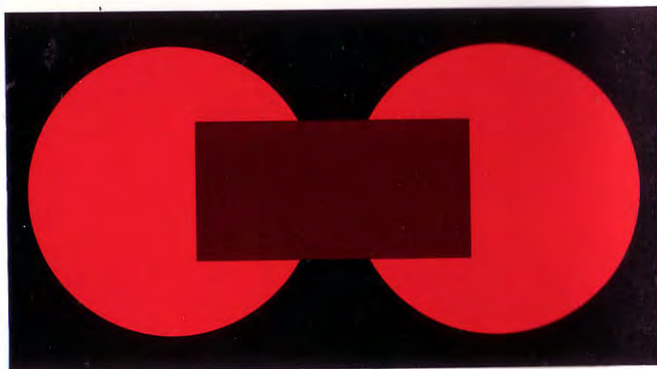


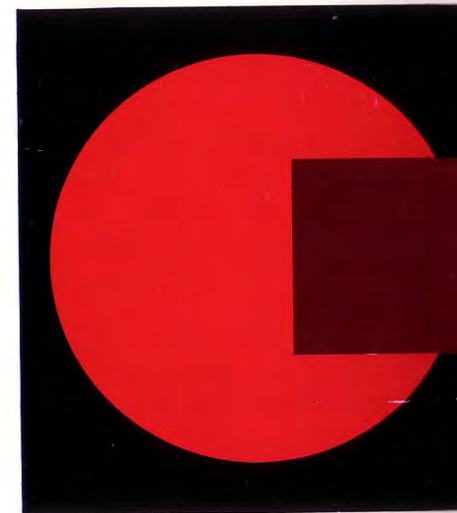
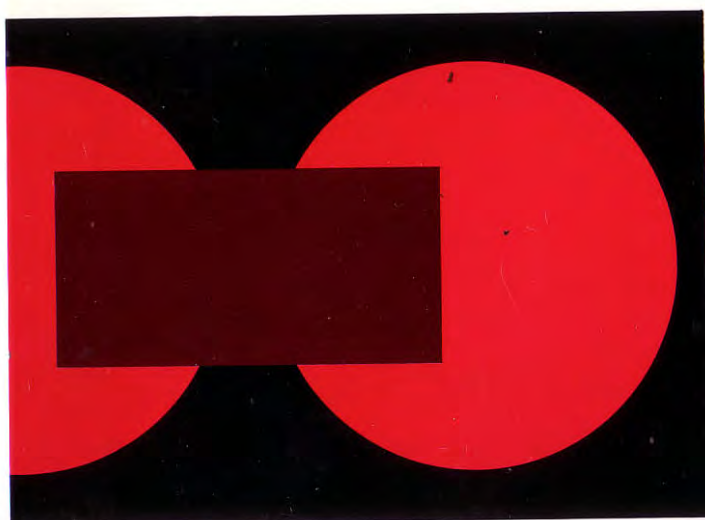
# A Video Marketing Workbook



**TEVPA**



# Off the shelf



Text © London Strategic Policy Unit 1987  
Cartoons © Nick Davies 1987

This guide was written by Krishan Arora and Justin Lewis of the Recreation and Arts Group of the London Strategic Policy Unit (LSPU). It is part of a joint initiative with the Independent Film and Video Association.

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## ● Introduction

This guide is designed for community video groups, independent video groups, or anyone involved in making a non-broadcast video tape. You may be a voluntary organisation, a community or a campaigning group who has decided to make or commission a video. What this guide will help you to do is *get your video seen by the people you want to see it*.

In the pages that follow, the skills and techniques of marketing are applied to video. You can use these techniques how you like. They provide ways of reaching your target audience, whether you simply want to get a point across or whether you want to generate some means from sales or hires. A video tape left on the shelf is an *invisible video*.

# PART I: COMMUNICATION AND VIDEO MARKETING

## ● Marketing Video

This booklet looks at the promotion and distribution of community/independent videos/or films on video-cassette for non-broadcast use.

Why video marketing?

One of the reasons for the slow growth in the impact of independent video is the reluctance shown by grant-aided groups and individuals to get involved in marketing. Ironically, for many people, marketing has a lousy image. It is important to begin by answering some common objections.

Public service and social marketing

● **Marketing is part of commercial, profit-making activities – We don't want to/can't make a profit.**

Marketing doesn't *have* to be about making a financial profit: you can market political ideas (often called 'propaganda'), local government services, events etc. The marketing principles are the *same*, whether the target audience buys something or uses a publicly-available service. Marketing to sell public services (including grant-aided arts or media) is often called 'social marketing'.

Market research

● **Marketing is manipulative. We want to work with people, involve them in the media, not use it against them.**

Marketing can also involve people too, in the form of market research: it asks the community/the consumers what they want, and then provides them with it. Marketing is only seen as manipulative because it's identified with private sector consumerism, where companies use marketing strategies to sell products people don't really need.

● **We'd like to have more people see our tapes, but we can't afford it: we haven't got the resources.**

The resources for marketing have to be budgetted for and built into the production. They're not an expensive luxury. You have to budget – either at the beginning of the year, or for individual productions – for the cost of marketing as for the cost of scripting, shooting or editing.

● **Marketing is too expensive**

Firstly, this guide will suggest ways of promoting your video which involve little expense (as well as ways which *are* expensive).

Secondly, expense is *relative*. The production cost of a tape may be distorted downwards by voluntary labour, equipment subsidy, free materials etc, and so seem out of proportion to marketing costs (which are often cash costs). Spending time and resources on production will often be wasted without *also* spending time on promotion. Thirdly, money spent on promotion can be recouped through increased sales or hires.

Marketing: part of an overall budget

Spending on promotion – a necessity not a luxury



**Profit, loss or break even**

You may want to subsidise promotion costs, increase your audience, you may want to break even (£500 spent on promotion, £500 made from sales), or you may want to make some money out of it. This guide will help you make the choice.

**Distribution is only part of marketing**

● **We don't need to know about marketing. Albany/Other Cinema/Concord do our distribution, so it's up to them.**

Distribution is only a *part* of marketing, not separate from it. The producer, not the distributor, is in the best position to market the programme, because she or he knows what she or he is trying to say through the video, and who she or he is trying to say it *to*. You need to know about marketing so that you can choose the most effective distribution method or distribution agency.

**Reaching the audience you want**

● **We're not interested in mass audiences. We want to make videos on specific subjects for group viewing. It's the quality of audience response, not the quantity, that matters.**

The guide, and the advice in it, aims to help you to reach your target audience, whether groups or individuals. It will help you to multiply the number of groups using your tapes.

**Outreach is part of marketing**

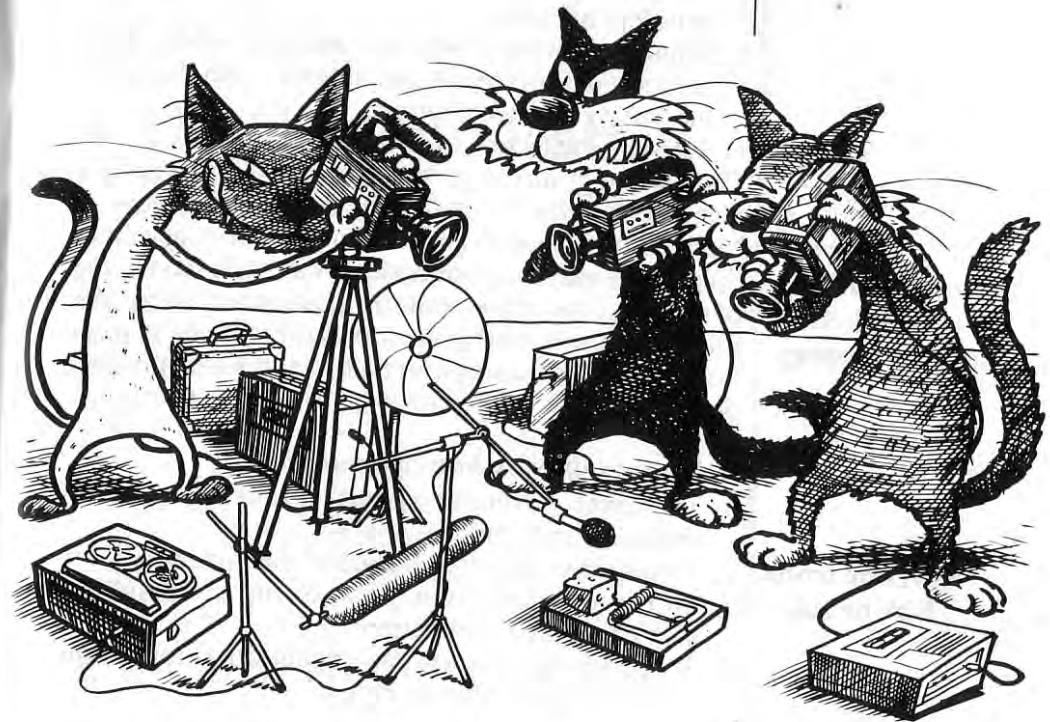
● **We haven't got any marketing skills.**

Any group with an information or outreach worker essentially has a marketing officer: both do the same job of finding out what people need and encouraging them to use the available facilities.

**Using your past work**

● **We haven't got anything distributable.**  
This guide may encourage you to reassess your past work – maybe even to consider re-editing it – by suggesting *how* you can reach audiences with it. Thinking about your work in marketing terms may ultimately be a better way of improving its quality than thinking about it in technical terms. Marketing involves thinking about the audiences' needs, and

how the product appears to *them*, rather than what *you* think of it.



## ● Production Practice

The terms 'community/independent' need clarifying because they cover a range of production ideologies. It's important to recognise the difference in the way things are produced because this will often determine the objectives of the marketing strategy.

There are six general categories

1. Grant-aided workshops producing for Channel 4 who have the non-broadcast rights for their programmes.
2. Non-franchised production workshops, with per-

**Different types of video production**

**Different reasons for a marketing strategy**

- manently employed production staff.
- 3. Production *access* groups, which have equipment and give production support to groups and individuals.
- 4. Individual producers, working through a workshop or independently.
- 5. Voluntary groups who commission videos from individuals/workshops and intend to do their own marketing and distribution.
- 6. Training Projects

The type of group or person you are will play a major part in setting the targets for the marketing strategy. Many groups need to generate income to supplement their grant aid; some individuals aim to make a living from tape production and distribution; some see the production and distribution of programmes as their normal budgetted work; for others, it's a by-product of process work. So you need to ask further questions:

- **Where will sales-hire revenue go?**

- 1. To cover promotion and marketing costs – materials and labour.
- 2. To subsidise free distribution of the same tape.
- 3. To recoup production costs, or top up subsidised elements of the production.
- 4. To generate cash for the organisation for future productions or other work.

- **Is a tape a success when it:**

- 1. Covers promotion and production costs?
- 2. Makes a financial profit over and above those costs?
- 3. Reaches a large number of people?
- 4. Reaches people in the priority-target groups?
- 5. Reaches three or four key decision makers?
- 6. Gives the makers production experience, or other social skills?

**Being adaptable to needs and issues**

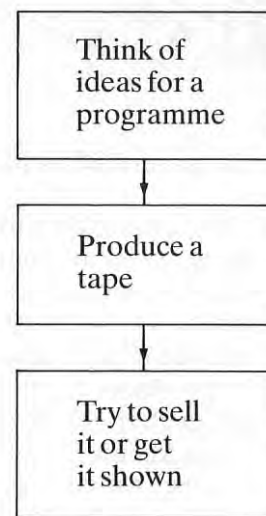
For a sector which often sees itself as reactive, adaptable, and dealing with 'unquantifiable' social/political benefits, such an approach may seem restrictive; nevertheless, the principles of promotion

and target setting can apply *whatever* the defined objective, and it is easier to react/adapt to the needs of the community or to a particular political situation if you are clear what you can offer, and who you can offer it to.

## ● The Communication Mix

If video is to be an effective form of communication, the actual production of the video tape needs to be seen as *part* of a process, not an end in itself. All too often, the communication process looks like this:

**Production is part of communication**



If you're making a programme for television, this is not too much of a problem. The audience, in the form of TV licence payers, have already bought it. For a non-broadcast video, however, it's a very poor system of communication. It begs a number of questions:

- who are we communicating to?



### Thinking about the audience

- how can interest be generated in the message you want to get across?
- under what circumstances are they likely to see it?

In other words, thinking about your audience and how your tape is going to reach it is as much a part of the communication process as making the tape itself.

### Don't take your audience for granted

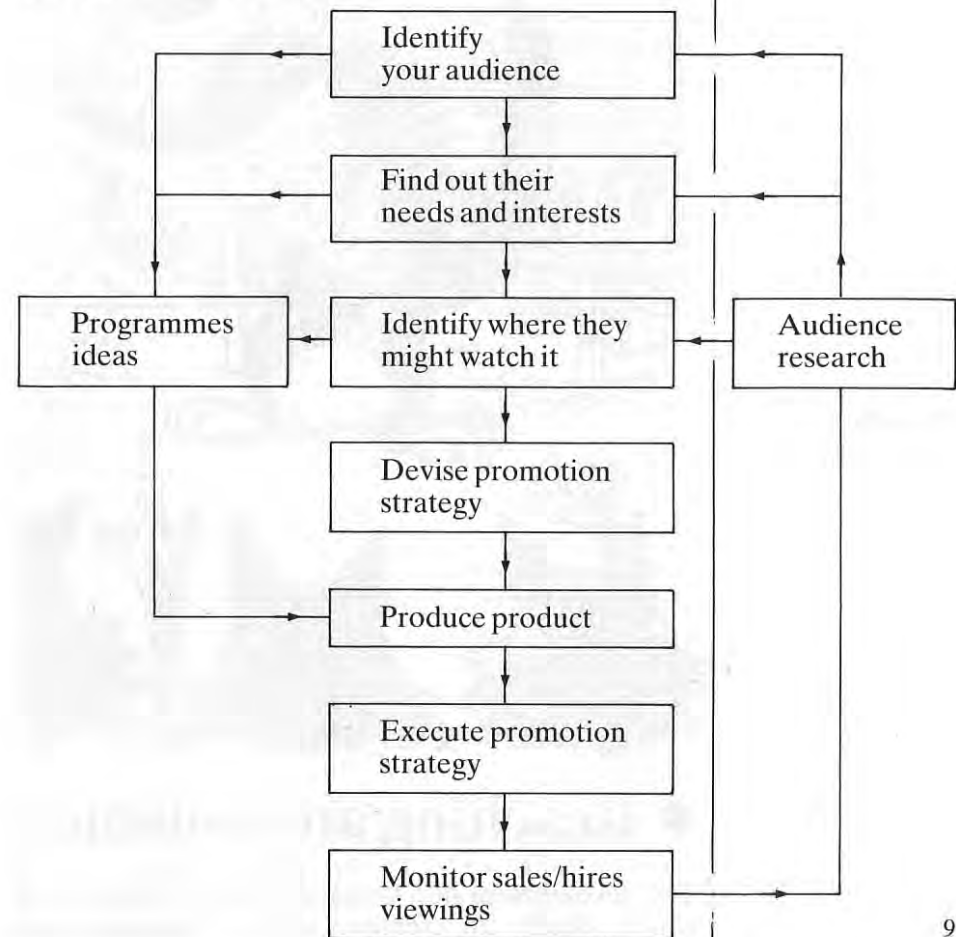
The interaction of videomaker and audience – so that the videomaker produces a programme *with* a group/community rather than for or *about* them – is perhaps the sector's best feature. It is the cornerstone of an 'integrated practice' which involves training a wide range of people to use technology, involving people in the editorial content of the production, and screening the tape in an appropriate context. This identification of producer with consumer *should* allow the right messages to be produced and supplied to the audience through video, with a minimum of persuasion or manipulation. Unfortunately, the needs of the audience are often taken for granted, and

the resulting programmes fail to address people directly: rather like broadcast TV, in fact.

The potential for improving the impact of non-broadcast video is enormous. This guide is designed to help you do that. This means offering advice and information on promotion techniques, as well as clarifying the whole process of videomaking. In a successful communication strategy, video production happens at a fairly late stage. The process should look something like this:

### Potential for increasing impact

### The Communication Mix



Once the 'communication mix' has been set up, we can build up information about what works and what doesn't, in order to gradually improve the whole process.



## ● Reaching an Audience

The development of a video/film idea is a process in which, ideally, the creativity of the makers and the

needs/reactions of the audience go hand in hand. It's not a question of thinking of an idea and then finding an audience, nor is it one of identifying an audience and making a programme to fit. Programmes, whether feature films, TV programmes or non-broadcast video, are always made with a notion of intended audience ('family audience', 'arthouse', 'community groups'); but in order to get the programme *to* them, this needs to be made far more explicit.

Once you've identified and pictured your audience, you can decide what will motivate them to watch your programme. In other words, think about what your programme looks like to the audience and how it can be promoted to them.

There are two ways of doing this. One is by simply going and talking to people, the other is by getting members of your potential audience to fill in a questionnaire. You don't need a large sample to make this worthwhile – you're not trying to predict the next general election result, after all. Even a small sample will give you an idea of *what* people want to watch, and what this means in terms of the *form, style* and *packaging* of your tape.

The next step in reaching your audience involves the *audience structure*. Your audience is likely to be split between *the buyer, the hirer or user* and *the viewer*. You may *sell* your tape to an audio-visual librarian at an education authority, for example. The tape will then be *hired* by a teacher to be *shown* to an audience of 15-year-olds. Or you may hire or sell your tape to a youth worker who will show it at a youth or drop-in centre.

The structure of your audience, has consequences for your promotion strategy. Do you, for example, promote the video to youth or to youth workers? You might decide to do both, but the two will involve quite different promotion strategies. The technicalities of promotion and distribution will be explained later on in this guide. In the meantime, it is useful to map out some audience structures.

**Needs of audience is part of production**

**Motivating the audience**

**Audience research**

**Audience structures**

**Different audiences, different promotion**



## ● Programme Content

As part of the production plan for a tape, three things will determine its success.

- Programme *form* and *function*
- Programme *packaging*
- Programme *style*

Programme *form* and *function* means:

- the length of the video
- whether it's in short sections or a continuous piece.
- the stated functions of the tape, i.e. as a discussion-trigger, model for role-play, informative documentary.

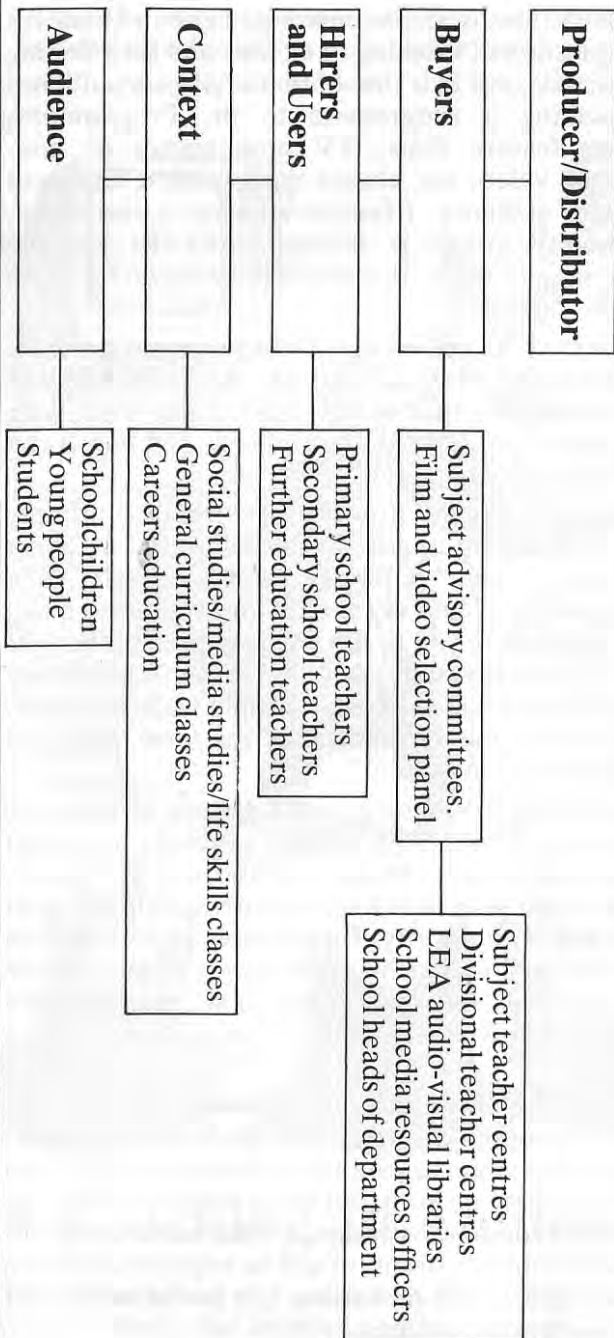
Programme *packaging* means:

- the availability of discussion notes, reading lists, practical exercises, further information related to the video.

**Programme  
form and  
function**

**Programme  
packaging**

## Sample Audience Structure – Education





<p><b>Programme style</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● the relation of the video to other resources with which the audience may be more familiar, e.g. accompanying books, audio cassettes, training courses.</li> </ul> <p>Programme <i>style</i> involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● drama/documentary/experimental/topical or artistic content?</li> <li>● direct or indirect address?</li> <li>● informative/propagandist/humorous or open-ended tone?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Length of tape</b></p> <p><b>How can the tape be used?</b></p>	<p>There are few general rules, but there's no substitute for knowing what your audience wants. For example, a tape aimed at the school curriculum can be no more than 15 minutes long; within a standard 40 minute lesson, this is all the time that's available. A tape aimed at the youth service should include practical exercises rather than just discussion points: discussion is often difficult in a crowded, noisy, energetic youth club. Trade unions seem to prefer tapes based around specific topical issues. However, there is nothing to stop you marketing, say, an art video to geography teachers: if you can think of imaginative ways in which the teachers may use it, and make sure that they understand and feel confident about doing so, it may well work.</p>
<p><b>Contact with the tape's users</b></p> <p><b>The identity of your work</b></p>	<p>Your best source of information about programme style, packaging, and form must be the eventual users themselves. Contact with them at the planning stage will not only improve the programme, it'll also generate interest to buy the finished product. Broad generalisations about the type of videos produced by the community, workshops or independent sector are hard to come by. This in itself is an indication of the problem that potential buyers have with the sector's products: the absence of an overall identity for the work. What can a tape produced by a workshop tell you that one produced by the BBC can't? Distinguishing the content of a workshop-produced tape from that of one produced for TV or by a 'commercial' production house will make the product easier to distribute. Some angles which could give</p>

your video a 'unique selling point' are:

- if the subject hasn't been covered before;
- if it's giving an alternative political perspective on an issue;
- if the process of production is important to the meaning of the tape, e.g. if it was produced through process work, or by beginners;
- if it's specifically designed for a particular purpose like discussions, teaching or group work;
- if it's specifically produced for local people, local communities, or looks at local history/landmarks.

The last category, of locally-produced/locally-aimed programmers, is perhaps one of the sector's strongest but as yet underdeveloped points. *Dogs Life*, produced by the Island Arts Centre on the Isle of Dogs in East London, reaches, according to the video hire shops through which it's distributed, an extremely high percentage of its local market. *The Downham Tape*, a video about a new housing development, distributed through Albany, has sold over 200 – to the people who live there. If workshops cast their nets wider – to attract regional rather than borough funding, for example – the potential of local production becomes neglected.

**A number of selling points**

**Local distribution**

## PART II: STRATEGIES AND METHODS

### ● Promotion Strategies

#### Mixing standard and specific promotion

Having identified the audience and planned the *content* of the programme, the next step is to devise the promotion strategy. This should include a combination of standard forms of promotion – press advertising and direct mail, for example – some of which will be particular to individual videos. Imagination, common sense and a range of ideas from a ‘brainstorming’ session amongst the production group will probably result in a more effective promotion strategy for a video than bringing in a marketing specialist to do it.



Promotion is always partly experimental. Some ideas will fail and some will succeed. Monitoring and reviewing progress is particularly important here to ensure that you know which promotion methods work best. It is extremely useful to record where people have got their information from when they buy or hire your tape, as well as what appealed to them about, say, a particular leaflet.

Another fundamental rule is to make the different strategies support each other: a message repeated through different media at the same time is more effective than a message in one medium repeated over a period of time. The crucial thing in all of this is to *keep trying*. Not easy when your first instinct may be to bury yourself in your next production, but vital to success.

### ● Promotion Content

*Writing your own copy: leaflets, brochures, advertisements*

Although leaflets and advertisements are quite different, there are a number of general rules to bear in mind when writing copy.

Copy writing is not easy. It is all too easy for copy, like design, to shout ‘amateur’ and thus undermine any image of professionalism that you may be trying to project. As a general rule you should aim to produce copy which is clear, direct and relevant.

Assuming that you have thought carefully about what you aim to achieve with the communication, following these steps should be helpful.

1. Identify what particular benefits your video offers which makes it special or distinctive.
2. Don't let your personal enthusiasms get in the way. The benefits you identify should appeal to the viewers or users. You need to stress how it will benefit him or her.
3. Translate your lead benefit into an attention

#### Monitoring and reviewing

#### Mixing media

#### The importance of writing copy

#### What makes your tape special? How will it benefit the user?

**Attention  
grabbing  
headline**

**Development of  
benefits**

**Specific details**

grabbing concept, no longer than a headline – something to draw the reader irresistibly into your copy.

4. Expand on your theme, keeping your copy to short sentences and paragraphs. Make sure there is a logical, coherent transition from your opening gambit towards a fuller development of the benefits on offer.

5. Back up your choice and promises with *specifics*: name, precise figures, documented facts. Superlatives are rarely credible; concretes invariably have the ring of truth.



6. Your copy should address the particular *type* of audience you want to attract. A wordy, artistically designed leaflet will go down well with middle class rather than working class readers. If you assume a certain type of literacy you may well be excluding just the people you're aiming at.

7. Your prospects are people. If possible, inject elements of human interest into your copy: testimonials, anecdotes, real-life experiences, before-and-after case histories. Be as personal as possible. Write in the readers' own colloquial language; be concrete rather than abstract.

8. Superficial preparation usually generates anaemic copy. Do some research. Learn everything you can about a subject area and your market. "Brainstorm" ideas with fellow workers or producers before you start drafting your copy.

9. Write with enthusiasm. Far too many promotions display absolutely no interest, involvement, excitement, drama or passion. Involve the reader too: don't just make statements, ask questions.

10. Have application/order forms where appropriate; where not, make sure your co-op's address and telephone number are clearly displayed and make absolutely clear what the reader's next action is to be.

11. You may believe you have said what you meant, but will other people understand? Check it out with several people who have not been involved in the tape. Also check that the material you have is compatible with the other promotional methods and messages you are using.

**Audience  
literacy**

**Human interest**

**Brainstorm**

**Ask questions**

**Reader's next  
action?**

**Check it out**

## The efficiency of direct mail

# ● Direct Mail

Where the potential buyers of the tape can be easily defined, as they can amongst institutional users, direct mail offers an excellent way of reaching them efficiently. Its ultimate success rests on three main factors:

- the suitability of the mailing list
- the campaign tactics
- the presentation of the arguments

## ● Mailing Lists

Your first step is to identify the individuals or groups you want to reach. It is painstaking work, but it is worth the effort. The list needs to contain *names*, not just job titles; one of the secrets of direct mail is the personal nature of the advertising. It's worthwhile storing the list on index cards, which can also detail any response to the mailing, follow-up etc. Ideally the whole lot could be stored on computer, but the system can run quite efficiently without one. It's impossible here to provide a comprehensive list of the sources from which lists can be compiled, but many are available from public libraries. A few for the institutional/voluntary sector are:

- The Education Authorities Directory
- The Education Year Book
- The Directory of Associations

## List brokers

You can build up lists from those supplied by professional organisations or 'umbrella groups' (the London Voluntary Service Council publish a list of Co-ordinating groups in London Boroughs for example, available free from the Community Networks Unit of the LVSC, tel 01-388 0241), yearbooks, specialist magazines, and personal contacts. There are commercial 'list compilers' and 'list brokers' - *IBIS Educational* provide one for primary and secondary schools teachers, for example, but these are sometimes gleaned from publicly available sources, and are usually too general to be of much use.



## ● Campaign Tactics

The crucial part of any promotion is *Repetition and Reinforcement*. The advertising message, in this case the title of the video, needs to be repeated through different advertising media (magazines, leaflets, mailshots) and these need to support each other. In magazines, a review or news item can support an advertisement, and vice versa. Similarly, in the case of direct mail, two or three consecutive approaches to potential buyers can be used to repeat the message

## Repeating mail shots

**Example of repeat mailshots, different selling points...**

and reinforce the sales pitch. The mailings can use different arguments, for example:

- Shot 1: Buy this video for use in anti-racist training (include press reviews).
- Shot 2: Send for a review training pack/sample tape to see if the video would be right for *your* group.
- Shot 3: Buy at the special launch price of £27.50, available on this order form only until . . . .

Or different forms they take, for example:

**... different forms**

- Shot 1: Letter + A5 leaflet/order form.
- Shot 2: A4 folded leaflet on training pack, + reply card for sample pack.
- Shot 3: Postcard reminder with tear-off reply section.

**Cutting your costs**

Naturally, three mailings is not a cheap proposition, but if costs won't permit a full mailing it's probably better to repeat mail selected people rather than to use a single shot for a larger number. The time gap between mailshots needs careful thought. You may want a mailshot to coincide with a magazine advert to which it could refer ("you may have seen our advert in . . ."), or you may want to send a second letter four or five days after the first while the idea is still fresh in their minds. The need to think about how those targeted will react to the mailings is important at all stages.

**Timing your mail shots**

### ● Presentation of Arguments

Although this is dealt with in more detail in the section 'Promotion Content', it's worth pointing out the absolute necessity of neat typing and good quality white envelopes to make a good impression. Reply cards are a useful way of monitoring the effectiveness of the mailing, and should be included at every stage. Follow-up phone calls are an especially good way of monitoring, and may make the crucial difference in a sale. Finally, be aware of the opportunity direct mail gives you to talk to someone 'personally'. Grab their attention in the first paragraphs and don't let go until you've got the point across.

## ● Magazines

Magazine promotion is probably the most popular method of attracting sales from institutional buyers. Specialist magazines or newsletters will often be very good ways of reaching particular target users, such as teachers or youth workers. General interest magazines may also reach your target group, although in a

**Reaching institutional audiences**



**Think of what your audience will read**

less concentrated way. It's important, once again, to put yourself in the shoes of your audience, to think about whether your target group reads a particular magazine, rather than opting for one you read yourself. This may sound obvious, but it's surprising how often groups will limit themselves to the specialist or listings magazines that *they*, not their target audience, reads.

Magazine advertising has three main advantages.

**1. A magazine allows you four means of promotion**

- Editorial coverage, either as a feature article/survey or an individual review;
- Display advertising, in the main body of the magazine either measured in sections of a page or in single column centimetres (SCC);
- Classified advertising, priced per line/number of words;
- Inserts - leaflets inserted loose between the pages.

**2. A magazine gives you a public identity**

Advertising in a respected magazine can make an enormous difference to the perception of the grant-aided video sector. This can be enhanced by direct mail or more informal personal contacts, but it is important to get your name known to establish a profile.

**3. Magazine advertising is easy to organise**

Magazines come complete with a readership (which may be easily identifiable) and set publication dates.

Despite these advantages, it is important to recognise the limitations of this form of promotion.

1. You can't be sure that your target buyers (which in the case of videocassettes may be very small) will actually see your advert.

2. Follow up work is difficult: you have no way of knowing *who* the readers are (although 'cold selling' by phone or letter could refer to the advertising - 'You may have seen our advert in *Community Care*

Magazine').

3. Only a limited amount of information can be put across in an advert: you're unlikely to persuade somebody to buy/hire a videocassette by post through advertising alone - although you can persuade them to contact you for more information.

**• Planning a campaign**

The range of periodicals published in Britain is *vast*. A comprehensive list of periodicals and newspapers in the UK is available in 'British Rate and Data' (usually called BRAD), published monthly and available in libraries. This gives their advertisement rates, technical data, circulation figures and so on, and arranges the publication in consumer or subject categories.

Comparing magazines by cost alone is difficult, but it will give you a benchmark.

1. Take the audited circulation figure, say 20,000;

2. the cost of 1/2 page advert, say £200

So  $\frac{£200}{20} = £10$  per thousand

20

The main things to bear in mind when comparing costs are the likely percentages of readers who might be interested in your tapes and the status of the magazine.

**• Different forms of magazine promotion**

*Classified Advertising* is probably the least successful, because of:

- the limited amount of information classified ads can contain;
- classified ads are often for *services* not products.

They're useful, however, for reminder messages to support previous advertising. Local newspaper display classified ads could be idea for local history/news magazine/campaign tapes.

*Inserts* have many advantages over an advertisement.

**limited space**

**Comparing value for money**

**Classified advertising**

**Inserts combine many advantages**

**Types of magazine promotion**

**Establish your profile**

**Disadvantages:**

**your ad may not be seen,**

**no follow up,**

They combine some of the advantages of direct mail (the ability to carry a large amount of information, the impression of the 'uniqueness' of what you're offering) with the audience reach and prestige offered by the magazine. You need to provide the leaflets to be inserted, and can specify if they're for the entire print run or, more reasonably, for subscribers only. You could also limit them to certain regions. Inserts are quoted on a cost per thousand, *excluding* the cost of the leaflet itself. *New Society*, for example, charges £30 + VAT per thousand, which compares extremely favourably with its display rates. The disadvantage with inserts is that they have a shorter life than the magazine itself. They may be discarded after only a cursory glance, whereas a magazine may sit in the office for several days.

### Reviews

*Reviews* are, of course, free. However, since most publications reviews are done by voluntary contributors there's no guarantee that your video will get noticed or written about. You will greatly improve your chances (and the likelihood of a *favourable* review):

### Increasing your chances of a review

- by supplying as much information as possible, preferably in a 'press release' style, from which quotes can be lifted;
- by giving the video some 'news value' to enable the magazine to place it in the news *and* reviews section;
- by organising a review article, covering, amongst others, your video;
- by offering to take out an advert in the same issue of the magazine.

The most successful reviews are not necessarily those which paint the most glowing picture of the tape. Constructive criticism by a subject specialist may make the reader feel that at least they know what they're getting. The reviews in the *BUFVC Newsletter* are good examples of this.

### Display advertising

*Display Adverts* are the most obvious method of promotion in the press, but not always the most successful. Notes on *content* are given elsewhere in the guide, but there are other factors you need to think about.

- Position in the magazine. Is it in the back of the magazine amongst a mass of similar adverts?
- Position on the page and page design. the top right-hand position is considered the most effective, but other design matters (page layout, amount of white space around your ad, etc) play a part.
- Relations to editorial content. The closer an advert is to an article/review on a similar subject, the better.

### The position of your advert

## ● Using the Media

One of the best forms of publicity is absolutely free – media coverage. The media is often ignored as a publicity outlet, because it's assumed that they won't be interested in something as specific as a new video tape. In fact, if you present it to them in the right way, it's possible to get media coverage somewhere for almost anything.

### Media coverage – often ignored



## Media Outlets

The first thing to do is identify the range of media outlets:

- Local newspapers
- Local freesheets
- Regional newspaper
- BBC local radio
- Independent local radio
- Specialist magazines
- Journals
- Regional TV news

## Press release and media event

The next step is to get them interested. This will involve issuing a press release, and might involve backing it with a 'media event'.

## Imagine you are the Journalist

### • Writing a Press Release

The most important thing to do when drafting a press release is to imagine yourself as the journalist receiving it. How can it be made to appear *newsworthy*? What kind of news story or feature could be written about it? Is it new? Is it controversial? Does it relate to another news story? Is it written in a chatty, newsy style? Does it contain a quote either from someone well known or someone involved? You then need to make sure you include the following details:

- Where the information comes from
- Where it is to go within the journal
- The release date, i.e. immediate or some future date
- Clear headline showing what it is about
- Telephone number and name for further contact, day and night, preferably at the top of the page.

In terms of *form* and *style*, the press release should:

- be short and concise
  - include wide margins and have 1½ line spacing for the text
  - include the main details in the first paragraphs
  - avoid too much hype (don't do the journalist's job).
- Before sending it out, it's then worth finding out:
- the copy deadlines for stories
  - the name of the appropriate journalist.

Make sure that someone will be available at the

## Send it to the right person

## Include important details

contact number you give and, if possible, follow up the press release with phone calls giving further information.

### • Media Events

It's often easier to write a press release if it's associated with a particular event. The easiest way to do this is to have an 'official' launch of the video – particularly if you can get someone well known to put in an appearance. Even if journalists don't turn up, it enables them to write newsworthy copy – 'X video group today launched a new video about...'

Alternatively, you can use your imagination and think of a publicity stunt. You could stage your first screening somewhere unusual but appropriate. Or you could combine the launch with a musical, sporting, political or a straightforwardly bizarre event. Whatever you do, the easier it is for journalists to come along, the better. Awkward times and places are to be avoided.

Finally, you must try and give the impression that your event is the place to be: if a journalist thinks an event is likely to be entertaining and/or well-attended, she or he is more likely to come along.

## • Screenings and Video Based Promotions

Launch screenings are in theory a good way of promoting your video to potential buyers and appropriate journalists. After all, a video only makes sense when you watch it... doesn't it?

Well, not entirely. Watching a video outside the interactive context in which it's designed to be used (like a school, meeting or youth club) may give a false or damaging impression of its content. Large-screen projection may highlight technical faults which would be unnoticeable on a T.V. screen. Also, the 'leisured' environment of a cinema may not be appropriate for what may be a 'working' programme.

## Launching the video

## Publicity stunts

## Make it easy to come along

## The place to be

## The viewing context





**Getting people there**

Your next problem will be getting people there. Many institutional users would find the launch of a new video no more noteworthy than the launch of a new book. Attending such events wouldn't figure particularly high on their list of priorities, however directly relevant the video may be.

**When is a screening appropriate?**

For many tapes of course, a cinema screening is worthwhile – those with future cinema or broadcast distribution in mind, for instance, or those which

don't need much audience participation. Screenings need to be arranged and invitations sent around a month in advance.

An originally designed invitation, preferably on stiff card, perhaps including a stamped reply portion, could be sent with the general promotional mailing for the video. You should, if possible, follow up the invitations with phone calls.

You could avoid some of the uncertainty of this approach by organising the launch at an event with a 'captive' audience; a conference or a festival, for example.

Another way to make the most of the medium could be to send out *sampler* or *compilation tapes* to selected customers. Money spent on producing such tapes, even if there's a certain percentage that are not returned, may well lead to higher sales than the printed media.

You obviously need to take care that the excerpt in the video isn't sufficiently long or coherent to be used as a teaching tool in itself, otherwise you may find a great demand for your compilation tape and none for the finished product!

## ● Generic Advertising

One of the main problems facing groups trying to promote a video is that people are still not used to the technology. Used imaginatively, for, instance, the video tape could become as important as the text book in the classroom. The problem is that teachers are not aware of its potential. This means that most people who receive a leaflet or see an advertisement don't feel that video is for *them*.

Part of the problem is that video promotion *assumes* that people are already used to hiring or buying videos, and simply tries to persuade them of the value of *this* particular one. It's worth thinking about this before designing your promotional material.

**The invitation**

**Captive audience**

**Samplers and Compilation tapes**

**People are still not used to video**

**Don't make assumptions**

**Generic  
promotion  
leaflets**

It may be worth producing a general 'Why Use Video' leaflet to send out with your more specific promotional material, or you may produce a series of leaflets for groups like youth workers, teachers or shop stewards. Advertising the medium and the community/independent sector will provide the groundwork for selling your particular production.

**Overcoming  
the costs**

Unfortunately its often difficult, with meagre resources, for an individual producer or workshop to do this. A solution is to join forces with other interested local organisations to pool resources and present a common front. The East End Video Group in East London is an example of this. This is a forum

**Various group  
initiatives**



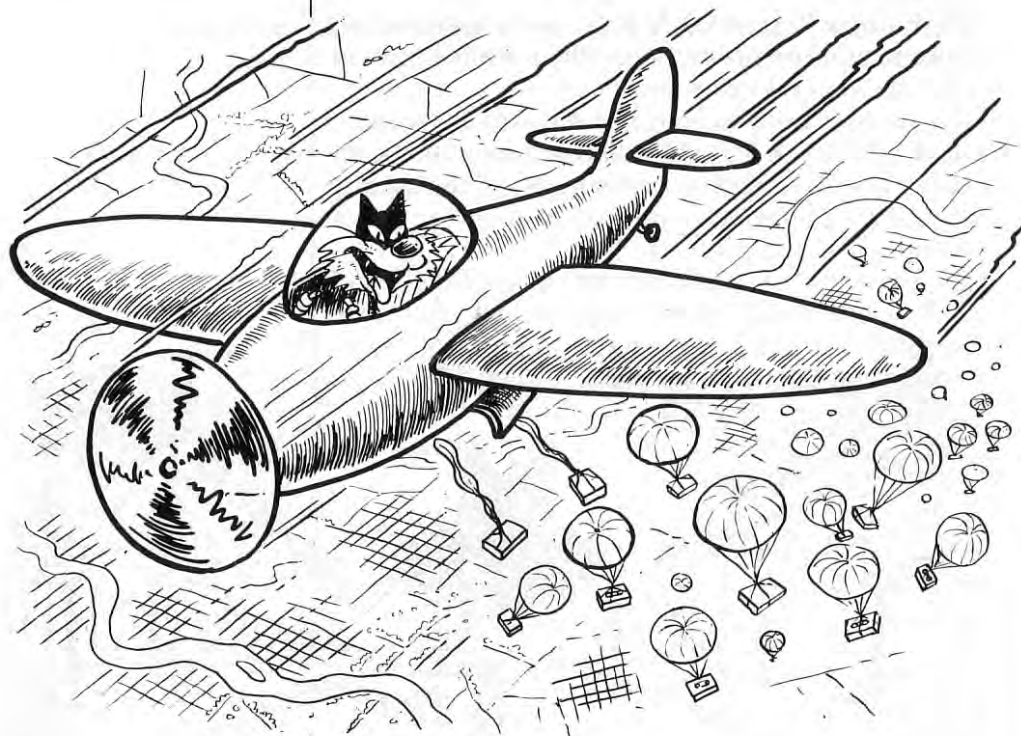
(recently funded by Greater London Arts) with representatives from video producing groups and video users, and is currently preparing a new catalogue of video/film material, about or produced in the East End, as an educational resource. They are also organising hire and sale of the material through local outlets.

The Eastern Region I.F.V.P.A., on the other hand, is concentrating on promotion to the Local Education Authorities and Library services.

The Greater London Enterprise Board has set up a Video Distribution Forum, with representatives from the main London distribution agencies. It has recently produced a leaflet which aims to encourage the use of videotapes in group contexts.

The benefits of this 'generic advertising', and getting together with other groups to do it, cannot be overestimated. The long-term future of non-broadcast video depends upon it.

## PART III PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS



### ● Distribution and Distributors

**Distribution relies on promotion**

Distribution is the mechanical process of dispatching tapes, collecting money and recording transactions. It is entirely separate from promotion. Nevertheless, a distribution service is little use without a promotional

strategy to make it necessary. No promotion means no demand and, therefore, no distribution.

Because distribution is a specific and time-consuming process, it is often easier to let one of the specialist agencies—like *Albany Video* or *Concord*—handle that side of things. Some of these agencies will *also* help you to promote your tape, but you cannot assume that they will be able to devote the time and imagination to do this in anything other than a fairly general way. Your marketing work begins rather than ends when you give your tape to a distributor.

In some cases you may find a video distributor is inappropriate for your particular tape. A local programme for example, may be easier to distribute yourself. Alternatively, your marketing strategy may have already given you enough contact with potential buyers or hirers for you to handle distribution without too many problems.

If, however, you do want to use a distribution agency, you will usually grant them a non-exclusive licence to distribute your tape at certain cost (taken from the sale or hire charge). You may also want to come to some arrangement with them on monitoring sales, in order to discover which of your promotion methods is most successful, and to who. A model licence agreement is contained in the *Off the Shelf Workbook*.

#### ● Hiring Versus Buying

Because of the lowering costs of tape duplication, the gap between the cost of hiring and buying video tapes is narrowing. Hire prices have remained fairly constant (at between £10 and £15 for a 48 hour hire), while sales prices have fallen dramatically to anywhere between £25 to £50. This, combined with the extra administration required for tape hire, has

**Specialist distribution agencies**

**Think when to use a distributor**

**Monitoring your promotion strategy**

**Lowering costs of sales**

**Shift away from hire**

**Some places prefer to hire**

**Audience's financial structure**

**Group viewing**

**Specialist and individual buyers**

**Posters and leaflets vital for success**

**Crossover audiences**

meant a shift from hiring to buying tapes. Indeed, as hiring becomes less economic some distribution agencies have decided to deal only with sales.

Nevertheless it's worth remembering that many institutions still prefer hiring to buying. Budget headings may specifically exclude purchase, or the purchase price of a cassette may take it out of the area of 'petty cash' and into the long-winded one of invoices and authorisations. Youth clubs with no storage space or with security problems may not want to risk keeping bought tapes on the premises.

So, while selling tapes may be more convenient and more profitable than hiring them out, the *financial structure* of your audience may still make hiring necessary.

#### ● Other Distribution Outlets

Tapes made by the community or the independent sector are often geared to specific institutional audiences (education, training etc), with an emphasis on group rather than individual viewing.

If however you have a tape that might appeal to either a more general audience (a local audience, perhaps) or a particular specialist audience of individuals, you might want to consider other outlets such as video hire or bookshops.

Exploring these other distribution outlets means planning your promotion strategy accordingly. If you are using local video hire shops or bookshops, for example, you might find a series of posters or leaflets strategically placed in the neighbourhood does the trick.

Tape distribution through retail outlets has often failed in the past because it has not been accompanied by promotional material (a poster or leaflets for the shop, at the very least!).

Another way of exploring other retail outlets is to combine the tape with something else, like a book or booklet – or to a particular activity, like a musical or artistic event. This allows you to *cross over* into audiences who wouldn't normally consider buying videos.

## ● Bulk Video Duplication

Whether you use bulk duplicating of your video or not depends largely on your financial position and access to equipment.

The *advantages* are:-

- Speed.
- A lower cost per tape than the corresponding edit suite time in repeat dubbing.

**Advantages of bulk producing videos**



**Disadvantages  
of bulk  
production**

**Cost of  
duplication**

- Greater consistency than repeat dubbing.
- Much less wear on your master tape (in bulk duplicating depending on the number of their machine and the run, the master may only be played once or twice).

The *disadvantages* are:-

- Having to pay large support costs without guaranteed sales income.
  - Having no control over technical factors, like sound mix-down or picture control.
- Duplication rates, as in printing, are charged according to the size of the run.

As an example, Videoprint gave the following quotation for duplicating (through a Time Based Corrector) a 20 minute programme on standard quality E-30 VHS tapes:-

Quantity	Tape Cost	Copy Cost	15% VAT	Total per Tape
61-100	£2.40	£1.50	0.58	£4.48
101-149	£2.40	£1.10	0.52	£4.02
150-199	£2.40	£1.00	0.51	£3.91

By comparison, 20 copies of the same programme produced in an edit suite at £60 for 8 hours would cost around £5.50 each excluding labour costs.

Finally, presentation of the finished tape is important. A library box (not just the cardboard tape case) costs about 35p; a leaflet can double as the slip in cover, and you can get specially printed sticky labels for the tape itself.

**Bulk  
duplication  
saves money**

**Presentation of  
the video**

## ● Further Reading

Effective Advertising

H. C. Carter,  
Kogan Page 1986

The Fundamentals and Practise of  
Marketing

John Wilmshurst,  
Heinemann, 1984

Videoactive

Jon Dovey and Jo Dungey  
I.F.V.P.A., 1985,  
79 Wardour Street W1

The Independent Producers  
Handbook

Faber and Faber, 1986

Art - Who Needs it?

Justin Lewis, David Morley,  
Russell Southwood,  
Comedia and the London Stratetic  
Policy Unit, 1986

## ● The Off the Shelf Workbook

A video marketing workbook has been designed to accompany this guide. The workbook provides practical information and examples to help you organise your promotion. It comes in a loose-leaf file, enabling you to add your own information and ideas.

The workbook is available from the Recreation and Arts Group of the London Strategic Policy Unit (Tel 01-633 2959) or the Independent Film Video and Photography Association (Tel 01-439 0460).