweet, posted 57 minutes ago, says 'Don't forget - applications to be part of the #edfringe Box Office team close on Tuesday 26 April' and includes a link to 'goo.gl/p5F2ul'. The third tweet, posted 16 hours ago, says 'Fancy being part of the @edfringe team this summer? The deadline to apply for our Box Office roles has been extended' and includes the same link 'goo.gl/p5F2ul'. The fourth tweet, posted 22 hours ago, says 'more #edfringe shows on sale' and includes a link to 'goo.gl/p5F2ul'. Each tweet shows engagement metrics like replies, retweets, and likes.

## Planning

Once you've decided which channels to use, it's a good idea to plan out roughly how and when you'll update them. Make a list of what content you'll have, such as professional photos, videos and blog posts. Put it on a calendar for the run up to and during the Fringe, tying in with key moments in your marketing campaign, such as ticketing on-sale dates, the day you arrive in Edinburgh, or the day of your first performance. You can supplement this as you go with reviews and photos you take yourself. If you have time or if you're not normally inclined to post to social media regularly, consider writing a content plan in advance, detailing what messages you'll share on each channel each week. You don't have to limit yourself to what's in the plan, but it can be useful in ensuring a baseline level of activity you'll be guaranteed to post. If you're delegating your social media activity to a PR/ marketing professional or someone else in your production, ask them to supply you with one in advance.

Social media scheduling tools can help you pre-schedule posts and send them automatically at times you set in advance. Some social planning tools also include analytics information to help you find relevant messages or have analytical tools to monitor social metrics and give you an idea of how your posts are performing. Remember that whilst pre-scheduling can be useful – especially during the Fringe – it's no substitute for live interaction and you should be mindful of balancing both. Prescheduling posts also carries some risk: if something goes wrong, you may not log in to correct it until after the damage has been done. For that reason, it's always best to post manually when you can.

**There are numerous tools for social media scheduling available, many of which are free, but the following are amongst the most popular and may provide a place to start.**

### Facebook Publishing Tools

A way of scheduling Facebook posts direct from Facebook's page manager tools. Log into Facebook as a page manager and select 'Publishing Tools' then 'Scheduled Posts' along the side.

### TweetDeck

A Twitter-owned service to schedule tweets in advance and track relevant searches, hashtags, followers or content from custom Twitter lists.

### Hootsuite

A third-party service providing scheduling for Facebook, Twitter, G+, LinkedIn, WordPress and Instagram. Hootsuite also offers analytics that pull together Facebook Insights, Twitter analytics, LinkedIn Page Insights and a custom link tracker called ow.ly, but you have to pay for these services and all of them are available from the channel providers for free.

### Buffer

Another third-party service, Buffer lets you set up scheduled posts for Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, G+ and Pinterest. It features minimal analytics, but these are blocked from the free version.

## Content and tone of voice

Deciding on a tone of voice appropriate to your show and audience is integral to your success on social. Some of the most successful brand accounts generate thousands of user interactions without much supporting content simply by having a clear and defined brand voice that's relevant and engaging to their readers.

Your social voice should be influenced by a number of factors: the character you want to portray, the tone of your show, the language you use to describe it and the reason you're on social in the first place. It should be consistent across all of your channels, although you may want to accentuate different aspects of it according to different content or audiences on different social media accounts.

If you're stuck with where to start, try writing down three adjectives to sum up your show. Every post you write should reflect at least one of them, if not all. Find brands, venues or artists with relevance to your show or who might also be described by the three adjectives you've picked and research their social accounts for inspiration. If your show was a person at a cocktail party, what would that person say? What would they not say? How would you want the guests to react? What would make you listen to what they had to say?

There's no golden rule for creating great social media content: different things work well for different individuals, and successful content relies equally on intuition, practise, and trial and error. Think about how to adapt the content you post to suit each of them. Don't repeat the same message everywhere – reward those who follow you across multiple networks with different messages on each, even if the story you're sharing is essentially the same.

**The following tips might also help structure and inform your content, especially if you're new to using social media as a promotional tool.**

- Include images wherever possible, across all your social platforms. Posts with images get around 150% more engagement on Twitter, and even more on Facebook. Videos, if you have them, also perform very well.
- Keep it snappy: tweets under 120 characters are more easily sharable, and tweets with less than 100 characters have been proven to get more engagement. Consider what your keywords are and mention them as early as possible in your messages.

- Consider running a competition – they're a good way of boosting your follower numbers. Tag them #win, #competition or #giveaway, and make them easy to enter ('RT for a chance to win...' works well), but be careful to publish a clear set of terms and conditions, link to them in every post, and make sure they comply with the official competition terms and conditions of the channel you're using.
- Keep in mind the best time of day, or day of the week, you get most attention. Bear in mind that some of your followers could be in different time zones, and consider that brands typically get around 20% more Twitter engagement at weekends than week days. When does your content perform best?
- Think before you link. Social media is a great way to drive traffic to a website, but that doesn't mean every post should have a link in it. Research has shown that some of the most successful social accounts share a link in one of every ten posts, or even less. When you do post a link, accompany it with a clear label so your followers know what they're looking at, and always double check the link before you post.
- If you can't be funny, be helpful. Some of the best Twitter accounts rely on humour for their success, but it can be hard to gauge the level of wit appropriate to your audience and to maintain it. If humour doesn't come naturally to you, aim to make your tweets helpful instead, by providing interesting or useful information and sharing interesting stories.
- DO NOT SPAM! Nothing will lose you fans faster than tweeting 104 variations of "Hey @StephenFry/@SarahMillican/@RubyWax tickets are now on sale for our #edfringe show PLS RT!!" – your followers will see every single one of them.
- Don't be afraid to share the same message twice. Social media is extremely transient; your content will very quickly be yesterday's news and there's no harm in reiterating it, especially on Twitter. Do, however, vary the wording so as not to make it repetitive for anyone who sees it more than once.
- Have FUN! Social media can and should be one of the most enjoyable parts of your marketing strategy, and if you're enjoying yourself your audience will identify and respond to that.

## The Fringe Society's social media policy

The Fringe's open access ethos applies to everything we do. For social media, that means that we won't do for one company what we can't do for everyone, and as such, we won't tweet, retweet or engage in any way with anything designed to promote a particular show. There are, however, ways to engage with the Fringe on social media that don't rely on our participation and that will help you to reach our followers:

- Tag @edfringe or use #edfringe in all of your posts. Both are watched by many of our fans and journalists who'll see your updates even if we don't respond to them.
- @FringeCentral is our dedicated participants account on Twitter. Tag it in your tweets to reach other performers.
- Take part in our social media games and respond to our call-outs. We do occasionally retweet content posted by shows, as long as it hasn't got any promotional messaging (including hashtags). In 2015, one such project (#petswithprogrammes) was featured on the STV blog and Huffington Post Comedy, securing free exposure for some of the participants who took part.
- Post information, pictures or promotions for your show to our Facebook wall or G+ community page.

The screenshot shows the Facebook page for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. At the top, there is a banner image of a performer with the text "The Edinburgh Festival fringe 05 - 29 August 2016". Below the banner is the profile picture (the Fringe logo) and the page name "Edinburgh Festival Fringe" with a verified badge. The page is categorized as "Theatre · Charity Organisation · Event". Navigation tabs include "Timeline", "About", "Photos", "Reviews", and "More".

The left sidebar shows statistics: "113,089 people like this", "105,036 people have been here", and a rating of "4.6 of 5 stars - 2,908 reviews". The "ABOUT" section lists the address "180 High Street, Edinburgh" and phone number "0131 226 0026". The "APPS" section shows links to "Twitter" and "Pinterest".

The main content area displays two posts:

- Post 1:** "Market trader? Today is your last chance to apply for a stall at this year's #edfringe <https://goo.gl/c2Uyx6>" with a photo of a market stall in front of a large building.
- Post 2:** "Fancy being part of the Fringe team this summer? The deadline to apply for our Box Office roles has been extended until next Tuesday. <https://goo.gl/GAxsNF>" with a photo of a box office.

## Selling tickets

Social is not primarily a commercial platform, and you should be realistic about the fact that you're unlikely to sell hundreds of tickets as a direct result of your activity. Your aim for social media should be to spread the word about your show and let audiences know who you are. That way, you're getting free exposure to potential audience members without forcing sales messages on them on a platform they aren't using for commercial reasons. That said, there is a place on social media for careful promotional messaging. Used correctly, social can be a valuable component of your commercial marketing strategy.

If there's a golden rule about selling on social media, it's don't do constant plugs for your show. It's boring for your audience and makes it look like you're manipulating them. Your social messages should be entertaining first, helpful second, and promotional last. If in doubt about how often to do a ticketing reminder, use the 7:2:1 rule: for every ten pieces of content (excluding replies)...

**7 should be non-promotional and either helpful or entertaining to your fans,  
2 can be vaguely promotional, and  
1 can be a blatant plug.**

Use strong calls to action that tell your audience clearly what it is you're expecting them to do, such as 'buy tickets', 'find out more' or 'details here'. Try to turn ticket information into stories: it's more interesting to announce that tickets for your show have just gone on sale than it is to just tell people to buy them. Give your messages a context and don't assume that readers will be familiar with your show or company name – your messages can reach friends of friends or followers of followers who may not be familiar with you at all. For example, consider which of these statements you're more likely to engage with from an unknown source:

*"We can't believe that Titus is ACTUALLY HAPPENING! We're so excited and would absolutely love it if you could come along and support us."*

*"Our #edfringe show, Hamlet, just went on sale! Details at [tickets.edfringe.com](https://tickets.edfringe.com)."*

Sales messages should include a striking and relevant image and should always include a link. Where possible, link to websites that are mobile compatible, such as [tickets.edfringe.com](https://tickets.edfringe.com), since the vast majority of social media users are browsing on mobile devices. If you're not sure whether a site is mobile optimised or not, have a look at it on a phone or tablet: if the content fits the screen, it's compatible, but if you have to scroll across to see the content, it isn't. You don't need to include the time, date and venue in your post – if users are interested in seeing it, they'll click the link to find out more information.

Be aware that in 2014, Facebook announced changes to its algorithm that automatically penalises the reach of posts it identifies as being overtly promotional.

These include:

- Posts that solely push people to buy a product or install an app
- Posts that push people to enter promotions and sweepstakes with no real context
- Posts that reuse the exact same content from ads.  
(That is, advertising from the same account on Facebook).

If you do decide to use Facebook, this doesn't necessarily mean that you should never post ticketing messages: just be careful to avoid words like 'sale', 'buy', 'deal' or 'offer', don't post them too often, and emphasise the story and not the sales message.

Read the full announcement at

[www.facebook.com/business/news/update-to-facebook-news-feed](https://www.facebook.com/business/news/update-to-facebook-news-feed).

## Advertising

Advertising can be a great way to reach audiences for a relatively small amount of money: on Facebook for example, £10 can allow you to reach around 1,000 to 4,000 users depending on the size of your page and the quality of your ad. However, we strongly recommend that you speak to a social media professional or at least spend time familiarising yourself with the training information available online before getting stuck in. Whilst most of the social advertising platforms are fairly intuitive, you need to make sure you understand the core principles thoroughly to make sure your budget is achieving the results you want.

## Facebook

There are two types of promotions available on Facebook: an advert and a promoted post. A sponsored story is usually targeted towards followers of your page and their friends, and everyone who follows your page has the potential to see it, although you can define a target audience if you wish. Ads are set up in different formats adapted to achieve a range of goals, such as a website click or a new page follower. They are more targeted and you can set them to only appear to specific groups of people you choose by information such as age, location, gender and interests, or people who don't necessarily follow your page. A promoted post is more likely to reach more people; an ad is likely to reach a smaller but more defined audience who will see a post designed specifically to achieve your goal.

Advertising targeting options on Facebook include basic demographic data, such as location, age, gender and language, as well as the broader categories of interests (hobbies, business and lifestyle) and behaviours (such as mobile users). There is no simple rule for who you should target with advertising, but think carefully about who your target audience is and what it is you're hoping to achieve.

Facebook will automatically optimise your adverts to increase their performance, so it's worth adding variations to image and copy to see what works and what doesn't. Like your sales posts, ads should include a link, a clear call to action and a striking image. If you're working with a designer to create visuals for your ad, be aware that Facebook has strict advertising rules that automatically block any ads with images where more than 20% of the total visual area is covered by text.

To boost a post, select 'Boost Post' at the bottom of it. To create an advert, visit 'Adverts Manager' on the left-hand side of your Facebook newsfeed. Before you do anything else, be sure to visit the Billing section of Adverts Manager and set a spending limit: this will ensure that, should you make a mistake, you aren't charged more than you're expecting. [www.facebook.com/business](http://www.facebook.com/business) talks you through the basics, and if you'd like to see how the pros do it, have a look at [www.facebook-studio.com/gallery](http://www.facebook-studio.com/gallery) for some inspiration.

## Twitter

Like Facebook, Twitter offers different ads adapted to achieve specific objectives, such as gaining new followers, website clicks, tweet engagements or generating leads. There is also a range of design formats, including tweets, cards (a combination of text, image and caption in a range of formats for different objectives) and videos. Targeting options include demographic details like location, gender and language, as well as device and platform options. You can also target by keyword, meaning your ad can appear when a user tweets a certain word, and by follower targeting, which will serve ads to followers of specific Twitter accounts. Twitter advertising is set up on a billing model: you can set it either to bid automatically for you, letting Twitter optimise the ad for the best result at the lowest price, or set a maximum bid per action if you'd like to take more control over how the budget is spent. As with Facebook, be sure to set maximum spends to avoid nasty surprises.

## Instagram

As of October 2015, Instagram are in the process of rolling out new functionality that will make advertising with them more accessible and easier to manage, including the ability to manage Instagram ads through Facebook Power Editor (a free Facebook ads plugin with better functionality than Adverts Manager that lets you bulk-edit ads). Please visit <https://business.instagram.com> for more information.

## Talking to the media on social media

You can contact journalists by social media, but remember that you want to encourage them to come and see your show as opposed to pestering them to the point that they are put off doing that, so consider the following points:

### Do your research

Don't just contact every journalist on the media list inviting them to come and see your show. Find out the interests and specialisms of each individual critic. Make a wish list of which reviewers you would like to come and see your show and find out their twitter handles so you can interact.

### Think before you tweet

Journalists will expect to be contacted about coming to see your show, but in order for them take up the offer you need to make sure that what you tell them is engaging and relevant. Things like updates on rehearsals, award nominations and details of your Edinburgh dates are informative and helpful. Pictures of what you are having for dinner should be reserved for your own enjoyment.

### Pick your timing

As well as considering what you post to journalists on social it's important to work out when and how often to message them too. Try not to overdo it: you want their attention but you also don't want to irritate anyone. Try and tweet them at landmark moments throughout your Fringe journey, for example when you first register the show, when you arrive in Edinburgh and a reminder of dates of your press night if you're having one. If time is running out and you really want to get them to review you can tweet them with gentle 'last chance' message.

### Don't send private or direct messages

This is something that journalists have told us that they don't like and most of the time these messages won't get read or even noticed. So best not do it.

## Tracking tools

Not everyone will have the resource to track social media metrics extensively – nor is it necessarily a good use of your time. If, however, you do have the time and inclination, there are countless free tools online that can provide valuable insight into your audience and how they respond to your social media content.

The following is by no means an exhaustive list, and you should consider what metrics will be most useful to you and pick the platform that best tracks those particular metrics. Although many of the more robust social monitoring platforms need to be paid for, many of them offer 30-day free trails, which could be worth using to see how your content performs during the Fringe. All of the resources listed below are free.

*Please note that the Fringe Society does not endorse any of the following third-party resources, which are included here as a sample of the tools that some social media professionals might find useful.*

### Bit.ly

Lets you shorten and customise shortened website links and tracks how many clicks they get. Be aware that some followers may spot that you're tracking them and may be put off clicking a bit.ly link.

### Goo.gl

Google's version of bit.ly: set up shortened links and find out how many clicks they've had and where those clicks have come from by tracking website referrals and the countries they happened in.

### Twittercounter

Monitors your daily followers, retweets, mentions, and key influencers.

### Facebook Insights

Available on all Facebook pages, this lets you track your reach, engagement, and audience demographic. Its new "Pages to Watch" tool allows you to monitor pages similar to yours and alerts you to content of theirs that's performing well.

### Twitter analytics

Lets you track your tweets, impressions, mentions and followers in a handy month-to-month breakdown as well as individually by tweet.

### **YouTube analytics**

Tracks views on and engagement with your YouTube channel.

### **LinkedIn analytics**

Lets you monitor impressions, clicks, interactions, followers acquired and engagement on LinkedIn pages. This is only available for LinkedIn company pages, and not for individual users.

### **Iconosquare**

A web-based version of Instagram that can also track your Instagram metrics.

### **Google Analytics**

A powerful tool for monitoring website traffic that also tracks the sources of your revenue. It's probably only worthwhile setting up Analytics if you have your own website so that you can track where clicks and sales are coming from.

### **Followerwonk**

Focusses on identifying your Twitter followers and their demographics, as well as identifying key influencers.



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