
The Fringe Guide to Selling a Show



The Edinburgh Festival
fringe
society

Please do not print this PDF document

Black Grace (Black Grace) Fringe 2014
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Introduction

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, representing a whole range of genres. As one of many different performances and artists, getting out and selling your show can seem daunting. This document brings together all kinds of ideas, expertise and experience to help you sell 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 2015 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 Participants' area of edfringe.com. There's lots of useful information in the Marketing and Media page as well as advice from expert panels in the Podcast section.

Fringe selling: in a nutshell

It's important to get as much in-depth information as possible about how to sell your show at the Edinburgh Festival 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 selling 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 sooner 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. 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 will underpin a successful campaign.

Ticket promotions can be the way to start word of mouth with audiences early on. Think about Fringe 2for1 offers and the Half Price Hut.

Delegate amongst your team. Bring someone on board to coordinate your media and marketing – as actor, director or acrobat you have your priorities set during August, so you'll need someone else concentrating on selling. 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

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 box office. The Society is a membership organisation and all are welcome to join. See 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 – 410,000 copies published and distributed nationally.
- The official website www.edfringe.com – almost 1.3million unique visitors and over 14.5 million hits in the months leading up to the Fringe in August.
- Events we run to help you sell your show, including Street Events which in 2014 had four stages for performers to showcase on.
- The production and promotion of the Fringe's own app that has been used over 1.85 million times.
- 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 about 80,000 followers and the official Facebook page, facebook.com/edfringe, has around 78,000 likes. The Fringe Society is also on Pinterest with over 1,500 followers, Google+ with 220,000 followers and SoundCloud with 320,000 followers.
- The running of the 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 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 information you'll need to organise your promotional activity. Fringe guides are invaluable tools for all things festival, but there's nothing like the personal touch 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
- regular email bulletins from May onwards with information, advice and deadlines
- help developing ideas for stunts and photocalls
- 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 the media when relevant. 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 seven for a clearer idea of what to do when
- taking time to read the bulletins
- sending in your press 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
- using the services!
- thinking thematically about your show – who knows what feature writers are after!

You may 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 2014. 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 www.edfringe.com/participants

Tortoise In A Nutshell, children's puppet show The Last Miner

The Fringe Office helped us from the very beginning of the project to the very end. They gave us great opportunities for exposure, including interviews on the BBC and continuously advised us on the important what, how and whens of our PR campaign. From proofreading and advising on our press releases to helping organise our first photocall, the Media Office always had time for us. They would always go out of their way to keep us in the loop, advising us on what publications we should be chasing to give us the sought after five star reviews and how we could best use any good publicity we did get. Even when we dropped in unannounced in a mild state of panic, they would always sit down, chat through our worries and ensure we left with a more definite plan of attack.

The advice we received was always clear and always pinpointed exactly what we should be doing next and when we should be doing it. When we fell behind in our deadlines, the Fringe Society team encouraged us and gave us all the support we needed to set off on the right foot again.

Missed the roadshows? We hold [How to Sell seminars](#) with Media Office staff and guest speakers during the Fringe at Fringe Central.

Fringe publicity

What to do, how and when

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 which received over 14.5 million hits from June to August 2013.

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.

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 2013. What were the big launch stories? Which is the right publication/broadcaster/agency for you to be talking to?

04 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. They'll also provide you with a Media Contact List at programme launch time.

July

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.

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.

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

Show registration

Your 40 word show copy is a vital tool in selling 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) and have a thorough read to see what works best. Think simple, clear and informative.

Your 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 compliment the programme copy, not to replace it. Your 40 words include your show title.

Below are some examples of copy from the 2013 programme.

Nirbhaya

On a December evening in 2012, a young woman boarded a bus in Delhi. What followed changed lives forever. Internationally acclaimed playwright and director Yael Farber and an extraordinary Indian cast, bring us a searing and unforgettable new work.

Die Rotten Punkte – Kunst Rock (Art Rock)

Fans of Spinal Tap and Flight of the Conchords, say 'hallo' to your new favourite band. 'Wild cabaret rock concert' ★★★★★ (*Herald Sun*). 'Pitch-perfect pop parody' ★★★★★ (*Scotsman*). 'Hilarious, outrageous!' ★★★★★ (*List*).

Dark Vanilla Jungle

Time Out and *Evening Standard* Award-winner Philip Ridley's first Edinburgh premiere. A beautiful, breathtaking drama about one girl's craving for family and home ... and the lengths she'll go to achieve them. 'Heart-stopping' ★★★★★ (*Times* on Tender Napalm).

Here is how Dark Vanilla Jungle extended their text for their web entry:

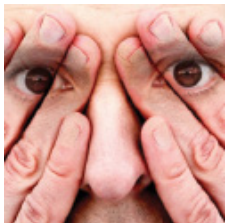
The Edinburgh premiere by *Time Out*, *Evening Standard* and Critics' Circle Award-winner Philip Ridley (Pitchfork Disney, Mercury Fur). A beautiful, breathtaking new drama about one girl's craving for family and home ... and the lengths she'll go to achieve them. Starring Gemma Whelan (*Game of Thrones*, *One Man Two Guvnors*), from the team behind Ridley's 2011-12 smash hit *Tender Napalm*, including *Evening Standard* Award nominated director David Mercatali and BAFTA nominated composer Nick Bicat. 'Heart-stopping' ★★★★★ (*Times*), 'Viciously funny... sensationally staged' ★★★★★ (*Guardian*) on *Tender Napalm*. 'Probably a genius' (*Time Out*), 'A visionary' (*Rolling Stone*) on Ridley. www.supportingwall.com.

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.

Show listing image

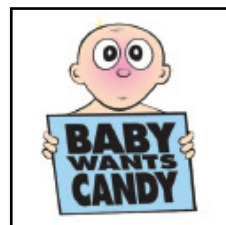
Remember the marketing tie-in. If you're an existing company, go through all the marketing your company already has. If the production is in its early stages use your show logo. If you're starting from scratch, a new company or first production, find an image that will slot into future marketing.



Howie the Rookie



Hot Dub Time Machine



Baby Wants Candy



Music from
a Piece of Leaf



Red Bastard



Severe Blether Warning

Please note, programme images will not have a key line around them unless these are added to the image when it is submitted to the Fringe. Key lines are used here to show structure only.

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.

Print: design/logo/illustrations

At the Fringe you will be competing with over 3,000 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.

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.
- Include only necessary information (time, ticket price, venue, dates). Don't try to pack too much in there – you can overdo it.
- Keep details clear and easy to read.
- 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.
- Think practically about how you plan to use your flyers when working out numbers. Will you speak to 50 people a day, or hand out 1,000 flyers on the Royal Mile? Print is cheap and easy to organise during August in Edinburgh, so don't worry about supplies running out.
- 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.
- Grab their 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.

Green Tip

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.

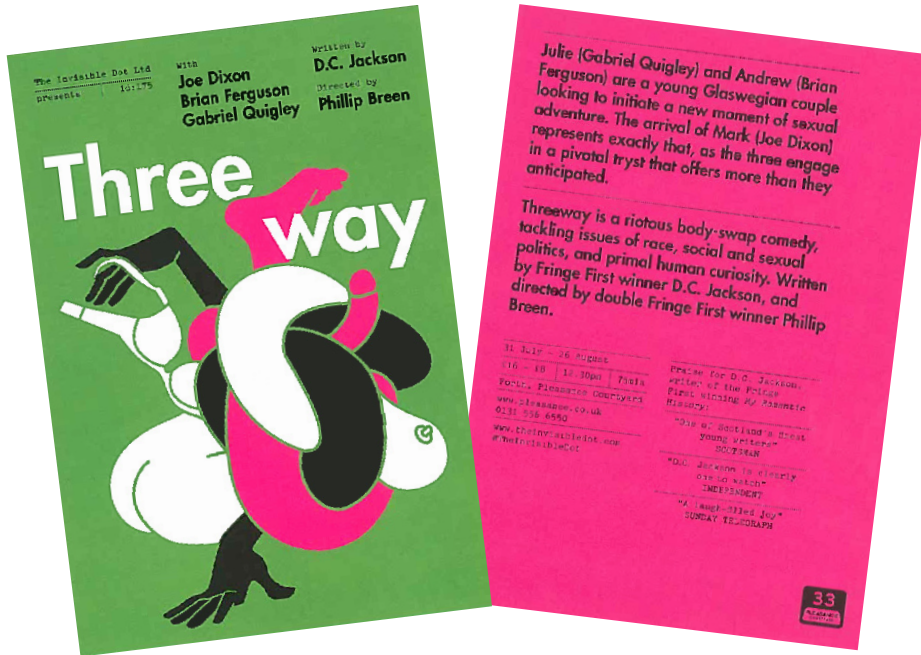
2013 flyers

Over the next couple pages you will see a number of examples of flyers we felt stood out on the High Street in 2013.

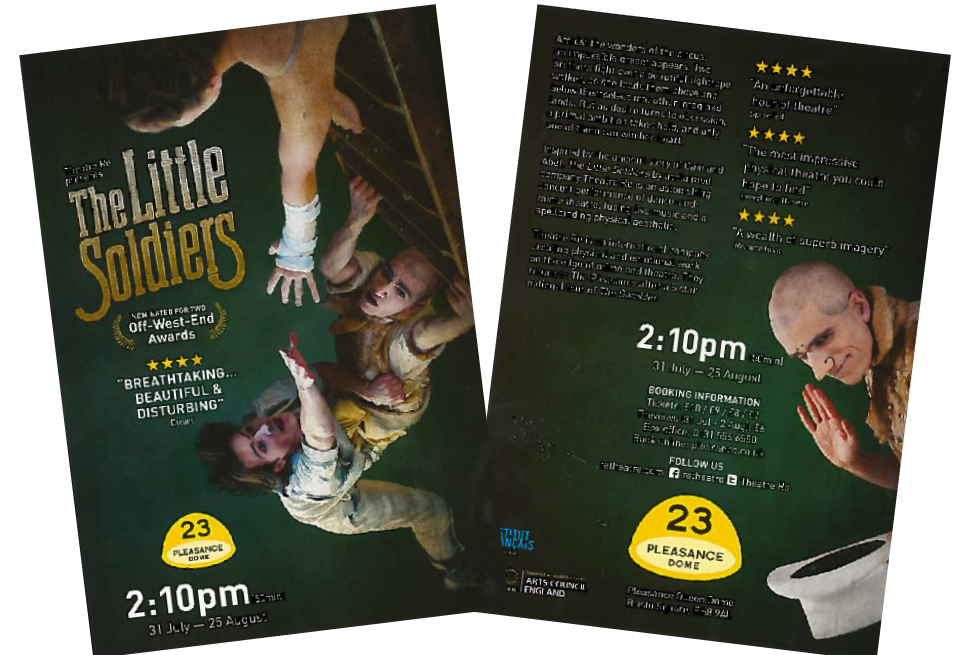
Henry Paker's flyer features a simple portrait of the performer, some professional accolades and links brilliantly with his programme image.



The Invisible Dot Ltd's flyer for Threeway is a great example of powerful illustration depicting themes of the show. It's also printed on high quality card without a lacquered finish, making it better for the environment.



Theatre Re's The Little Soldier flyer features a high quality shot based on a scene from the show which helps communicate the physical nature of the performance, while punctuating this information with professional achievements.



Chad Sell's simple playing card design portrays the duality of the storyteller Dandy Darkly, allowing variety in how he interacts with potential audience members.

Green Tip
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 1000s so save the cash and use it for something else.

Wolfgang Weinberger's flyer for Sex Guru is quirky done well. This 'do not disturb' gimmick gives off a naughty message for the show and without being crass or overtly sexual.

DO NOT DISTURB.
WE JUST GOT BACK FROM SEEING THE SEX GURU.

FREE MOJITOS FOR EVERY AUDIENCE MEMBER

7PM
33 PLEASANCE COURTYARD
0131 556 6550
www.pleasance.co.uk
www.sxguru.com

Wolfgang Weinberger's
SEX GURU
The sexological comedy show

YOU NEED IT!

GONE TO SEE THE SEX GURU.
YOU SHOULD COME TOO.

FREE MOJITOS FOR EVERY AUDIENCE MEMBER

7PM
33 PLEASANCE COURTYARD
0131 556 6550
www.pleasance.co.uk
www.sxguru.com

Wolfgang Weinberger's
SEX GURU
The sexological comedy show

YOU NEED IT!

Dog Eared Collective– 5 years on the Fringe Case Study

Flyering should be approached like entering the Crystal Maze – ideally you need a team boasting different strengths in order to infiltrate every kind of Fringe zone:

The Medieval Zone: The Royal Mile

So-called because it's the closest thing to running a gauntlet. Dodging theatrical bodies littering the cobbles, this challenge needs skill to fight your corner. The trick is armour-plated morale to cope with the constant stream of acceptance, rejection and non-compliance. You may question its effectiveness amongst so many competitors – but you have to be in it to win it and it's definitely the main thoroughfare of all Fringe activity. It's also a great place to network with other performers.

Tips:

- Have a super short question which hooks people in (ie, 'fancy a laugh?')
- Flyer in pairs if possible – to cover both sides of the street
- Remember any age restrictions and flyer accordingly

The Futuristic Zone: At the Entrance of your Venue

This is definitely a mental challenge as it is within your power to change the destiny of all who pass. Through questioning and the powers of polite persuasion, you can influence someone's future ticket choice before they reach the box office. Unlike the Royal Mile, the Fringe-goers you encounter here probably already want to see a show, so your job is to convince them of your show's quality. This can be done with succinct descriptors or by using your insider knowledge to give them more of an insight than they'll get from the flyer.

Tips:

- Ensure all positive press is immediately attached to your flyers once published.
- Don't be phased if they are already booked up for a show – let them know how long your show is running at the Fringe and suggest it for another day.
- Don't eat tuna sandwiches beforehand – there's a lot of close contact chat involved.

The Ocean Zone: Outdoor Fringe Seating Areas

Outdoor bars, courtyards and gardens – these are prime locations for Fringe-goers soaking up the atmosphere and planning their schedules on the back of a beer mat. Circling the tables like a shark, you can bide your time and then surface in a stranger's conversation. It's definitely a mystery challenge as you don't know what response you'll get – but you can ride any waves with just the right amount of non-threatening sell.

Tips:

- Don't flyer a table immediately after someone else – too many interruptions turn people off.
- A flyer in the hand is worth ten on the table. Don't just dump and run, it's always better to talk.
- Know your Fringe geography so you're able to direct someone to see your show from wherever you're flyering.

The Industrial Zone: Gigging

Any extra shows you can do – be it the Royal Mile stage or a late night compilation show – will provide a captive audience who, after seeing a snippet, will be well-primed to take a flyer. Increasing your workload, this is a physical challenge and will mean a bit more overtime – but it'll be worth the effort because the 'try before you buy' approach is a very successful way of advertising. Just make sure you remember what you've booked in and when!

Tips:

- Ensure you are stood at the door armed with flyers just before a gig ends – so you are in position once the audience exit.
- Choose suitable gigs to perform at – if you do saucy cabaret, a set at a kids show won't sell any tickets.
- Promote your show to other performers on the bill, as it can lead to further gig opportunities – or increase ticket sales.

No matter which zone you're in, the main things to remember are to stay affable, positive and versatile. You can change your game plan at any time as different things work for different people.

And if it rains, almost all forms of flyering will be made much more difficult. So concentrate on indoor locations, keep your flyers dry and look after morale with a hot chocolate. You can call this the Aztec Zone.

Green Tip

It's much more effective to hand out flyers to people you have chatted to about your show. Engage with people and reduce your print run.

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 18 for further information about fly posting).
- Many UK suppliers offer special discounts for Fringe related print.

Media releases

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.

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.
- 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.
- Large attachments. Always put the text of your release in the body of your email.

You should also have high resolution images available. You don't need to send these out with your initial emails, but it's a good idea to have them available if journalists request further information on your show.

Firstly, 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.

Releases we liked.

On the following page you will find media releases for Victoria Melody's Major Tom and We Object by Figs in Wigs which stood out amongst the hundreds we received in 2013.

Green Tip

Always issue releases electronically. Print outs should only be sent if specifically requested. High resolution images can be uploaded to file share sites and URLs emailed instead of CDs.

Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2013: Theatre

Victoria Melody/Farnham Maltings/Harlow Playhouse/Esalator East to Edinburgh *present*

Major Tom

How an unlikely pair of underdogs became a beauty queen and championship show dog

Artist Victoria Melody is the reigning Mrs Brighton and an unlikely beauty queen. Her unruly basset hound, Major Tom, has become a championship show dog.

When Major Tom accidentally won an amateur dog show his unexpected success prompted Victoria to examine her own prize winning potential. She decided to put herself through the same scrutinising process by competing for the title of Mrs Galaxy UK – the ‘married’ version of Miss UK.

‘Startlingly bonkers and utterly ordinary at the same time...deceptively thoughtful fun’ Lyn Gardner Guardian

After winning her regional round, Victoria has spent the past year as ‘Mrs Brighton’ in a wide range of public appearances. She has used this opportunity to access the subculture of this exclusive, members-only, club and has quite literally metamorphosed herself into a beauty queen, unrecognisable to friends and family.

The show, in which Victoria and Major Tom appear together onstage, follows their journey through the obsessive and confusing realm of personal scrutiny using film and photography to document their adventures.

‘Major Tom, is a major achievement, beautifully designed, carefully choreographed, and performed with panache’
Total Theatre

Major Tom questions how even the most self-assured amongst us (even if they are a feminist) can become intoxicated with the allure of beautification, celebrity and competition. The initial artistic experiment blurs into Victoria's real life leading her husband to ask when they can go back to their old lives. But Victoria had never won anything before so she has become competitive and really wants to win Crufts and Mrs UK – and she thinks they are in with a chance.

Victoria's eccentric, ethnographic approach to making performances finds her immersing herself in other people's worlds. Victoria examines national characteristics, focusing on the extraordinary in the everyday.

To create her one-woman theatrical shows about England's pastimes, passions and tribes she immerses herself into communities and becomes a participant. Before becoming a championship dog handler and beauty queen she has been a pigeon racer and a northern soul dancer. Her show Northern Soul, directed by Ursula Martinez, toured extensively.

‘Original and Inspiring’ ★★★★★ Latest 7

After a UK tour Major Tom will be transferring to Brisbane and Denmark later in 2013.

Major Tom has been selected for Escalator East to Edinburgh. Each year Escalator East to Edinburgh helps artists and arts organisations to raise their profile and perform to new audiences as part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. It was developed at BAC, Nightingale Theatre, The Showroom, Chichester and MAKE, Ireland, is supported by Harlow Playhouse and produced by Farnham Maltings.

www.victoriamelody.co.uk

Listings information

Venue: Summerhall Venue 26
Dates: 2 - 25 Aug 2013 (not 5, 12, 19)
Time: 16.45 (ends 18.00)

Tickets: £12 (£10 concs)
Venue Box Office: 0845 874 3001
Online: www.summerhall.co.uk

Press Contact

Tel: _____
Email: _____

Figs in Wigs with Arts Council England and Escalator Performing Arts present:

WE, OBJECT

Winners of the Roundhouse Show Slam! 2012, Figs in Wigs' hilarious new show has one objective: to use objects to object to objectification.

‘Figs in Wigs... like a pop band, but better.’ Simon Casson, Duckie

We, Object is an absurdist amalgamation of visual puns, word play and amateur dancing. It begins with a slide show and ends with a dance routine. The middle is somewhat embarrassing – the striptease goes horribly wrong, and a plethora of miniature props begin to complicate the bigger picture. As the show progresses it becomes increasingly unclear as to who (or what) is (or isn't) being objectified. Figs in Wigs are five women placing themselves in the spotlight, using comedy to highlight something so frequently laughed off.

N.B This is not a show about small things.

‘A refreshing burst of surrealism that defiantly flies in the face of more conventional theatre. Dali would be proud.’ The Scotsman

Figs in Wigs are one of the UK's leading emerging performance company. They are best known for their unique blend of trashy dance routines, alternative comedy and their passion for fashionable fruit. Expect excessive use of puns, obscure cultural references and unconventional choreography, all washed down with a bottle of WKD.

‘With razor sharp puns and a smart feminist edge, Figs in Wigs are destined for great things.’ Daniel Pitt, Producer at Cambridge Junction

‘It treads the high-wire of credibility with the surest of feet...original and entertaining and entirely barking...The product of a rather marvelous collective lunacy.’

What's Onstage

We, Object has been developed with support from the Roundhouse, Cambridge Junction and The New Wolsey Ipswich. Figs in Wigs are Escalator supported artists and funded by the Arts Council England.

www.figsinwigs.com

<http://www.facebook.com/figsinwigs>

Twitter @figsinwigs

We, Object by Figs in Wigs

Venue: theSpace @ Surgeons Hall (V53)
Date: 2nd-24th August (not 11th or 20th)
Time: 7.40pm (45 mins)

Tickets: Mon-Thur £8/£6
Fri-Sun £10/£8
Box Office: 0131 510 2384
Website: www.figsinwigs.com

Media Contact:

Tel: _____ Email: _____

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.

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 publication.
- Unusual angles, dramatic settings, humorous approaches and even images that have been digitally altered work well.
- 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.)
- From as early as the end of June, 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 June.

- Some publications have special email addresses for festival pictures which are included in the media list we send out. Never send pictures to a journalist who hasn't asked for them. 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.
- 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.

Photocalls

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, but remember to think about arranging your own photographer so you have a collection of images to send on to picture editors yourself if needs be.

If you are coming to the Fringe for the first time, your first port of call should be the Fringe Media Office. You can email or call for advice and ideas on where to start.

Case study: Aneke McCulloch, Producer

ThisSideUp Acrobatics

We chose Greyfriars Bobby for a number of reasons. As an iconic Edinburgh landmark we knew it would be instantly recognisable. It was also located very close to our venue, in a busy area of the city where there would be a lot of public. Finally, the statue holds a sentimental place in the hearts of many Edinburgh residents so, while we knew it wouldn't cause offence, it would cause a wee stir once we got on top of Bobby's head!

Another key factor was that we were able to bring a unique and genuine artistic skill, not just a random gimmick, to our chosen location. The photos were striking, onlookers were entertained, and we conveyed a direct representation of what audiences could expect from our show.

Timing was also key. We held the shoot the day before we opened, one week later than most, so the media were ready for something new. The image was picked up by several Scottish papers that week, and used for everything from a representation of the Fringe as a whole, to a story on tourism. The coup for us though, was the phone call to say we were on the front cover of the Scotsman on our opening day. Mission accomplished!



The Clash Diary

The Fringe Media Office keep a diary of photocalls, publicity stunts, receptions and press launches on www.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.

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 bulletin, you receive it. Check with your venue if they are supporting your show registration – and make sure your contact details are down correctly.

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 promotion 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.

Performer opportunities

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 updated on the website and highlighted in bulletins.

Keep www.edfringe.com as your homepage and check the participant pages regularly.

The Fringe is a unique market – the largest open arts festival in the world. It can be challenging to get your show to stand out over and above the other 3,000-plus shows.

Fringe Central

Fringe Central is the participants centre run by the Fringe Society. It's open from week zero (also known as preview week – the Fringe officially starts the Friday of this week) right up to the last day of the festival. Fringe Central not only has all the practical things you need – IT, printing, coffee – but is also a hub where media, arts industry professionals and performers all spend time, regrouping, relaxing and chatting. Don't underestimate how much those links with other Fringe participants could help you out and of course remember to visit the Fringe Media Office when coming into Fringe Central.

Use the timeline on page seven to make a list of what to do when. Be organised! The most important thing to remember is you are not alone and the Fringe Society are here to help.

Information and references

Programmes

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 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 you produce.

Gimmicks

As mentioned in the previous section on flyers, 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.

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 Facebook and Twitter 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 (eg, 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.

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.

Sizes and formats

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.

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.

Web advertising can be dynamic. Check with your host for specifics. For example, edfringe.com can accept animated gifs and Flash files, but not all websites can.

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 100/1000? 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. Remember that you're the client, so ask as many questions as you need.

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 try to 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 for more information about Street Events and trading.

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 and you can also pick up free city centre maps across Edinburgh.)

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, but often, if they like your marketing – and you – they'll put your poster up!

Fly posting

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.

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 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.

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 is well worth it.

Social Media

Social media can be an important part of your marketing strategy. You should cultivate your chosen social channels consistently and regularly, planning your key content in advance and adding 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. 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.

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 are similar to you/your show, monitor their most popular content and respond to them in a friendly way – engage with their conversations without venturing into selling your show. Get your friends, family, cast, crew and venue on board; make sure that they follow you, share your stories and tag you in their own posts when appropriate. 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 may seem like a great way to advertise your show for free but remember that it is 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 everything but no time to update them. 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 our your show. Consider the type of content you're likely to have (eg, short messages, longer text, video, photography, audio) and pick the channels that suit it best. Once you've decided which channels to use, think about how to adapt content to suit each of them – don't just repeat the same message everywhere – reward those who follow you across multiple networks with different information on each.

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

Facebook

A key platform for hosting images, videos and mid-length text updates that are longer than tweets. Although there's no golden rule for how many times 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.

Twitter

A platform for messages of 140 characters or less (including links and picture links). Twitter is 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.

G+

Useful if you have a website, since it helps boost your ranking on Google searches. Also useful if you have lots of blog content (there are thousands communities discussing every topic under the sun), or lots of high-quality images from your show.

YouTube

A platform for video content. Don't necessarily be put off if you don't have high-budget footage: lots of successful YouTube channels are run by amateurs.

Soundcloud

A sound and music hosting site; again essential if your show is very musical, or if you're considering doing podcasts.

Tumblr/blogs

An interesting way of giving context to your show but probably the most time-consuming way of broadcasting content – you should only write a blog if you're confident that what you have to say is interesting enough to make it worthwhile, you'll also likely need supporting social networks to promote your blog.

Vine

Twitter's video-hosting platform that runs six-second footage in continuous loops recorded on mobile devices. Successful Vines often rely on humour.

Instagram

A mobile photo-sharing site, sometimes used for micro-blogging. It's common practise to share photo content from Instagram to other social networking sites.

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 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 or [@edfringe](#) or use [#edfringe](#) in 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. Tag them in your tweets to support 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)
- You can post information, pictures or promotions for your show to our Facebook wall or G+ community page

Content: some guidelines

There's no golden rule to great social media content: different things work well for different individuals, and all good content relies equally on intuition, practise, and trial and error. The following tips may, however, 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 approximately 150% more engagement on Twitter, and even more on Facebook. Videos, if you have them, also perform 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](#) or [#competition](#), 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 what 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.

Don't do constant plugs for your show. If in doubt about how often to do a ticket-buying reminder, remember the 7:2:1 rule: for every ten pieces of content (excluding your tweet replies)...

- 7 should be non-promotional and helpful to your fans,
- 2 can be vaguely promotional, and
- 1 can be a blatant plug

DO NOT SPAM! Nothing will lose you fans faster than tweeting 100 variations of "Hey [@StephenFry](#)/[@SarahMillican](#)/[@RubyWax](#) tickets are now on sale for our [#edfringe](#) show PLS RT!!"

Don't be afraid to share the same message twice. Social media is extremely transient; your message will very quickly be yesterday's news and there's no harm in reiterating it, especially on Twitter.

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.

Talking to the Media on Social

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.

Remember, social media is just one avenue to use when contacting the media. You should also be sending your press releases to the Fringe Media Office for advice, and then on to journalists via email and calling journalists to see if they need any further information.

Useful 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 time or 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.

Please note that the Fringe Society does not endorse any of the following third-party resources, but includes them here as a sample of the free tools that some social media professionals find useful.

- [Bit.ly](#) lets you shorten and customise shortened URL 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
- [Tweetdeck](#) and [Hootsuite](#) These are tracking and scheduling tools for Twitter (Hootsuite also manages G+ and Facebook). You can pre-schedule your messages in advance and track relevant searches, hashtags, followers or content from custom Twitter lists. Whilst pre-scheduling can be useful – especially during Fringe time – it's no substitute for live interaction and you should be mindful of balancing both. Hootsuite also has an analytics platform to monitor some social metrics.
- [Twittercounter](#) monitors your daily followers, retweets, mentions, and key influencers (Twitter accounts with high numbers of followers)

- [Facebook Insights](#) is 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
- [Iconosquare](#) is a web-based version of Instagram that can also track your Instagram metrics
- [Google Analytics](#) is a powerful tool for monitoring website traffic that also tracks the sources of your revenue. It's probably only worthwhile setting up Analytics if your audience are buying tickets through your own website so that you can track where conversions are coming from
- [Followerwonk](#) focuses on identifying your Twitter followers and their demographics, as well as identifying key influencers.

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 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.

Advice from the experts

Pete Shaw (Publisher, BroadwayBaby.com and founding member of the Festival Media Network)

Online media has changed dramatically over the last few years, transforming from the simple publication of reviews on the web to syndicated and collaborative dynamic content that can be delivered in multiple different formats, platforms and distribution methods. The web allows you to connect with your audience using video, audio and interactive content – it isn't restricted to the confines of one-way text and images of traditional media. It requires you to explore new ways of marketing, and those that engage potential ticket buyers the best will ultimately sell the most tickets.

But to fully exploit this online Nirvana you need to first get the basics right. Understand, for instance, that the majority of publications have a very limited workforce, mostly volunteers and are all doing about eight jobs at once. So when you're sending information through to any site, you'll get the best results if you send material in the format it has been requested. Most sites will have an FAQ section which will outline what is needed and where to send it. For example, few websites need images bigger than 500px wide – so sending press-resolution images not only clogs up an inbox, but also moves the job of resizing that image onto the publication. As the Festival gets closer, time to do those jobs gets less and less. Simple things like that can make the difference between your show being featured or not.

You should also consider how you present your press release. Online media rarely have the luxury of staff writers, which means your description of the show is normally what will make it online should the editor choose to feature it. If that description is poorly written, too full of flowery superlatives or just doesn't contain information that is relevant to your production, it's less likely to make the cut.

Your press release should tell the reader enough about the show for them to know what it is, who is staging it, where, when and why someone should see it. Consider also the format that you present that text in. PDFs may allow you to format your press release in an attractive style, but copying text out of PDFs presents line break problems that create extra work. With more than 2000 shows to deal with, extra work is not something to relish. Plain text documents are much easier to deal with than PDFs, and plain text in the body of your email with a right-sized image attached is even better.

With the basics under your belt, you should then start to leverage some of the other technologies the web can offer your show. Film a video preview and upload it to YouTube, Facebook and Festival Previews. Content sent to Festival Previews will automatically be shared around other online media sites like Broadway Baby, ThreeWeeks and even the iPhone App, iFringe, through the Festival Media Network.

If you have songs as part of your production, record those and get them onto your own site.

Publish the occasional rehearsal shot on Twitter and publish your own Twitter feed on your own site. Go through Wikipedia and make sure any biographies of your notable cast or crew have information of your new production. Encourage your audience to submit their own reviews of your show to Broadway Baby and edfringe.com.

For a publication like Broadway Baby, our resources mean we can generally only cover about 20% of the productions staged in Edinburgh in any one year. Deciding which shows to cover involves many different factors, and the ones that you can influence are the presentation of your material and the amount of 'buzz' you have generated in advance that makes yours the 'must see show'. Go as 'digital' as your resources can manage, because – luckily – most of it is free to use, so it's just your precious time you need to invest.

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!

