

Printed Information

Engagement range	Inform
Difficulty level	Easy to Medium
Cost	Medium (\$1,000 to \$10,000) High (over \$10,000)
When might you use it	To communicate an issue To showcase product, plan, policy
Number of people required to help to organise	One-three people
Time to organise	Medium (six weeks to six months)
Size of audience	Large (over 30)
Issues/resources to think about	Staff or volunteers with expertise in writing, editing and layout; Paper; Printing; Postage
Innovation level	Low

Description

Printed material is still one of the easiest ways to publicise and provide information on a project/issue, or publicise a participation process such as an event or meeting.

Popular forms include: fact sheets, flyers, newsletters, brochures, issues papers, reports, surveys etc. These can be single purpose or be produced as a series for distribution (e.g. newsletters).

Printed material can be distributed hand to hand, made available for the public to pick up, or mailed out either directly to a select mailing list, or included as 'bill stuffers' with regular mail outs such as utility bills, rates notice or other regularly posted bills.

Objective

- To provide easily scanned details, in words and drawings, to inform a community about an issue or proposal. Printed information can be easily handed out and carried away.

Desired Outcome

- Easy and familiar way of creating awareness of an issue and/or soliciting responses to an issue or proposal.

Uses/Strengths

- Printed public information materials can combine the needs of publicity with information and allow for minor public input.
- They can reach a large amount of people through mailing or via the availability of the information to the public.
- If comment sheets or questionnaires are included the material can allow for limited public input to a project.
- Can facilitate the documentation of the public participation process.
- Can be a low-cost means of publicity.
- Can be economically distributed by doubling up with existing mail out lists.

Special Considerations/Weaknesses

- The problem with most printed materials is the limited space available to communicate complicated concepts.
- Needs time to decide on text, visuals, proofread, print and fold.
- There is no guarantee that the materials will be read.
- If mailed, the guarantee of being read is only as good as the mailing list itself; mailing lists need regular updating to avoid wasted time, energy and paper.
- Appearance of the material should be visually interesting but should avoid a 'sales' look.
- Can be lost if included with many other flyers and bill stuffers (consider using coloured paper and bold headlines if mailing as a bill stuffer, to ensure this is not just binned without reading).
- Without visual elements, this can exclude those who are not print literate.

Step by Step Guide

1. Available budget, and the use of other publicity methods and tools for distributing project information, will determine just what type of printed material will best suit your need.
2. Plan your messages well. Provide regular updates, but do not bombard people with information.
3. Develop the material with the following considerations in mind:
 - Make it eye catching (colour, photos, cartoons)
 - Make it simple and easy to understand
 - Provide points of contact, such as the name of a central information contact or details of the participation program
 - Avoid a 'sales' look
 - Do not overload with information.
4. Limited public input can be sought through printed public information materials by including surveys and questionnaires or comment/ response sheets.
5. Enclosing a stamped, addressed envelope (or email address/website) with mail outs will improve the return of comments for posted materials.
6. The material should be easily available to the public and be accessible from a number of locations.
7. It is critical that the information outlines the public's role in the participation process or opportunities for participation.
8. Keep mailing lists up to date and check for duplication to save money, time and paper.
9. If distributing as a bill stuffer, speak to agency/department which distributes bills and find out when they need the material in order to go out in the appropriate mail out, and in what format. Check what else is being distributed with bills, and decide whether your flyer will have a good chance of being read. Deliver/arrange for printer to deliver to agency/department who will stuff and distribute.