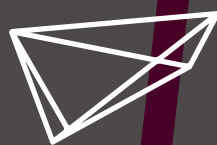


# Building MyCreativeEdge.eu 2018



a creative  
momentum  
project

**MyCreativeEdge.eu:  
Showcase.Discover.Connect**

**Building an online community to showcase  
creativity from Europe's Northern Edge**

**May 2018**



Northern Periphery and  
Arctic Programme  
2014-2020



EUROPEAN UNION  
Investing in your future  
European Regional Development Fund



WESTERN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
COMMISSION FOR INNOVATION AND GROWTH



Damastikoru photographed by Valokuvaamo Kipinä, Kopio

# Summary of Lessons Learned

**DURING 2015-2017, THE TRANSNATIONAL EU CO-FUNDED 'A CREATIVE MOMENTUM PROJECT' RE-DEVELOPED THE MYCREATVIEEDGE.EU ONLINE SHOWCASE PLATFORM. THE WEBSITE'S PURPOSE IS TO SHOWCASE THE CREATIVE WORK OF ENTREPRENEURS FROM EUROPE'S NORTHERN EDGE TO POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS AND COLLABORATORS; AS WELL AS BUILDING A CREATIVE COMMUNITY ACROSS THE FIVE PARTNER COUNTRIES. ORIGINALLY LAUNCHED IN 2013, THE WEBSITE WAS TOTALLY RE-DEVELOPED AND THE NEW SITE LAUNCHED IN MARCH 2017.**

This report outlines the re-development process, the structure of the new site, how the project engaged with site members (creatives working in Arts, Crafts, Design and Media & Technology) and the digital marketing activities carried out to advertise it to key target audiences. Based on the experience of re-developing, re-launching and promoting a transnational showcase website for creativity from five different countries, here is what we have learned:

## Re-developing a Website

**Time:** Everything takes longer than you expect – however long you anticipate the re-development will take, double it or triple it!

**Transnational complexity:** A transnational project, with multiple partners in different countries, working in different types of organisations and with heavy workloads on other activities, makes the process considerably more complex. Ultimately many decisions have to be taken by the organisation leading the re-development. This complexity also extends to communications and marketing activities.

**Hands-on input:** e-mails and con-calls are useful to involve partners, but really engaging the partners in the re-development process requires face-to-face, practical hands-on input.

**Regulatory requirements:** Public/EU funding requirements such as state aid and publicity requirements can sometimes be in conflict with the commercial approach taken by web developers and trends in digital technology.

**Quality Control of User Generated Content:** A website relying on user generated content (Member Profiles) means that site administrators have limited control over the majority of the site's content and its look, as well as Search Engine Optimisation. Moderation and quality control is critical but very time consuming.

**Differing needs of target audiences:** Balancing the needs of different target audiences is challenging. An objective of 'a creative momentum project' was to increase the capacity of creative entrepreneurs, including those with weaker digital skills, but this needed to be balanced with the needs of website visitors (potential customers) for a highly visually appealing site with strong imagery.

**Make decision to go live:** A website will never be perfect, at some stage you need to make the decision to go 'live' and manage issues as they arise.

## Engaging with your Audience

**Communications and Marketing is not the same as an Engagement Strategy:** While the first may recommend actions such as 'co-creation', the second should go into the detail as to what 'co-creation' means and how this is truly to be implemented at a regional level.

**Need for a dedicated resource:** Driving engagement with a new online platform, while implementing all other aspects of a project Communications Strategy is a time-consuming job – consider creating a specific role for this that may be combined with digital marketing.

**Tailor to locality:** Never forget the 'language barrier' and cultural differences when trying to engage audiences based in different countries! Also applies to digital ads.

**Face-to-Face works best:** Never forget face-to-face interaction. Events, study visits, and video interviews are good tactics to grow awareness of a newly established website and build a community of members. Participation in industry and public events is key – build a plan at the start of the project (e.g. budget your visits) and think about setting up an attractive stand. Giveaways work!

**Contact influencers early:** Don't be afraid to approach journalists and bloggers from the start – get them to follow you, gradually feeding them with news. Don't chase them up at the last minute.

**Quality visuals rule:** Check out creativity-based blogs, website and social media pages to figure out how highly visual content is published, presented and promoted.

**Clear and consistent message:** Make sure that you have a clear and consistent message that can be explained quickly and easily. You may need a number of different messages for different audiences but need to be clear on what these are. Keep repeating the message.

## Digital Marketing

**Start early:** Marketing advice should be sought as soon as possible, at the start of the project. If the project activity includes the re-launch of a brand or – as in this case – a digital platform, make sure to identify re-branding tactics.

**Training:** If digital marketing channels are accessed by multiple people with different levels of expertise in digital marketing, it may be appropriate to set up a formal training session and openly identify who in the context of the project will have responsibility for quality control. Having too many quality controllers may not work. A quality controller should not be afraid to take down a post that does not match the style and tone of previous posts.

**Be curious:** In order to select the 'right' image and write the 'right' copy, check out relevant websites. Pay attention to how internationally known creative brands communicate with their audience. Watch out for adverts promoted by similar projects/organisations and see if there are any lessons that can be applied to your project.

**Mind your marketing budget:** Switching off a 'Campaign' on Facebook, does not necessarily mean that all adverts are switched off. Adverts may continue to run, wasting marketing budget. If a brand is not established, targeting audiences in North America may be too ambitious. Spend time on shaping your brand and the message around it. Launching an EU co-funded brand in non-EU markets, where competition is very high, may not be appropriate without the support of experts and established agencies operating in those markets and a very large budget.

**Consider working with media buyers:** With the right training, it is possible to run successful digital marketing campaigns without being a digital marketer. It may be advisable to set some budget aside to work with consultants with expertise in buying/selling media space (e.g. print) in different markets.

**Build and refresh your image bank:** Digital marketing depends on high quality visuals. As well as establishing a strong image bank, this needs to be refreshed and updated with new imagery on an ongoing basis. Imagery for specific periods e.g. Christmas, summer, is also important.