

Factsheet 1

Promote your Walks



Why do you need to promote your walks?



- To get more people to join you, or remind 'lapsed' members about your walks
- To start again after a break
- To set up different interest groups from an existing walking group
- To promote a special event

Whether you just want three or four more friends to join you, or you are about to undertake a major marketing project, there are some common principles to think about:

Who are you trying to attract and how many?

- People you already know, young people, young families, middle-aged men, retired couples, cardiac patients, or anyone from the local community?
- Do you just want a few more members or to attract hundreds of people to a community walking day? Choose a method that's realistic for your goals and the time and resources you have available.

What's in it for them?

- Why should they join you, what will they get out of it?
- 'Buyers buy benefits' – and these depend on whom you're targeting.

What are you selling?

- Fun, a good social time, company, confidence, a like-minded group, health benefits, variety? People are more likely to respond positively to the 'buzz' rather than the 'philosophical values' of walking!

So what are the key messages that you need to get across?



Whatever method you use, remember that effective promotion:

- Grabs people's attention
 - "That sounds or looks good"
- Gains their interest
 - "Tell me more, read on"
- Encourages them to make a decision
 - "I think I'll do that"
- Then to take action
 - "I'll pick up the phone. I'll turn up next week"



How to get your messages across:

This isn't a problem with people you know. They already know you, and something about you. You speak their 'language'; know what interests them, and how to get their attention and what their likely barriers or concerns might be. You know where to find them and they know where to find you if they need any more information.

Attracting people you don't know uses the same principles, just different methods of getting your message out there. Think about who you want to communicate with, what might interest them and how to get their attention, what 'language' they speak and the barriers that might get in the way. Make it easy for them to take the next step – to get in touch and to find out more.



How to get your messages across:



	Poster, flyer, advert, web based, social networking site	Face to face – a presentation to a group, or maybe a local radio broadcast
Is your group easily recognisable?	Do you have a logo, colour or a style you always use?	Send someone to whom the group can relate – someone like them.
What do people know about you?	A short sentence that tells people who you are and what you do.	Make sure you use the name of the group several times, so that it 'sticks'. If presenting, take some flyers to hand out.
Getting their attention	Use design, colour, style, lettering, size, words that stand out and catch the eye. Marketing experts tell us to use no more than 10 words on a poster! A picture says a thousand words – make a visual impact. Relevant pictures, images – smiling faces, all shapes and sizes walking along.	Be well prepared – make a positive, confident and snappy start. Paint a picture with words. Help the audience to see themselves in that picture. Don't try to say too much – focus on your key messages – benefits, overcoming barriers, encouraging action. Tell a story about a member of your group – make it real.
Are you speaking their 'language'?	Avoid jargon, be clear, concise, make it easy to read and understand. Use the right 'words' for your target group – e.g. text for young people.	Don't get technical! Think about key words and use them two or three times – friendship, fun, health, easy, progressive, interesting. Avoid – risk assessed, intensity, health screening questionnaires.
Have you thought about the things that interest your target group?	Think about what they might want to 'buy', rather than what you want to sell! Making friends, getting fit, getting out of the house, trying something new, losing weight, and staying healthy could all be reasons.	Put yourself in the audiences' mind. Who are they? What might interest them in walking? What are the triggers that will prompt them to take action?
What might their barriers or concerns be and how can you overcome these?	Not fit enough, not the outdoor type, too fast, too far, wrong day, what to wear, don't know anyone who goes, not sure where to go. Nearly every barrier has a solution.	Identify two or three likely barriers and provide immediate solutions through the key words you choose to use. Your pace, your friends, your locality, part of a group, come and try (give examples specific to the target group).
Where will you find them?	At home, village shop, pub, outside school, health centre, post office, in the park,	Think about existing community groups that your target group might attend. Think about radio programmes they're likely to listen to.
How do they contact you if they need any more information?	An approachable and friendly named person to contact, who will be able to provide comprehensive information (include phone number, email address and website if you have one).	Take flyers or a handout with your contact details – stay around afterwards to meet and talk to people. Ask the radio station to make your contact details available.