DOCACCESS PLAYLISTS FOR CHANGE

PARTNERING FOR IMPACT

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Welcome to the DocAccess playlists for change – this is our Partnering for Impact Module!

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In this module:

- We will start with an introduction on the benefits of partnering to accelerate the impact of your screening or event
- Go through some fundamental partnership considerations and top tips
- As well as some practical insights into how to best research, identify and then leverage your partnerships

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So - why partner?

Finding the right partners can have enormous benefits for your screening or event. You can achieve greater impact through collaboration with experts in the field.

And why do everything yourself when there is a perfectly placed partner to work with you to achieve shared value?

Coming together with other organisations and groups allows you to leverage the work and existing networks of others, tapping into diverse audiences and communication pathways, as well as creating a more powerful screening or event experience by collaborating in your areas of strength

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Let's talk through some key partnership benefits for your screening or event.

Firstly, partnering with local media, influencers and organisations operating in a relevant area or with access to target audiences can be a fantastic way to improve your promotional capacity and extend your reach, meaning more audience will hear about and attend your screening or event.

Partnering can also provide credibility for your initiative, and attract audiences to register for your screening/event.

Partners may be able to provide different types of practical support, for example, they might have an appropriate venue you can use or volunteers to help coordinate and manage your screening or event.

They can provide an injection of expertise or skill, from providing expert guidance to ensure that your event is accessible and/or culturally safe, to expert speakers or panellists to enrich a post screeningQ&A.

You may also want to share or promote a powerful "call to action" related to a partner and their work for your audience to engage with at the end of the event.

Ultimately, partnering with the right people and organisations in the right ways can be immensely powerful - and change the outcomes of your event.

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There are a range of important factors to consider when weighing up whether to partner, and with who.

The most effective partnerships involve clarity on your shared alignment, and the mutual benefit of your work together.

If you have a number of partners you could potentially collaborate with, it is useful to consider their resources and capacity to contribute, including their capacity to support your screening or event within your required timeframes.

This is also closely related to internal organisational functioning and requirements, for example:

- What is the organisation's internal approvals process - for example, for sharing a logo?
- How much notice is needed for decisions - for example to share content to a mailing list?
- Are they willing and able to share resources and information or are there restrictions that would prevent collaboration?

Consider the organisations' own reach and network.

- How many people do they have signed up to their database?
- How many followers do they have online?
- And potentially more importantly - how engaged are they?
- What is the external profile of the organisation?
- Are they a known and highly regarded body?
- Do they have influence?

All of these factors will matter to different degrees depending on the nature of your partnership, and whether it is a short-term collaboration for a one-off screening or event or the beginning of a longer term, sustainable relationship.

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In addition to carefully considering your alignment, it is essential that you know about your potential partner and their interests in being involved with your screening or event.

They might choose to be involved because their mission strongly aligns with the topic or focus of your planned screening or event, so they can see the benefit of supporting an initiative that will bring people together and spread the word.

They might seek to be involved with your screening or event to improve their own organisational visibility, exposure or profile in an area they are committed to, or want to be associated with.

Similarly, the screening or event may be viewed as an opportunity to bring attention to key initiatives, calls to action or opportunities to engage with their organisation or campaign.

It always helps to ask a partner to be explicit about what they hope to get from a partnership and your particular screening or event.

Different partner interests will influence your partnership agreement and the establishment of mutual benefit.

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So how do you find the right partners?

Partnerships must be carefully considered and result in shared value. You don't need too many. It is better to have fewer more engaged partners than to have many who do little.

Co-ordinating partnerships is time consuming, so it is important to research, to identify synergies, and explore before committing.

Ask yourself the following questions when vetting potential collaborations:

- What is their mission? What are they aiming to achieve?
- What is your alignment? In general and in relation to your screening or event?
- What value would the partnership add to your screening or event?
- What would the objectives of being involved be? What would their answer be to - what is in it for me?
- Do you share target audiences? What network do they have access to? How would the partnership extend your potential reach?
- And, does their capacity align with your needs?

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Depending on the nature of your screening and event and the types of partnerships you are building, you may or may not need to carry out a lot of partner outreach.

At a high level, undertaking broader outreach to secure key partnerships generally involves a number of steps:

- An initial personalised email introducing your screening or event and why the partner may be interested in being involved
- A personal follow up email or call if you haven't heard back

- An initial meeting to gain a better understanding of the partner and the potential benefits of working together
- An agreement outlining your collaboration, expectations, roles and responsibilities - whether this be verbal or more formal
- Continual discussion about and reinforcement of your agreement as you continue to work together to deliver your screening or event

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There are many ways to ensure that you leverage the opportunity to maximise your shared outcomes once you have secured a partner. You can do this in a number of ways, including:

- Ongoing clear communication and regular feedback to ensure that you are on the same page and making the most of every opportunity
- Setting out agreed timeframes, roles and responsibilities
- Being clear on all promotional and communications pathways, as well as the timeframes associated with finalising and distributing content
- Developing and providing a range of assets to support your collaboration, from project documentation through to a digital promo kit for partners to distribute
- Reviewing your work together and in the case of ongoing or longer term partnerships identify future areas for improvement

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In summary, remember:

- Less is more
- You must ensure there is clear goal alignment
- Prioritise mutual benefit
- Make data driven decisions
- Engage early and often