



Advertising
your courses



Introduction

Whether you're a social media pro or beginning to find your feet, this guide will help you understand how to apply concepts and best practises to run effective social media campaigns and advertising to help tell our community about your courses.

Target audience

Before you begin to advertise you need to consider your target audience, their interests and their skill level. Think about the following questions below:

- Who has attended your courses in the past?
 - What is their age group, gender, etc.?
 - Skill level - is your course for beginners, intermediate or advanced paddlers?
- This will determine the language and imagery that you use, e.g. a beginners course shouldn't be using technical language. Use relevant imagery to target them e.g. don't use family paddling shots if your course is aimed at existing coaches running technical sessions.

Writing your advert

- Start by looking at existing adverts. What attracts you to an advert? What doesn't work so well?
- Think about your unique selling point - maybe your courses are set in natural beauty spots? Are you the only provider in the area who deals with a specific discipline?
- You need to make the course sound appealing - what will participants experience? What will they learn?
- Short and snappy - you need a tagline to grab people's attention. Can you summarise your offering in a few words?
- Clear and concise - make sure you get across the message in as few words as possible, 20 or less. Ideally you should be able to convey what the course is and where it is in 30 seconds or less.
- Make sure the tone sounds conversational and not too formal. If you were to hear it, would it pique your interest?
- You may want to consider using testimonials. An ideal one for a course would be to ask past candidates to provide a quote. However, if you only have limited space it may be worth adding these to the course information page on your website as opposed to on the advert itself.
- Utilise persuasive writing and give people a call to action, e.g. telling them to visit your website for more information.
- Positive adjectives and emotive words are a great way to get readers to imagine themselves taking part in your course and having a good time.
- Imperative words used with a sense of urgency are a great way to encourage positive persuasion - "Book a course today" "Click here for more information" will make the reader feel as though you are talking directly to them and will get them thinking.



Imagery

Use positive imagery relevant to your target audience and course.

Promoting a sea kayaking course using photos taken on inland waterways isn't going to give a realistic picture of what you are offering. If you have the capacity, always aim to take a few shots when running your courses so they can be used for advertising purposes later on!*

*Ensure you have the relevant permissions to do so and include a consent form in course booking materials or signage at your event informing participants on the use of imagery. British Canoeing can provide guidance on this if necessary.

As a provider of British Canoeing courses you may have access to and permission to use personal performance or guide logos which can be used as part of your advertising.

Places to advertise

Social Media

- Utilise paddling community groups and sites to promote your courses
 - a simple search will show lots of specific groups aimed at your target audiences. Think local clubs, centres, interest groups, forums, local business groups, outdoor interest groups etc., e.g. Women's Paddling Community, Regional Development Team pages, regional paddling groups and many more! Remember to check the rules of the page, some pages only allow courses to be advertised once a month, some pages do not allow advertising at all.
- Set up your own page! If you have the capacity to provide regular updates (at least once a week) then setting up your own Facebook page to advertise your courses is a great way to showcase your offering and offer detailed and in-depth information.
- Having a page is a great resource as you can use this to direct people somewhere for further information. You can even produce case studies and share testimonials - they don't need to be wordy, even a picture of a participant with a short quote about how much they learned from your course is a great start.
- Events pages - Facebook is great for setting up events pages, inviting your contacts or former participants and keeping people updated.
- [Click here for a cheat sheet outlining all the social media different platforms and their uses.](#)
- Remember that this may be the first time your potential participants have engaged in a Paddlesport course, or a formal British Canoeing course and they may not be familiar with acronyms or the registration / membership process so keep the language clear and simple, with signposting to National Association websites where applicable.

Websites

- Listing sites related to your course such as those related to sports or an active lifestyle are a great way to spread the word to your target audience (e.g Institute for Outdoor Learning).
- British Canoeing, Canoe Wales, SCA and CANI also have a 'find a provider' section on their websites. If you are interested in appearing on the 'Find a Provider' tool, you will need to 'opt in' via your Membership portal. English members please click [here](#) for guidance. SCA, CANI and Canoe Wales members please contact your National Association to 'opt in'.



Local press

- As with websites you need to think about your target audience. What are they likely to read? An advert for a technical course in a family magazine or local newspaper will not have as much impact as a targeted message on a social media page aimed at them.
- If you have any local outdoor magazines or trade publications, then an advert may be a useful option. Some local publications offer advertorials, this could be another option to consider as it allows for more exposure than a simple advert.
- If you are running beginner courses for children or young people, then an advert in the local newspaper or online news site around school holiday times may be a good way to attract parents' attention.

Posters and Leaflets

- Utilise design software such as Canva which is easy and free to use, and contains lots of templates for posters, flyers, business cards and posters.
- Keep it simple and include your contact details.
- Direct readers to further information - a link to your Facebook, social media page or website for example.
- Think of your local and surrounding areas - are there places where people can utilise your courses and would be looking for your services? Think activity and outdoor pursuit centres, canoe clubs or cafe's popular with hikers and cyclists. People interested in outdoor pursuits are often interested in taking to the water too.
- Local paddling clubs and outdoor centres may let you put up a poster on their notice board.
- You could email your poster to local outdoor centres as a way to direct coaches and those who may utilise your services.



Where will people go for further information?

Making sure you have somewhere people can refer to for further information is more important than the advert itself. Having a website or social media page to refer readers back is the best way to ensure you have all your key information in one place.

- Make sure that any images used are not grainy or blurry.
- Ensure that there is recent content on there, so the site looks current and up to date.
- Can your potential candidate find all the information they need to know about the course easily? Your potential customers will be put off if they reach a website that looks unprofessional or is hard to navigate. Please use the URL for the course information page when providing a link on an advert or submission on the British Canoeing portal, rather than just to the homepage of your site.

Once your advert has been released

You may want to release the advert in one or two places first to see if it works. Don't be afraid to revisit and rewrite your advert to keep it fresh and attract new customers - sometimes a simple change of imagery is all your advert will need to keep it fresh.

Guidance and resources

British Canoeing branding guidelines - If you are wanting to use provider logos please refer to the logos page of the British Canoeing and National Association branding guidelines.

If you have further questions regarding imagery, photo permissions or branding please contact mediaenquiries@britishcanoeing.org.uk

British Canoeing online coach store

The British Canoeing online shop now has a dedicated section just for coaches and providers! Be a proud provider and shop personalised clothing which you can customise with your name, title and British Canoeing provider logo.



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