



Introduction to marketing for emerging artists



By Holly Ball, Creative Careers Coach & Specialist

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Who this resource is for

This resource is for early career artists, who want to take control of developing their creative career. Early career means someone who has started working in the creative and cultural industries in the last two years. It doesn't matter how old you are - this is about helping you to move forward and develop the creative career you want for yourself. You might not yet identify as an artist and that's OK. This resource has been designed to help you move forward whenever you are ready.

About this resource

This resource focuses on marketing skills to develop the creative career you want. It is based on best practice and theories of career information, advice and guidance, designed to empower the reader to take action for themselves. Each section has an introduction followed by prompt questions and activities to encourage reflection and action.

Please note that the information shared is correct at the time of publication. Any signposting to external websites and resources does not constitute endorsement. Readers are expected to research further and seek professional expertise where needed.

About the author

I'm Holly Ball, a Creative Careers Specialist with over fifteen years of experience supporting artists to develop the creative career they want. A proud Salford creative, I build journeys that help artists get unstuck in their creative careers. Find out more about my work at www.careerforward.uk.

Marketing

As an emerging creative, understanding how to communicate your work, connect with your audience, and build a recognisable presence is just as important as the work itself. Think of it as making sure the right people get the chance to discover what you do.

Are you creating for yourself to then find an audience to sell to?

OR

Are you thinking about audience first and then making things in response to their needs?

Your response is personal to you and your practice. It is important to be aware of this as you develop your creative career as it will impact on how you approach marketing your work.

The following elements are key to marketing your work:

WHO	Who are you marketing your work to?
WHAT	What are you offering them?
WHERE	Where are you marketing it? Online, in person, etc.
WHEN	Is there a particular time of day or year when it is good to promote your work?
WHY	Why should they 'buy' from you? What makes it special or unique?

Who are your target audience?

Take time to identify your target audience and create a pen portrait of your ideal customer / participant / client.

Prompts to consider:

- Age / Location / Income / etc
- What do they like and not like?
- What are they passionate about?
- What challenges are they facing?



You might need to make some assumptions about them. That's OK initially - you can add to this as your understanding of your target audience develops.

What can you offer your audience?

Now that you know your target audience, focus in on what challenges they are facing, what they need help with, what they enjoy doing.

What can you offer your audience in response to their needs? For example, artwork as gifts for family and friends, workshops to participate in with, 'how to' guides to learn a new creative skill, etc.



If your target audience doesn't have the income to buy from you directly, then who will pay for your time and skills?

For example, do you need to find funding to cover your costs in full or to subsidise your offer?



What do people need to know about you and your practice?

Your audience needs to understand you and your work in a clear, concise way. No jargon allowed. Think about what they need or want to hear based on their circumstances.

Using the sentence stems as inspiration, create 3 sentences to explain what you do to the following audiences:

- Your target audience.
- Fellow artists.

Sentence Stems:

- I am... (e.g. a visual artist, musician, printmaker).
- My work is about... (themes, values, ideas).
- I create work for/with... (audiences, communities, participants).
- What makes me different is... (unique angle, lived experience, approach).

These sentences might change as your practice develops and that's OK.

Top Tip: Ask three people outside of the creative industries, ideally from your target audience, to see if they understand your work. Make any necessary changes from there.

Finding your audience

Where does your target audience find out about opportunities to take part in? Where do they shop? Where do they connect with like-minded people?

Research task:

- Find social media accounts and hashtags to follow to find your audience or give you content ideas.
- Find networks to join both online and in person.
- Subscribe to the newsletters that your audience reads.



Build a meaningful connection

Marketing feels awkward when it becomes transactional and someone is constantly asking you to buy something.

Focus on building meaningful connections with your audience. Be intentional with your approach to engaging your audience and create a two-way conversation.

For example:

- Do a micro challenge - for example, over the course of a week invite your audience to do a five minute drawing activity with you and post the results each day.
- Offer a short, free workshop, either online or in person.
- Ask your audience to comment on a social media post to receive a free mini resource.

Remember to:

- KISS - **keep it simple stupid** - don't overcomplicate it.
- Have fun with it and use your creativity!
- Collaborate with fellow creatives to share ideas and what's worked.

To find out more



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