

Tips on Selecting Like-Minded Conferences, Fairs and Community Events

Staffing a table or a booth at a like-minded conference, fair or community event can present a great opportunity for you or your organization to network, promote Nonviolent Communication, and/or promote an upcoming NVC workshop or event. Imagine gathering all of the top decision-makers in one of your target audiences – and having them all at your disposal . . . this is essentially what such a conference can provide to you. While some fairs and conferences offer free tables or booths, others can range from \$25 to thousands of dollars per table, usually depending on the profile and attendance numbers of the conference. Along the same lines, a well-selected conference could expose you to hundreds of people in a target audience, while others will only expose you to a small handful. This document is intended to guide you in selecting the most cost-effective fairs, community events, and conferences to meet your specific promotion needs.

TIP #1: CONSIDER YOUR PROMOTION GOAL(S).

- The best way to know if your specific promotion strategy is effective is to link it with a specific goal. Consider using the Promotion Worksheet to outline your goal(s) for promotion, and to identify the specific strategies you'll be using to meet those goals. In doing so, you may discover that staffing a conference table is not the strategy you'd like to use. You may be most effective if you use a variety of strategies to meet your goals.
- Is your goal to promote NVC in general – perhaps to reach out to a specific audience such as counselors or social workers?
- Is your goal to promote an upcoming NVC event or workshop?
- Is your goal to connect with like-minded organizations as an opportunity to raise awareness about NVC and your local movement?
- Is your goal to network and to raise funds for your local team through NVC book sales?

TIP #2: IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE(S).

- Use the Target Audiences sheet to identify your top 3-5 target audiences. This will help you narrow your search for conferences/events in your area.

TIP #3: RESEARCH UPCOMING CONFERENCES, FAIRS AND COMMUNITY EVENTS.

- Considering your target audience(s), research what conferences, fairs or events are coming up in the next several months (or in the next year) that will be attended by this audience. Do a search on the internet that includes the target audience, and your region/city (i.e., "conference+activists+portland+OR").
- Contact a local professional organization affiliated with your target audience, and ask them to identify the top fairs, conferences or community events that this audience usually attends.
- If you know people who are in your target audience (i.e., you're targeting healthcare professionals and you have a friend who is a midwife), ask them what professional conferences, events or fairs they typically attend in a given year.

TIP #4: CONTACT THE CONFERENCE/EVENT ORGANIZER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

- Once you've identified what conference/event or fair you'd like to attend, connect with the conference organizer as soon as possible to determine what your options are. Many decisions are made several months in advance to the conference dates, such as the sale of vendor tables/booths, and determining conference presenters.

TIP #5: DISCUSS YOUR OPTIONS WITH THE CONFERENCE ORGANIZER.

- **STAFF A VENDOR TABLE/BOOTH:** Ask the organizer if vendor tables or booths are available, how much they cost, and what process you need to follow to apply for one. Before deciding if staffing a booth will be effective for you, ask (1) how many people usually attend the conference; (2) how much time do attendees and speakers have to visit the vendor tables/booths during the conference; (3) are you able to sell books/materials at your table. Weigh these answers with the costs involved, including fees, your time, costs of printing promotional materials you'd like to distribute, etc.
- **GUEST PRESENTER/SPEAKER:** Consider applying to be a guest presenter or speaker at the conference (instead or in addition to staffing a table/booth). This way you'll have a more direct connection to attendees.
- **ADD YOUR FLYER OR AN NVC BOOKLET TO CONFERENCE PACKETS:** If the conference you've chosen is regional or national in scope, and attended by decision-makers or persons of influence within the chosen audience, PuddleDancer Press may be willing to provide you free NVC booklets to add to all conference attendee packets. To request free booklets for conference packets, go to the Giveaway Campaign request forms in the Share NVC area of our website at www.nonviolentcommunication.com. When cost effective, you may also consider requesting that the conference organizer add your flyer (for an upcoming event/workshop, or a general flyer about NVC) to all attendee packets. Before making a decision on either of these strategies, be sure to ask the conference organizer if they are willing to add an item to packets (remember - often packets are prepared well ahead of time).
- **ADD YOUR FLYER OR AN NVC BOOKLET TO SPEAKER PACKETS:** For larger or multi-day conferences (attended by over 1000 people), it may be more cost effective to add your flyer or an NVC booklet to speaker packets instead of offering them to all attendees. Larger, multi-day conferences typically have several presenters. Ask the conference organizer if this is an option for you. To request free booklets for conference presenter packets, go to the Giveaway Campaign request forms in the Share NVC area of our website at www.nonviolentcommunication.com.
- **CONNECT WITH PUDDLEDANCER PRESS TO DISCUSS OTHER OPTIONS:** If you're attending and/or presenting at a conference that is regional, national or international in scope, PuddleDancer Press would enjoy supporting your promotion efforts in any way we can. Please connect with us as soon as you know you'll be attending the conference so we can brainstorm mutually-beneficial promotion options together.

TIP #6: IF YOUR ORGANIZATION IS A NONPROFIT, ASK IF THE EVENT ORGANIZER OFFERS A NONPROFIT DISCOUNT.

- Many conferences will offer a discount to nonprofit groups who purchase a vendor table/booth. If you're NVC group/team/organization is a nonprofit organization, ask what discounts are available to you.

TIP #7: ASK THE EVENT ORGANIZER IF YOU CAN SELL BOOKS/MATERIALS.

- Some conferences/fairs are great opportunities for people to purchase educational materials, particularly if you'll be providing an NVC workshop/presentation at the conference. Since NVC books/materials can be purchased in bulk at discounted rates from CNVC and PuddleDancer Press, selling materials can be a great method for you / your team to raise funds that can be used to further grow your NVC community. Careful planning is an important part of effective book sales. Before purchasing, identify the books/materials attendees will most likely be interested in; estimate the number of books you think you could sell, and purchase accordingly. If you'll be selling books/materials, use the "Conference Booth Checklist" to be sure to bring everything you need.

TIP #8: TO SAVE MONEY, CONSIDER SHARING A BOOTH OR TABLE WITH A LIKE-MINDED ORGANIZATION.

- Since many fairs/events/conferences offer at least a 6 or 8 foot table to each vendor, it's possible to share a table/booth with another likeminded organization or individual. Consider partnering together if your funds are limited and/or the conference booth prices are high.