

WEB PROJECT UPDATE – July 15, 2009

Following approval by the national Steering Committee of the preliminary web strategy, a Lead Web Developer has been engaged by the national office. Additionally, web and communications experts from across the country have been consulted to help refine the web strategy, which is helping to develop and shape a broader communications plan rooted in grassroots, edgy, targeted tactics.

The communications and web experts consulted, in addition to the web development team contracted for the Culture Days web project, include:

Paul Artiuch Director and other team members nGenera	Ken Bautista Associate Creative Director, Interactive RED The Agency	Keith Durrant President/bizman Ecentricarts
Kirsten Gunter Director of Communications Ontario Arts Council	Susan Kennard Director & Producer Banff New Media Institute	Kim Lymburner Head, Arts Services Canada Council for the Arts
Erica Mattson Director of Marketing & Communications Calgary Arts Development	Maurizio Ortolani New Media Producer National Arts Centre	Marie-Josée Paradis Director of Marketing Culture pour tous
Grace Thrasher Acting Senior Communications Manager Canada Council for the Arts	Perry Voulgaris Director, Digital Media Programming CBC	Warren Wilansky Principal & Founder Plank

As well, we received some general feedback on the national Culture Days project as a whole, from François Lagarde, a social marketing specialist who helped realize the highly-successful ParticipACTION public health communications campaign. In brief:

- François appreciated the rationale for creating a movement; the basis, as he put it, is there.
- He cautioned against communications efforts that may likely only reinforce the already committed and advised us to clarify *who* we want to do *what* differently as a result of our campaign, in order to develop the communication strategies for the campaign – why aren't they doing these things, why would they, what factors will we address through our communications?
- In other words it is necessary to segment the target groups very carefully as different groups will require different strategies.
- François suggested that it is harder to create a social movement today than in the 1970s because Canadian society is more pluralistic; the target can't be 33 million Canadians (the population of Canada).
- Today's mass media landscape is much more diverse and fragmented.
- Being too general in our communications will at best create awareness; it takes focused, strategic messaging to targeted segments to create change, to make impact.

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As such, François recommended that we work backwards: first determine what would be a noticeable impact that we would like to see over the next few years (end result), and then determine how we will achieve that impact (process/methodology).

Summary of Web Strategy Refinements

To sustain the dynamic balance between championing provincial efforts as unique, individual leadership projects, and needing to create convergence and direct focus as a collective national effort, Culture Days will strive to create complementary types of visibility in our co-branded promotional and communications initiatives and be a convener of stories about Canadian culture. The web project will continue to be divided into 4 phases, although components of each phase will likely overlap with others during implementation. To guide development, the 4 phases are each focused around a different message:

- **Phase 1** of web development will focus on creating a website *to introduce and build the case* for the Culture Days initiative to groups such as sponsors, funders, government, host organizations, Task Force members, potential activity organizers, and others – loosely termed those who will become “the Culture Days network”.
- **Phase 2** will *provide tools to the network* to share knowledge and experiences, and to help galvanize their networks and communities.
- **Phase 3** will *promote to the public* the national Culture Days movement and the provincial initiatives.
- **Phase 4** will highlight the personal stories of participants and *enable the public to share* their Culture Days experiences.

Moving forward, until December 2010, the many features and possibilities outlined in the preliminary web strategy (an exploration of options) will be prioritized and focused according to the following schema:

- **Priority:** to create web tools that will make it easier for network members and citizens to help spread the buzz and generate interest and support for their events, using their own channels for engagement.
- **Priority:** to develop creative online partnerships to reach out to national, provincial and disciplinary networks, to engage and animate diverse communities, to encourage volunteerism, participation and collaboration, and to leverage the expertise and needs of other online content creators, portals etc.
- **Priority:** to determine who our Year 1 & 2 primary targets are, and where they gather online – build presence and contribute to conversations in the web 1.0 and web 2.0+ communities where they gather (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and others).
- **Postponement:** of the development of a proprietary social networking platform – under advisement that the perceived benefit of being able to “oversee” or “direct” the online dialogue on a proprietary network would no longer be possible if Culture Days becomes as successful as we’d like it to be. It was also advised that the web budget would be more effectively employed if used to engage audiences where they already are as a first priority, before trying to bring the audiences to our home base.
- **Affirmation:** to capitalize on the possibilities afforded by database-driven RSS feeds to present and re-configure information about Culture Days in a variety of ways – for now and in planning for the future.
- **Affirmation:** to creatively highlight provincial initiatives and local stories throughout the web strategy.

For more information please contact:

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