



**a creative  
momentum  
project**

## **CREATIVE EXCHANGES:**

**A MODEL FOR CREATIVE SECTOR NETWORKING & LEARNING IN  
PERIPHERAL REGIONS**

## **SUMMARY & BEST PRACTICE MODEL**

**JULY 2018**


**CONNECTING CREATIVITY ACROSS  
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**Northern Periphery and  
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## SUMMARY & BEST PRACTICE MODEL

During 2015-2018, 'a creative momentum project' organised 41 Creative Exchanges across five partner regions with total attendance of over 1,600 people. Creative Exchanges are networking and information events addressing real needs identified by the target group (creative entrepreneurs).

The organisation of these 41 Creative Exchanges has inspired a best practice model for the organisation and delivery of events for the creative industries sector in the context of an EU-funded transnational project. The use of technology as a way of facilitating transnational knowledge exchange is discussed in the report as well as in the following model.

### CREATIVE EXCHANGES: BEST PRACTICE MODEL

**Stakeholders:** It is good practice to engage with all stakeholders as early as possible. This facilitates detailed planning, proper programme development and promotion. It is good to have extra time at your disposal should organisational issues arise (e.g. cancellations, inability to contract external expert, and so on).

Some of the stakeholders who participated in the Creative Exchanges were:

- Venue managers
- Photographers
- Videographers/Live streaming technologists
- Creative entrepreneurs (audience)
- Speakers
- Public relations firms
- Media
- Politicians (if representation is required)
- Associate partners, funders and/or supporters
- Colleagues including remote 'a creative momentum project' team and people who will help on the day

**Focus:** It is important to identify the *right* topic for the *right* speakers. Speakers should be profiled and, if they are suitable for a given Creative Exchange, they should be briefed thoroughly so that the focus of the event is respected. When contacting speakers, it is useful to include a short event outline illustrating the scope and target audience of the event.

**Marketing:** A marketing plan should be in place. This should include all actions that need to be performed before, during and after the event.

If the plan includes press/media releases, make sure that quality images are taken at the Creative Exchange. The media often appreciates 'fun' shots, where subjects interact with each other. Pictures must be attention grabbing.

- In order to promote a Creative Exchange and use the marketing budget effectively, it is important to realise the limits and strengths of different marketing channels. It is important to pay attention to the target audience(s).
- If a target audience does not really read local newspapers, adverts in the local papers will not be effective. Alternatives such as social media or radio ads may be appropriate, albeit expensive.
- Social media promotion can be very effective, especially if 'influencers' (e.g. people with many social media followers and/or a respected public body) get involved.
- 'Likes' on Facebook do not necessarily translate into a large attending audience. Promotional activities should stop only after the event has taken place. If possible, organisers should engage with the people who 'liked' or engaged with the adverts. Paid ads, tailored content and re-marketing may be useful, if resources are available.
- Email marketing is a very effective way to generate trust with an audience.

**Plan, plan, plan:** Organising and delivering a successful Creative Exchange requires time and an eye for detail. Prepare briefs for everyone involved in the organisation of the event – everyone must be aware of roles and schedules.

**Venue:** Choosing the right venue can be difficult (see Section 3). Visiting the venue *before* the event allows the organisers of a Creative Exchange to 'imagine' the event and ask relevant questions (see Sections 3 and 5). Some of the issues that need addressing are:

- WiFi options
- Screen and technical equipment available
- Technician and staff available on the day
- Distance from screen to projector and from screen to attendees
- Catering (where?)
- Registration desk (where?)
- Parking facilities
- Lighting

**Equipment:** It is important to make sure that the technical equipment available at a venue is suitable to the Creative Exchange in question. External expertise may be required. External experts may not want to use the equipment provided by a venue, as they cannot take full responsibility for it. Hiring technical equipment and a technician can be the most expensive element of a Creative Exchange. Investigating options and asking for a detailed cost breakdown are good practice.

If a Creative Exchange includes live/video streaming and/or photography and camera work, one member of staff should focus exclusively on these activities, even if they are implemented by contracted experts.

**Feedback:** Good feedback helps the organisation of future Creative Exchanges (see Section 6). It is good to prepare feedback

forms in advance. These forms can be distributed at the start of the event - perhaps they can be included in a 'welcome pack'. These forms should be completed on the day - attendees are more likely to leave constructive feedback on the day than through an online survey later. Attendees are more likely to fill in form and perform other similar tasks if a reward is offered (e.g. free voucher, usb key).

Feedback can be collected through an online survey. If this is the case, it is important to send the follow-up email immediately after the Exchange. The email should include the link to the survey, as well as a link to any presentations or material from the event.

The feedback survey should question different aspects of the Creative Exchange including promotion, suitability of venue, quality of the programme and information provided, hosting, and networking opportunities.

**Meet expectations:** Attendees should be provided with what they expect. If pre-event research demonstrates that attendees are mainly focused on networking, networking opportunities should be a key component of the event.

**Networking:** Never assume that networking will happen naturally, perhaps during the coffee breaks. Dividing the audience into discussion groups facilitates networking and specific knowledge transfer.

The organisation of networking activities can be complex from an administrative point of view. It may be necessary to identify and involve a facilitator, e.g. someone who can lead the discussions and keep them on point. Professional facilitators may also organise group activities that allow creative professionals to connect with each other.

Allowing creatives to briefly present what they do may work as an effective icebreaker. Pecha Kucha presentations can be a fun format to facilitate this activity.

**Variety:** Organising a busy and varied event is generally well received by the audience. Some people like to attend frontal lectures; others may prefer more interaction and hands-on learning. A mix of formats can be used during the same event.

Changing room to have food or having a break-out session encourages people to stay engaged with the Creative Exchange. It is also a way of creating networking opportunities.

**The full report 'Creative Exchanges: A Model for Creative Sector Networking & Learning in Peripheral Regions' can be downloaded [here](#).**







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