Top tips to digitally engage with diverse communities

By Milton Brown, Community Archives and Heritage Group

Reaching new diverse, and cultural audiences can be a daunting task. Getting new cultural audiences locally and nationally in the digital space involves creating engaging content, using social media and targeted advertising, partnering with other organisations, and engaging in outreach and promotion to build awareness and trust and attract new followers.

Here are some tips when digitally engaging with new and diverse communities.

1. Develop a tailored approach:

Different communities have different preferences and habits regarding digital engagement. Research and understand the importance of the specific community you are focussing on, and tailor your digital engagement approach to meet their needs.

2. Use inclusive language and imagery:

Be mindful of the language and imagery used in your digital engagement efforts. Ensure that it is inclusive and respectful of all communities and avoid using language or imagery that could be interpreted as stereotypical, discriminatory, racist or generally offensive.

3. Leverage social media:

Social media platforms are powerful tools for digital engagement. Identify the social media platforms most used by the community you are targeting and use them to share relevant and engaging content.

4. Collaborate with community leaders:

Build relationships with community leaders and influencers who can help amplify your digital engagement efforts. Collaborate with them to co-create and co-produce content that resonates with the community and leverages their networks to reach a wider audience.

5. Monitor and evaluate your efforts:

Regularly monitor and assess your digital engagement efforts to understand what works and is not. Use this feedback from your partners and diverse audience to continuously improve your approach and ensure you effectively engage with diverse communities.

6. Listen actively:

Listen to what community members say, and try to understand their concerns, needs, and priorities. Pay attention to non-verbal cues, including faith-based practices, and ask clarifying questions to demonstrate your interest and commitment to understanding your audience's perspective.

7. Building trust

Learn and respect the community's customs, traditions, and values. Be mindful of your language, tone, and behaviour, and avoid making assumptions or judgments about the community.

8. Build relationships:

Before you start your project, building relationships with diverse community members is crucial to building trust. Attend community events, participate in community activities, and engage with community leaders to demonstrate your commitment to the community.

9. Transparency

Be transparent about your intentions and actions and communicate clearly and honestly with community members. Be upfront about any limitations, risks, lack of knowledge or challenges associated with your project or initiative.

10. Follow through on commitments:

Follow through on your commitments and promises to the community. Deliver on any agreed-upon action items, provide regular updates on your progress, and be accountable for your actions.

11. Cultivate diversity and inclusion:

Ensure that equality, diversity, and inclusion run through the core of your project or initiative. Actively seek out and include diverse perspectives, experiences, and voices in your decision-making processes and actively promote equity and inclusion in all aspects of your work.

Find out more

The following websites provide guidance, tools, and frameworks for engaging with new and culturally diverse communities, promoting diversity and inclusion, and ensuring effective communication and engagement with these communities.

- Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit, The National Council for Voluntary Organisations, https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/diversity-and-inclusion

- "Digital Inclusion: Engaging Diverse Audiences: https://www.cogitatiopress.com/socialinclusion/article/view/3184

- UK Data Service: https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/

- Digital Inclusion and Diversity," https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1069072/civil-service-diversity-inclusion-strategy.pdf

- CAHG: https://www.communityarchives.org.uk/wp-search/diverse+communities