

Getting the most out of your involvement in the Perthshire Creative Trail

Introduction

The great thing about the Trail is that it is open all year – this means Christmas shopping, Mother's Day, International Women's Day, summer tourists, new shows, new work, attendance at other events, can ALL be promoted.

We hope this package will help you plan your promotional activities to make sure you attract the maximum number of visitors during the year. You can do a huge amount to drive visitors to your studio, gallery, or place.

It is not technically? difficult to create a real buzz. We are here to help. So never hold back from asking for support from info@perthshireopenstudios.com. Within this document you will find easy-to-follow ideas, logos you can use, order forms for leaflets and brochures, facts and figures about the Trail, and lots more. Keep in mind that the target audience for the Trail is both Perthshire residents, their visitors and tourists from across Scotland, the UK and overseas.

This is the first year of the Trail, and this will stimulate peoples' interest but also you may find people confused about when the Open Studios Festival is running (second weekend in September!) Any change is difficult, especially with the Festival having such a great profile. Over time, the Trail will become more widely known and draw more and more people.

An important thought about competition: POS is committed to the concept of "the more, the merrier".

- The more people who encounter art, the more interest there will be in art.
- The more people who buy art, the more people are likely to buy art.

We find that the publicity we generate together gets people through the door. However, the way you price and display your work and what *you* create will influence sales once people are through the door – *not* POS. Our experience is that having artists together or next door does not reduce footfall or indeed sales – working together only increases footfall. The rest is up to you!

Don't be put off!

It's up to you to do what you feel you can do. We know some Trail members have more experience than others. If you would like help, then do please contact us. It's perfectly OK to ask for help and it's what the POS team is here to do for you.

Contents

1. Focus on the Trail.....	2
What will you need to make the most of the Trail?	2
Using Creative Trail materials.....	3
Using local opportunities	3
Using the Trail website	3
Using Trail facts and figures.....	4
2. Using social media to drive footfall.	5
Using POS digital channels.....	5
Using your own digital channels	6
Facebook	7
Instagram	8
Using hashtags	10
Using good photographs.....	10
Using video.....	11
3. Inspiration.....	11
4. Planning suggestions.....	12
5. Finding hooks	13

1. Focus on the Trail

What will you need to make the most of the Trail?

The minimum you will need to draw attention to what you do is:

- A plan for your year – what are you doing and how you will promote it
- Colour photographs of your work, yourself and you working using one landscape and one portrait for each picture.
- Clarity about what you are offering to visitors.
- A system for making appointments and storing contact details for follow-up.
- A range of prices, from £3 cards to hundreds of pounds art works
- Facebook and Instagram pages and website if you have one.

It would be nice to have:

- A short video about how you work, or why you work in a particular way.

- A process of meeting, greeting and showing visitors around
- A worked-out safe route for visitors to move through your space.

Using Creative Trail materials

You will receive:

- A window sticker
- Detailed brochures with foldout map – you can order more.
- Leaflet, A4 folded to A5 – you can order more.

You will be asked to keep a record of where you distribute the brochures and leaflets and how many are given out over the year. This will help us raise money for more next year.

You will be able to download digital logo and banners from the Branding area of the main website.

Using local opportunities

- Work together to coordinate distribution so that the whole area is covered. If you have no-one else on the Trail nearby, let us know and we will help with distribution.
- Make sure local cafés, restaurants, B&Bs, hotels, visitor attractions, campsites, local supermarkets and shops are offered leaflets or brochures.
 - keep a record of where they are and how many you have given them and whether they take a refill. This will help all of us understand what is working and what is not.
- There lots of local publications that cover a small area and are always looking for stories. It doesn't have to be an event: it could be similar to a Facebook post, a new product, or just to say that you are on the Trail or a picture of a piece to celebrate a particular day or event.
- There are also lots of local online (usually Facebook) groups that carry a very wide range of discussions and news. Do read the rules for each group – some don't allow selling. Building a local profile is talking to your best and nearest customers.

Using the Trail website

The Trail website is the go-to resource for people with digital access. The site includes:

- a downloadable PDF version of the brochure
- the ability to search the Trail by name, type of art and area.
- a function for people to save their favourite places and print them out.
- an interactive map with pins that show a summary and a link through to the detailed listing pages.
- feedback page.

To get the full benefit of the website and its potential to promote you effectively, you will need to curate your "page" on the website.

- The website will initially carry the same information as you submitted for the brochure – with links to your own website, Facebook and Instagram pages.
- It will carry the photos you submitted, but as the year goes by you might develop a new style or "product" and you will be able to update your gallery. The more quality photos, the better!
- Perhaps you are closed for a holiday.
- Perhaps you're exhibiting somewhere.
- Perhaps you have a product that fits a particular moment.

Please remember that you can't sell on the POS website, but you can link people through to other online sites or shops.

Using Trail facts and figures

You may be asked questions or want to include some information in promotional posts:

- This is our first year of the Perthshire Creative Trail – it runs April to April
- Included in the Trail are:
 - 15 galleries and 32 solo artists
 - 6 of Perthshire's outdoor places
 - 5 places to visit (Cairn o' Mohr, Errichel Farm, Glenturret Distillery and Innerpeffray Library) for a different insight into Perthshire's creative community.
- The Trail is supported by Perth and Kinross Council (UNESCO City of Craft project), Perth Creative Exchange, and Perthshire Artisans.
- The idea comes from consultations with Perthshire artists, whether they create jewellery or paint, sculpt or are photographers.
- There is a detailed brochure, a leaflet, and a website.
- "The Trail provides visitors and residents access to our creative community regardless of what time of year it is. There are lots of 'shop local' campaigns – this is about supporting local artists. It's been a tough few years for everyone – the Trail will help encourage visitors and residents alike get the best of Perthshire", explained Heather Budge-Reid, Chair of POS.
- The Trail is organised by POS (Perthshire Open Studios) to complement the long-running September Perthshire Open Studios Festival. POS is a Community Interest Company (CIC).
- For further information, contact Heather Budge-Reid info@perthshireopenstudios.com

2. Using social media to drive footfall.

This section assumes that you have one or more social media accounts already set up – if you don't use these channels, there are online guides available to get you started:

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/business/help/1199464373557428?id=418112142508425>

Instagram

<https://business.instagram.com/getting-started>

We are also here to help.

Using POS digital channels

- POS has a Facebook page and a Facebook group:
 - <https://www.facebook.com/perthshireopenstudios>
Perthshire Open Studios community
This is a POS 'page' that is visible to the general public and is used for promotion of POS. The POS admins can post here to reach the general art-loving public. Content posted on this page can be easily shared from it.
To get your content shared here, create a post on your own Facebook page or feed and add the tag @perthshireopenstudios at the bottom so that the POS admins will be notified. If you see someone else's post that you think would be good for the POS page, you can add a comment to it and add the tag @perthshireopenstudios there.
Click on 'Follow' to be notified of posts to this page. The more POS posts you engage with, the more people will learn about our events.

This page currently has 2,230 followers who are art fans.
 - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/perthshireopenstudios>
Perthshire Open Studios group
This is a private group for Perthshire artists and is used for sharing information among artists about their work and about POS.
The group requires members to join and be approved by the administrators, and content created in the group can't be shared publicly. However, posts created on other public pages can be shared to the group, e.g. a post on your own page can be shared to the closed group and then people can share the original post if they want to.
Click on 'Join Group' and answer a couple of quick questions to join this group and keep up to date with POS and your fellow artists.
Currently has 857 artist members.
- POS has an Instagram page:
<https://www.instagram.com/perthshireopenstudios/>
Perthshire Open Studios
This page is used by POS to share information about POS and its members.

Similar to Facebook, if you would like POS to repost your content, tag your post with @perthshireopenstudios or add a comment to someone else's post and the POS admins will do the rest!

Follow this page to keep up-to-date with POS news, and to enable POS to see and share your latest images. The more POS posts you engage with, the more people will learn about our events.

Currently has 1,478 followers.

- POS has a website, that includes an Arts Diary:
<https://www.perthshireopenstudios.com/events>
The Arts Diary is updated regularly to provide a source of arts events information – this could be a new exhibition or a new range. If you have an event to share, please prepare text and images as best you can (maybe you've already created a Facebook post) and then email info@perthshireopenstudios.com for your event to be added to the Diary.
- Remember to give us your Facebook Business Page name if you have one and please share as many of the posts from the Perthshire Open Studios page as possible, to help spread the word.

Using your own digital channels

In this section we are going to cover a couple of the more popular social media channels. There are a significant number of different channels, and each can be used by different segments of your customer base. Depending on that customer/viewer base and its demographics, you may wish to consider what's most appropriate to you. If appealing to a younger demographic, you may wish to consider TikTok, etc. There are also some channels such as Facebook / Instagram where it is possible to post in both at the same time using the settings in your account.

There are multiple opinions about selling using social media, and some channels have their own shopping options. However, the received wisdom is that you should not focus only on selling. Posting about your creative process, asking opinions about your work, your pets, etc., can create more reaction than a piece of art where you post a price. That said, a mix of posts can allow that one customer who might not see your work anywhere else to know you do sell.

Many social media channels have the ability to schedule posts, e.g. Facebook. If you're not going to schedule posts in advance, it's a good idea to have several days worth of images on your phone so that you can post when you want. There are some theme days listed at the end of this document, which can be effective times to post, but make sure they are relevant for you.

With any social media, it's important to follow up if viewers like your posts and especially if they comment on them – make sure you reply and like where appropriate and invite them to like your page. Communication is a two-way street!

- Have a link on your website to the Trail website – it's great to use this in any posts that refer to the Trail, the work you are showing, the dates and time you are open, pictures of any of your visitors. You can grab this from the top of your Trail page, it will look something like this: <https://trail.perthshireopenstudios.com/places/firstname-lastname/>
You can shorten this by using bit.ly or a similar site for free – <https://bit.ly>

Links can't be used in Instagram posts but you can include a link in your bio to your page and if you would like to include more than one link in your bio, you can use LinkTree – <https://linktr.ee>

- Make sure your own website is up to date.

Facebook

Pin your most relevant content.

- Make a description of what you do or the next date for a craft fair / exhibition / or another event appear at the top of your page.
- To do this, share the post then click on the 3 dots [...] to the top right of post and select the 'Pin post' option at the top of the menu.
- This menu is also where you'll find the option to edit your post, if any details change or you notice a spelling error, etc.

Think about creating a group.

A Facebook group allows you to separate communications between your family/friends and your clients and art fans. Facebook groups can be created by individual users. Groups allow members to post content such as links, media, questions, events, editable documents, and comments on these items. Perhaps you can't make up your mind which picture to turn into a card – ask your fans. Groups are increasingly used by clubs, companies, and public sector organisations to engage with stakeholders, be they members of the public, employees, members, service users, shareholders or customers. Groups can have two different levels of privacy settings:

- "Public" means the group, its members and their comments are visible to the public (which includes non-members), but they cannot interact without joining.
- "Private" means that nothing can be viewed by the public or shared outside the group unless a member specifically invites another user to join the group.

Posting good content

The key to developing a winning fan page that builds fans and pushes your business forward is to post content that genuinely interests your customers or clients. Don't ONLY focus solely on you or your business, post about exhibitions you go to or major events in your life as an artist – anecdotally accounts comment that some of their best performing posts are about pets, family, etc. People like to know the people behind the posts too! By providing valuable information to the reader, you will build a stronger relationship with current and prospective customers.

There isn't a very tight restriction on word count but remember, if you have more than a couple of sentences people will have to click to read the rest of the post, so make sure the start of your post grabs attention so people want to read to the end.

Events

Facebook allows you to create events, so if you are open on certain days, you can use this function to let people know what is happening. Even if people don't come, you will have created the idea that things are happening. Once you have set up an event, it will appear in your feed, and you can re-share this as well.

Using images

Posts with more than one image can work well, although Facebook will arrange multiple images into 4x4 picture template. So, if you load up more than one image then they will appear in the template with, for example, a '+6' on one image. The 6 other images won't be visible unless the reader clicks on them.

Make your photos eye-catching and fun where possible. Remember you can use part of an image to garner interest. Image size is flexible but do try to be consistent with the shape and size of your images. Typically, you don't need to worry about high quality images as much as you would with print work, as the images are seen in a small format. With a portrait-style image, you will gain more screen time if using a single image and portrait-style works best.

Facebook has started allowing users to upload and view 360-degree photos. Mobile users will move their device around to navigate the environment, while website users will have to click and drag – now you can show all sides of your work, your studio, etc.

Reels

Reels are short videos that you can make to entertain your audience AND help introduce your business to new audiences, as these are also shown to people who are not your followers.

Reels have to be less than a minute long and are posted from the same place as you would normally post, simply click 'Reel'. You can add music and text to your stills and videos to make them more engaging. We recommend keeping these short and fun.

How to post on groups

To post on any group, you usually must have joined the group.

Open the group and you should see somewhere at the top an option with your profile icon to the left with the message "Write something". As with any post, you can add reels / photos / feeling emojis, etc. It will depend upon the group settings whether your post will require approval by a group admin before it appears online.

Instagram

Instagram has been recognised as a much more image-friendly social channel and allows some management of your images within the platform. It is a fantastic channel, but many users choose either Facebook or Instagram, so you may need to consider whether your customer base warrants posting in both. As mentioned earlier, you can post from either channel into both through your account settings.



The next paragraph describes the type of posts you can make but one factor to consider is when to post: mid-morning, teatime, evening, etc. A lot depends on your viewer group but by trying out different times you can determine what works best for you, perhaps even a mix.

With Instagram, there are various options now for how to post. To keep your account fresh, it is a good idea to try to vary the type of posting between reels / posts / story / story highlights / live / guide / fundraiser. We won't be going through all of these in detail but there are excellent guides on YouTube or the web that you can refer to.

Definitions (typically most posts are in the first three options):

- Reel – a video you can record on your phone, choosing to add music, text, effects, etc.
- Post – a single or multiple images with the option to include text.
- Story – a 24-hour post that is seen by your followers.
- Story highlight – these appear on your profile page.
- Live – allows you to appear live to your followers.
- Guide – this is a way to recommend places / products / posts.
- Fundraiser – you can select a charity and there are no processing fees for donations.

As the focus is on the images, that it the first thing you should choose:

- When you open a new post, you are taken to your photos to select the ones you want – you can choose up to a maximum of 10 images.
- Images are best square (1080 x 1080 pixels is recommended) and high quality but as the images tend to be viewed on phone screens this doesn't have to be the case.
- Ideally choose your strongest image as the first, as this will encourage people to look at the rest.
- Be aware that there is a function on Instagram  which appears at the bottom left of the image, it allows you to toggle between image sizes, once set it applies to all images.
- To choose more than one image you need to press the multiple button 
- Once you are happy with your images, press the 'Next' button at the top right of the screen. On this screen there are automatic colour options, including a black and white option which you can try out, as well some minor editing tools. The 'Next' button takes you to the final screen.
- There is a space to write a description of why you are posting and / or enter hashtags.
- You can tag people, by entering their account name with an @ in front – they will receive a notification that they are mentioned in your post. There is also the option to collaborate here, which allows them to share your post on their account too.
- There are lots of other options to try out and see what resonates with your viewers and what gets a better response.
- Hashtags are important here too, see the section on Hashtags above in the Facebook section.
- You can also choose a Facebook account to share the post to. If you have multiple accounts, you can switch between them here.

Using hashtags

- A hashtag, # preceding a word or phrase (with no spaces) i.e. #acrylics is a tool on social media that allows users to follow topics they are interested in. So, by using hashtags you can attract users who've never heard of you before and may be across the world.
- Hashtags can be any word you think applies but typically using them for promotional purposes means you want to decide which to use. There are various tools / options that can help.
 - You can look at other accounts you know and see what they use.
 - Within some social media, i.e. when you start typing the hashtag in a post, options will be offered, showing how many of your followers follow the hashtag or if there is a better one to use.
 - Websites such as www.best-hashtags.com enable you to search for other similar hashtags that are commonly used and how many followers they have.
- You can use hashtags at the bottom of your post OR in a comment to the post. That's useful if you forget when making your original post – you can edit your post or add them in later as a comment.
- You can simply type a number of hashtags leaving no spaces between the different ones, but it does read better for others to format each hashtag as follows; #artofinstagram #landscapes #oils #acrylics #glass #ceramics.
- If a hashtag is in the right format, it will turn blue to show that it is live.
- Please use our hashtags in your posts

#POS #PerthshireCreativeTrail #POSFestival #POSSummerShow

Following hashtags

To follow a hashtag on Instagram, simply type it into the search bar and tap Enter/Return. Once you click on a chosen hashtag, the 'Follow' button will appear. Tap 'Follow' and the posts and stories using this hashtag will appear in your feed and story tray, even when they are shared by accounts that you don't follow.

On Facebook, you can search hashtags but the option to 'follow' is not available.

Using good photographs

The best advice is to get professional photographs taken but realistically that's not always possible. Consider where the images are to be used and how long they'll be required, i.e. magazine print artwork, websites, social media might be an order of priority when deciding when to use professional images. Also, you can use the same images across various channels and create a brand identity.

It could be worth taking a course in photography composition, lighting, etc., that can help you produce better images. The quality of image does impact the viewer's interpretation.

Some guidance for you or your photographer(s):

- Consider the composition, a single piece of art, a grouping of pieces or complementary elements, e.g. often plants or flowers can make hard items such as ceramics or jewellery appear more engaging.
- Ensure your photographs are cropped appropriately – use photo editing functions to prepare your photos.
- Have examples in portrait and landscape format, and square as well for Instagram.
- Photos that are saved at the highest resolution, at least 300dpi.
- Use daylight and watch out for reflections in glass and take a photograph before framing an image.
- Include a picture of you working.
- Consider a series of pictures, before, during and after.
- A head and shoulders picture of you.
- Think about the background – make it simple and plain – perhaps hang a sheet or think about your camera angle. Consider using software such as Photoshop or GIMP to remove or change backgrounds.
- Think about using scanners to capture images.
- Talk to Louise at Craiggrossie Printing – <https://craiggrossieprinting.com> – if you need help with scanning options.
- Remember that good photos are fundamental if you are presenting yourself as a professional artist.

Using video

Many social media channels offer options for video to be posted or as mentioned above you can use reels to post videos taken as you make the post. Other options, such as iMovie, allow you to create a movie with music, titles, transitions, etc. This can then be posted to most social media, although some restrict the length of video – keeping it short also works for viewers.

You can practice videoing in portrait or landscape format, experimenting with how that appears and where you plan to use it. Speak to others you know who use the same media channel to post videos.

There are now several templates available on channels that allow you to choose a selection of images and timings with pre-set music choices that tie into the image transitions providing a strong overall effect. This brings movement to your post without recording a video.

As members of POS, remember you get a 10% discount from several video suppliers and there are plenty of courses to help you develop this aspect.

3. Inspiration

The key to all this activity is planning *and* ideas. Planning is a tool that can help reduce last-minute panic by preparing images / text / promotional materials in advance. There will typically

be something unplanned that occurs at the last minute, but having a plan and a series of dates allows you to work out how you can move something and still achieve deadlines.

Planning becomes more important for more significant events. For example, an exhibition may require thinking of when materials have to be gathered, not just the actual pieces of art but the promotional materials required, banners, leaflets, cards, etc. Using images of the latest works won't always be possible as it can be a last-minute creation, so it's worthwhile taking images throughout the year so you have images you are happy to use when you need them.

Allow time for any external suppliers and allow slippage wherever possible to avoid disappointment. Consider when using suppliers not only the timeline and costs being promised but also the quality of work. Make sure you're happy with the output you've seen and work to that supplier's timeline.

There is a law of nature (or Sod's Law) that if things are done at the last moment, then something will breakdown, the car won't start, or there's a road closure. Planning is the only way to counteract this force of nature!

Think about what events / exhibitions / commissions you will be doing during the year, and for each of them:

- When is the event happening?
- When will I start promoting on social media or take up local opportunities?
- When will I need to drop off my piece(s)?
- Do I need to have my work framed / mounted? Allow timing?
- Will I require promotional materials?
- Do I have materials, or do I need to prepare some? Allow timing?
- What information will the organiser need from me?
 - Biography
 - Prices
 - Titles
 - Media
 - Consignment note.
 - Bank details
- When do I need to collect work?

4. Planning suggestions

- Remember the Trail can be promoted all year round.
- Complete your profile on the POS website and plan to do this every month with updates.
- Consider arranging a meeting with other artists to coordinate activity in your area.
- Distribute brochures and leaflets.

- Confirm deadlines for advertising/editorial opportunities in local publications and online groups.
- Pick significant events that you could link to – such as UN days, Christmas, Diwali, etc.
- Remember to distribute leaflets to family, friends, neighbours, and colleagues.
- Prepare your own social media schedule for the year ahead.
- If you are taking part in the POS Summer Show at Birnam Arts (July 1st-16th 2023): switch your messages to have a Summer Show focus in mid-June.
- Check regularly that your brochure distribution points have not run out of stock.
- If you are taking part in the Open Studios Festival (6th-11th September 2023): switch your messages to have a festival focus in mid-August.

5. Finding hooks

In media-speak, a 'hook' is what a story hangs on that makes it timely and relevant to a particular audience. It could be a calendar event (as listed below) or another news story, for instance a report about the mental health benefits of creative activities.

There are the well-known calendar days such as Valentine's Day or Mothering Sunday, and those days trigger a lot of coverage that may drown out your own message. There are other days that people don't know so much about, or that don't generate as many stories. This means you may be the only person linking to that day!

Below is a list of just some of the "UN days" in a year. There are many more, and the best advice is to pick a few in advance (remember the Trail is open right the way through to April 2024).

When coupled with the right hashtags, these days can provide you with a good opportunity to reach a like-minded crowd and post interesting content – but avoid gimmicks.

January

24 Jan International Day of Education

February

01 Feb World Wetlands Day

04 Feb Valentine's Day – Gift your one and only a unique ...

March

01 Mar World Wildlife Day

05 Mar International Women's Day

21 Mar World Poetry Day

21 Mar International Day of Forests

21 Mar World Water Day

April

20 Apr World Creativity and Innovation Day

21 Apr International Mother Earth Day

May

10 May International Day of Plant Health

12 May World Migratory Bird Day

14 May International Day of Families – Could you hold an open day for families with children?

16 May International Day of Light - How do you use light in your work?

17 May World Bee Day

June

04 Jun World Environment Day

13 Jun World Blood Donor Day – Maybe an exhibition for people waiting to give blood?

14 Jun Sustainable Gastronomy Day

July

18 Jul International Moon Day– Hold a late-night opening or a "Paint the moon together" workshop?

August

09 Aug International Youth Day

September

07 Sep International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies

18 Sep International Day of Peace

26 Sep World Tourism Day

27 Sep World Maritime Day

October

08 Oct International Day of Rural Women

15 Oct World Food Day

November

20 Nov World Children's Day

December

10 Dec International Mountain Day

For more see 'days' see: <https://www.un.org/en/observances/list-days-weeks>

An alternative, more related to the USA:

<https://blog.hootsuite.com/weird-holidays-to-celebrate-on-social-media>