

# ACTION PLAN: COMMUNITY SCREENINGS

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## 1. Create Your Screening Kit

The first step is to create the actual physical and digital components for your screening kit. Here's a basic guide to what you'll need to include:

- **Physical DVD.** Most small organizations are still using DVD players, so you'll need to print a run of physical DVDs. You can start out with a small run of 300, but keep in mind the discs get cheaper as you order more. We recommend hire an experienced freelancer to create your DVD menus and packaging.

*Recommended vendor for DVD manufacturing: Discmakers*

- **Discussion guide (PDF or printed).** You need to include three things in your discussion guide: a step-by-step guide for hosting a screening, context information about your film, and discussion questions your hosts can use to engage the audience. Google "documentary discussion guide" to see some examples for other successful films. You can create a printed version or a simple PDF your hosts can print themselves.

*Recommended vendor for printing: PS Print*

- **Postcards and posters (PDF or printed).** Hire a graphic designer Your screening hosts can use postcards and posters to promote their screening. You can provide them a printed version or a simple PDF your hosts can print themselves.

*Recommended vendor for design: Crowdspring*

*Recommended vendor for printing: PS Print*

- **Swag and extras (optional).** Some filmmakers like to include extras like stickers, t-shirts, buttons, books, or artwork. If there's something you really think would be important and relevant to your film, you can add it to your screening kit.

Remember: after you've created your screening kit, you'll need to make it available on your online store. See the "Direct Distribution" lesson and action plan for more details.

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## 2. Reach out to Partners

Second, you need to promote your community screening campaign to individuals, institutions, and media in your niche. By focusing your efforts on your core audience, you'll be able to target those fans who are willing to go the extra mile and host a screening of your film.

Here are three strategies for promoting your community screening campaign:

- **Broker communications partnerships.** Talk to your institutional partners and have them communicate to their members about your community screening campaign. Ask them the best way to reach their members—this could be their newsletter, email list, blog, or social media channels.

*Write down three potential partners for your community screening campaign.*

- **Pitch your campaign at conferences.** You can also pitch your campaign at conferences and speaking events. This is a powerful way to get your film in front of a large audience and move people to action. One successful way to do this is to show your trailer and give a short pitch during a lunch or plenary session.

*Write down the top three conferences to pitch your community screening campaign.*

- **Get coverage in niche media.** Email and call the editors of the most important publications in your niche and ask them to publish a story on your community screening campaign. If you can give them a reason why it's "newsworthy" or time-sensitive, it will increase the likelihood you'll get coverage. Try tying it in to current

events or an important launch date.

*Write down the top three media destinations to pitch your community screening campaign.*

See the “Build Your Network” and “Make the Pitch” lessons and action plans for more information on identifying and pitching potential partners.

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### 3. Launch Your Campaign

Last, you need to set a launch date to activate your partnerships and start your campaign. Community screening campaigns are all about momentum, so try to make a big splash and line up as many screenings as possible for a specific kick-off day. The better job you do with an attention-grabbing launch, the easier it will be for you to continue your momentum.

- **Set your launch date.** One strategy is to plan your launch around a relevant holiday or celebration—for example, Veterans’ Day if your film is about the military.

- **Communicate with your partners.** Keep in touch with your partners through email blasts and phone calls. Make sure they have everything they need and are ready to launch.
- **Launch.** Make your screening kit available on your website, send out the final communications, and launch your campaign.