

COMMUNICATORS PEER GROUP MEETING

4TH OCTOBER 2021

FACEBOOK PAGE WORKSHOP – MEETING NOTES

(Note that the name of this Peer Group is in the process of changing from the “Communicators Peer Group” to the “Public Relations Peer Group” in line with its evolution towards external communications activities.)

In his introduction, Rodney Fox looked at emerging from Lockdown and returning to as “normal “ an environment as possible for our members. u3as now have to develop and implement activities to raise the profile of their organisations, recruit new members to offset recent membership declines, and especially to recruit new members who are younger, with more diverse backgrounds, and skill in modern information/communications technology.

Nicky Lee made an excellent presentation with Q and A session about the use of Facebook Pages at Chepstow u3a that can help towards achieving the above objectives.

Effective marketing is multi-faceted. Social media, specifically Facebook, should be recognised as only one element of a marketing mix that a u3a needs to employ in order to gain community presence and obtain new members; other elements include word of mouth, poster / brochure / banner publicity, events, an attractive website, media coverage, and also an exploration of reaching out beyond our normal “harvesting” areas.

Facebook is the primary social medium of choice for 55+ age group.

A Facebook (FB) Page is the ONLY Facebook alternative that is a vehicle for targeted recruitment.

Establishing a FB Page: needs to be linked to a key member who is a FB user; can then have any number of administrators (‘admins’) to do the postings (only admins can post), and to handle links to other local community FB pages etc. Suggest use own u3a logo as ‘profile picture’, and a positive image as a cover picture. Note: most FB is accessed from mobile ‘phones, so don’t forget to check what your page and posting looks like from a ‘phone as well as a laptop/PC. Members can send a post for the admin to approve.

Posting: All postings should point towards your website.

To attract maximum interest, postings should principally be images/visuals (use text sparingly).

Need to *push all Group Leaders* to get in the habit of taking activity pictures of their Groups for use on FB Page, website, newsletter/magazine, etc,

Photos need to show small groups of people (not crowds) engaged in some obvious shared activity, minimal background so they can be used anywhere, representing a range of members.

Chepstow use Power Point to develop Facebook postings, then copy straight to FB. Be careful to ensure use of non-copyright material. For images try Pexels, Pixabay, Pablo, or Unsplash -- not Google. Chepstow also use a lot of collages.

Sharing posts to FB Pages of other local community groups: Make a comprehensive list of such community groups, divide and delegate them to your team members. Each team member needs to join their assigned community groups, and then is able to share u3a posts to those other groups.

Posting frequency: Doesn't need a big number of postings, but do go for regularity. This depends on how much traffic you can generate, but generally speaking at least weekly and more often if possible. Post when there is something coming up, with a link to the website, rather than as an after-event report. Post a few days before your e.g. Open Day etc. to give it time to circulate. You can either create your post and post it immediately, or create a post scheduled for a later time and date which you specify.

It would appear that mornings are the best times for FB Page posts to be sent to audiences of our targeted older age group.

Chepstow u3a use a system called 'Buffer' <https://buffer.com/> to enable them to develop a number of posts and then schedule their postings for when they want them released. Croydon u3a use Facebook Business Suite <https://business.facebook.com/>
Other alternatives can be found here: <https://influencermarketinghub.com/social-media-posting-scheduling-tools/>

Boosting a post: This is paid-for advertising to a targeted audience. Select 'boost' on the post. Define target audience by location (distance from a central point), age range, gender and interests. Look at audience size as you adjust these targets.

Chepstow pay the boosting bills by card, and have a specific u3a card for this. In Croydon they pay and claim it back.

Look at the effectiveness of the boost results in the presentation!

Since April 2021 Chepstow added 64 new members before their October Open Day. Obviously this was due to many positive factors, including FM Page use. With boosting, this enabled a good attendance on a rainy Open Day and brought in 31 more new members, and enquiries still coming in.

Other Welsh u3as have taken a lead from Chepstow, a small u3a at Caldicott and the larger u3a at Cardiff were mentioned.

London Region will explore ways of having its own regional FB Page, and working with London u3as to enhance the reach/effectiveness of their FB pages. Not clear how yet.

For those u3a members "scared off FB" by concerns about privacy and hacking: protect your Friends by making sure you set your personal FB privacy settings so that nobody can see your Friends.

Nicky's presentation has been uploaded here to this London Region website Peer Support Groups page as is the short video promoting Chepstow's Open Day that was shown on their FB Page, and also Rodney's introduction.

Nicky's email is njlee_99@yahoo.com Ann, who does most of the FB detail work in Nicky's team, will also be happy to help, her email is Facebook@Chepstowu3a.org.uk

Other useful Facebook related links include:

How to set up a u3a Facebook site and keep it going, This presentation by Jean Jackson explains why you might want to use Facebook, the difference between Facebook Pages and Groups, the usefulness of Facebook Adverts, and how to create content that will keep your site alive.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=daCWvmXM6rg>

Choosing and using Social Media

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/component/edocman/recruitment-toolkit/23-social-media-choosing-and-using?Itemid=>

Recruitment & Social Media - Why Do we Need to Address this Issue Now? Produced by Ravenshead u3a with input by Paul Martinez of Pathfinder fame.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBMc4aDctCI>

How to Guides: Using Facebook Ads

<https://sources.u3a.org.uk/2021/03/09/how-to-use-facebook-adverts/>

An example: Ilkley u3a has an excellent Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/IlkleyU3A/>

Rodney asks that you keep him abreast of your FB Page developments on pr.lru3a@gmail.com

Let's share in our successes and learn from each other!