Social media, email and your website are some of the best tools to market your organisation to your target audiences. Best of all, they’re low cost – or free in some cases.

The digital age that we live in has given us a plethora of ways to connect with our audience and engage them in what we do and what we offer. Social media, in particular, allows us to reach a diverse audience, to ensure the heritage sector is accessible to all and to inspire people to support it and ensure its sustainability for future generations.

In order to connect and engage with these audiences, and even to grow them, we first need to understand who our target audience is.
What is a target audience?

A target audience is a group of people who are defined by specific demographics (such as gender, age, location, marital status and occupation) and behaviours (what types of things they’re interested in, what media they consume, what social media platforms they’re on etc).

We tend to give these groups a name, and create a persona for them, so that we know who we’re referring to when we create content for them.

How to create a persona

Whilst a persona is a fictional person, they are rooted in research. Take a look at any existing information you have about your audience – from your database, Google Analytics or social media insights – and then fill in any gaps by conducting some research. It’s best to do both qualitative and quantitative research. You could survey your audience by creating an online questionnaire and also run face-to-face focus groups or telephone interviews to get to understand them better. Once you have as much information as possible, it’s time to create your personas.

Typically an organisation will have between four to seven personas. Whenever you are creating content – whether it’s for your website, social media or email, think about which persona or personas the content is for. The more tailored your content is, the more successful it will be.
Ana Persinaru, a consultant and researcher in the heritage sector, worked with Heritage Open Days to define three personas for New Wave, their training programme for Heritage Open Days organisers and coordinators. The structured training programme gives them the tools and knowledge to develop new and innovative events aimed specifically at the 18-34 audience.

“Creating personas is an exercise that allows you to visualise your audience and know them in greater depth, from demographic details to their media consumption habits. This can be applied on specific segments, such as 18-34 year olds as was the case for New Wave.”

Using a number of free resources (The Audience Agency’s Segment Spectrum and Morris Hargreaves McIntyre cultural segments theory), Ana was able to profile three main young adult audiences based on their level of engagement with the arts.

1. **Confident culturalites**: made up of liberal, educated, social and highly active urbanites who regularly engage with culture
2. **Escapist part-timers**: made up of suburban young families, mid-level professionals with mainstream tastes
3. **Disengaged and disenchanted**: made up of the least engaged audiences, primarily young suburban or semi-suburban, cash-strapped families who consume mainstream art as entertainment
The best channels to reach your audience on

FACEBOOK

Two thirds of the UK population is on Facebook (44.8 million) so chances are your audience is there too. The largest audience on Facebook is aged 25-34 years however, the fastest growing audience is 65 years plus.

Most people are on Facebook to see what their friends and family are up to and Facebook will always prioritise their content over yours. Make sure your content is highly visual and engaging so that you stand out on newsfeeds.

TWITTER

Twitter is much smaller than Facebook with only 13.7 million UK users. Over 50% of global users are aged 18 – 49. It’s an open platform with most people having public profiles so it’s much easier to reach and engage people on Twitter.

Remember that Twitter is in real time so there’s a lot of noise. Make sure your posts stand out by using great visual content and relevant hashtags. A hashtag is a keyword or phrase with a # symbol in front of it. Look into relevant, popular, or trending hashtags to reach more people.

INSTAGRAM

Instagram has 25 million UK users and 32% are aged 25-34. It’s a visual platform so you have to have high quality images or video to post on the platform – you can’t just post text. As it’s a visual platform, that has a younger audience, it’s a great platform to get creative and experiment.

Don’t forget to use Stories to engage your audience. There are lots of features you can use, such as polls, questions, filters, hashtags, location, add music and more.
How to grow your social media followers

If you’re creating engaging content, aimed at the right audiences, on the right platforms, you will naturally grow your social media followers. However, there are also some specific things that you can do to grow them.

Make sure that you have the icons of the social media platforms that you are on shown prominently on your website (see below example) and that they link directly to your account on those platforms. Also include these in your email signature, making it easy for anyone to find your social media accounts and then follow you.

**ON FACEBOOK**

The best way to grow your followers on Facebook is to create shareable content. The more people share your content to their friends and family, the more brand awareness you create. People are usually friends with people who share their interests so it’s likely if they regularly share your content, their friends may want to Like your Page too.

Another way to grow your followers is to boost high performing content and to target the post to People who Like your Page and their Friends or you can create a specific audience to target. A Facebook boost post is a type of paid advertising promoting an existing post from a business page. They amplify the reach of your content to appear to a wider range of your target audience outside those that already follow your page.

**ON TWITTER**

There are a few things that you can do on Twitter to help grow your followers. One is to use relevant hashtags and to tap into Awareness Days and trending hashtags – but only if genuinely relevant to your cause.

Take a look at who is following your competitors and follow them in the hopes that they follow you back. Just follow a few at a time though and not lots at once.
**ON INSTAGRAM**

The best way to grow followers is to use a variety of hashtags and to tag the location of your post. *Posts that tag their location get 79% more engagement* than those that don’t.

When using hashtags, make sure you’re using a range – from viral to niche. Don’t just go for the very popular ones as your post will last mere seconds on that hashtag’s feed. Rather use one or two viral ones and then ones that have less than 300,000 for example and most should be under 100,000. Instagram lets you use up to 30 hashtags so try to aim for between 20 and 30.

Another top tip is to use only a few hashtags in your caption and then once you’ve posted, put the remaining hashtags in a comment. This then tells the algorithm that you’ve already had a comment and that your post is engaging, so that it will be shown to more people. Keep a bunch of hashtags in Notes on your phone so that you can easily copy and paste the ones you need. Not sure which hashtags to use? Take a look at the hashtags similar organisations are using and add them to your list.

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**ON LINKEDIN**

LinkedIn is a rising social platform for professionals with 27 million UK users. Engagement with LinkedIn is growing 50% year on year, and globally 61% of users are aged 25–34. You can write public posts and articles to aid your reach as the platform also works as a search engine.

They have also introduced a new feature where, as an Admin, you can invite your connections to follow an organisation’s page (see below screenshot). Be sure to only invite people who have an interest in your sector. Don’t forget to use Stories to update and engage your audience – other features include polls, questions, hashtags, locations, music and much more.

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https://www.linkedin.com
“Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft’s Instagram has a large and lively following, which has grown significantly during lockdown. We saw an increase of 630 followers between April and July; around double the amount we’d expect to increase by over that period. We launched a digital programme called #CreateToRelate a couple of weeks after closing the museum, which was designed to promote wellbeing through creativity. This consisted of video tutorials and an ‘after-school’ club for kids amongst other content. We like to have a direct line to our followers, and have found Instagram to be a friendly and creative platform, ideal for our new digital programme. Before lockdown we’d never done any IGTV videos, and now we have a collection of 21 brilliant tutorials that serve as rich content for our other social platforms too.

The IGTV programme has been curated very responsively. We’ve paid close attention to our wide network of craftspeople with large Instagram followings, inviting them to make tutorials for recent projects they’ve posted online. This also amplifies their reach so it’s win-win.”

ABBY BUTCHER, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER AT DITCHLING MUSEUM OF ART + CRAFT
How to engage your audience with great content

The best way to engage your audience is to go back to your personas and tailor content to them, thinking about what their goals, needs and wants. Once you know who your audience is and what the objective of your content is, here are some ways to make it really stand out:

✅ **Use video**, such as 360 video, Facebook Lives, IGTV and TikTok. Your video doesn’t need to be slick and professional. In fact, people love authenticity. It does need to have good sound though so invest in a microphone that can connect to smartphone. And don’t forget to add subtitles too. Not only is it good for accessibility but often people watch video with the sound off.

✅ **Use wit, humour or puns.** In fact, 49% of people share on social media to bring valuable or entertaining content to others.

✅ **Use storytelling.** People love a good story so share one with them. Bring the story to life with first person quotes and a great image or video.

✅ **Fulfil a need.** What would be useful, interesting or helpful to your audience?

"People love a good story so share one with them."

https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/
Tap into relevant Awareness Days. On Twitter in particular, these tend to trend so you have an opportunity to reach and engage more people.

Work with influencers. We don’t mean celebrities or even influencers with hundreds of thousands of followers. Working with nano influencers in your sector (usually between 1,000 – 10,000 followers) can help you raise awareness and tap into their audience.

Encourage user-generated content. Give your audience an opportunity to share their content with you. Create a dedicated hashtag that they can use when visiting your venue or run a campaign or competition.

Use polls or ask questions. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram all have poll features where you can ask your followers a question. Instagram also has the Questions sticker for Stories. These are all great ways to encourage people to engage with you.

Give your audience an opportunity to share their content with you.
Free content design tools

Now that we know how to make content engaging, we also have to make it visually appealing. Canva is a free design tool which lets you design great graphics. It’s very user-friendly and comes with free photos, filters and more. Nonprofits can apply to get their professional version for free, which allows you to add your branding so that it’s always consistent.

It’s always best to use your own images, however if you need to find some high-quality images, Canva has millions. Also take a look at Unsplash and Gratisography. They are all free to use and copyright free.

Looking to create or edit video? Again, Canva has a video feature. Alternatively try Lumen5 which has templates for each social media platform, MoShow which turns photos into slideshows and Adobe Spark which is a free video editor tool.

It’s always best to use your own images.
Do’s and Don’ts

- **Do** create personas so that you know exactly who your audience is and you can easily refer to them when creating content.
- **Don’t** just create content for content’s sake. Think about your audience and what their needs and wants are.
- **Do** remember that each social media platform is different and content needs to be tailored to each platform.
- **Don’t** get despondent if your followers are not growing as quickly as you’d like them to. Follow our tips on how to grow them and create content tailored to them and they’ll soon grow.
- **Do** use polls and questions to engage your audience – give them a reason to comment.
- **Do** experiment with video if you’ve not used it before. It doesn’t need to be slick and professional. Videos tend to get more engagement and reach so try it out.
- **Don’t** forget to apply for Canva for Nonprofits so you can get all the professional features for free.
- **Do** get creative! There are so many free tools and different features in the social media platforms themselves for you to make your content more engaging.

As the world becomes increasingly digital, it’s important to build and engage your audience online. By understanding who your target audience is, what their needs and wants are, and then tailoring content to them whilst reaching them on the right platforms, you’re setting yourself up for success. Not only will your content get more engagement, you will grow your audience too.

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Thank you to Kirsty Marrins for producing the content of this guide on behalf of the Heritage Digital consortium.
Who is in the Heritage Digital consortium?

**THE HERITAGE ALLIANCE**
The Heritage Alliance unites nearly 150 independent heritage organisations in England as a powerful, effective and independent advocate for heritage. It seeks to inspire, catalyse and support action to enhance the sustainability, resilience and capabilities of independent heritage organisations to achieve their full potential.

**MEDIA TRUST**
Media Trust works in partnership with the media and creative industry to give charities, under-represented communities and young people a stronger voice, through training and access to free resources and matching them with communications and digital expert volunteers. Digital skills are embedded in and are a crucial element of all of these areas.

**NAOMI KORN ASSOCIATES**
Naomi Korn Associates is one of the UK’s leading information management consultancies specialising in intellectual property rights, data protection and licensing, providing support to the heritage and arts sectors. Naomi Korn Associates supports their clients develop better rights and privacy policies and awareness through training and consultancy services.

**CHARITY DIGITAL**
Charity Digital helps organisations #BeMoreDigital through daily content, weekly events and the UK’s only discounted and donated software platform. We have helped over 50,000 charities, including heritage organisations, save nearly £260 million on software purchases and supported thousands more on their digital journey with inspiring and educational articles, webinars, podcasts, videos and events.