

TIPS FOR MARKETING YOUR CLASS OR WORKSHOP

At Opus, we want to see your efforts come to fruition when you offer a class. To that end, we've prepared this basic tip sheet to help you market your course to potential students, so that you are greeted by a room full of bright-eyed individuals just waiting to be inspired. We hope you find it helpful.

CREATE A FLYER:



People looking for interesting courses will read the information you put out there. However, what you put on your flyer matters.

Get to the point – be very clear what your course is about, but keep it simple. Too much can be overwhelming, and the goal is to get them interested. Come up with a descriptive yet simple course name.

Consider the price. If you are a new instructor just starting out, you may want to think about offering a short 'starter' course for a smaller cost, as people may be willing to try something new with less initial investment. Similarly, higher end classes may require that you market more broadly, perhaps outside of your community and definitely well in advance so that you have adequate time to fill your class.

Offer to teach courses privately and negotiate a fee depending on the specific needs of the student.

Include graphics. After all, a picture is worth 1000 words! An image or visual on your flyer will help inspire people to try something new, and it will help them to identify what they are going to learn about.

Credentials matter. Make sure you tell people where you learned your professional skills. Education and exhibition history is an important aspect of the decision making process

for many students, as it helps them to assess what level of experience you have. After all, it's not just beginners that take classes. Often experienced artists will look for inspirational sessions, or brush-ups for their techniques, or even partake of social opportunities for dialogue and critique of current work.

Clearly state what people will leave your course with. Students come to an art workshop with different needs and expectations. Some think they will walk out with a piece of art (or art in process), some want new skills or techniques, others want project ideas or inspiration. Make sure you tell them what your course is about clearly, so there are no surprises for either of you.

Print 'em up! If you do not have a computer or printer, you can try a local business or copy centre. Often they will rent time on the computer for a reasonable price, and they can print and copy for you too. Many libraries also have equipment you can use for a very reasonable cost. Or, you can always do it by hand – you are an artist, after all!

Include clear and complete contact and registration information. People may want to ask questions before they commit, so be easy to reach, available, and ready to answer them. And while it's a simply and well used technique, a tear-off strip along the bottom of your flyer makes it easy for students to grab info and go.

WHERE DO YOU FIND STUDENTS?

The Opus info board. Inside every Opus store there is a community board just waiting for you. This is a perfect way to reach an interested audience.

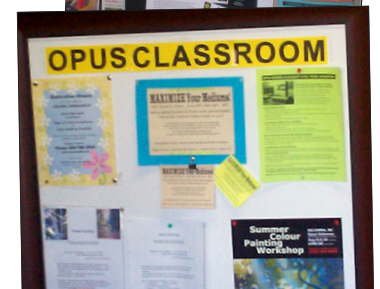
Your public library. Most libraries have a community board. They are a great place to reach someone who is interested in learning. And if your courses are designed for kids, libraries are a fantastic place for parents to discover you.

Where students already go. Many local colleges, technical institutes, art institutes and private institutes have community student boards for posting notices.

Galleries and artist-run-centres. Many have a posting board for community notices, or any area where you can drop off your flyers.

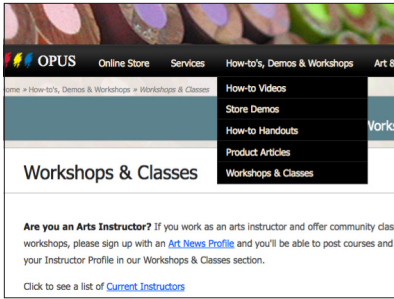
Coffee shops, community centres, recreation venues – many have informal spaces for postings or even art shows. Ask around and keep your eyes open for opportunities.

If you are exhibiting anywhere, be sure to include information about where or what you teach on your bio, and supply them with a good stack of business cards to give out. If patrons they like your art, they may also want to take a class from you too.



WORKSHOPS & CLASSES

The Opus website hosts a large and growing collection of instructors and courses in a searchable interface. If you haven't registered as an instructor, we encourage you to do so.



Go to www.opusframing.com, and hover over “How-to’s, Demos & Workshops” to open the drop-down menu. Then click “Workshops & Classes.” You will be taken to the course listings. Click the link in the first paragraph to create an Art News Profile. Set up your Instructor Profile and start posting your classes!

Be sure to provide clear contact information so people can register to take your class easily, including details about cost, pre-payment and your cancellation policy. By registering your course online, you now have an online “page” for your course! You can use this on your flyer and other promotional materials, or send it to people directly in an email.

GET SOCIAL ONLINE

We are in the era of the social web, and it is a powerful tool. If you haven't started a Facebook, Blog or Twitter account (or one of many other options), this may be worth considering. And as mentioned above, if you registered with our Opus ‘Workshops & Classes’, you now have a link to your information which you can use online and in emails.

Consider these free options:

Tweet your course on twitter.com: Use a Twitter account to share details of your upcoming course. Tweet about how many spots are available. Provide a link to your course online. Your followers may even re-tweet to their friends. Engage other twitter users to develop a following. Start by following @opusartsupplies of course!

Post it to facebook.com: Share a link to your class, create a facebook event page, or post it to your status or wall, with the workshop name, date and time. Invite people to email you for details.

Start a free blog at www.blogger.com or www.wordpress.com: If you're not blogging already, it may be time to start. There are many free blogging services that require virtually no technical skill to start – if you have an email address and can use a basic website, you'll be fine.

Blogs require some maintenance, but as long as you are posting content consistently, you may develop regular readers. Write about a topic that your audience would be interested in, and you may find they are sharing your blog with their networks.

TAKE IT TO YOUR CLASS

Your marketing shouldn't just happen outside the classroom. Make sure to budget time at the end of your class session to inform students about other courses you teach, or when you will next be giving the workshop. If you can, make sure you have this information set and planned, and hand out flyers during your class.

Also, keep the names and contact information for all your students and art buyers and ask their permission to stay in touch. You can send out notices about future classes, exhibitions or other projects you are doing. And ask them to spread the word too – offer them something for sending a new student your way. For example a small piece of art or a free 1-1 instructional session.

These are just a few ideas to get you started. Please let us know if you have any other suggestions to share.