The Power of Word-of-Mouth: A Study on the Impact of Interpersonal Communication Using Arts Festivals as a Case Study

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Using Arts Festivals as a Case Study

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MA Public Relations with New Media

Cork Institute of Technology

September 2017

Supervisor: Emmett Coffey
Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of

Master's Degree (MA) in Public Relations with New Media

is entirely my own work and has not been submitted for assessment for any academic purpose other than in partial fulfilment for that stated above.

Signed ...........................................................................

HOLLY NÍ GHRÁDA

Date ...........................................................................
Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the importance of interpersonal communication tactics in building and maintaining key relationships in the arts festival context, using two Irish traditional music festivals as its case studies. The main objective of this research is to demonstrate the effectiveness of word-of-mouth endorsements among stakeholders for small organisations.

This research undertook three stages of study. The first stage of this thesis took the form of a literature review – also known as the secondary research phase. Throughout this stage the author found relevant academic opinions and definitions based on selected public relations, culture, and festival themes. The information gathered during this stage helped to form a better understanding of the research question, and to design the basis for the primary research.

The second stage of this study involved a mixed methods approach for the primary research phase. The researcher collected relevant information using a quantitative research methods approach in the shape of a survey, which was distributed to a sample audience of one of the case study festivals chosen by the author. A qualitative research methods approach was also used in the form of interviews with two co-founders of the chosen Irish traditional music festivals. The researcher made use of triangulation in the final stage of the research to analyse the information gathered.

Results found the major impacts of word-of-mouth endorsements and peer recommendations have on these selected arts festivals and the invaluable advantage this has for them compared to larger, international festivals. The research also showed the interpersonal communication tactics used by these two festivals which were successful in building and maintaining the relationships between these two organisations and their key stakeholders.
This study outlines recommendations outlined by the author in how reprioritising interpersonal communications tactics in a public relations strategy will be mutually beneficial to both the organisation and its publics.
Acknowledgements

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This thesis would not have been possible without the contribution of others. I wish to convey my sincerest gratitude to Aoife Granville, Conal Ó Gráda, and all of those who are interested in Irish traditional culture and work to keep the tradition strong in the world.

Agus leim’ chlann is mo chairde, gabhaim mo bhuiochas libh i gconáí as ucht bhur dtacaíocht, bhur ndearfacht, bhur gcairdeas agus bhur ngrá. Beir bua.
“There is no such thing as a human nature independent of culture. Men without culture ... would be unworkable monstrosities with very few useful instincts, fewer recognisable sentiments, and no intellect: mental basket cases.” (Geertz, C. 1973)
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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This study aims to delve into the success of the niche arts festival in Ireland. Many of these festivals have low budgets with no public relations or event management professional, however this does not affect the volume of their audience each year. This research intends to discover the public relations tactics used by these small organisations in garnering a worldwide following and participation.

1.2 Aim of Research

This research will critically examine interpersonal communication and public relations strategies employed by small organisations in building and maintaining relationship bonds which lead to word-of-mouth endorsement, focusing on the arts festival in Ireland. Specifically, it will centre on the interpersonal communication tactics employed by Irish traditional music festival organisers and the relationship between the festival and its key stakeholders. It will analyse the impact of interpersonal communication practices in building and maintaining bridges between the festival and the musician.

The overall aim of this research is to develop best practice guidelines for interpersonal communication implementation in relation to the arts festival in Ireland. These guidelines will be based on an examination of public relations and communications theories, an analysis of the impact of traditional culture on PR and professional communication implementation, and also as an evaluation of trust and satisfaction when building and maintaining relationships with key publics.

Information will be gathered through surveys which will be conducted within an Irish traditional music festival context. Further information and insights will be gathered through interviews undertaken with relevant experts within the Irish traditional music and arts festival field.
1.3 Research Objectives

The research objectives for this study are:

- Culture and Public Relations: The key elements of a festival
- Image, Identity, Reputation: The importance of staying true to your ethos
- The Power of Word-of-Mouth: The importance of peer-to-peer endorsements

1.4 Relevance to Public Relations

This thesis will study the area of interpersonal communication strategies within the public relations and professional communications sphere. It will also look at the importance of trust, relationship building, and satisfaction between the arts festival organiser and its key stakeholders. It also emphasises the importance of peer-to-peer endorsements within the cultural arts community.

1.5 Content Overview

1.5.1 Chapter Two: Literature Review

The ‘Literature Review’ chapter comprises of a comprehensive review and critical analysis of published literature related to this research topic. This chapter delves into a wide range of subjects which relate to the chosen research topic. As a result of the secondary reading undertaken, research objectives were formed and these became the basis of all primary research conducted by the researcher.

1.5.2 Chapter Three: Research Methodology

The Research Methodology chapter provides a detailed account of the research design implemented to investigate the research objectives of this study. It provides an in-depth discussion on the two data gathering methods employed and an explanation as to why the author chose these two particular methods. This chapter also includes a discussion on the ethical issues which apply to primary research.
1.5.3 Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis

The Findings and Analysis chapter assembles and assesses the research findings uncovered by this study. The data is collected and discussed according to the research objectives. It is analysed with reference to these objectives as well as the secondary research conducted in the Literature Review chapter.

1.5.4 Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter summarises the conclusions drawn from the findings. It also outlines several recommendations based on the objectives of this study. Research limitations and the author’s final thoughts will also be discussed.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The Literature Review chapter was undertaken to critically examine and analyse existing academic material based on several themes establishing the research topic:

- What is Public Relations
- Interpersonal PR Tactics
- The Importance of Relationship Building and Trust in Public Relations
- Peer-to-Peer Endorsement
- Culture and Public Relations
- The Arts Festival

The focus of the literature review was on interpersonal communication tactics and relationship building among key stakeholders in an arts festival context. The purpose of this research was to design a better understanding of the research question and to form the basis for the primary research.

2.2 What is Public Relations

Public Relations (PR) is a form of strategic communications which is used across the private, public, and non-profit sector. There are many different definitions of PR, each differing slightly from the other, as those who have attempted to define PR struggle to reach an agreed consensus on the core idea underlying all PR activities. However, there is one central idea which is agreed upon in all definitions – PR always involves both an organisation and its various key stakeholders, which are also known as “publics”.

These stakeholders, or publics, are specific groups within society who have an interest in certain issues or with particular organisations (L’Etang, 2008). It is crucial for an organisation to be in communication with its publics, by doing so the organisation can learn from its publics and improve its relationships with them. According to Jacquie L’Etang, public relations “involves the communication and exchange of ideas to facilitate change” (2008, p. 8)
Cutlip and Center's definition describes PR as a management function: “management in all organisations must attend to public relations. It also identifies building and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and publics as the moral and ethical basis of the profession” (Broom, G.M. 2009, p. 25). By this definition, PR is characterised as a discipline which looks after reputational management. The aim of PR is to earn the understanding and support of the organisation's publics and to influence opinion and behaviour (Broom, 2009).

There are definitions which accentuate persuasion and influence when speaking about PR, especially in the fields of issues management and public affairs. According to Cooper (1982, cited in L'Etang, J. 2008, p. 30) “Political warfare is a research-driven effort to persuasive communication that draws upon communications theory and research, media research, analysis and tactics, planning skills, messaging, group dynamics, teamwork and spin, or ‘accentuating the positive’”. While this definition is defining a part of the military's propaganda effort it is obvious that it can be methodologically linked to the work of PR (L'Etang, 2008).

2.2.1 Four Models of Communication

“Public relations contributes to organisational effectiveness when it helps reconcile the organisation’s goals with the expectations of its strategic constituencies. This contribution has monetary value to the organisation. Public relations contributes to effectiveness by building quality, long-term relationships with strategic constituencies. Public relations is most likely to contribute to effectiveness when the senior public relations manager is a member of the dominant coalition where he or she is able to shape the organisation's goals and to help determine which external publics are most strategic” (Grunig, 1992; cited in Tench & Yeoman, 2009, p. 150).

Grunig and Hunt's “Four Models of Communication” outline the four distinct types of practice within PR and effective communication. The framework of these four models have been accepted as accurate, however not without criticism.

The Press Agent Model is solely one-way communication. “No dialogue with the intended audience is required and the main objective is to put forward on particular view of the world through the media and other channels” (Tench & Yeomans, 2009, p.
This model is seen as propagandistic, "there being little respect for truth" (Davis, A. 2007, p. 82) as well as little to no research.

The Public Information Model is similar to the Press Agent Model in that it is "one-way information dissemination is the purpose of the activity" (Tench & Yeomans, 2009, p. 150), however in contrast with the press agent model "truth is fundamental to its purpose" (Tench & Yeomans, 2009, p. 150). The primary aim of the Public Information Model is to inform its publics rather than persuade. Therefore the information has to be correct, definite and true (Tench & Yeomans, 2009).

The Two-way Asymmetrical Model is defined by its use of "scientific persuasion" (Davis, A. 2007, p. 83). This model aims to achieve an understanding between the organisation and its publics by bringing them around to the organisation's way of thinking (Tench and Yeomans, 2009). "The two-way asymmetric approach involves messages going in both directions but there is an imbalance in favour of the sender, who is intent upon securing advantage from the exchange without recognising much conditional need of reciprocity" (Davis, A. 2007, p. 83). Research and feedback from publics is used to adapt communications strategies, with the intent to become more persuasive without altering the position of the organisation.

Finally, the Two-way Symmetrical Model aims to generate a mutual understanding between the organisation as well as its publics. This model of communication should lead to changes in both the organisation's and the public's position on an issue by having "a greater incentive to develop dialogue" (Davis, A. 2007, p. 84). "Symmetrical public relations refers more to a process than to an outcome" (Grunig, 2011; cited in Davis, A. 2007, p. 84). The two-way symmetrical model is practiced most in interpersonal communication.
2.3 Interpersonal PR Tactics

Interpersonal communication can be defined in many different ways. Interpersonal communication, according to Adler et al, refers to “any interaction between two people” (2004, cited in Rhee, Y. 2007, p.103). Verderber and Verderber defined interpersonal communication as “the process through which people create and manage their relationships, exercising mutual responsibility in creating meaning” (2004, cited in Rhee, Y. 2007, p. 103). Another definition of interpersonal communication, by Trenholm and Jensen is “communication between two people, generally in face-to-face interaction” (2000 Cited in Rhee, Y. 2007, p. 103). Although these definitions each vary from another, two recurring elements are present. These two elements are the notion of ‘relationship’ and a form of communication between two people, usually face-to-face (Rhee, 2007). The notion of relationship and communication are also vital elements when defining public relations.

Many public relations scholars have looked into the commonalities between public relations in an organisation-public relationship and interpersonal communication. Ledingham and Brunig (1998, cited in Rhee, Y. 2007. P.104) identified five components which are applicable to both the relationships in interpersonal communication and those of organisation-public relationships. These elements are: trust, openness, involvement, investment, and commitment. In 2000 Grunig and Huang also analysed interpersonal communication theories and found relevant elements to those of organisation-public relationships. These include: trust, control-mutuality, commitment, and satisfaction (Rhee, Y. 2007. P 104).

The two-way symmetrical model of communication is prominent throughout interpersonal communication and is adopted in excellent public relations practice (Grunig et al, 2002). The two-way symmetrical model of communication is balanced and aims to generate a mutual understanding between the organisation as well as its publics through negotiation and compromise, instead of identifying messages to motivate and persuade (Grunig and Grunig, 1992; cited in Rhee, Y. 2007. P.104). The two-way
symmetrical model of communication employs interpersonal communication more than mediated communication.

Grunig and Grunig (1992) separated interpersonal communication with the notion of only being face-to-face. Forms of interpersonal communication include meetings between government officials and PR practitioners, or personal meetings between senior managers and various stakeholder groups (Rhee, 2007).

2.3.1 The Interpersonal PR Approach

While defining strategic communication tactics, Smith (2013) presented four key public relations approaches. These four categories include the employment of interpersonal communication, organisational media, news media, and advertising and promotional media strategies. According to Smith (2013, p. 230), it is agreed by both academic and professional experts that interpersonal communication is “the most persuasive and engaging of all the communication tactics” in both the disciplines of public relations and marketing communication. This statement does not aim to demean the other forms of communication tactics, however, in terms of influential communication, the dynamism of direct, face-to-face interpersonal communication trumps other forms of communication in terms of effectiveness.

There are several advantages to using interpersonal communication tactics. Interpersonal communication tactics are controlled – the organisation administers its message and the way it is delivered. However, it is important to remember that the organisation cannot control the response of the audience to the message. Interpersonal communication tactics are generally inexpensive to the organisation, although special events can become expensive if the budget allows. This tactic takes up more staff time for planning and implementing than other strategic communication tactics. Interpersonal tactics have the ability to make a strong impact on its publics, which is useful for both persuasion and dialogue models of communication (Smith, 2013). Using interpersonal tactics, an organisation can communicate with its publics in a way that can have a major effect on not only what the publics knows but also on how the publics feel.
about the organisation’s message. Interpersonal tactics also involve “information-seeking publics” (Smith, 2013, p. 233). These publics are people who are already interested in the organisation, already have some knowledge of relevant facts, are open to the organisation’s message and have gone out of their way to interact with the organisation.

Grunig and Grunig (1992) primarily focused their assessment of symmetrical two-way communication on ‘face-to-face’, ‘one-on-one’ and smaller scale interactions. Smith (2013) views interpersonal communication tactics as lengthening the boundaries of personal involvement to information exchange opportunities and special events. Smith (2013, p.233) defined personal involvement as a “powerful element of communication, whether for purposes of information, education, persuasion or dialogue.” The main aim is to promote “audience-involvement activities” through inviting key publics onsite for organised site visits or facility tours to create public interaction. Information exchange, he stated, “centers on opportunities for organisations and their publics to meet face-to-face and thus to exchange information, ask questions and clarify understandings” (Smith, 2013, p. 234). Information exchange occurs at product exhibitions, educational gatherings, meetings, demonstrations and speeches.

A further category of interpersonal communication tactics includes the special event. A special event is “an activity created by an organisation mainly to provide a venue to interact with members of its publics” (Smith, R.D. 2013, p. 234). Special events include festivals, tournaments, launches or grand openings, fundraising events, general publicity events, etc. The aim of the special event, according to Smith is to “bring a community together in celebration and fun” (2013, p. 236). The purpose of many of these social events is “to thank or recognise members of an important public” (Smith, R.D. 2013, p. 238), this is why it is of utmost importance to be sure that the event is “of legitimate interest to the identified key publics” (Smith, 2013, p.239).

The main downfall to interpersonal communication tactics is that, when compared with other strategic communication strategies, there is a major limitation in audience reach. As Smith highlights “If numbers are important, these tactics won’t be heavy producers”
While interpersonal communication tactics are generally less expensive than other public relations tactics, they can "claim more staff time to plan and implement than some of the other categories" (Smith, R.D. 2013, p. 232). Another drawback of interpersonal communication tactics, similar to all public relations strategies, is the misuse of these tactics by choosing the wrong messages or publics. This can damage the relationship with key publics and the overall value of public relations.

2.4 The Importance of Relationship Building and Trust in Public Relations

Through their research on more effective ways to measure the overall value of public relations practices, Dr. Linda Childers Hon and Dr. James E. Grunig (1999) found that the outcomes of an organisation's longer-term relationships with key publics can be most accurately measured by focusing on six elements of the relationships that exist. These are:

Control Mutuality – Some imbalance is natural, however, a stable relationship requires the organisation and its key publics to each have the power to influence one another.

Trust – There are three elements to trust between both the organisation and its key publics: integrity – "the belief that an organisation is fair and just", dependability – "the belief that an organisation will do what it says it will do, and competence – "the belief that an organisation has the ability to do what it says it will do" (Hon & Grunig, 1999, p. 3).

Satisfaction – When the benefits outweigh the costs, both the organisation's and its key publics' positive expectations become reinforced leading to a satisfying relationship.

Commitment – This refers to how much the organisation and its key publics believe the relationship is worth maintaining and promoting. There are two elements of commitment: continuance – a particular line of action, and affective – an emotional orientation.
Exchange Relationship – This refers to the exchange of benefits with the other party because the other provided some in the past or is expected to provide benefits in the future.

Communal Relationship – This is far more important to develop than the exchange relationship as in a communal relationship both the organisation and its key publics provide one another with benefits because “they are concerned for the welfare of the other – even when they get nothing in return” (Hon & Grunig, 1999, p.3).

According to Hung “The relationships with publics start when there are consequential behaviours executed by an organisation that effects its publics” (2007, p. 453). Grunig et al. states that the value of relations can be identified by “measuring the quality of the relationships it establishes with the strategic components of its institutional environment” (2002, p. 539, as cited in Hung, CJ. F. 2007, p. 453).

Roper & Fill state that “a strong brand with a positive reputation must be trusted by its stakeholders” (2012, p. 113). It is important for an organisation to build trust among its publics. If key public appreciate the “value set of an organisation, they are more likely to transfer this trust into other offerings by the same brand” (Roper & Fill, 2012, p. 113). When an organisation builds a relationship with its publics derived from trust, the organisation has developed a following. According to Willmott (2011, cited in Roper & Fill, 2012, p. 113) trust is based on three core elements: honesty, fairness and openness. These elements are described collectively as ‘transparency’. It is important for an organisation to stay true to this image in the eyes of all of its key publics – this is corporate image management.

2.4.1 Corporate Identity, Image and Reputation: Corporate Image Management

According to Cornelissen (2008), corporate image management is an important dimension of corporate communication as it constructs a symbolic image of how the organisation is seen by its important stakeholders. “Corporate communication is not only seen as a matter of exchanging information with stakeholders so that they can make informed decisions about the organisation, but also as a case of symbolically
crafting and projecting a particular image for the organisation” (Cornelissen, J. 2008, pp.65). The development of a corporate image has strategic advantages also (Cornelissen, 2008). These can be summarised as:

**Distinctiveness:** A corporate image helps to create awareness, triggers recognition and may instil confidence among key stakeholder groups by developing a clearer picture of what the organisation is and stands for.

**Impact:** This confidence among key stakeholders can lead to the organisation being more front-of-mind and favourable which can have a direct impact on the organisation’s performance.

**Stakeholders:** When an organisation projects a consistent image of themselves to its different key stakeholders (any individual can play more than one stakeholder role, e.g. an employee can also be a consumer) the organisation can avoid potential pitfalls that could occur when conflicting images or messages are sent out.

These advantageous attributes, when constant, lead to trust, credibility and attractiveness among stakeholders and in turn can lead to peer-to-peer endorsements.

**2.5 Peer-to-Peer Endorsement**

Society has begun to move away from advertising. As Kotler (1967) stated, society has become more aware of the selling element in advertising leading to people putting more trust into what their peers have told them about a product. The relationship between an organisation and its publics is important because the trust between peers stands in high regard. “Advertising is one of several influences on a person’s behaviour and probably less important – because it is known to be self-serving – than such influences as peers and personal observation” (Kotler, 1967, p. 456). It is important to understand the power of personal referral on customer behaviour.
2.5.1 Word-of-Mouth

As Francis A. Buttle states, word-of-mouth has been acknowledged as a leading influence on what “people know, feel and do” (Buttle, F. 1998, p. 1). It has been observed that word-of-mouth does influence a variety of conditions, including awareness, expectations, perceptions, attitudes, behavioural intentions and behaviour. According to Sheth (1971) word-of-mouth is superior in raising awareness and in securing the decision to try a product than advertising is. Day (1971) states that this is because of source reliability and the flexibility of interpersonal communication. Day also concludes that word-of-mouth is nine times as effective as advertising is at switching negative or neutral predispositions into positive attitudes. According to Murray (1991), this is perhaps because personal sources are viewed as more trustworthy than other sources of influence.

One of the earliest researchers of the influence of word-of-mouth on consumer behaviour was Arndt. He characterised word-of-mouth as oral, person-to-person communication between a receiver and a non-commercial communicator regarding a product, brand or service (1967). More recently Stern (1994) defined word-of-mouth by stating its distinctiveness from advertising. She stated “Word-of-mouth differs from [advertising...] in its lack of boundaries... Word-of-mouth involves the exchange of ephemeral oral or spoken messages between a contiguous source and a recipient who communicate directly in real life ... Consumers are not assumed to create, revise and record pre-written conversational exchanges about products and services. Nor do they ordinarily use poetry or song to discuss consumption. Finally, word-of-mouth communication vanishes as soon as it is uttered, for it occurs in a spontaneous manner and then disappears” (Stern, 1994, p. 7).

Word-of-mouth can influence decisions in a negative way just as quick as it can positively. Similarly to positive word-of-mouth, negative word-of-mouth can have huge impact on consumer behaviour and attitudes, particularly online when comments can be found in the archives.
2.5.3 Virtual Word-of-Mouth

These days, word-of-mouth need not necessarily be strictly face-to-face or oral. There is evidence of virtual word-of-mouth in this electronic age. Examples of virtual word-of-mouth communication can be seen on electronic bulletin boards (Buttle, 1998) and the different social media platforms. The electronic community generates virtual word-of-mouth which is not face-to-face and these unedited messages can be traced through archival threads (Buttle, 1998).

Many organisations have embraced the use of social media because it offers opportunities to engage directly and work with consumers, enhancing two-way symmetrical communication between the organisation and its key publics. With the use of social media, organisations can gather unmediated consumer insights easily. Social media is also used as a platform for networking and can aid in fostering loyal relationships between the organisation and its stakeholders (Hudson et al, 2014). In 2011's study found that the most influential tools for destination marketing organisations were Facebook at 64%, Twitter at 26%, TripAdvisor at 4% and YouTube at 3% (Sparkloft Media, 2001, cited in Hudson et al, 2014). Cruz & Mendelsohn (2010) suggest that positive experiences from direct brand interaction on social media platforms lead to repeat purchases and also peer-to-peer recommendations. According to comScore (2011, cited in Hudson et al, 2014) when people hear about a product from a peer, there is a 15% higher rate that they will become a customer than if they found out through other means. In this digital age however, a peer may not need to be a personal friend. Peers can include any person who shares similar interests, brought together via an online community.

2.5.4 Newly Defined Communities

According to Gusfield (1975) the definition of sense of community includes two types of community: territorial and geographical community; a community built around a neighbourhood, town or city, and relational community; a community built around interests, spirituality or profession without reference to location. According to Durheim
modern society develops community around interests and skills more than around locality and this is true when it comes to online communities in cyberspace.

There are many different online communities which serve a wide range of purposes. You find small groups in forums talking about specific topics, massive multiplayer online role-playing game worlds with hundreds of participants as well as communities of millions of people connected worldwide by an interest in exchange networks for goods or information (Wilson & Peterson, 2002). The internet has made it possible for people to find their niche, to find others with similar interests, and to build cyber communities around these interests. "These new media collectives might be mobilised to further particular political agendas or to bring together dispersed members of familial or ethnic groups, or they might be organised around commodity consumption or multinational corporate interests." (Wilson & Peterson, 2002, p. 449)

Online communities can give people a sense of identity and more and more people are gravitating towards them in recent years. It can be easier to find like-minded people sitting at home on the computer than it is to go into your local town and find them. However, some people do not agree with the notion of traditional communities within the cyber sphere. In Fernback's (2007) study, the participants are more concerned about the mediation that is constantly being done by the computer during all communication and how each member is still technically a stranger to the next one. They also question whether these cyber communities could really develop any real folklore, customs or legacies. "The community metaphor placed on virtual social relations is inadequate and inappropriate. The metaphor is one of fellowship, respect and tolerance, but those qualities describe only a fraction of our culturally understood ideas about community" (Fernback, 2007, p. 62).

2.6 Culture and Public Relations

2.6.1 What is Culture?

Sociologists define culture as "'designs for living': the values, beliefs, behaviour, practices and material objects that constitute a people's way of life" (Macionis &
Cultural practices can be defined as "the practical logics by which we both act and think in a myriad of little encounters of daily life" (Bourdieu, 1990, as cited in Macionis & Plummer, 2005, p. 106). Cultural practices are compiled of what sociologists call non-commercial culture: "the intangible world of ideas created by members of a society", and material culture: "the tangible things created by members of a society" (Macionis & Plummer, 2005, p. 106).

Cultures throughout the world differ in many ways, however five major components are present in the foundations of each culture. According to Macionis and Plummer (2005), these five components are:

- **Symbols**: "Anything that carries a particular meaning recognised by people who share culture"
- **Language**: "A system of symbols that allows members of a society to communicate with one another"
- **Values**: "The standards people have about what is good and bad"
- **Norms**: "Rules and expectation by which a society guides the behaviour of its members"
- **Material Culture**: "Artefacts"

Within this broad definition of what culture is comes another term: cultural involvement (Marsh, et al. 1997) or cultural expression (Vallely, 2011). Neither cultural involvement nor expression are the be all and end all of what culture is truly made up of, however they can be seen as significant actions in keeping up and practicing a society's culture. Activities which are associated with cultural involvement and expression include the traditional arts, such as ballet, literature and painting (Marsh, et al. 1997). The traditional arts thrive in Ireland and one element of this is Irish traditional music and song.

**2.6.2 Irish Traditional Music in a Cultural Context?**

"Culture is fraught. People work to make culture. Not only the writers, technicians, artists, carpenters and all those who put together movies, books and such; culture is also made by labour not directly involved in the culture industries" (Maxwell, R. 2000. P281)
A subculture is defined as “cultural patterns that set apart some segment of a society’s population” (Macionis & Plummer, 2005, p. 115). Irish traditional music is practiced throughout Ireland as the one-time popular music of Ireland, however that has decreased and increased throughout the years—“Traditional music was neither uniform nor evenly spread over the island at all times in the past, but was present in response to populations needs—in greater or lesser supply depending on available talent, social conditions and political upheaval” (Vallely, 2011, p. vii). Currently, Irish traditional music expression can be found throughout the world—a cultural hybridisation (Macionis & Plummer, 2005). As Fintan Vallely (2011, p. vii) describes it:

“The music is promoted abroad too, it is emblematic in the Irish Diaspora, and there are several thousand widely-available, specialised albums of players of all ages and styles: from ‘straight’, solo, old-style playing to modernist fusions with rock, classical and various folk music. Instrument makers and repairers cater for its community, with businesses supplying instruments, albums, literature and services. Institutions and organisations promote its learning at skills and academic levels, and knowledge of the field is developed and promoted by research, broadcasting and publishing. All this is considerable activity for one music form representing an island of five million-odd people.”

2.6.3 Public Relations in Culture

On investigating whether public relations is culture free or culture specific, a term borrowed by Sriramesh and White (1992) from Tayeb (1988), there were two arguments. The argument for the former stated that “organisational characteristics and their contextual factors are stable across societies” (Sriramesh, K. 2007. P. 508). However, in opposition to this, those who argued the cultural specific approach later stated that “organisations are made up of individuals acculturated differently at home, school, and the workplace, which makes each individual a unique personality offering different sets of opportunities and challenges to managers” (Sriramesh, K. 2007. p. 509).

According to Sriramesh (2007), there is little doubt that organisations are culture bound therefore making the link between public relations and culture as “logical and very obvious” (Sriramesh, K. 2007. p. 509). Culture has an effect on communication and because communication is such a prominent element of public relations, culture too has an effect on public relations (Sriramesh, 2007).
2.6.4 Promotional Culture and Authentic Communication

Wernick views promotion as a form of advertising, which is a form of cultural commodification, that seeks to draw attention to and publicise in a favourable light some product or thing (Thomham et al, 2010). Furthermore promotion is a “cultural force that alters the relationship between culture and economy” (L'Etang, J. 2008, p. 214) meaning that the production of symbolic promotional discourses in the context of competitive exchange are often linked with aesthetic, educational, political, and religious discourses (L'Etang, 2008). However, when an extension of promotion is used as a strategic instrument it “degrades authenticity ... when a piece of music, or a newspaper article ... is fashioned with an eye to how it will promote itself ... and indeed, how it will promote its author and distributor ... such goods are affected by this circumstance in every detail of their production” (Wernick, A. 1991. p. 188-190).

Cultural intermediaries who are those in PR, marketing, design and advertising businesses are sometimes grouped in the “critical discussions of promotional works’ negative effects on authentic communication” (L'Etang, J. 2008, p. 216) by cultural studies theorists. However, the circuit of culture concept developed by British cultural studies scholars “explains how culture is informed by economic practice and shows how the economy can be seen as a cultural construct” (L'Etang, J. 2008, p. 215). The circuit shows five key moments at which meaning is produced – identity, production, consumption, regulation, and representation where “identity is partly achieved through consumer purchase, consumption, and symbolic display of goods as an adjunct of personal and group identities” (L’Etang, J. 2008, p. 215).

2.6.5 Culture and Community

The City of Edinburgh states that “culture is a mechanism through which individuals, communities and nations define themselves” (1999, as cited in Ali-Knight & Robertson, 2004, p. 5) – cultural festivals and events are participative vessels for all the community, as well as tourists, to recognise, practice and celebrate this definition of self. When speaking about tourism, culture is seen as a product or a process (Ali-Knight &
Robertson, 2004). Cultural festivals and special events are beneficial to both the arts world as well as the tourism destination. In recent years, cultural festivals and special events are growing internationally and are significant economic and cultural drivers for towns and cities, as well as communities (Ali-Knight & Robertson, 2004).

2.7 The Arts Festival

The word ‘arts’ is commonly linked with the idea of festivals and events, and these arts festivals and events are seen to be an essential part of celebrating a country’s history or culture (Ali-Knight & Robertson, 2004). Traditionally, the arts were seen to include the works and activities of the upper class: classical music opera, theatre, ballet, fine art and sculpture (Hughes, 2000, as cited in Knight & Robertson, 2004). However, today the arts consists of a much wider variety of works and activities such as contemporary dance, film, traditional and popular music, and the visual arts. Goldblatt states “a special event recognises a unique moment in time with ceremony and ritual to satisfy specific needs” (1997, as cited in Derrett, R., 2004, p. 33). The arts festival is very much based on the interests of its key audience.

Gilbert and Lizotte state that the defining characteristic of a festival or special event is its transience (1998, p. 73). What this means is that the excitement and sense of occasion could not be emulated repeatedly if the special event was to be held more frequently, which is why festivals are held once a year. Festivals require and encourage the use of a physical space. According to Derrett, “Festivals link landscape to lifestyle in simple and complex ways by introducing the human dimension to static spaces that become animated” (2004, p. 33). Arts festivals entertain locals and provide avocation and entertainment for visitors. Arts festivals are attractive to communities who wish to address issues of heritage, conservation, local pride and identity, etc. The arts festival also helps to build a positive image of the host destination in the marketplace through media coverage. According to Derrett, “the more an event is seen by its host community as emerging from within rather than being imposed on them, the greater that community’s acceptance of the event will be” (2004, p. 33).
2.7.1 Festivals and Community

Similar to a sense of place, the feeling of community and community culture is an invisible phenomenon. It can’t be seen however people know whether it is there or not. Festivals and events provide opportunities to develop this sense of community culture. They offer a sense of stability and protection to the individual members who attend, similar to that provided by the sense of community. Community events can use place to show confidence in their interests, values, and aspirations which are true to their own natural, surrounding environment and in turn develop an interpretation so that visitors can do likewise (Derrett, 2004).

“A sense of community which visitors can feel when they participate in a festival is an intangible amalgam of services and experiences. While such festivals allow local people to satisfy their leisure needs, residents are able to work as volunteers at large and small events. That is another way for visitors to get a sense of local values and interests” (Derrett, R. 2004, p. 40).

2.7.2 Public Relations in the Arts Sector

There is no direct definition of public relations, however most people would agree that it is an organisation’s efforts to cultivate better relations between an organisation and its key publics (McDonald & Harrison, 2001). Public relations is an easy and effective promotional tool for organisations that have limited financial resources and rely heavily on the relationship and support of their stakeholders, e.g. customers, employees and sponsors. Arts festivals often have very low promotional budgets. The future successes of an arts festival relies on the actions of its large range of many key publics (McDonald & Harrison, 2001). The relationship between these publics and the arts festival is vital.

For many small arts festivals, the person(s) who propose the original idea for the event – the event catalyst(s) (Salem, et al. 2004, p.16) – are not necessarily experts in the event management and public relations fields. The decision of implementing an arts festival should be made once the aims and objectives are specified first. The aims and objectives of a festival or event are crucial and must be agreed upon early as they have an impact on many different aspects of the event, including marketing and sponsorship (Salem, et al. 2004, p. 16). According to Salem, et al. cultural aims of an arts festival may focus
primarily on encouraging participation to increase awareness of a place, tradition, or sociocultural values; increase community pride or area's profile; or satisfy the needs of special interest groups and subcultures (2004, p. 17). According to Derrett, "Decisions about the staging of an event essentially come from a special interest group eager to educate a wider audience, showcase cultural practice and maybe preserve and enhance its acceptance" (2004, p. 35). Once the aims and objectives are resolved, the ethos of the festival is born. It is then vital to stay true to this ethos to satisfy the needs of the key publics.

The satisfaction of the key publics is vital as this can lead to positive future behavioural intentions such as repeat intentions, as well as recommending the event to others. For an arts festival this includes performance and music quality, design and layout, and overall satisfaction of the event among attendees (Thrane, 2002).

2.8 Chapter Summary

A comprehensive literature review was undertaken to assemble existing academic knowledge on this topic which allowed the researcher to develop a better understanding of the research question. The focus of the literature review was on interpersonal communication tactics and relationship building among key stakeholders in an arts festival context. The review explored in detail the theory behind public relations strategies for relationship management, the importance of culture, and the arts sector. The secondary reading completed in this chapter has helped to form the basis for primary research questions based on three main objectives:

- Culture and Public Relations: The key elements of a festival
- Image, Identity, Reputation: The importance of staying true to your ethos
- The Power of Word-of-Mouth: The importance of peer-to-peer endorsements

These main objectives will guide the data gathering process as well as the structure of the Findings and Analysis chapter.
Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will analyse the research methods the investigator will use to gather data for this study. The research objectives will be discussed as well as the importance of research for the study. This chapter will identify the different methods used by the researcher, the advantages and disadvantages, the design of the research method and the ethical considerations for each method.

3.2 Research Objectives

By using a mixed methods approach, this study aims to investigate the importance of interpersonal communications and the public relations tactics used by small organisations to build strong relationships which lead to word-of-mouth endorsements among its key stakeholders. This will be achieved through analysing relevant data already procured as well as acquiring opinions and insights from selected population and professionals. The information gathered will construct future recommendations for public relations tactic implementation. The chosen research methodologies will be used to investigate existing practices and help shape and inform future communications considerations. The research will focus on the following objectives:

- Culture and Public Relations: The key elements of a festival
- Image, Identity, Reputation: The importance of staying true to your ethos
- The Power of Word-of-Mouth: The importance of peer-to-peer endorsements

The above objectives have been assessed through the completion of a literature review and will be supplemented by relevant primary research. Reviewing existing literature has informed and facilitated a more focused approach into the interpersonal public relations strategies used to communicate and connect with targeted publics.
3.3 The Importance of Research

"Research is an integral part of good professional practice in many professions and has been responsible for greatly influencing the practice procedures and outcomes in these professions. As a matter of fact, research and practice are two sides of the same coin that should and cannot be separated" (Kumar, 2014, p3)

This section outlines the value of research in public relations planning and implementation. It will examine the scientific methodologies, considerations and controls employed when conducting public relations research with an emphasis on validity, reliability, ethics and theoretically-informed best practice. With these objectives in mind, the concepts and characteristics of sample choice, data gathering, analysis and validation will be examined.

The following sections explore the reasoning behind the research and include justifications for the methods adopted. The sections will also detail the expected outcomes from each division of inquiry and information related to the structure of the different forms of questioning. The chosen research methods will be analysed and the advantages, disadvantages and challenges will be discussed. Ethical considerations will also be outlined for each research activity.

3.4 Research Design

To gather data for this research question, the investigator will utilise a mixed methods approach. Both quantitative and a qualitative research methods will be used. This will include interviews, surveys and a literature review. The collected data will then be triangulated.

3.5 Research Theory

3.5.1 Mixed Methods

In this study, the researcher has decided to use a mixed methods approach to collect the required data. With use of both surveys (quantitative) and interviews (qualitative) the researcher will gather data which is more concentrated, ethical and sound. The
One disadvantage of using a mixed methods approach when gathering data for a thesis is that it is time consuming. In limited-time studies, the researcher may be forced to “limit the scope of the research, narrow the range of research questions addressed or reduce the volume of data collected” (Denscombe, 2009, p.249).

However, there are many more advantages to applying the mixed methods approach to a study. The investigator can use each source of data to double check, compare and contrast the findings of the research. This reduces the possibilities of errors and increases the certainty of the findings. The mixed methods approach provides a means of validating the accuracy and authenticity of the collected data. The mixed methods approach can also produce new findings which can be added to the information previously gathered on the topic.

3.5.2 Quantitative Vs Qualitative

"Quantitative research... is described as entailing the collection of numerical data, a deductive view of the relationship between theory and research, a preference for a natural science approach (and for positivism in particular), and an objectivist conception of social reality” (Bryman, 2016, p.149)

Quantitative research produces data which is perceived to be more objective than qualitative data. This concept of detachment is important and distance must be kept from the researcher and the data collecting process in order to prevent applying any unjust influence over the data. This helps to maintain objectivity over the data.

One major advantage of quantitative research is that the data collected is standardised. Standardisation of data has many benefits. One benefit is that the researcher has greater control over the data gathering process. Another benefit is that the data is pre-coded which in turn simplifies the analysis process. The standardisation of data means that quantitative research methods accommodate large-scale and limited-time studies. However, a downfall of quantitative research methods is that it decontextualizes the
data collected. The researchers are "stripping the situation researched from its context, or ignoring the possible effects of the context" (Robson, 2011, p10).

**Qualitative** research methods stand in direct contrast to the scientific approach of quantitative research methods. The findings of qualitative research methods take a verbal form, unlike the numerical form of the quantitative methods. Qualitative research methods are known to be flexible which means the researcher may have to rely on an emergent research design and may be forced to spontaneously adapt their research methods to evolving circumstances. According to Hogan et al qualitative research is "a multifaceted approach that investigates culture, society and behaviour through analysis and synthesis of people's words and actions" (Hogan et al, 2009, p 3).

"Qualitative research is rarely linear, with each phase seen as a discrete entity. Researchers tend to work in a circular way, devising and rephrasing their research questions as they engage critically with existing theories. The research question will grow and evolve, as it becomes more theoretically informed and precise. The central question is, in effect, the 'translation' by the researcher of the various theories purporting to explain the phenomenon of interest in a form of words that captures his or her interpretation and understanding of the explanations (theories)". (Hogan et al, 2009, p 1).

An advantage of qualitative research methods is that it offers the researcher with rich, comprehensive and accurate data. In contrast with quantitative researcher methods, the qualitative research "tends to focus upon small samples" (Hogan et al, 2009, p5). In qualitative research the subjects are purposefully selected for examination and chosen specifically based on characteristics of interest to the researcher and the research question.

However, the flexibility of the qualitative research methods can lead to the researcher losing control over the data gathering process. "Qualitative research recognises a researcher's interaction with the topic of study as part of the knowledge creation process. Researchers' reflections on their own research actions become an element of the project, constituting part of the data" (Hogan et al, 2009, p 6). Another downfall of the qualitative research methods is that the researcher must have a good skill to be able
to extract rich and meaningful data from the which can pose a problem for inexperienced researchers.

3.5.3 Triangulation

The researcher will make use of triangulation to increase the reliability and validity of the study's findings. With use of triangulation, the researcher will gain a stronger comprehension of the research topic by examining it from different perspectives using a assorted methods, theories, observers and positions. According to Geraldine Henderson "... you reach a point that any new data points found only confirm what you have already found across people, places, occasions, and time" (Henderson, G. 2012, p. 145). In this study, triangulation will be accomplished by combining interviews and survey undertaken by the researcher.

3.6 Primary Research Methods Employed

When conducting a study there are many research methods available to the researcher for data collection. These include surveys and questionnaires; interviews, in the form of structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews; focus groups, tests, and observational methods. For this study, the researcher has chosen a mixed methods approach with the use of a survey, within a chosen sample, and semi-structured interviews with experts in the field. The data collected from the interviews and the survey will be combined and the investigator will make use of triangulation to analyse the information.

3.6.1 Surveys

According to Wells, as cited in Moser & Kalton the social survey is defined as a “fact-finding study dealing chiefly with working-class poverty and with the nature and problems of the community” (1971, p. 1). However, this definition does not cover every element of the modern day survey. Surveys are applied in many investigations, including town-planning surveys, market research, research institutions, universities and governments. A survey may be used to administrate facts on an aspect of public life, to
investigate a cause-effect relationship or to gather information to learn more about an aspect of sociological theory. According to Moser and Kalton "When it comes to subject matter, all one can say is that surveys are concerned with the demographic characteristics, the social environment, the activities, or the opinions and attitudes of some group of people" (1971, p. 5). The purpose of a social survey is to gather and provide the investigator with information.

3.6.2 Reliability and Validity

“In any set of data you collect, there will be some amount of error. Naturally, you want to minimize this error so that the data provide a more accurate reflection of the truth.” (Litwin, M.S. 1995)

Error in survey research comprises of two components: random error and measurement error. Random error is the unpredictable error that occurs in all research. Measurement error refers to how well or poorly the instrument being used to collect data performs (Litwin, 1995).

In order to qualify as suitable for research purposes, a survey must include a series of written questions which ask the participants directly about the issues that relate to a specific research topic. The design of the survey has a huge impact on the kind of data collected, the response rate, quality and scope of the responses, and the overall validity and reliability of the information (Chartered Institute of Personnel Development, 2017). Therefore it is essential that the survey is structured correctly and consideration is taken when writing the questions so as to collect information which can later be analysed (Denscombe, 2010).

3.6.3 Survey Design

The survey consisted of ten questions in a range of formats including numerical rating, multiple choice and open-ended opinion questions. This allowed the researcher to gather scientific information as well as gather a clearer idea of opinion among the respondents. The design of the survey questions was based on the research objectives.
The survey was distributed at one of the case study festivals of choice and represents this population.

3.6.4 Sampling
The most common form of a survey is a sample survey in which the participants selected represent a larger group known as a population (Robson, 2011). The author chose this sample with consideration to the objectives of this thesis. The sampling of this survey represents the participants of one of the case study festivals chosen by the researcher. Due to time restraints, the researcher was only able to hold a survey with one sampling of the two case studies.

3.6.5 Interviews
Interviews can range from informal conversations between the interviewer and the interviewee and a formal structured interview with an order set questions. Interviews are a person-to-person interaction where one person gathers information from the other. According to Kane (1985) choosing the right type of interview for the research being undertaken depends on the research topic and the kind of information that is needed for that study. It also depends on the characteristics of those being interviewed. For this study, the investigator will use semi-structured interviews to gather the required data. Semi-structured interviews provide a middle-ground between the rigidity of the structured interviews and the freedom of an informal conversation. By using semi-structured interviews, the interviewer can tailor the questions to suit the interviewee and the category at which they are speaking about.

3.6.6 Reliability and Validity
A number of checks will be carried out to ensure reliability and validity throughout this research. The interviews will be transcribed wholly from the original recordings without any edits or changes to wording or phrasing from both the interviewer and the interviewee. This will ensure the validity, truthfulness and authenticity of the data produced.
The skills of the interview have a huge impact on the procurement of information. Also, the interviewer-interviewee relationship can an effect on the quality of the data which is given. To ensure a high quality interviews, background research into each interviewee will be taken before commencing the interviews.

3.6.7 Interview Design

The interviews were held with two professionals – both experts in musicianship as well as both co-founders of each of the case study festivals. The interviews consisted of ten questions, however as these were semi-structured interviews the amount of questions asked varied with each interview. The design of the interview questions were based on the research objectives of this study. Both interviews were held over online video call. It was not possible to conduct the interviews face-to-face as time did not permit travel. The interviews were digitally recorded to simplify transcription and analysis. The length of the interviews was between 30 and 60 minutes.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Both primary research methods of interview and survey involve an intrusion into the life of the people involved and in turn deserve trust and respect. Prior to undertaking any primary research methods the investigator identified all potential ethical issues that could arise. To ensure the primary research was carried out to the highest ethical standard, the researcher took into account the ethical principles which are laid out by Cork Institute of Technology’s Code of Good Practice in Research (2005). This code stresses the importance of:

- Professional Research practice
- Securing and storing of research data
- Documentation and publication of research results
- Maintaining professional standards

To uphold these principles, the researcher made certain to obtain informed consent from each of the participants as well as informing them of their right to withdraw at any
stage. The researcher also proceeded to follow the conventional standards of data protection with a guarantee of confidentiality, anonymity and non-traceability if requested, and made every effort to prevent bias.

3.8 Secondary Research Method Employed

3.8.1 Literature Review

No research is complete without finding out, first, the extent of existing knowledge about your topic. The purpose of this is to acquire a better understanding of the research topic, of what has already been done in this field, how others have researched it and what key issues stand out (Hart, C. 1998). For this research project a literature review will be conducted to achieve this. A literature review amounts to showing an understanding of the main theories in a subject area and how these theories have been applied and developed. The literature review also aims to present the main criticisms that have been made on the topic.

“The literature review is therefore a part of your academic development – of becoming an expert in your field”(Hart, C. 1998).

In the case of this research question, the area that will be examined in the literature review include:

- What is Public Relations
- Interpersonal PR Tactics
- The Importance of Relationship Building and Trust in Public Relations
- Peer-to-Peer Endorsement
- Culture and Public Relations
- The Arts Festival

It is the responsibility of the researcher to find out what already exists in the area of the chosen research topic. This must be done before the research itself – the literature reviews acts as the foundation to the proposed research (Hart, C. 1998). This foundation helps the researcher to communicate their argument with prior knowledge of the theories based around the subject area.
3.9 Case Studies

3.9.1 Cruinniú na bhFliúit

Cruinniú na bhFliúit was launched in April 2006 by two flautists, local to Cúil Aodha. This three-day event is dedicated to only flute players with flute workshops and clinics in the mornings, afternoon lectures and evening concerts and sessions. When it first began it was held every two years but as the numbers grew the festival began being hosted annually. 2017 saw its biggest number of attendees with half being new, first-time attendees.

3.9.2 Dingle TradFest

The Dingle TradFest was established in 2009 by two musicians local to Dingle. This weekend event is a musicians' festival with an emphasis on giving a platform to young musicians and the creativity within the Irish traditional musical realm. It began as a festival for musicians but it has since grown to include dancers and singers. Since its launch the festival committee has grown in numbers with more younger musicians and dancers getting involved. It is held every year in September.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter offered an in-depth account of the research methodology used for this research question. A mix of quantitative and qualitative methods will be employed for this study. The quantitative research comprises of a ten-question survey which was distributed to the participants of an Irish traditional music festival. Qualitative research was carried out in the form of semi-structured interviews with two experts in the field of Irish traditional music festival management. The researcher will make use of triangulation to gain a stronger comprehension of the data gathered by these two methods which will be analysed in the following chapter. This chapter also outlines the ethical considerations of all of the research methods employed.
Chapter Four: Findings & Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This study aims to develop best practice guidelines for interpersonal communication implementation in relation to the arts festival in Ireland, specifically the Irish traditional music festival. The structure of this chapter is based on the objectives set out in Chapter One. These objectives were formulated following extensive secondary reading carried out for the Literature Review Chapter. These objectives represent an attempt to discover the public relations strategies employed for best public relations and event management practice, by non-professionals, which lead to strong bonds of trust and eventual word-of-mouth endorsements by key publics and peers. These objectives are:

- Culture and Public Relations: The key elements of a festival
- Image, Identity, Reputation: The importance of staying true to your ethos
- The Power of Word-of-Mouth: The importance of peer-to-peer endorsements

All of the primary research undertaken was guided by these objectives. The researcher aimed to get a clear insight into the various issues and agreements presented by these objectives by surveying both the organisers and attendees of the Irish traditional music festival. Interviews were conducted with co-founders of two different Irish traditional music festivals. A survey was conducted with the 51 participants of the Cruinniú na bhFliúit festival. Data triangulation was then carried out by the researcher. This was done by comparing the data gathered from both research methods against each other. This chapter will present these findings and display any patterns or themes as well as any doubts or disagreements within them.

4.2 Culture, Community and The Festival

According to Marsh et al (1997) the activities which are associated with cultural expression include the traditional arts, and in Ireland a prominent element of this is Irish traditional music and song. The practice of Irish traditional music and song is a subculture that is found in Ireland and abroad. According to Vallely (2011) Irish music
and song is ‘emblematic’ in the Irish diaspora throughout the world. The interest in Irish music traditions has brought communities together, though individually they may be spread out around the world (Durheim, 1964). During the secondary research phase it was found that cultural festivals are participative vessels for these communities (Ali-Knight & Robertson, 2004). Ó Gráda, co-founder of Cruinniú na bhFliúit (The Flute Meeting), conveys the special qualities of a community coming together from around the world to Baile Bhuírne “an area rich in Irish culture”. This resembles Derrett’s (2004, p. 33) statement - “festivals link landscape to lifestyle” – the festival community have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the rich culture from the surrounding area and this builds a sense of place, stability and adds authenticity. Survey results included comments such as “It was like being a part of a big family, I felt I was a local, like I belonged here” (Survey results, Cruinniú na bhFliúit, April 2017). Granville also comments on the positives of hosting the TradFest in Dingle because the town is already well-known and it entices people to come and take part – “People like an excuse to come to Dingle, so that paired with September, paired with the musicians in the first year giving it a bit of buzz, made it a very easy first few years for us” (Interview with Aoife Granville, 10th August 2017).

Resonating with the sentiment from Salem et al (2004) in the Literature Review chapter, the focus of these festivals are to encourage participation, increase awareness of a tradition, and satisfy the needs of a special interest group. According to Ó Gráda, a festival which focuses solely on flutes did not exist before now. Ó Gráda references existing festivals which focus on the Irish fiddle and Irish singing, and he believes there was a need for a festival focusing of flutes. Another objective of this festival was to give musicians of all levels a platform to share knowledge and to interact together in a friendly environment.

“I’m a flute player and Hammy makes flutes as well and we decided to start a festival that focused only on flutes because such a thing didn’t exist... People who were wanting to learn would certainly come to it, but it was also a good opportunity for people who were very good to share their knowledge and to give them a platform as well” (Interview with Conal Ó Gráda, 7th December 2016).
Similarly, Granville emphasises the establishment of a traditional music festival to showcase the opportunities available to young musicians:

“My sister and myself decided to start a lively traditional music festival that would be geared to give an opportunity to younger musicians to perform in Dingle because even though there is lots of music around it’s very much geared towards tourists, a lot of the sessions are amplified and that immediately puts [younger musicians] off” (Interview with Aoife Granville, 10th August 2017).

Echoing Derrett (2004) from the secondary research, both of these festivals aim to invite the participants to become a part of a community within this interest. An important factor of this festival for Ó Gráda is that everyone comes together, no matter what level of competency a musician they are – “They view it as an opportunity to get really up close and personal with the whole flute playing tradition. There’s kind of a community element to it now” (Interview with Conal Ó Gráda, 7th December 2016). As Derrett stated “A sense of community which visitors can feel when they participate in a festival is an intangible amalgam of services and experiences” (2004, p.40). It is also evident from the survey results when asked what they enjoyed most about the festival, the social aspect and inclusivity topped the ranking at 37% (see Figure 4.1) followed by learning opportunities at 29%, with additional comments including: “The high quality of instruction obviously but the inclusive feeling was tops and better than other festival workshops I’ve attended”, “All abilities welcome in a relaxed friendly environment” and, “Meeting and hearing other flute players, pro and amateur” (Survey results, Cruinniú na bhFliúít, April 2017).
4.3 Building Relationships and Trust with Key Publics

According to Hung (2007) in the secondary research, relationships between an organisation and its key publics begin when the organisation's performance and attitude has a consequential effect on its publics. There was evidence of this in Ó Gráda's interview. Ó Gráda speaks about the festival tutors every year, it is his belief that when you treat a stakeholder well, you get more than you pay for in return:

"We treat our teachers really well, we pay them well, we feed and water them and we make sure they have a great time. We get two things back in return. One, they're fantastic with our students... They're also very happy outside of teaching hours and they'll talk, play and contribute much more. So, they give much more than they are paid for and when they go away they tell everybody 'Cruinniú na bhFliúit is great' so, that's how it works" (Interview with Conal Ó Gráda, 7th December 2016).

In the survey results, when asked how they first heard of Cruinniú na bhFliúit 47% answered "From a Past-Attendee" (see Figure 4.2). This is evidence of participants' satisfaction being reached which leads to recognition of good reputation among peers and eventual peer-to-peer endorsements among key publics. Similar evidence of reputation management and relationship building was found in Granville's interview. Granville discusses the importance of treating their stakeholders well and how this has a knock-on effect for following years:

"We would encourage them [bands] to stay a couple of days if they had the time, to stay and relax and enjoy themselves and then in turn they might tell other people, 'oh yeah you'll have a great weekend if you do Dingle TradFest'. That sort of word-of-mouth, especially amongst the musician cohort, is invaluable to us really" (Interview with Aoife Granville, 10th August, 2017).
The evidence derived from both primary research interviews display clear outcomes of the elements mentioned in the Literature Review chapter by Childers Hon and Grunig (1999), when measuring long-term relationships between an organisation and its key publics. These include:

**Control Mutuality** – "When we started doing the late gigs in the pubs as opposed to the Hillgrove it really kept people together and that was something that came from feedback from a lot of different people, they didn’t want to go to the Hillgrove because they were losing a lot of people along the way, so we changed that a little bit" (Interview with Aoife Granville, 10th August 2017).

**Trust** – Comments from the survey results include: “Great, I look forward to coming every year” and “These are my favourite days of the year. I have enjoyed all our teachers, each exceptional in his or her own way. You all are extraordinary teachers, each different in your own way. Unique insights, suggestions, analysis, and inspiration from each of you, thank you” (Survey results, Cruinniú na bhFlúít, April 2017).

**Satisfaction** – “You’re there for three days and you know you have to shell out for accommodation and food as well as the charge for the course... and the people who come from abroad there’s a travel commitment as well, all and all there’s a significant investment from their perspective. So, they need to be sure that they are going to get something good out of it, that it’s worth all the money they are spending” (Interview with Conal Ó Gráda, 7th December 2016).

**Commitment** – 50% attendees each year are past attendees: “50% of the people that attend have been there before” (Interview with Conal Ó Gráda, 7th December 2016).
Communal Relationship – “We would have a certain amount of musicians that would be on the session trail but then there would be others that would come and usually they are friends of the ones on the trail or they have heard about it from other friends... If one has made an effort to come off their own back, the following year we’d add them to the session trail and give them something back from it” (Interview with Aoife Granville, 10th August 2017).

In his interview, Ó Gráda says “Our festival is unusual... total participation is 60/70 people every year... The quality of what goes on, the uniqueness of what’s presented, the caliber of the musicians, as well as the wide range of showcases and lectures... It’s a good thing that happens but we also realise that it’s not a big thing... in terms that it touches loads of people but the people that it does touch, it touches very deeply” (Interview with Conal Ó Gráda, 7th December 2016). This quote from Ó Gráda’s interview responds to a statement in the Literature Review chapter by Cornelissen (2008) which stated corporate communication can be used to project a distinct image of the organisation. It also resonates with another statement in the Literature Review chapter by Willmott (2011), who stated that trust is built on three core elements which include honesty, fairness and openness and these are described collectively as ‘transparency’.

When discussing going forward without funding, Granville mentioned in her interview having to devise new ideas which differed from the original ethos of the festival.

“We have had a lot of challenges in the last two years in terms of funding that has made us try to think differently about things... We had to start thinking about doing a gig with someone that’s going to attract a big crowd but might not necessarily... be within traditional music... we may have to lose a bit of our own artistic preferences” (Interview with Aoife Granville, 10th August 2017).

It is clear that Granville speaks about this issue with trepidation, however, according to Roper and Fill (2012), as discussed in the secondary research, when key publics appreciate the ‘value set of an organisation’ it is common that they take this trust and carry it into new ideas offered by the same brand.
4.4 PR Tactics and the Small Organisation

In both of the primary research interviews, Granville and Ó Gráda spoke about radio interviews on local and national Irish channels to promote each of their festivals, a promotional tool with no cost to the organisation. “We do a lot of interviews which wouldn’t be costing us and that’s fine” (Interview with Aoife Granville, 10th August 2017). Ó Gráda echoes the same use of this cost effective promotional tool: “We did interviews on Raidió na Gaeltachta, and any other radio stations that would allow us” (Interview with Conal Ó Gráda, 7th December 2016). As McDonald & Harrison (2001) state in Literature Review chapter, it is common for an arts festival to have very low promotional budgets. This is why the actions of its wide range of stakeholders are so important to its success.

In Granville’s interview she spoke of the Dingle TradFest receiving funding from the tourist board – Fáilte Ireland. This funding is granted toward marketing and promotional activities. “We started hiring a photographer - Don McMonagle or Valerie O Sullivan, and they’re photographers that would get pictures regularly into national papers and we’ve had quite a lot of success with [them]... They were on the front of three of the national papers on the Thursday before the TradFest, which lead onto Radio One interviews... we find it has impact” (Interview with Aoife Granville, 10th August 2017). Granville also commented: “We take out a magazine ad with Irish Music Magazine but we don’t feel that it has that much impact, it’s more that we need to spend the Fáilte Ireland money to be honest” (Interview with Aoife Granville, 10th August 2017). From this interview it is clear that traditional advertising is not as impactful, referring back to Kotler (1967) in the secondary research phase – society has become more aware of the selling element in advertising and people put more trust into peer recommendations.

It is evident from both the interviews and the survey results that word-of-mouth and personal referrals are the strongest and most cost-effective promotional tools used within the festival context. In the survey results, 47% said they heard of Cruinniú na bhFliúit through peer recommendation (see Figure 4.2). As discussed in the Literature Review chapter, Buttle (1998) states that word-of-mouth referrals influence awareness,
perceptions, expectations and behavioural intentions. This is evident in the survey results. Granville comments on the importance of word-of-mouth in her interview, saying: “Word-of-mouth, especially amongst the musician cohort, is invaluable to us” (Interview with Aoife Granville, 10th August 2017). Sheth (1972) agrees that word-of-mouth is superior to advertising in raising awareness and also in securing the decision to try the product. Ó Gráda also references word-of-mouth referrals amongst stakeholders in his interview echoing why Murray (1991) suggests personal referral sources are viewed as more trustworthy. “I think people make up their mind to go on the basis of what they hear from other people. We have different teachers every year, so, if you got a teacher who is not teaching at it next year saying, ‘you should go’, that’s hugely powerful because he doesn’t have vested interest... there’s huge power in his recommendation as opposed to us recommending ourselves” (Interview with Conal Ó Gráda, 7th December 2016).

4.5 Virtual Word-of-Mouth

As Smith (2013) stated in the Literature Review chapter, the main downfall of interpersonal communication tactics when compared with other strategic communication strategies is its limitation in audience reach. However, as Buttle (1998) discussed, the digital age has offered an opportunity for virtual word-of-mouth with a more extensive reach within online communities. As Durheim (1964) established in the secondary research, modern communities are built around similar interests and skills more than locality. In his interview in the primary research, Ó Gráda speaks about a student who had found out about Cruinniú na bhFliúit through an online forum: “we had a guy who came from Inner Mongolia and... he knew all about it and he knew it from the forums and had seen his peers say it was great. And he knew they were his peers even though he didn’t know them personally, so it’s not direct word-of-mouth... but he knows his peers are talking about it and it’s a validation for him” (Interview with Conal Ó Gráda, 7th December 2016). This comment supports both Buttle and Durheim’s statements.

In the primary research, it was found that 15% of Cruinniú na bhFliúit participants heard about the festival online (see Figure 4.2) – this includes the website and online forums,
while only 2% heard about the festival on social media – Facebook and Twitter. When asked about online and social media, Ó Gráda admits their activity is low and that the organisers actively avoid being present on online forums which discuss the festival: “I purposely stay off that forum because I think I’m too big a presence and it might intimidate them... they get insider opinions from people who are also trying to learn the flute and that’s much more convincing to them” (Interview with Conal Ó Gráda, 7th December 2016). Hudson et al (2014) established that social media is an important tool for organisers to foster loyal relationships with their stakeholders, one which Cruinniú na bhFliúit do not use to its full potential. When the participants were asked if they use social media and online services to source Cruinniú na bhFliúit information, the survey results revealed 38% use Facebook, 10% use Twitter and 52% said they visit the website (see Figure 4.3). However, when asked how they would like to receive future updates about the festival 9% preferred the website, 31% preferred social media (30% Facebook, 1% Twitter), and 40% preferred to receive updates via E-mail (see Figure 4.4).
In comparison with Cruinniú na bhFliúit, Granville speaks highly of social media activity and the positive outcomes derived from this use. “We use social media... Our target audience also uses social media and... last year we started using Facebook Live which was absolutely incredible... there’s great feedback in terms of those videos, even locally, people are saying ‘oh my, you’ve great stuff happening this year’... We found it really effective” (Interview with Aoife Granville, 10th August 2017). This feedback correlates with Cruz and Mendelsohn’s (2010) opinion, that positive experiences on social media platforms can lead to higher recognition among peers. It is worth noting, however, that this reach is shared between the festival’s social media profile and their own private profiles promoting the festival.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter presents the analysis of the data gathered by the researcher, taking from both the primary and secondary research undertaken. The data was analysed in the context of the objectives set out in Chapter One. The following chapter will discuss the conclusions of this study and will offer recommendations for future studies and practice.
Chapter Five: Conclusions & Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this research is to provide a strategic communications perspective on interpersonal communication tactics employed by small organisations in forging, fostering and furthering relationships with key stakeholders which lead to invaluable peer-to-peer endorsements. Primary and secondary research was carried out and the findings of this research were delivered in the previous chapter.

The purpose of this chapter is to summarise the outcomes of this study in the form of conclusions and recommendations in line with the research objectives set out in chapter one. It will also include a discussion on the research limitations and the author’s final thoughts.

5.2 Research Limitations

Every effort was made by the researcher to ensure the validity of this study, however there were some limitations which were unavoidable. Because of time constraints the researcher decided to limit the scope of the study. An implication of this was the survey with a sample representing one of the case studies.

5.3 Key Findings

5.3.1 Culture and Public Relations: The Key Elements of Festival Organisation

From the data collected, three recurring elements should be taken into consideration when setting out to organise a successful arts festival. These elements include: setting, need and ethos. In both of the sample festivals, the surrounding area is an important factor of the festival. The cultural settings of both Dingle and Baile Bhuirne have an effect on participants and help to persuade the choice to attend. Not only this, but the festival layout has an impact also. It was clear from the interviews and the survey results that, in both samples, the togetherness of the festival was an important and dynamic element. This is because it gives it a higher sense of community – a gathering
of similar interests. Another recurring element of the sample festivals was the demand for a festival of this sort to cater for a niche community. Both festivals set out and chose its desired target audience and both serve this community admirably. Which brings the author onto the final element – the ethos of the festival. In both case studies, the ethos of the festival was to give a platform to a particular cohort of musicians and to enrich and strengthen the tradition in a relaxed, friendly and inclusive environment. Both festivals execute this to an impeccable standard, as you can see from the survey results and the information collected through interviews.

5.3.2 Image, Identity, Reputation: The importance of staying true to your ethos

It is evident from this research carried out that staying true to your ethos is a fundamental component of the success of these small organisations. These small organisations put the needs of their target audience to the fore front of their aims and objectives. This does not go unnoticed by the participants. The information gathered from interviews and survey results is proof that this leads to a mutually beneficial relationship between the organisations and its key publics. This resonates with Broom's (2009) definition of public relations as a management function which identifies the forging and fostering of “mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and publics as the moral and ethical basis of the professions” (2009, p. 25). Not only do the attendees, participants and tutors all enjoy the festivals, they also work outside of hours making genuine recommendations of the festival to others. Two-way symmetrical communication is key in maintaining these relationships. Also, knowing from day one what the organisation stands for and presenting that image wholly in every aspect of the organisation. This builds reputation among stakeholders and this reputation is easily spread and embraced through word-of-mouth recommendations and referrals.

5.3.3 The Power of Word-of-Mouth: The importance of peer-to-peer endorsements

It is indisputable, from the information gathered from both interviews and the survey results that a lot of the participants of these festivals were recommended by peers to attend and will recommend to further peers to participate. In both cases, the festivals are small, they do not have large budgets and, in one case in particular they do not use
social media to its full potential. That being said, both organisations have grown in numbers and the success of this is clearly down to peer-to-peer recommendations from past attendees. Both organisations fully understand the importance of interpersonal communication tactics, two-way symmetrical communication, and the importance of reputation and relationship building. These organisations fully understand their target audience and they deliver impeccably each year to their needs and expectations. It is evident that the devotion of these organisations to the tradition is their ethos, something that is very important to the whole community spread out around the world.

5.4 Recommendations

- **Recommendation to PR professionals:** This study highlighted the power of interpersonal communication. In this digital age, many organisations are putting a particular emphasis on online communication, with the easy use of social media platforms. However, these organisations must not forget about the importance of face-to-face interactions and personal engagement in relationship building. Public relations professionals need to reprioritise interpersonal communication tactics in their PR strategies.

- **Recommendation to other arts festivals:** All arts festival organisers should make use of more face-to-face interaction, no matter the size or theme of the festival. The more engagement between the organisers and the key publics the more successful the event will be. This should be a priority in all special events.

- **Recommendation to the sample festivals:** This research found that the use of video helped to spread recognition of the festival online through virtual word-of-mouth. With this in mind and the high volume of dedicated repeat attendees, the author proposes an idea of a members club for participants who cannot make it due to travel expenses, etc., in which intimate concerts, workshops, and lectures are live streamed for members-only viewing. In doing this, the participants who cannot make it can still feel a part of the community, building on the stakeholder relationship.
5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

In carrying out this research, the author came across a few gaps in literature which could provide necessary grounds for future studies. Literature covering culture and public relations was noticeably scarce. Similar to this, there was also a lack of literature done on public relations in a small organisation context. Future studies with these themes in mind would benefit future studies and practice.

5.6 Final Thoughts

This research highlighted the importance of interpersonal communication in relationship building between an organisation and its key publics. The results of impeccable face-to-face interaction and personal engagement is invaluable to small organisations as it leads to positive word-of-mouth endorsements and peer referrals. Even in this digital age, society still holds a deeper trust among its peers, and word-of-mouth endorsements are more rewarding than traditional advertising.
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Appendices
Appendix A

Interview with Aoife Granville – Dingle TradFest – 10th August 2017 – Skype

So, if you could tell me, when did you become involved with the festival?

Well, Deirdre. My sister and myself decided, well it was basically Deirdre wanted to start something. I suppose she started thinking about it eight years ago, so whenever that is (laughs). And just to start, I suppose, a kind of a lively traditional music festival that would be geared towards, maybe give an opportunity to younger musicians as well and dancers and singers to perform in Dingle, because even though there’s lots of music around it’s very much geared towards tourists so a lot of sessions are amplified and that and it immediately then puts people off, we’ll say if we have younger musicians coming into us from music of whatever, it puts them off joining in a session because there’s microphones and it changes the whole nature of the session. So her initial idea, and I suppose my initial idea as well, was that we’d make sure that the town would be full of music, and like, young musicians to showcase that there’s different ways of playing traditional music, that there’s not just one way of playing traditional music in this country. So, anyway, that was the idea initially, and that we give a platform to some younger bands, am, which I think we’ve managed to do. And this is the seventh year of the festival now, this September coming up and I think it’s been successful really with what we initially started, I mean you kind of change things as you go along about what you want out of it and all that, and I suppose you’re constantly trying to improve and everything but the main thing was that, um, it would be, eh, it would be attractive to young musicians, singers, dancers and would maybe entice more in, or that, that musicians around here would see, young musicians, the young people around here would see that there is actually careers in music, or that there is actually, am, a lot happening in music for younger people. There’s a lot of football around here for a lot of younger people, you see that they’re pulled away from the music so, I suppose that that was really one of the main things that we wanted to do.
You kind of touched off it there, but what would you say the ethos of this festival is?
Well, we do have a strong emphasis on new and also, um, creativity and different ways of playing traditional music. You know, and different ways of singing, you know and I mean obviously, we grew up with the Irish language and Irish song but for a lot of people that ... and to show as well that English traditional singing is very popular in other areas. You know, we’d always bring in a few that would sing in traditional English songs as well as sean nós, you know, that type of thing, so that it’s not just about, I suppose, even though we love them, the Begley and Cooney model of playing music. That that’s not the only way to play music. That you don’t just need a guitar in a traditional setting, you know which would be the... it’s very one dimensional here, I suppose that’s not going to be put out on media around here I’m sure. You know like, so that it would be kind of, it would showcase the vibrancy and the, I suppose the variation that’s there in our music today. And the liveliness of it and you know, everything. The craic that’s involved in it. That it’s not about being serious all the time, you know, about your music. Um, and we also wanted to have things running through the day, in terms of accessibility as well to younger people or families and that so, like, sessions starting early, so it’s not nine or ten o'clock on a Saturday night when somebody can go listen, that it’s through the day and actually a lot of those daytime sessions are the most successful really for the festival. So, a big emphasis on youth and creativity in the music as well and kind of variation in the music as well and showcasing that.

So, you felt there was a need for this type of festival in Dingle?
We felt it, yeah. Like, I’m not sure everyone agreed on that around here and we definitely feel, and I think what has happened is that it has turned into a musicians’ festival or people that are into traditional music and singing and dancing, there are a lot of dancers that come now as well, um, that it is their type of festival. That they are taking, you know, we have a lot of people – traditional musicians and singers now coming this year that are teachers as well so they are taking course days around the weekend, it’s kind of their last festival of the summer. So, you know, it is very popular among musicians. I suppose there’s an element of, some people may say in the area, that there is plenty of music here already but I suppose our argument is that it’s a bit different, you know, because it’s not geared, we’re not gearing just toward tourism.
Obviously we have Americans and Japanese and stuff coming in and things like that, that would be going to the concert but generally speaking they are people who are interested in music already or have some knowledge of music already, um, and like we have great support from the pubs locally because they see the difference of the weekend, and the music over the weekend as opposed to just the session for two hours, you know from half nine to half eleven and then it completely stops. So a lot of the sessions we have, you’ll have maybe two or three musicians assigned to a session but there will end up being maybe ten and they’ll play longer than they need to be playing you know, because they’re enjoying it. As opposed to sometimes just clocking in and clocking out, which often happens in many towns like Dingle, Killarney where people are playing six nights a week or seven nights a week, you know, it’s normal. It’s sort of work to a lot of people around here.

Again now, you’re after touching off the next question there a bit, but I want to know, what are the difference types of people who attend the festival each year. Is it mainly musicians, is it a mix of people who have interest?

Yeah I mean, we have a lot of musicians and even this year now, the last week or two, we’ve a lot of enquiries from musicians that aren’t on the session list or anything like that but are wondering about accommodation and wondering about different things to do with it and they’re coming in campers and coming with families and things like that, extra musicians that will all get involved in sessions, but also some people who have an interest in traditional music anyway. Irish people, we’re seeing, eh, like you know and I suppose there’s an element of September being nearly cut off point that you’re trying to get a bit more out of the summer so we’re probably a little bit lucky with the timing of it as well, you know, in that way. But we have, September is a time where we would have still a good few tourists around town so a lot of them would fall in on it. We do have people travelling to the festival from the US, from the UK, from Japan and they have been coming for the last couple of years, people that I suppose would take a holiday in Ireland anyway and maybe hit a couple of events and they come to us, so we’re lucky with September for flights, you know, aren’t as dear as they are in August, so for travelling, um, so we see a lot of people like that. We’re getting a lot of, certainly in the last five years, we have a lot of the same people back, visitors you know, um,
which is great because that has a knock on effect as well. If they’re coming back year in year out, I mean they’re booking into the same B&Bs or hotels and you know they’re telling, the ones in the B&Bs are even saying ‘oh we have ones coming every year’ and then, you know, the word-of-mouth thing carries more weight as well, you know. And we have a lot of support locally like as well, you know, amongst a lot of the younger generation of people, that when we were starting out they might have been in school and we would have done a school concert every year to try and entice them in, you know, and sometimes we’d involve some of the younger musicians and like, some of those are on the committee with us now. So, then their friends are coming to the gigs, they’re college age now or whatever, you know, a lot of them, um, so we have a lot of the younger generation from around the town that are actually really enjoying the music now or have come back to the music, so we have a big cohort of them now last year and this year, who are actually helping us out as well which is great, but attending the gigs and maybe taking part in sessions and that as well. So that’s really positive for us.

That’s great. You were saying people come from the US and the UK and Japan every year. Would they be holidaying anyway and they so happen to be at the festival or do these people actually come over for this festival?

Mixture. We have quite a few that would come over especially, or because they know there’s a trad fest happening, you know, um, they’ll work around that. You know, a lot of people, if they have some interest in music and again the September crowd as well like, what I was saying about flights, but they would make sure that they could hit a festival one weekend and maybe something else the next weekend, or whatever way it would work. But we do, generally, we would have a lot of people as well that in September will just happen to come and book Dingle in September and then they’ll attend a couple of the concerts, you know, they want to, um, you know, experience the culture or whatever. A couple of years ago we had a couple of different people from the states that just fell upon it by accident and have come back since because they enjoyed it so much the first time. So that’s a bit of luck as well I suppose, you know with Dingle as well you can sort of tap into that a bit more. So there’s a mixture there, you know, with some that would come intently for the festival and the ones that would just fall upon it but then it becomes a little bit of a tradition for some of them then, you know.
**Do you use social media much, in terms of for the festival?**

Yeah, we do a lot and especially in the last couple of years and for us, I suppose, it’s ok for us, Deirdre, myself, David Geaney – he’s involved with us, he’s a dancer – we use social media anyway, so it’s accessible. But a lot of our audience, our target audience, a lot of the musicians that we’d have programmed for the music or the sessions or whatever, they also use social media and what we found, you know even last year, I think it was last year, we started using things like Facebook Live button, which was absolutely unbelievable, like the reach we got and the amount of views that some of the videos got was quite incredible, so if you’re using, and I suppose we’re lucky cause it’s Irish music and its, maybe, Irish dancing in a lot of our things so you know, it’s something that’s appealing to people anyway. But we found it really effective and one of the things we’ve done this year, because we didn’t get the same funding we were hoping we would get I suppose, um, we decided to run a Fund-It campaign, and the Fund-It campaign is like a pre-booking I suppose for a lot of the packages but anyway, um, to kind of keep promoting that we ran little videos in a lot of the different venues around the town with a snapshot of music – a whistler, or a dancer, or whatever – in each venue and they’re only about a minute long or 45 seconds I think for Twitter, cause that’s Deirdre’s baby, the videos go out, promote the link for the Fund-It and also promote the venues and maybe the musicians in it. And actually, there’s great feedback in terms of those videos, even locally, people are talking, saying ‘oh my god you’ve great stuff happening this year’ even though it’s probably the same stuff we did the last few years, the social media thing and those videos are having great impact. So, I mean, it’s something we will continue to use and I think even the Live Facebook feeds from the festival, even if people aren’t there, giving them the feeling that they are there is no harm and they might think about coming next year, you know, so I think for us it’s been very effective. And also if we are going to do a funding application we can say well the reach of the videos were however many views on Facebook, in terms of promotions and marketing and people knowing about what’s going on that’s important I suppose now because it’s all about numbers and that now sometimes with funding organisations.
Do you know when you are talking about the reach, do you feel that it is a good mix of people you don’t actually know but who are interested in music or, I wonder, could that reach be mainly your friends?

Yeah, and sometimes it is hard to tell but we definitely know since last year that like, even for example, this year we have a hen party booked in. They booked, the girl that is getting married, we don’t know them but they have contacted us, they have been in contact with us quite a bit actually, they saw some of the videos from last year, so they, I don’t even know where they are from actually, but she dances, the bride, and a couple of the others, the friends, do a bit of dancing, so they decided that the hen weekend would be during Dingle TradFest and David and James – Velocity fella, two dancers – are going to do a workshop with them during the day. You know the activities during the day, and all that. So, you know, things like that, it’s definitely having an impact, like, we wouldn’t know them. And probably David’s presence online is quite large as well, so the dancing crowd is very different to the crowd we would have on our, kind of, circle, online certainly, so we see his presence online having an impact, bringing in very varied people, you know what I mean? It’s funny like, and definitely there’s extra people that we wouldn’t know at all, you know, that just have turned up on the back of seeing stuff online or seen people sharing stuff, or getting a notion if they see a video on the Friday night last year they were down by the Saturday to Dingle, you know like, that sort of thing.

Would you use much advertising?

Um, yeah we do. From the start we try, I suppose, engage with, like, we would use the radios, you know, we do a lot of interviews and stuff like that which wouldn’t be costing us and that’s fine – Radio na Gaeltachta and local radio and Spin, loads of different radio stations, Radio na Life would do stuff for us. But I dunno, was it maybe the second or third year we, um, we did a festival, I can’t remember which one but anyway, we got some money from Fáilte Ireland and Fáilte Ireland are kind of the tourist board really but a lot of the money they give to festivals is for marketing and promotional stuff, so you can’t spend it on music. So we were trying to find out ways to spend it really, so we hired and we started hiring a photographer Don McMonagle, or Valerie O Sullivan, and they’re photographers that would get pictures regularly into national papers and we’ve
had quite a lot of success with that because I suppose we're talking about Dingle with music, dance, things like that, I suppose quirky things that you can do and Don in particular has great ideas in terms of staging photographs and like we had, a couple of years ago there one of the dancers Tomás Ó Sé who happened to be on the Kerry minors at the time as well we did beautiful photos back in Com Dhineol and they were on the front of three of the national papers the following day, on the Thursday before the TradFest which lead onto Radio One interviews, which lead onto that, so we'd do that again this year and we find it has impact. Even if it's not people turning up but that they recognise the name or as well that we're highlighting maybe one of the local young musicians or dancers which is important too. But we do use that photography thing quite a bit. We, we take out a magazine ad with Irish Music Magazine but we don't feel that is has that much impact, it's more that we need to spend the Fáilte Ireland money to be honest (laughs). We think that a lot of the online stuff has more impact and of course the word of mouth among the young musicians, that's a big thing for us now. So it's kind of hard for us to spend all that money on marketing and advertising because I think it costs a bomb as well, if you want to put something in the paper, we have had stuff on TV3, which we find great if you, there's an entertainment thing and they do, they run slots throughout the week if you take out ads, reasonable enough considering, so we take out and they do a little snapshot of what's happening, they might show some visuals from it and as a result of that like, one of the guys that does be on the morning show, Ireland AM or whatever, has slotted us in by chance, I suppose because it sticks out a little bit to him, maybe, what's happening or whatever. And that has great knock-on effect. You know when they pick up on, I mean, there's a bit of because we take out the ad with them they probably do it a bit more but, we kind of are, we feel that we are kind of under contract to do some of the paid media alright but sometimes it's, I mean, like Don's photos in particular we use year in, year out as well as advertising and they would be the ones that would have gotten on the national papers and that, so without the grants and stuff we wouldn't be able to do that. Oh well you couldn't justify the money for paying for the advertising really. You know.
Do you think that spreading the word on social media or through face-to-face word of mouth is more impactful rather than advertising?

Well, for us because I think generally speaking we’re dealing with the younger cohort, when I say younger like I mean from, people that are engaging with social media and engaging with online practice and things like that so from 45 down we would have most of our musicians or maybe 50, you know a lot of the people attending would be in that age bracket, but, also the big thing, I think, for us, is the word-of-mouth among musicians in particular. Which, I was saying earlier, we would have a certain amount of musicians that would be on the session trail but then there would be others that would come and usually they are either friends of the ones on the trail or they’re one who have heard about it from other friends and we would try then, let’s say, if one has made an effort to come off their own back, the following year we’d add them to the session trail and things like that and give them something back from it. They might not get paid but... definitely the word-of-mouth and it is very important for us you know. We make a big effort from the start to mind the people that travelled here. They’re not put up in hotels or anything, you know, it’s houses and things like that, but like you know, they’re not stretched in terms of what they’d be having to do playing wise and all that. So I think they really enjoy their weekend and even bands and stuff we would have brought in for the concert gigs, we would encourage them to stay a couple of days if they had the time to stay and just relax and enjoy themselves and then in turn they’re maybe telling other people, saying, ‘oh yeah you’ll have a great weekend if you do Dingle TradFest’ so we might get the band for a more reasonable price, you know. That’s the kind of, you mind people. But that’s sort of word-of-mouth, especially amongst the musician cohort, is invaluable to us really. and we would have a lot of musicians or people who have moved into the area, not all of them engage with the festival, but those that do would be from the start like and they would have friends who would come as well, they have their own houses full of people probably as well who are here especially for the festival so, um, we’re very lucky in that way I think, that the word-of-mouth thing and the online thing for us has been fruitful and has created a buzz about it.
When you first started, how did you get the word out about the festival in the beginning? Facebook Live and Twitter weren’t as popular then.

No, I suppose, we were lucky in that we were musicians and we had access to, or we knew a lot of sound enough musicians and the first year or two I suppose we invited a lot of those down. Ones we knew that would be a bit of craic, that would, the sessions would be good, that were young and kind of a bit funky, I suppose like the Moxies and those ones with the skinny jeans and all that, they were nearly wearing skinny jeans before skinny jeans were in nearly! (Laughs) and the first few years, we would have always had video and stuff, footage that we would have, I think we were kind of aware of documenting it, sort of a way, so if we had pubs that were heaving with music and people, even in year one we documented that and later uploaded in onto YouTube and things like that. But we certainly, I think the word-of-mouth thing the first year, we were very lucky in the first year that we had a great crew of session musicians who absolutely made it, you know, and the house parties as well for the musicians, there were house sessions for the musicians, were really really good. So, the second year we had people immediately, musicians, contacting us early in the year looking to get on the session trail. And that created a buzz in itself, and certainly among those in their 20s and 30s were wanting to be coming down. So, at that stage we had a sponsor as well so we could house some extra people like that. So the first two years really, because of the people we brought down made it, and the word-of-mouth is really important and I think it must have been the second year we must have had the photos, we started having the photos in the papers then we had another sort of impact, you know. But... we also, the time of year, we also picked a weekend that used to be a festival weekend here, years ago, a Carlsberg music festival and it was always well supported locally, it was a great festival I suppose and coming off the back of the summer in Dingle, you know, people in restaurants and pubs and that don’t get to go out, I suppose as much in the August whereas September there are a lot of locals who will come out of the woodwork, we get a bit more, and that festival was very successful, it hadn’t happened in about 9 or 10 years I’d say, so that was one of the reasons we chose that weekend, we thought from a local perspective that it would suit people and that immediately we saw the difference and in the pubs they were delighted with it. You know, because it was immediately stretching the summer, so we had from the first year and certainly from the second year,
the sessions, you know, people were nearly expecting them you know. So, um, the session trails and bringing kids in you know, that sort of thing really we were very lucky in how it happened but then we’re lucky with Dingle anyway I suppose in that people, maybe we go out a bit more here as well (laughs). People like an excuse to go out and people like an excuse to come to Dingle, so that paired with September, paired with the musicians in the first year giving it a bit of buzz and having a bit of a buzz about it, made it a very easy first few years for us.

You were saying earlier about making sure you mind people, can you talk a bit more about that. How important do you think that is?

I don’t mean mollycoddling now or anything, and this is something that Other Voices, the other festival that runs here in December for pop stuff, or rock stuff, always have their ethos as well and I think we probably wanted to follow their route in that way cause we saw with them over the years they didn’t have a very big budget but yet they could attract really big names in music to Dingle because it was Dingle. And, um, again like, in the same way if they were to say someone was to do a performance on a Friday night, ‘look come down on Wednesday stay till the following Wednesday, you can come in whenever you want, there’s a room there for you’ um, you know, that was the kind of thing they did and we tried to do the same. We wouldn’t have a budget they have now and we never will have but we wanted to make it a place that people really want to come whether they are getting paid or not. That sort of a way. So we had lovely houses for the first couple of years that our sponsor owned which eventually went into NAMA, which had hot-tubs and things like that, not that they got used that much, but the novelty of being in lovely houses and that. We wouldn’t always be feeding all the musicians but they’d be paid well enough for sessions, there would be grub and nice places in Dingle and we wouldn’t over stretch them with work or sessions so that they would be allocated one or two sessions that they’d have to do over the weekend or a concert that they had to do but then they could go around themselves and relax and join in on other sessions somewhere else or whatever. And it would actually pay you back over and over because, um, because they weren’t over stretched with what they had to do all the musicians would play a lot more than what they needed or what we’d ever expect from them because they felt like they were on their holidays. And it doesn’t
actually take much to do that, once they had a nice place to stay, once they had access
to food, good food, and places where they could play or sing or dance, it kind of just
happened. I mean we would make sure that none of them would have to drive if they
wanted to have a drink, that they were staying in town, everything was accessible to
them so I suppose it’s easy to mind the musicians in particular if you want to. You know,
I’ve been playing at plenty of places where you would be put sleeping on a couch, which
is grand if you are a certain age but you know if you’re coming down for a weekend and
you want to play and stuff, you want to be in an environment, you don’t need the fecking
Hilton or anything but it’s just that you want a place where you feel, as well, safe. If you
have instruments that you can leave or whatever and, I don’t know, it was always just a
part of why, of what we wanted with the festival, you know. Um, and kind of nurture
and mind the musicians, so that they would come back and genuinely some of the
sessions musicians that came to us in year one are still coming back now this September.
Not all of them like but you know between the jogs and the reels a lot of them are off
touring and stuff like but a lot of them, you know, we’d have ten, twelve of those who
have been here every year which is great you know.

The people who come to the festival strictly as attendees, do you feel that a lot of
those people are the same people every year or do you think because of Dingle being
Dingle is it too hard to tell?
It is hard to tell but we definitely have a good gang of people who come back year in and
year out, some of them, and again, a mixture. Some visitors and then people that are
from the area but also people that might be away but from Dingle, if you know what I
mean and they have booked to come in September home, if they have kids who are into
music or if they want to do dance workshops as well or bring, you know that sort of
thing, we see now that that has been happening the last few years. And it is hard to tell
sometimes because like certainly the last couple of years it has been so busy in the town
and you know we’d have an idea in the town, like this year, that the guesthouses are all
busy, the hotels are all booked up but that would be a mixture of people that are just
coming in September and a mixture of our crowd. But yeah, I suppose in other towns it
is easier to tie it down, you know, cause this is a touristy town anyway. But we would be
listed, we’d be advertised quite often on the local tourism, we’re on all the calendars for
all that now so, and have been for many years, so if people want to come to Dingle and they are checking out what sort of events are on, you know, the marathon is on the weekend before us, so there’s only a select few that would come for a marathon whereas a trad. festival where you can see a lot of the culture happening, and we have a lot of events that are free, that entices people. So when they see, we are seeing that on the tourism alliance or whatever they are called here now, have noticed that as well. You know, in the tourist office, that they would have people ringing specifically about what’s on and when can we come and you know, so some of those will come once but they might only come to Ireland once or they might only come to Dingle once, you know what I mean. And then some of them are returning so we have a really mixed bag I think. You know, in a long winded way of saying that. We’ve a really mixed bag.

Do you think that since you started getting into the tourism calendar, do you find that there is even more of an impact since then?

Well I suppose, yeah, the thing is Dingle is always popular so, there was a time when other towns were going through a recession we never really had one here, in terms of visitors and all that. And there has been a change in the tourism thing in the last number of years. Now they don’t break their backs for any of the festivals to be quite honest but they do do calendars, I’m trying to think when they started that. And they would share stuff, there’s a lot of different websites and a lot of different sources like dinglepenninsula.ie and there’s the Dingle News and things like that. Both now have a Facebook and Twitter presence but both are general websites that people would happen upon first, you know, if they are searching for Dingle and we would have a good presence on a lot of those websites, I think. It does make a difference, I suppose, for the people who are thinking about coming here anyway, they might not necessarily be the music enthusiasts, or they might want to experience the culture. We often meet people who have come into the concerts who say ‘yeah we actually rang the tourist office and they told us there was going to be a festival’ or ‘we saw online this was happening so we decided to come here before we went to Clare’ or you know. And that happens a lot. And we’re lucky in that the town is well serviced between tourist office, tourism boards and Kerry tourism anyways, is doing better than any other county you know, any of the counties certainly in the south you know. It certainly helps us. They’re not really our
target, I suppose, it just happens that they come and we’re lucky that there is a great buzz around but I suppose a lot of our target is the younger musicians and people who are playing themselves as well. If the tourism crowd get the others in, well that’s all well and good.

Yes I understand. So, with your target audience, why do you think that they come back?

Because they really enjoy themselves. And I think that, yeah they really enjoy themselves and I suppose we are lucky, look I keep saying we’re lucky, I’ll be tearing my hair out saying that now about other things to do with the festival later but we are lucky in that there are great pubs in the town, there are great places to eat in the town so it’s easy to bring people in to a session trail and bring them into environments that are conducive to playing a nice session, a place where they can get a nice drink or whatever. And they can have a nice long weekend of it. And for the pubs that support us in town, a lot of them are ones that don’t have regular music, it’s very funny, but they’re the ones that really want this type of session in their pub. And they’re very good to the musicians as well. You might have ones throwing out rounds of drink or just having a bit of craic with them, in Currans Bar James the owner might come out and sing or he’d be singing the praises of all the ones in the session and they just have great banter with a lot of the locals and a lot of the people that come. I think it’s just as simple as that, they enjoy themselves and they have the opportunity if they are musicians, singers or dancers to perform if they want to and to perform until late in the night if they want to. We always thought that we wanted the festival to be one that we would have wanted ourselves as musicians. And we always try to bring in a couple of different people that might be doing something different or someone not everyone might have heard before. Like this year now we have a crowd of Asturian musicians coming, a couple of them have been here before to Dingle and one at the TradFest a few years ago, but there’s a trio coming. That’s interesting for a lot of people because you know, it’s Celtic music but they might not have heard of it before, but they’ll be on the session trail as well. That sort of thing barks the interest of other musicians. And some of the ones we would get for concerts like we have Méabh Gilchrest and Nick Garrett coming, Méabh is a great harpist and he’s a dancer. They’re very creative and funky and a lot of musicians really love them.
So that attracts the musicians on the session trail into the concerts and maybe Méabh and Nick out to the pub afterwards and there will be interaction between the different musicians. And I suppose it’s that interaction as well that brings, certainly, the musicians and dancers and singers back, you know, if you hear something new or if you meet new people you know, it’s like, if you go to a festival and you meet people you haven’t met before as well and you get on or that has helped in the last few years too. And our younger cohort there’s a lot of dancers that come, a lot are the university crowd that come and we do late night trad gigs as well so they really enjoy it they go mental you know for those things like and trad discos and things like that. Even the younger generation around here really knock great craic out of it, you know, the locals here who might have a bit of interest for traditional music or might have played it before or whatever the Hillgrove has a trad disco and they think it’s great craic altogether. And they have a great banter and they are impressed by the young ladies coming down that play music and it works all around. We imagine you know, if we were going somewhere, what would bring us back to the festival next year, what would bring us back to an event next year and I think that’s one of the big things in any festival management, you know. How do you put a programme together that will become, like become a successful festival and become a kind of tradition for people, that they’ll add it to their calendar every year. And I think we have been successful enough in that sense really, like I mean you can always improve and all that but um, the enjoyment part and that is so important for our target audience anyway.

**Definitely. Just one more question, do you ever ask people for feedback?**

We do, we haven’t in the last... people offer feedback themselves all the time. The initial few years we did more, I think. And we will be getting feedback from, you know, if we apply for anything we get feedback from, you know like people from the Arts Council, we didn’t get the Arts Council funding this year, which is disappointing but we chased them for feedback, we try and get that feedback. But also, we started with just the two of us really doing it but bringing other people on board have brought in different ideas and feedback on what’s happening. So every time you try something new, like when we started doing the late gigs in the pubs as opposed to the Hillgrove it really kept people together and that was something that you know came from feedback from generally
across the board from a lot of different people that they didn’t want to go to the Hillgrove because they were losing a lot of people along the way, so we changed that a little bit. And we find I suppose in the cohort of musicians, they have said when sessions didn’t work in the pubs they were in or the timing didn’t work, which we would have had quite often at the start when you’d be trying out different things in different venues and hoping it might work. So in the last two years we don’t have that as much basically but um... we don’t have feedback forms or things like that, that we would give out or anything. But we would have people that offer feedback probably a little bit online you know, and also we didn’t want to go down the route of workshops, not that we didn’t want to but we initially didn’t but something that came out from a lot of the dancers was that people wanted to have workshops so we started the workshops last year and they are mostly dance workshops for younger people and the henners have a separate workshop (laughs)- dance and nutrition, so David is on board with it so it’s important but also this year then, a couple of friends of ours were actually saying ‘was there anything for smallies?’ you know, that they could bring them to, you know and eh, Deirdre got onto an organisation called Kids Classics and they do a lot of work in hospitals, playing music to sick kids in Crumlin, they’re amazing, an amazing organisation and they’re going to come down and do workshops for babies up to 10 year olds. Sort of inclusive music things, a bit about traditional music and stuff. Those are the things coming from friends and people around us, I suppose their circumstances that change and they’re looking for something different now so for kids and that. And also, something that would sort of have come from feedback and from our own looking at things is that as well as the pub trail, we’re going to do a café trail as well, a lot of coffee shops so in the mornings we will have a bit of music, well it won’t be in all of them, just three or four like Bean in Dingle, those kind of trendy coffee shops who want to be involved as well but also for people who don’t go into pubs or who don’t like going into pubs, we try to keep stuff on the street but that’s a weather and attendance like it rained here a couple of years, so we’ve done the busking competitions and that but yeah you’re kind of waiting until the last minute so with the café trails, there will be bits there for people that can come in, have a coffee, have their breakfast, listen to a bit of trad, you know, for an hour, an hour and a half and move on then. So that will be coming from our own assessments of the festival as well and I think things are changing in how people
want to listen to music as well so we are kind of trying to engage with that a little bit more and maybe see how we want to change things ourselves as organisers, as opposed to when we started off we wanted the trad disco and that but jeez we’re not able for that anymore! But you know, it’s trying to have something for everyone on the programme and the accessibility. So yeah, it’s worth it to sit down really and discuss, you know, say that that didn’t really work between ourselves like and between 5 or 6 of us now on the committee we can say, look, you know. And when we brought a lot of the younger ones on, they had different ways of looking at it as well, which was very good so we kind of keep, I think for us as well if you have too many cooks it’s very hard and too many chiefs like, you’d never get anything organised so I mean, Deirdre always takes the main lead and then we’ll have a few arguments about stuff or whatever (laughs) and like, the others coming in, David and some of the other younger people that would have a couple of ideas about what would, either bring in different people to the sessions or trying something somewhere else, trying the FundIt campaign like, this sort of thing and now we’re more than happy to try out a couple of things like that, try out the café trail, whatever it is. So I suppose, we do have people offering feedback sometimes we do take it on, you have to be careful who’s feedback it is and (laughs) but you know what I mean like, you have to be sensible about that as well. And also, realise that you are never going to please everyone, and we wanted to please everyone at the start but we’ve realised that we never are going to please everyone so, and we can just try and please those who are supporting the festival and that. And then see after that (laughs).

That’s great, now have you anything you feel you would like to add? Anything that you have thought of?

I suppose we have had a lot of challenges in the last two years in terms of funding so that has made us try to think differently about different things, you know. We looked at, this year, trying to get bigger artists in that we wouldn’t normally, so for the concerts that we would like to do ourselves, they wouldn’t pay, you know what I mean, they wouldn’t pay you to bring an audience in to St James’ Church which we would use, you’d never make money off it, like you would have to be charging a fortune and we don’t want to do that. So we had to start thinking about, well, you either try and do a big gig with someone that’s going to attract a big crowd but might not necessarily be the
musician we would have a taste for, you know and might not be within traditional music, so you know like the country music people or whoever, The Saw Doctors and things like that. So that will probably be something that we are going to have to think about going down the line of having a big gig even if it’s just at the start of the festival and then let the session trails take over again, or whatever. But we may have to lose a bit of our own artistic preferences I suppose in terms of doing that. Because we don’t think we want to rely on things like Arts Council funding, because when you don’t get it then, you’re fecked. And it’s too late to do anything about it, so this year, from this year on, this year we tried to get a few big acts and we couldn’t for September but we’re thinking about running into conjunction with the Hillgrove. He will take the fall, so that you know that our, the way we will have to change things around, he’ll take the fall for, if someone costs €7000 or whatever, if it’s a big band, he’s quite willing to take that fall if he’s going to make it back in the bar or on the door afterwards, you see, we wouldn’t be able to do that. And that maybe we will have a series of things running into the couple of months before the TradFest and that maybe off the back of that making profits and taking a bit of risk obviously on those bigger gigs that we maybe will be able to fund it ourselves as opposed to relying on state-bodies funding because we do come to rely on it and even if it’s only €2000 or €3000, when it’s not there then you’d end up in situations where you might end up having to pay it out ourselves and that’s obviously far from ideal. So I suppose, we are going to have to change the way, if we want to keep going I suppose, is one of the things we’re going to have to change something (laughs). And we are slow to bring on a drinks sponsor, or something like that, cause they are hard to deal with anyway. So we are kind of looking at that now. It’s something we have been thinking about a while and a lot of festivals are facing and actually traditional music festivals are facing this problem the whole time, I’ve seen others as well didn’t get funding this year. So we’re hoping, look we might get someone on board over the coming year that would be willing to invest a couple of thousand to tie us over, we’d never want to be running at a profit, it’s just that it keeps going and works.
Would there be a fear that if you got a big band that wasn't a traditional music band, would it take away from what your ethos is?

Yeah, this is the thing. And it does change it. The only thing about it is, the venue we would be thinking about for it, or the venue which has offered it to us and offered to take the plunge in terms of the finances of it is quite separate to the town almost. It's the nightclub at the top, they're doing a lot of live music there now, they used to run a lot of gigs, folk gigs, you know. And, the heart of the festival will always be the sessions and the stuff for the younger people and we do school concerts and that sort of stuff, that's always going to be the heart of the TradFest so long as it's going and making that accessible but that doesn't pay (laughs) basically and no matter how hard we try to make that pay and get the musicians that we want to come and play and they're doing great stuff like, and people that we enjoy listening to the whole time, that doesn't pay or it doesn't make a bit of a profit so that you have a little bit to tide you over to book someone else the following year. We do think we are going to have to do it, now why we were thinking of running a series of things as opposed to maybe having the whole weekend of the TradFest with big concerts, a series of things through the year, maybe through the summer next year that we'd have one gig in June, one gig in July and August, or something along those lines and that we might hopefully make some bit of a profit out of it, at least then it would be in conjunction with Dingle TradFest but it wouldn't be taking away with the heart of what we are doing with the festival. So we're trying to figure out, without losing, this is the thing and I think it's the thing that a lot of festivals have had to struggle with, you know, you start off with this idealistic view of what you're going to have, but to keep that going and to keep, you see the audience is for, we'll say, if you were to get the Saw Doctors or whoever it was, Hot House Flowers actually we were going to get to do a gig but we might get them to do something later now, we had Liam on his own before, but they would be grand for us cause they would be appealing to a lot of younger people anyway and people who would be kind of into trad. but you would get a lot of different crowds who would pay into gigs and then after the gig they might come out to a session but they are a separate crowd. It's kind of a conundrum (laughs). But I know a lot of people are in a similar situation. We are different to the Cruinniú, you have people paying to go to the workshops there, so they have a sort of a pota there they can draw from. But the pubs pay, basically, for the sessions but the other
things is then do we go back to the pubs and say 'listen we want you to pay more so that we can get this band that we would really like to play in the Church and not make profit’ so it’s very hard because in Dingle, even though they are making plenty of money over the weekend they’re being asked for money, like the races were this weekend so everybody in town will be donating to the races then a couple of weeks after they will be donating to the Christmas lights and you know, there’s everything so we are very conscious of that fact. We have a shop in town as well and we know it’s the same people who get asked all the time to donate to everything. We do have, we hope this will work out, but there’s a creativity hub here in town, a technology thing, it’s like a workspace but they’re trying to bring in companies and start-ups and that, they also have an interest in bringing in the arts and they have offered the space to us, there’s fantastic broadband and all that, but Eir have something to do with them, they sponsor a bit of it, and someone got onto me from the hub yesterday asking will we do one of the videos from the hub tomorrow and Eir will put that on their channel and it will be highlighting the hub, highlighting Dingle, highlighting music, what’s going on, the festival and we hope that maybe down the line there might be something that we could work on with them. Maybe sponsorship or something. We’re hoping we won’t have to go down the route of selling ourselves (laughs) but yeah we are in that conundrum because we’re both working through the year and when you are relying on funding and forms and checking everything, it’s hard to do it and it’s hard to commit to it. So, we’ll see. It will be an interesting year ahead. We’re not very worried about this year cause we have a good crowd coming and all that, and great interest in it but we will have to reassess in some way.

OK, that was great. Very interesting.

Ok, thank you.

Thank you very much, and I hope you all the best for the future.

Thank you.
Appendix B

Interview with Conal Ó Gráda – Cruinniú na bhFliúit – 7th December 2016 – Skype

OK, so can you talk to me about when you got involved with the festival?
Right I, I was involved with the festival from the very concept, so um, basically myself and Hammy, I’m a flute player and Hammy’s a flute player but Hammy also makes flutes and I do a lot of teaching, this is actually before I started teaching but anyway... very interested in flute playing and we decided to eh start um a flute festival um that was focused only on flutes because there was, such a thing didn’t exist. There was fiddle festivals and all that kind of stuff and singing festivals and... we decided we would do something on flutes only and we’d do it locally here in Baile Bhuírne because that’s where we both live and it’s also an area, a lovely area and very cultural and all that kind of stuff so that’s when I became involved in it we talked about it and we kind of trashed out what we would like to have in it and how we would like to make it a bit different from other festivals and... and basically what the concept was and the ideas for it. So that’s when I got involved.

You were saying there was a gap like there, or a need for a festival for flutes?
Well we thought it would, (stutter) that people would find it interesting, that am people who, who were eh wanting to learn would (stutter) certainly come to it but also that it was a good opportunity for people who were very good to kind of share their knowledge and give them a platform as well to kind of perform and to display that knowledge and you know that it was just I suppose filling a role in, (stutter) the um, the whole tradition really, that was it like, I suppose. And em, we had all the contacts and all that sort of stuff and we know what we are talking about and Hammy has a good academic background and I’d a very good teaching background so bringing the two together would work well like.

Would you say that that, that was the ethos of the festival, to bring flute players together?
Certainly that. It’s kind of I suppose, it’s kind of multi-pronged really, it’s two... Right, it’s kind of to (stutter) to address a lot of different, different aspects of flute playing like.
Not just the practical style, style of playing, which or aspect of playing, which is very important but kind of em... to kind of, a lot of things. So, we have lectures, OK, so we decided we (stutter) could maybe feature and investigate and explore using people who had a lot of research done in either, either non-academic research or academic research depending on what kind of a practitioner they were and they could come and present on aspects of flute playing maybe of a player or a particular tradition or whatever. We had that, we wanted to give a platform for really good players. We wanted to give a platform for very young players we thought were up and coming and all that. And then from a participant’s perspective we wanted to make all, all those elements very accessible in a really friendly you know um, easy accessible kind of no bullshit kind of atmosphere where everybody gets to meet each other and has a great old time.

**What are the different types of people who attend this festival?**

(Laughs) Cuckoos, “quare-hawks”, all sorts of people. Um, we have people from Ireland, we have young people. I suppose if you broke it down, we have... um... young teenagers, or teenagers I would say, who are very, who are usually very good players who want to come down and meet the teachers and they’re usually very enthusiastic eh kids anyway and they want to immerse themselves. Then we have adults. And then we have, from Ireland. And then we have adults from abroad as well. From England, from America, from Mongolia, from Japan and loads of places like that. And um, it’s just basically a chance for them I think they view it as an opportunity to get really up close and personal with um (stutter) with the whole flute playing tradition and that and we have lots of sessions and stuff like that and as the years have gone by like the amount of repeat people that come is huge and there’s a kind of community kind of um... kind of a community kind of element to it now like and they’ve got their own little Facebook groups afterward and they post stuff and they encourage each other to play and they talk about coming back and all that kind of stuff and um saying ‘Are you coming to Baile Bhúirne?’ and ‘I can’t go this year, I’m really bummed off’ and ‘Oh I’m definitely going’ and that kind of stuff and that that’s a bit we haven’t actually spoken much about how, like that’s only recently started. We had, we started our own forum actually on the um website and nobody uses it. But then they started their own forum and they’re all using
their own one.

You mentioned there that they use their own forums and you had a forum but nobody uses that, so if you don’t use the forum what other methods do you use to get the word out there about the festival, like how do you get the word out there in the first place about the festival?

Initially, we, a couple of things I suppose. We did interviews on Raidió na Gaeltachta and any other radio station that would allow us and there are chat lists on the internet like the Chiff and Fipple Flute Forum, eh The Session and all that kind of stuff and we put um, posts up on that and we had been a little bit active on those things ourselves and we’d be, so we kind of put up descriptions of what would happen on it. And then we had our own little website, which wasn’t very good in the early days but, we had that and we put descriptions up and we had our forum that nobody used and um I suppose as the years went by then like the first year, see it’s a very small festival like. If we have forty people attending we’re kind of full. You know, that’s it like, you know or forty-five that’s the size of it like and they’re active participants and then on top of that you have performers and you have lecturers and then you have people who come in just for the fun and people who want to play and all that kind of stuff, you know and that’s what we wanted it to become actually, kind of occasion that the programme itself would be one thing but also just the occasion of ‘flutedness’ of ‘flutiness’ would become attractive to people who had nothing to do with the festival but who just came in to hang out and that kind of stuff and get a feel off it and I suppose we haven’t really, we haven’t cracked that completely because it’s expensive for people to come, where are they going to stay and all that and there’s limited accommodation in Baile Bhuírne and all that like but we have people who, like we have teachers who want to come again even if they’re not teaching and then we have lads who turn up like just cause it’s on and all that kind of stuff and play away like so it’s kind of... but that’s how we advertise it, very simply really and from year to year then, I’m kind of active in that world anyway, you know I teach on Skype and I’ve a website and anywhere I go, I teach all over the world and when I’m over there I tell my class you should come to Cruinniú na bhFlúit like and if I’m in Miltown Malbay I tell them, if I’m in the Catskills I tell them, if I’m in Ballydehob I tell them. And our teachers then have a great time. We treat our teachers really well, we pay them 73
well, we feed and water them very well and we make sure they have a great time. We get two things back in return. One, they're fantastic with our students because they're happy and then and they're also very happy outside of we'll say teaching hours and they'll talk and they'll play and contribute much more than if we didn't treat them well. So while they're here then (stutter) they get treated well and they feel great and they give much more than they are paid for really and then when they go away they also teach in loads and loads of places and they tell everybody 'Cruinniú na bhFliúit is great' like so, that's how it works.

You were talking there about how the teachers would use word-of-mouth, they tell people their experiences and they think it would benefit the people, and you also mentioned how the people who attend make up their own forums. Do you ever see those forums?
Yeah.

So, do you think that there would be people who have never attended the festival in those forums who hear about it that way?
No, generally speaking it's people who have been at it who will come again because the forum kind of generates a kind of, a bit of excitement and then they go 'right so we're all going again next year' and so they all come again next year because they have been talking about it and kind of interacting with each other. I purposely stay off that forum because I think I'm too big a presence and it might intimidate them and they're better off dealing away with themselves, you know. Um, because it's such a specialist festival as well it's not like you attend to listen, you attend, you attend to participate. So it's really flute players come, not a general audience and because you are going to pay money to and you want something as opposed to just listening it's you know, you're there for three days and you know you have to shell out for accommodation and food and all that as well and as well as the charge for the course and all that like so, those people, it's a significant, like and the people come from abroad there's a travel commitment as well so all and all there's a significant investment from their perspective. So, they need to be sure that they are going to get something good out of it like, that it's worth all the money they are spending if you're coming from Japan you're paying
probably 800 euros in flights, you’re paying another 400 in accommodation and (stutter) food and whatever like you know and then you’re paying whatever you are paying for us, like, what you’re paying for us is actually tiny compared to what is costs you. So, they have to be fairly certain that it’s going to be good and they’re not going to get that from the website because every website tells me you’re good. You’ll only get that from recommendations like, people who have been there and saying ‘I was at it, it was fantastic. It changed my flute playing’ you know, whatever it was like. So they get insider opinions from people who are like them who are also trying to learn the flute and that’s much more convincing to them than a brochure or a poster because that could be anything.

Are you saying that these are people who haven’t attended but they see the forums and see what people are saying on the forums?

Yeah, or less, exactly yeah. They see... let’s say like we’ll say if you’re, we had a guy who came from Inner Mongolia like and obviously he didn’t talk to anyone, well actually he did actually he talked to me but he was coming when he spoke to me he was going to come anyway he knew all about it and he knew it from the forums and had seen his peers say it was great. And he knew they were his peers as such though even though he didn’t know them personally like so it’s not direct word-of-mouth like I like “Jack told me” but he knows his peers are talking about it and it’s kind of a a validation for him. Eh more people it’s direct word-of-mouth like, a lot of the like... we’ll say we have some teenagers from Kerry come and it’s one teenager that tells the other teenager or their dad or else their whatever it is, that kind of way so that’s kind of it really like, you know, so it’s not direct, it’s not like talking to people, we’ll say for the people abroad it’s not talking to them because abroad you’re too far away from the person, the next person who plays the flute so these on those forums but in Ireland it’s kind of talking alright like. And other or our teachers as well being out there speaking to our potential audience who are who are learning from them and they say, ‘Go to Cruinniú na bhFliúit’ you know.
And you mentioned there, let's say that some guy went and then he told his dad, would you get any families going to the festival?

Eh... we get... not really... you will, if the kids are young enough and far away their parents will come because they have to be supervised.... you might get a family, we do have one family that comes down but there is only one flute player in the family like cause generally speaking with a family you would only have the one flute player and the other one would be a piper or the other, it'd be different instruments and all that kind of stuff so, not really families no, but like you will have parents coming with a son or a daughter or whatever.

OK, and you were saying that the festival is quite a specialist festival. So, would you say that most people who attend are elitists or would there be many beginners?

Oh, oh a lot of, in terms of standard it's quite varied. Like we get good flute players down to people who have only just started. Like we had one guy from Dublin who had only just bought a flute and he couldn't even play it at all and he knew that he wasn't going to be playing in the class he just wanted to sit in the classes, just take the opportunity to listen and then he came back the following year and he was able to play. You know, so like he wasn't even a beginner. He hadn't even begun. He was a complete beginner like, he just had a flute, that was it. And then... like I remember one time we had Orla, Orla MacAuliffe was coming since she was about 13, or 12 maybe. She came right from the very start. And um, she's a fantastic flute player like, she won young musician of the year and all that but I remember a couple of years ago and we were at a session and I, kind of, we were having a chat and I asked her in front of everybody like, a lot of the attendees, I said 'Orla' I said, "How come you come to Cruinniú na bhFliúit like?" and like "You're brilliant like, nobody can teach you anything like!" And she goes "Well," she said, um, "I always" um "I always like to meet the teachers and I like to hear what they say, because I'll always learn something different and I'll always learn a new tune", and then she says, "I just like hanging out in flute country." And that was just (laughs) now she was only young like and just, just the fact that even though she was going to the classes and she mightn't be learning that much cause she's so good she still just enjoyed being in the company of flute players and flute playing and cause that's what she does
so why wouldn’t she. You know. It was a great answer I thought and she was only 16 when she gave me that answer like. I thought it was brilliant. A really nice answer.

Lovely. And, uh, Cruinniú na bhFliúít has been going for 10 years, in that 10 years do you see many new people attending or is it kind of, at this point is it a lot of the same people every year?
I'd say about 50% of the people that attend have been there before, they mightn’t have been there the previous year but, they're previous attendees. And I suppose that's going to grow because, we'll say, if someone comes every three years, right, after a while then everybody has been there before, you know. You know that kind of way. Well now, we always have new people as well, especially young people and that kind of stuff yeah. See our problem is we don’t want, we can’t grow because we can’t cope with any more and if we get bigger it will change the nature of the festival cause no longer can you touch everybody like so it loses a bit of intimacy... and anyway we don’t have the facilities and it just gets too big, you know. Like so your Friday night session is going to be just mayhem like, you know, because there’s just too many places to go, or we don’t have enough places to go actually. Yeah.

You were saying you can’t let it grow, so how, how do ye stop it, where is the cut off point? Is it 40 people like you said earlier or 50 people?
40 or 50 people yeah.

You were saying you don’t want it to grow much bigger than that, how do you put a stop to it? Or, is it exactly 40 people who are applying every year?
Well, we are a bit flexible like. And um, sometimes if we don’t get grant aid, we make the classes a little bit bigger, room for more and that kind of a way, you know... It’s hasn’t been a problem yet. We’ve managed to cope with what we had but I mean if we pushed it harder we could get 80 people. We don’t push it for that reason.
I want to go back on something, you mentioned the word ‘intimacy’, that you don’t want to lose the intimacy. So, you keep touching off that about the festival. It is really important so, is it?

Yeah, (stutter) that’s what everybody talks about like, it’s that they... it’s not like you attend and the teacher is away over there. Like, you... you’re eating with the teachers, you’re talking to them, you’re playing with them. The teacher is obviously relaxed in your company cause they’re having a good time like, you know, so, (stutter) it’s not a job to them like, you know, um... you’re meeting people who were there last year. You’re swapping stories, the atmosphere is really laid back, you know, it’s not as if, it’s not elitist like. It’s, even though what we presented it is of top notch... top authorities, top players, top up-and-coming players and all that and done very well but... it’s just done kind of naturally like, so... it’s that atmosphere that the people like, it’s the fact that there is a whole buzz around it and you’re in the middle of it, you know, you’re not just watching it, you’re a part of it. And everybody talks to ya. You know, I see people arriving... on their own like, you know... and being very shy... and not knowing how to mix and this person could be like 63 years of age like, you know (laughs) he’s like a little boy, you know. He doesn’t know how to make friends you know... and he knows nobody and he doesn’t think he’s very good at the flute and he’s afraid to take it out and he mightn’t know the tunes and all that kind of stuff and you can see, tis gas like to see an adult with that kind of, you know, aaah (laughs) but... you know, by the following morning like or (stutter) by the following night they’re completely immersed and they’ve made friends and everybody’s talking about him, he arrives and he’s not an oddball at all like, it’s like, it’s gas like, like you know (laughs).

I want to go again to something you spoke about earlier, you were mentioning about how, when I asked you how did you get the word out there you, it’s mainly the other people who have attended, talking to other people and, or it’s the teachers telling other people in their classes or at other festivals, you touched off flyers and posters. Do you do many, would you use many flyers and posters or anything like that as forms of advertising?

We have, we have lovely stickers actually. We have the best stickers in the world of our three-headed flute monster. Really top-class piece of art and we give them out and
people stick them on their cases. And I give them out um, at other festivals as well to people like and it’s (stutter) really, really striking, I mean it’s a striking sticker and so anybody who sees it will ask “What’s that?” like, so then there’s a conversation about “That’s Cruinniú na bhFliúit” or whatever that does, you know. So that’s worked very well for us to have something that’s really classy like, it’s not just you know ‘Cruinniú na bhFliúit 2016’ it’s a piece of art you know, and that has much more significance than just an ad like. In fact, the um, it does say Cruinniú na bhFliúit on it like but eh you can’t hardly read it like. You have to actually ask about it (laughs) to find out what it is like. So that works very well. Eh, we do a few posters and simply because just to have a little presence locally, eh, so that you know, people won’t be going “Jesus, I didn’t know anything was on” like, right, but it’s not for advertising. We stick them up, we put up posters just in the local village like and that’s all, so that people know. And the, the flyers, they are used by attendees really but they’re not, they’re not used as ads to get attendees. None of those things are. But the stickers are. The stickers are very special...

Oh we also did a video then. We did a video. Yeah, a very good video. Um, we got a... a top-notch crew to edit it and to shoot it and it kind of tells the story of the Cruinniú and live footage and all that and that’s on our website as well so that’s, eh, that’s a great little ad as well, you know.

So, that’s on your website, um... but you were saying earlier that your social media presence isn’t very strong, like your own one yourselves.

No, we have a Facebook site alright, we have, yeah but we are all confused about it. We don’t know how to work it properly.

And do you use any other social media platforms?

Eh... You mean like Twitter? Um... I don’t know Twitter, eh Hammy knows Twitter but I don’t think he uses it for that. Eh, Facebook, we try and use Facebook as best we can, um... and that could actually because photographs go up and all that kind of stuff and people post to them, that site. There’s actually another girl does her own little photographs site as well and everybody posts to that too which is great cause it means we don’t have to. Eh, no nothing else I’d say... um, what other ones are there? What other, there’s Instagrams is there?

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**Instagram and SnapChat.**

Instagrams yeah and we don’t use any or send any Instagrams and um... no, that’s it. We could actually because I was at a festival recently and I saw a fella taking photographs and immediately sticking them up there so it was kind of live updates. That’s good alright like but it’s kind of um, like nobody can come because you know, it’s ten o’ clock at night when you get it like and then you forget about it till the following year, I don’t know if that’s really good like, you know. That wouldn’t work for us. And anyway, as I said, we’re a very, we have a very targeted audience that we specialize in like and we’re not looking for the general public as such, you know, it’s a different festival like... But we like the general public too. We love them... as well... a bit.

**And would you say your website gets many hits?**

Um... I’d say not maybe no... like we get a few inquiries in like who are the teachers this year, what are the dates, that kind of stuff, you know. I don’t think people make up their mind to go based on what we tell them, you know, on our website, I think people make up their mind to go on the basis of what they hear from other people, be it teachers who are, really are independent kind of recommenders like we have different teachers every year. So, if you got a teacher who is not teaching at it next year saying “you should go” (laughs) you know, that’s hugely powerful cause he doesn’t have invested interest you know and he’s also like a hugely respected authority like, so that’s huge kind of power in his recommendation as opposed to us recommending ourselves, you know. That’s, that’s, of course we’re going to recommend ourselves you know. But, um, it’s much better when other people recommend.

**Very good. Have you anything else you feel you’d like to add, or anything you want to ask me?**

It might be, our festival is unusual like in that you know, it’s like a, it’s a... I suppose, total participation is maybe 60/70 people every year like and um... and like you know, the archive comes down and they record every year and we’re one of the few annual events that the archive will record because of the quality of what goes on, you know, and the uniqueness of what’s presented and eh the caliber of um the musicians that are...
presented as well and the wide range like of you know showcases or lectures or whatever it is, you know, so it’s a different, it’s not as if we’re marketing to the general public like as I said, (stutter) we’re marketing to a very select, tiny, kind of, little audience, who deserve to be served as well, you know, and we think that the end result is that the tradition is enriched and strengthened and recorded as well in terms of eh, archiving and that. So, we think we’re doing um, (stutters) it’s a good thing that it happens like but we also realise that it’s not a big thing, you know, it’s not a big thing in terms of that it touches loads of people but it does touch people very deeply, the people that it does touch, you know and very productively as well, so, it’s a different kind of festival like.

Thank you very much.

Thank you.
Appendix C: Interview Consent Form

Part I: Information Sheet

Introduction

I am a Public Relations and New Media Masters student in Cork Institute of Technology. I am doing research on the power of word-of-mouth endorsement in an arts festival context, with particular emphasis on the Irish traditional music festival in Ireland. I am going to give you information and invite you to be part of this research. You do not have to decide today whether or not you feel comfortable about the research.

This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask me to stop as we go through the information and I will take time to explain. If you have any questions later, you can ask them of me.

Purpose of the Research

The aim of this research is to find out the importance of interpersonal communication tactics in stakeholder relationship building. In this interview, I wish to find out more information about the festival: the ethos of the festival, the types of people who attend, their use of social media and the use of traditional word-of-mouth. With this interview, I hope to learn more about the feel of the festival, the motivations behind the festival and, in turn, learn more about the participants and what motivates them.

Type of Research Intervention

This research will involve your participation in a semi-structured interview that will take between 30-60 minutes in total.

Participation Selection

You are being invited to take part in this research because I feel that your experience as an Irish traditional music festival organiser can contribute to my understanding and knowledge of what is expected in a successful Irish traditional music festival in Ireland and how this can motivate repeat participants as well as attract new participants.
Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. If you choose to participate, you may change your mind later and stop participating even if you agreed earlier.

Procedures

I am asking you to help me learn more about Irish traditional music festivals and what motivates the participants.

If you do not wish to answer any of the questions during the interview, you may say so and I will move on to the next question. No one else but I will be present unless you would like someone else to be there. The interview will be recorded, if you do not wish to be named you will not be identified on the recording. The recording will be kept on my own personal hard-drive that only I will have access to. The information recorded is for the purpose of this study only.

Benefits

There will be no direct benefit to you but your participation is likely to help me find out more about the effects of word-of-mouth promotion for Irish traditional music festivals.

Confidentiality

If you do not wish to be named you will not be identified on the recording.
Part II: Certificate of Consent

The information has been read to me and I have been given a chance to read it myself. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Print Name of Participant___________________

Signature of Participant _________________

Date _________________________________

Day/month/year

Statement by the researcher/person taking consent

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands that the following will be done:

1. The interview will be recorded
2. The information gathered will be used only for my thesis
3. The information is confidential and will not be redistributed in any form other than my study

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this ICF has been provided to the participant.

Print Name of Researcher/person taking the consent___________________

Signature of Researcher /person taking the consent___________________

Date _________________________________

Day/month/year
Appendix D: Survey Questions
Cruinniú na bhFlúíit 2017

Your Thoughts about the Cruinniú na bhFlúíit
Scale 1-3  1 = Poor, 2 = Good, 3 = Excellent
Overall 1  2  3
Classes 1  2  3
Lectures 1  2  3
Showcases 1  2  3
Flute Clinic 1  2  3
Panel Discussion 1  2  3
Music Sessions 1  2  3
Value for Money 1  2  3
Facilities 1  2  3

What did you enjoy most about Cruinniú na bhFlúíit?
__________________________________________________________

What did you enjoy least about Cruinniú na bhFlúíit?
__________________________________________________________

Positive Suggestion to improve:
__________________________________________________________

How did you first hear of Cruinniú na bhFlúíit?
__________________________________________________________

Do you use Facebook? If so are you connected with Cruinniú na bhFlúíit?
__________________________________________________________

Do you use Twitter? If so do you follow Cruinniú na bhFlúíit?
__________________________________________________________

Do you visit the website? www.flutemeet.org
__________________________________________________________

How would you like to get updates on future Cruinniú na bhFlúíit news?
E-mail  Facebook  Twitter  Website
__________________________________________________________

Would you recommend Cruinniú na bhFlúíit to a friend?
Yes  No

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Appendix E: Survey Results

Figure 4.1

What do you enjoy most about Cruinniú na bhFliúit

- Learning Aspect: 29%
- Events: 14%
- Unknown: 1%
- Inclusivity/Social Aspect: 37%
- Playing Music: 19%

Figure 4.2

How did you first hear about Cruinniú na bhFliúit?

- Social Media: 2%
- Past Tutor: 8%
- Organisers: 21%
- Past Attendee: 47%
- Online: 15% (Website: 7.5% Online Forums: 7.5%)
- Unknown: 8%
Appendix E: Survey Results

Figure 4.3

How do you get information about Cruinniú na bhFliúit?

Facebook: 38%  
Twitter: 10%  
Website: 52%

Figure 4.4

How would you like to get future updates about Cruinniú na bhFliúit?

E-mail: 40%  
Facebook: 30%  
Website: 9%  
Unknown: 20%
Appendix F: Survey Quotes

What did you enjoy most?
Being able to meet other players of traditional flutes.
Meeting and hearing other flute players, professional and amateur.
Meeting old friends, making new ones.
Slow sessions.
Craic.
Diversity of flute styles, meeting people.
Meeting other flute players from far afield.
Sessions and the classes.
The sessions.
Meeting other flute players.
Meeting other flute players and learning new techniques.
Classes/Panel discussion.
Variety – schedule, tutors, lectures.
Dialogue with tutors, clinic, ungraded classes.
Learning new tunes, trying out ideas.
Banquet, teachers showcase, classes.
Social aspect/meeting people.
Workshops, sessions.
Good atmosphere, great information from teachers, not too many students.
The high quality of instruction obviously, but the inclusive feeling was tops and better than other festival/workshops I’ve attended.
All.
Everything – the people.
Meeting friends and new people.
The people and the craic.
Fascinating classes.
Friendly atmosphere.
Meeting great people and playing with other flute players and chatting to the girls.
Classes.
Spending time with famous flute players in a relaxed way.
The variety of quality of tuition.
Exposure to the cream of the crop in musicians.
Classes and sessions.
Tips and techniques from top players, range of experience.
The sessions, Desi Wilkinson and his approach.
Extensive Irish traditional flute training.
The slow sessions.
Classes.
Having four different teachers.
You get the opportunity to have a few different teachers.
The variety of approaches and emphasis of the instructors.
Meeting other flute players, all abilities welcome, relaxed friendly atmosphere.
Sessions with so many flutes, lots of playing.
Chatting with other flute players about technique, tone, etc. – the common interest.
Variety of tutors, mix of style, opinion and methods.
The classes/showcase. Really looking forward to tutor concert.
Playing with other players and learning new tunes.
Finding out my level of a flute player and realising I can play.
Meet and greet with teachers.
The many different teachers.
Background information of the players.
Meeting other players, teachers’ personal advice.

What did you enjoy least?
Background noise in the Mills.
Sessions too big but that’s unavoidable.
The noisy hen party in the Mills.
My own inability to learn tunes at classes’ pace.
Classes can be occasionally poorly prepared/organised.
Crowded sessions in noisy place.
Not getting to every tutor.
The drive to The Top of Coom.
Not enough time to learn the tunes.
Not many young people.
The end.
I didn’t get enough sleep.
The hangovers.
Flute clinic.
Some sessions were too big.
Going home.
The late nights, there should be cut off points for sessions, e.g. 1am.
No cash machine.
A couple of the classes lost their way a bit.
I didn’t get a class with all of the teachers.
I didn’t feel personally prepared.
The lecture.
Not getting to have all of the teachers.
Would have liked a class with every tutor rather than panel discussion although discussion was good.
Would like a full week.
I would have preferred to go to the tutor I never had before.
Too many in the sessions.

Positive suggestion to improve
Might be good to have possibility to influence which groups you get to.
Smaller sessions.
Circulate notes and recordings. Videos after on website or other forum. Good to see players’ fingers. Good way to keep contact. Do YouTube of the month.
Getting to Ballyvourney can be tricky when you don’t have a car. Transportation requests.
Notes and handouts in class.
Keep lectures short and more to the point.
Increase numbers of young people.
Repeat students to avail of teachers they haven’t had before.
Have a mass skype session for a mid-year checkpoint.
Different types of cake.
More younger players.
Would like more personal focus on techniques in some of the classes.
Keep the slow sessions slow. Teachers to provide ABC notation for those who have trouble learning by ear.
Contact, e.g. Facebook, E-mail.
Don’t take on more people.
Fix website glitch – registration.
Not so hurried.
A local activity – guided walk/history tour some afternoon.
Recordings and notations on website after event.
Graded classes might be better.
Three sessions at the same time are difficult to chase.
Add one more class.
Have another day.
Tunes written out on handouts rather than up on whiteboard.
Production of CD with all the tune on it.
Think about extra days.
More information for beginners/first timers.
More facilities for sessions.
Make more small sessions.
More live music, shorter talks.
**Additional Comments**

Doing great.
Doing a great job.
Overall a very good music gathering, some housekeeping on presentation, notes, organised in advance would improve the learning.
Have the panel discussion again next year. I look forward to coming back every year.
I think this is a very good festival.
Phenomenal idea. Great musical event. Hope I will be back.
Bravo. Well done.
Great event.
Maybe a showcase with Tansey or Molloy.
Looking forward to next year already. Go raibh maith agaibh.
Had a fantastic weekend, here’s to next year.
For a minority (myself included) playing with others is a new and thrilling aspect of the Cruinniú. Consider other opportunities for the new player to have a low risk chance to play with others. Some of us don’t get the opportunity often.
Would love to come back.
Some older or more characterful playing techniques could be showcased to demonstrate the earlier styles – perhaps in classes.
Love the humorous relaxed approach of the teachers – makes it great fun.
Wonderful week of music, food, drink and friendship.
Everyone was extremely friendly and personable. It was like a big family and great to be a part of it. I felt I belonged.
Great, I’ll repeat.
These are my favourite days of the year. I have enjoyed all our teachers, each exceptional in his or her own way. You all are extraordinary teachers, each different in your own way. Unique insights, suggestions, analysis and inspiration from each of you.
First year, and will come back if I am allowed.
First time here and blew away all of my expectations. These people are wonderful, classes were amazing, and the food and tea were divine. The only upset was we didn’t have another day and I missed out on a teacher.
The overall flow of the meeting was excellent, I would not change.
Very enjoyable – informative as well as musical.
Rang Gaeilge.