DOCACCESS PLAYLISTS FOR CHANGE

PLANNING AN IMPACTFUL EVENT

Slide 1:

Welcome to the DocAccess playlists for change – this is our Planning an Impactful Event module.

Slide 2:

In this video we will look at:

- Defining your event goals
- Finding and reaching your target audience
- The types of event stakeholders
- Basic steps in planning an event
- What materials and tools you might need at the event
- Tips on having a speaker or a panel discussion
- Why Calls to Action are important
- How to follow up

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Before you start thinking about planning your event, consider why you are hosting the screening and what you would like to achieve.

- Do you want to raise awareness of an issue in your community or organisation?
- Are you hoping to fundraise?
- Would you like to build more support for your cause?

Having an idea about your goals will help to communicate this effectively to your audience and better engage people in the screening or event.

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The audience you invite to your event will depend on the size of your event and whether it is private and invite only or a broader reaching public event.

Depending on these factors think about who you want to target to attend your event. Ask yourself:

- Who will WANT to see this film?
- Who SHOULD see this film?

- How can you reach them?

It can help to develop a clear 'profile' to keep in mind for your primary audience, or people who would be important if you want to achieve certain goals. For example, if you are screening a film about female refugee experiences and your goal is to encourage more interaction and support for female refugees in your local area, you may want to target female refugees who have recently moved to your area as well as local refugee and asylum seeker support services and community groups.

Your secondary audience may be other members of the community who have an interest in rural life, women's issues, refugee rights, social inclusion and film or documentary.

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Also, it's important to invite key stakeholders who support your organisation or cause, or who you would like to engage to help you achieve your goals.

For example, would it be beneficial to invite a councillor, politician, local businesses or your funders, volunteers and supporters?

These stakeholders would usually be provided with a more personalised invitation. You may also invite one or more of these stakeholders to speak on a panel or Q&A, and they may be key in helping promote and spread the word about your screening or event.

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Here is a list of key steps you might need to think about when planning your event and logistics. It is important to start planning at least 4-6 weeks beforehand so you have time to organise and invite people. A timeline would help you to plan what you need to do each week in the run up.

Firstly:

- Do you need to find a venue, and how many people does the venue hold? This will limit the numbers of tickets you can sell.
- Does the venue have technical support for the screening? And, you will need to test the film and sound and vision prior to the day.
- Is your venue close to transport and accessible?
- Will you have catering or a bar?
- When will you distribute your invitations or put tickets on sale?

Make sure you develop a plan for how the day will run. This is called a run sheet and helps you allocate jobs to people that are helping you and plan out what needs to happen and when.

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Other important considerations include ensuring that your screening or event is culturally safe, accessible and where possible includes equal representation.

A Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country is an important way to show respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional custodians of the land.

The first preference would be to invite an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander representative who was born in the area you are holding the event on, ideally a Traditional Owner or recognised spokesperson, to open your event with a Welcome to Country. However, if this isn't possible, anyone can make an Acknowledgement to Country at the start of your event.

Creating a culturally safe event involves ensuring that you create a safe space during your screening or event for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as well as other culturally or linguistically diverse people. This fundamentally involves being conscious of ensuring that the way the screening, event or discussions are presented don't negatively impact on the beliefs or cultural identity of people in your audience.

In terms of accessibility, inclusive events ensure that they don't include or minimise any physical barriers to participation, as well as ensure that the language and content provided doesn't exclude anybody.

Finally, consider who is represented at your event, for example in your audience, on your Q&A or panel. Do you have a mix of genders? Do you have diverse voices? If relevant, do you have someone with lived experience of the issue? Your screening or event and discussion will be much more powerful if you carefully consider who is given the opportunity to attend and have a voice.

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By organising a discussion, you can transform a great film screening into an engaging community event.

Discussions, panels and Q&As give everyone the opportunity to learn more and share their perspective on the issues raised in the film. This discussion can help to deepen understanding, to share perspectives on the issues raised by the film and even inspire people to take action.

It is a great way to engage your audience in the themes that are important to your community and goals.

There are three types of facilitated discussions you may be interested in including:

- A moderated panel, with a diverse range of people who can share and discuss their perspectives and experiences of the issue
- One guest speaker who can talk about their experiences in relation to the issues and themes raised in the film
- Or, an audience discussion, where you or someone else moderates a live discussion with your broad audience.

You can incorporate a Q&A session into all of the above.

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Following your screening and facilitated discussion, we strongly recommend that you consider whether there are any calls to action or asks you might share with your audience.

The film will hopefully raise a wide range of emotions and responses from the audience, with the most common audience question being 'what can I do?'

Providing a clear action for them to engage with can be satisfying for your audience and also support you to achieve your goals.

Keep in mind that a film can have a range of effects and support a number of impacts including:

- Raising the voices of the marginalised
- Creating meaningful community engagement
- Engaging audiences in grassroots campaigns and services
- Motivating individuals to participate in collective action
- Supporting advocacy campaigns
- Shift the dial on policy and systems change.

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Moving onto the things you would ideally have prepared for your event, or your key assets!

These will help you create an engaging, safe environment and enable you to engage your audiences with conversations and actions during the screening or event.

You may want to create a branded poster image or just use the poster for the documentary you choose.

Consider the content in the film and whether it would be appropriate to provide a content or trigger warning slide or a slide sharing information on where people could seek support if the screening provokes a difficult response.

You may want a slide to share as the backdrop to a facilitated discussion, or a 'Take action' slide with a QR code or link to where your audience members can do something in the moment in support of your goals (e.g. sign up, donate, volunteer etc).

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On the day, there are a few key tasks that will help your screening or event run smoothly.

Firstly, always do a tech check to make sure the version of the film and the technical equipment is all working - including sound, visuals and mics where appropriate.

Obviously you'll need to ensure your seating for your audience and onstage are set up, but don't forget to set up a registration table for your signup sheet, name tags and surveys for after your screening if you will have one.

Prior to the commencement of the screening ensure you have briefed your speakers on the event proceedings and how to use the microphones if relevant.

During your event, don't forget to take photos, remind people to complete your survey or engage with any actions you have decided on at the end of the screening or event.

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After your screening, don't forget to thank your guests for attending and engaging and follow up with an email reiterating any actions including signing up, completing your survey or taking one or more forms of action to achieve your goals.

We would also absolutely love to hear from you about your screening or event!

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In Summary;

- Consider your impact goals before you plan your screening or event. This will help you to develop your messaging, understand your target audience and key stakeholders.
- Developing a profile of your target audiences will help you invite individuals that are most likely to attend your screening or event and support your impact goals.
- Take time to approach key stakeholders from your community and seek their support.
- Plan your event ahead of time - allowing you to develop a timeline, key assets and carefully consider cultural safety, accessibility and representation.
- On the day - use a run-sheet to co-ordinate your event, make sure you have time to do a tech-check and brief speakers, so your event runs as smoothly as possible.
- Including a facilitated discussion at your event is a powerful way to engage audiences and deepen conversations around the issues raised by the film.
- After your event, make sure you follow up with your guests to thank them and provide them with calls to action to garner support for your impact goals.