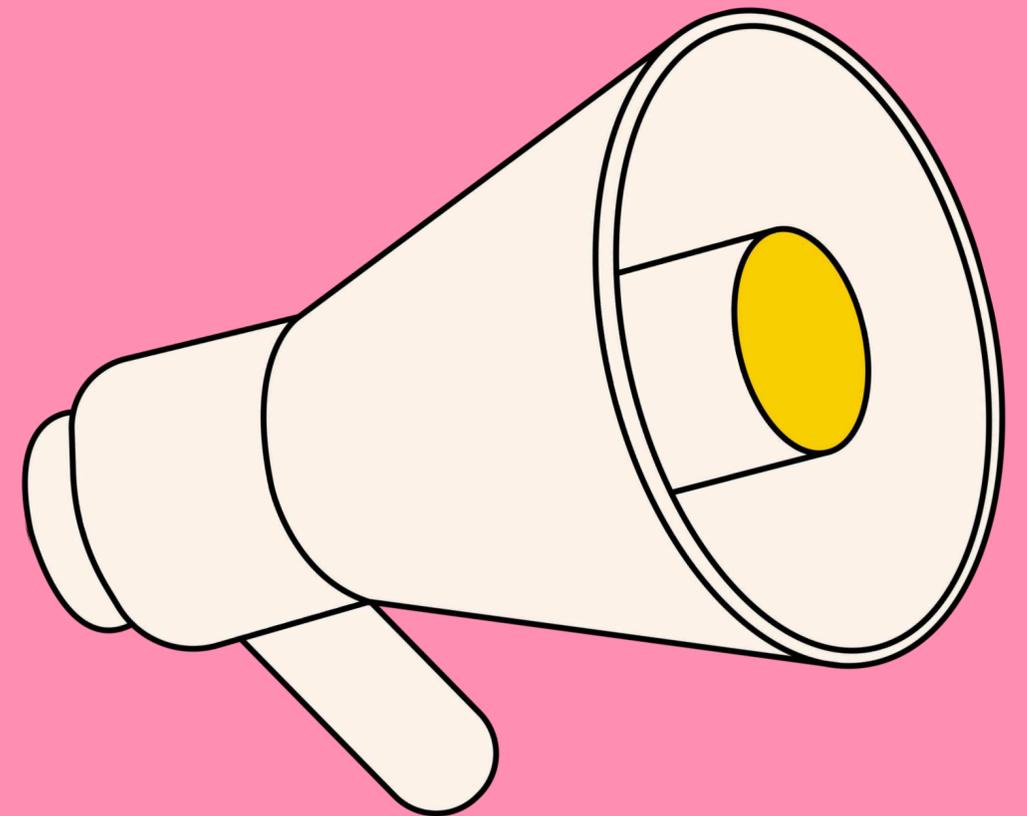Event Promotion

How to get the word out and fill your events with the right people

circular.ie

What's in this toolkit?

You've organised an event, but will anyone actually show up? Getting the word out effectively can make the difference between a packed room of engaged participants and a handful of people staring at each other awkwardly.

Event promotion isn't about fancy marketing campaigns or big budgets. It's about reaching the right people with the right message at the right time, using the channels and networks you already have access to.

What you'll find here

Click a heading to skip to a section

1 **How to craft messages that work:** Different approaches for different audiences and channels

2 **How to use multiple channels effectively:** Social media, local media, community networks and word of mouth

3 **How to plan your promotion timeline:** Start early and build momentum without burning out

4 **How to track what's working:** Simple ways to see which promotion efforts are actually bringing people in

Focus on benefits, not features

Benefits come in many guises. People want to know why they should attend an event – be it to meet people, join a community, get something fixed or save money. Consider the different benefits your event might have for people.

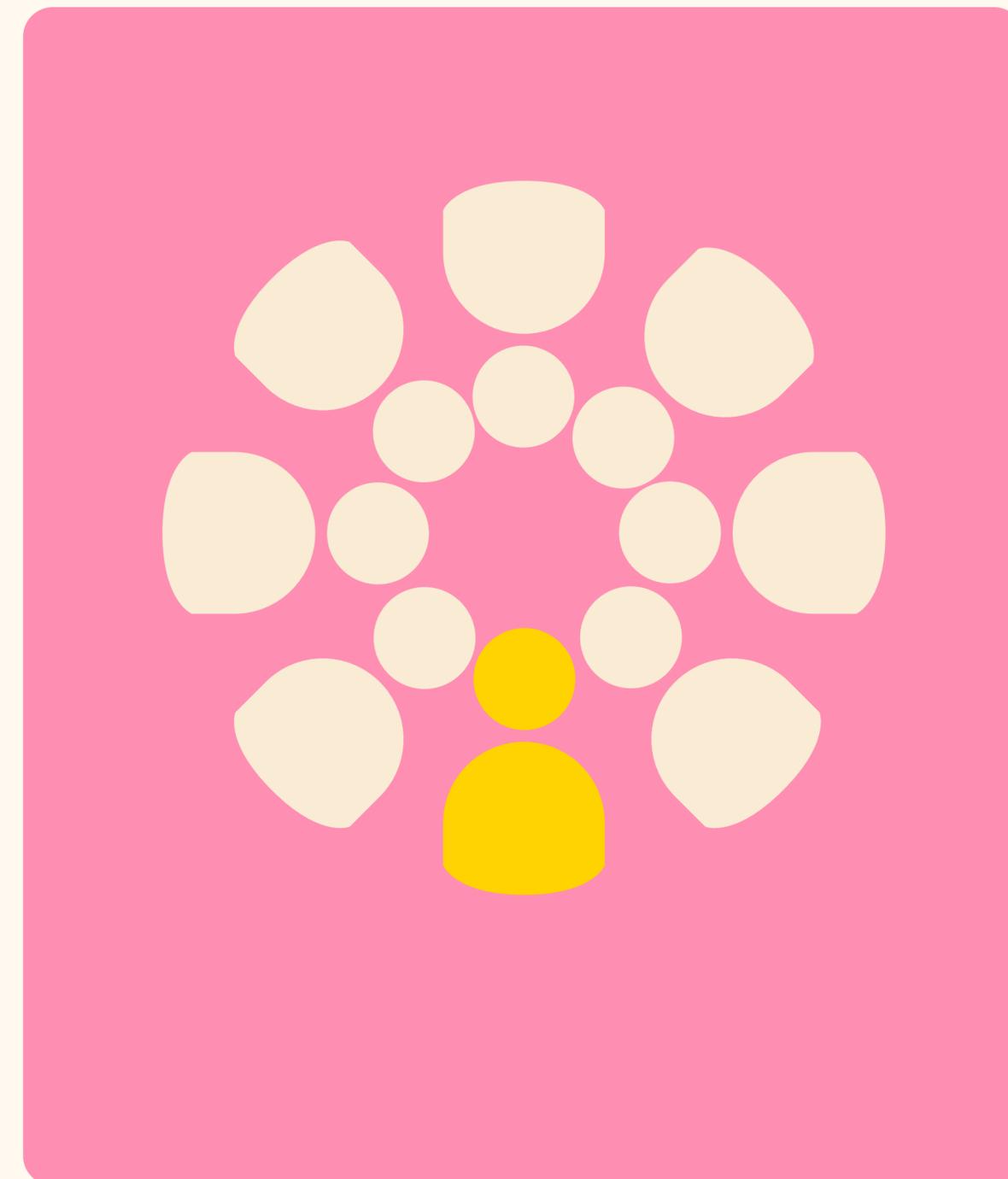**Instead of:** "Monthly repair café with volunteer experts"

Try: "Save money and learn new skills – bring anything that needs fixing"

Instead of: "Community clothing swap event"

Try: "Refresh your wardrobe without spending a cent"

Instead of: "Sustainability workshop"

Try: "Simple changes that cut your household bills"

# Address common concerns upfront

"I've never done this before"
- "Perfect for beginners – no experience needed"
- "Friendly volunteers on hand to help"
- "Everyone was new once!"

"I don't know if my thing can be fixed"
- "Bring it anyway – you might be surprised what's possible"
- "Even if we can't fix it, you'll learn something new"

"I don't have anything good to swap"
- "One person's unwanted is another's treasure"
- "Come and browse even if you don't have anything to bring"

circular.ie
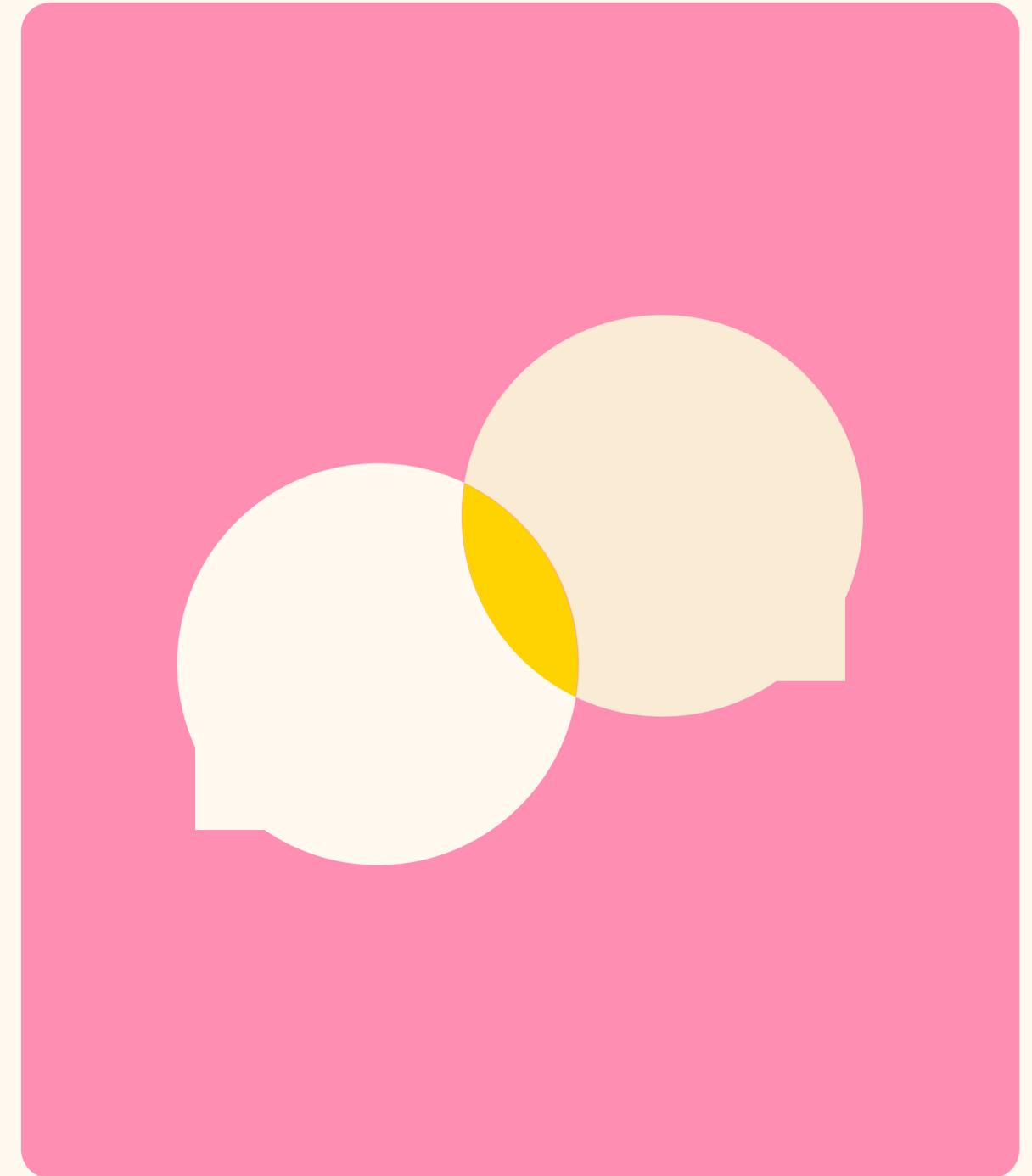
Create different versions for different channels

Social media version (short and visual):

"Broken toaster? Wobbly chair? Bring it to our repair café this Saturday 2–5pm at [location]. €5 donation, all tools provided. #RepairDontReplace"

Newsletter version (more detail):

"Join us for our monthly repair café where you can get help fixing household items, learn new skills, and meet your neighbours. Volunteers with expertise in electronics, textiles, furniture, and bikes will be on hand to guide you through repairs. Bring any item that needs attention – from small appliances to clothing repairs. €5 suggested donation covers materials. All ages welcome."

Local media version (newsy angle):

"In a time when household budgets are stretched, [Your Town] residents are finding creative ways to make things last longer. The monthly repair café at [location] has helped fix over 200 items in the past year, saving the community thousands of euros in replacement costs..."

Use urgency appropriately

For limited-space events:

- "Only 20 spaces available"
- "Book now to avoid disappointment"

For time-sensitive offers:

- "Early bird prices until Friday"
- "Free starter pack for first 10 participants"

For regular events:

- Focus on "don't miss out" rather than artificial scarcity
- "This month's theme is electronics repairs"

Social media promotion

Facebook:

- Create Facebook events for easy sharing
- Post in local community groups (with permission)
- Use Facebook's event promotion tools for small budget boost
- Encourage attendees to invite friends

Instagram:

- Use Stories for behind-the-scenes preparation
- Post carousel images showing what people can expect
- Use location tags to reach local audience
- Create shareable graphics with key event details

WhatsApp:

- Share in local community WhatsApp groups
- Ask existing members to share with friends
- Create event-specific group for updates and coordination

Social media promotion

LinkedIn

- Create a LinkedIn Event to share details and invite RSVPs
- Tag any partners, makers or communities to expand reach
- Encourage team and attendees to share with their networks
- Follow up with reminder posts as the event date approaches

TikTok

- Create short, engaging videos highlighting the event vibe or key moments
- Use trending sounds and hashtags to increase discoverability
- Share behind-the-scenes clips
- Feature speakers, performers, or attendees
- Add clear on-screen text with the event date, location, and link in biO.

Local media outreach

Community newsletters:

- Submit 4-6 weeks ahead of publication deadlines
- Include high-quality photo and clear contact details
- Follow their submission guidelines exactly

Local radio:

- Contact community radio stations for interviews
- Offer to discuss broader issues (sustainability, community building) with event as example
- Find ways to link your event to current news stories. E.g. if headlines are about cost of living crisis – use it as a moment to talk about saving money at your Repair Cafe
- Be available for live phone-ins if offered
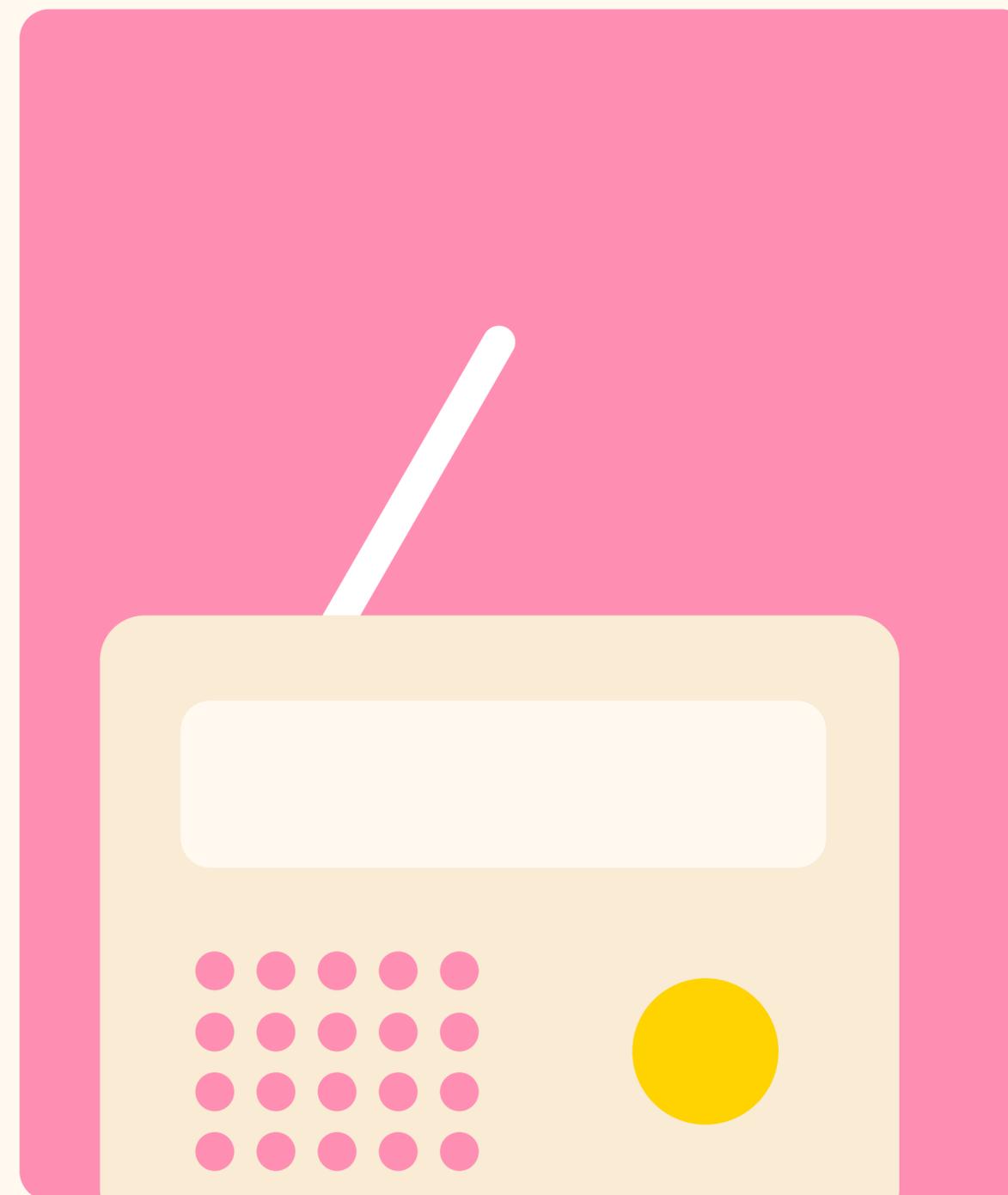
Local media outreach

Local newspapers:

- Send press releases 2 weeks before event
- Offer photo opportunities during the event
- Build relationships with community journalists

Community noticeboards:

- Print A4 flyers for physical boards in libraries, shops, community centres
- Include tear-off strips with contact details
- Ask permission before posting and respect any guidelines
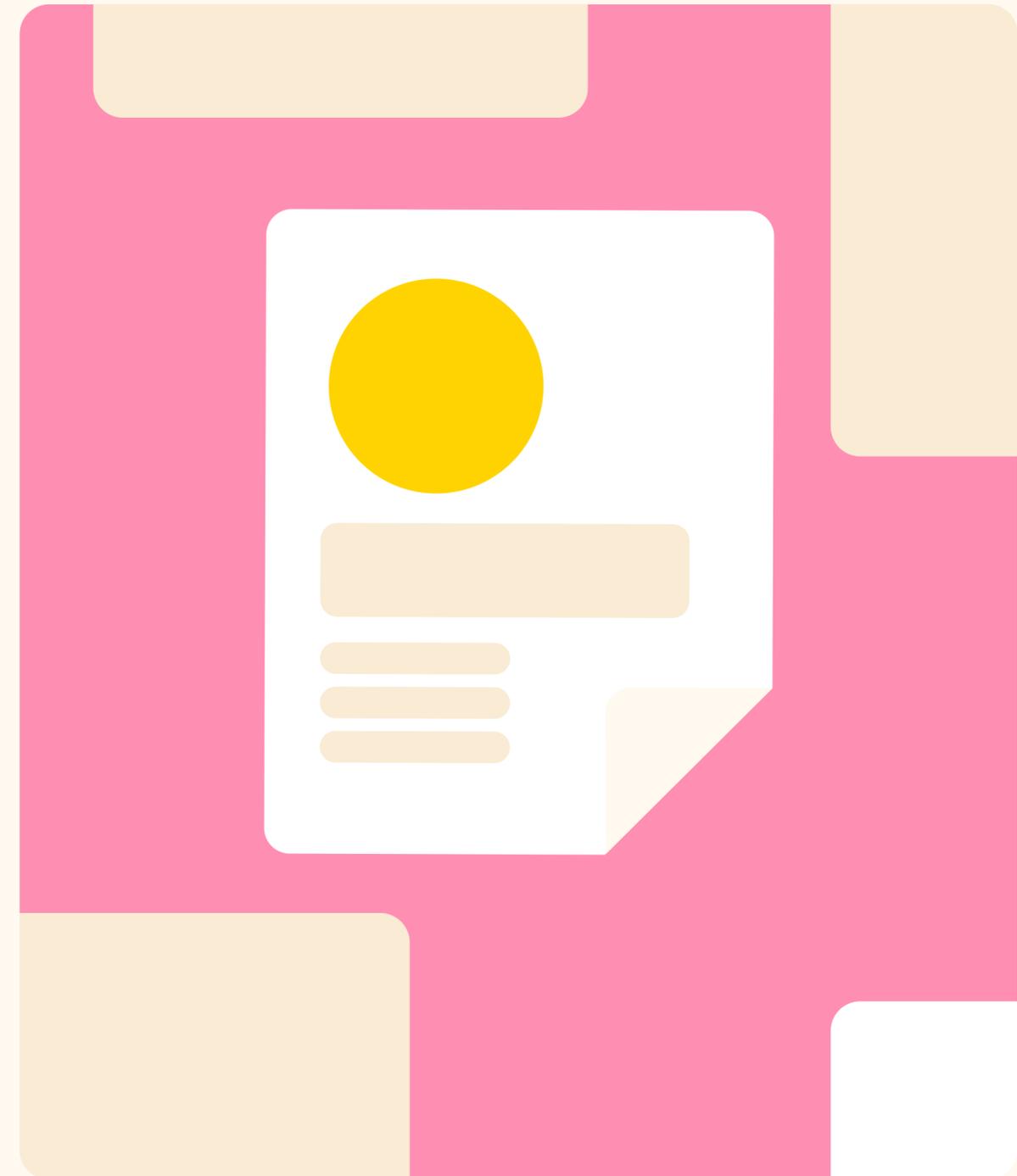
Word of mouth and networking

Partner with complementary organisations:

- Environmental groups for sustainability events
- Local libraries for educational workshops
- Parent groups for family-friendly activities
- Residents associations for community events

Leverage existing networks:

- Ask members to invite one friend each
- Contact local councillors and community leaders
- Reach out to relevant hobby or interest groups

Cross-promotion with other groups:

- Share each other's events on social media
- Include each other's events in newsletters
- Attend other groups' events and network respectfully

Email and direct communication

Email newsletters:
- Build email list from event attendees (making sure to get permission to add people to your list – more on that <u>here</u>
- Send monthly updates with upcoming events
- Include photos and stories from recent events

Personal invitations:
- Identify 5–10 people you'd particularly like to attend
- Send personal messages explaining why the event would interest them
- Follow up closer to the event date
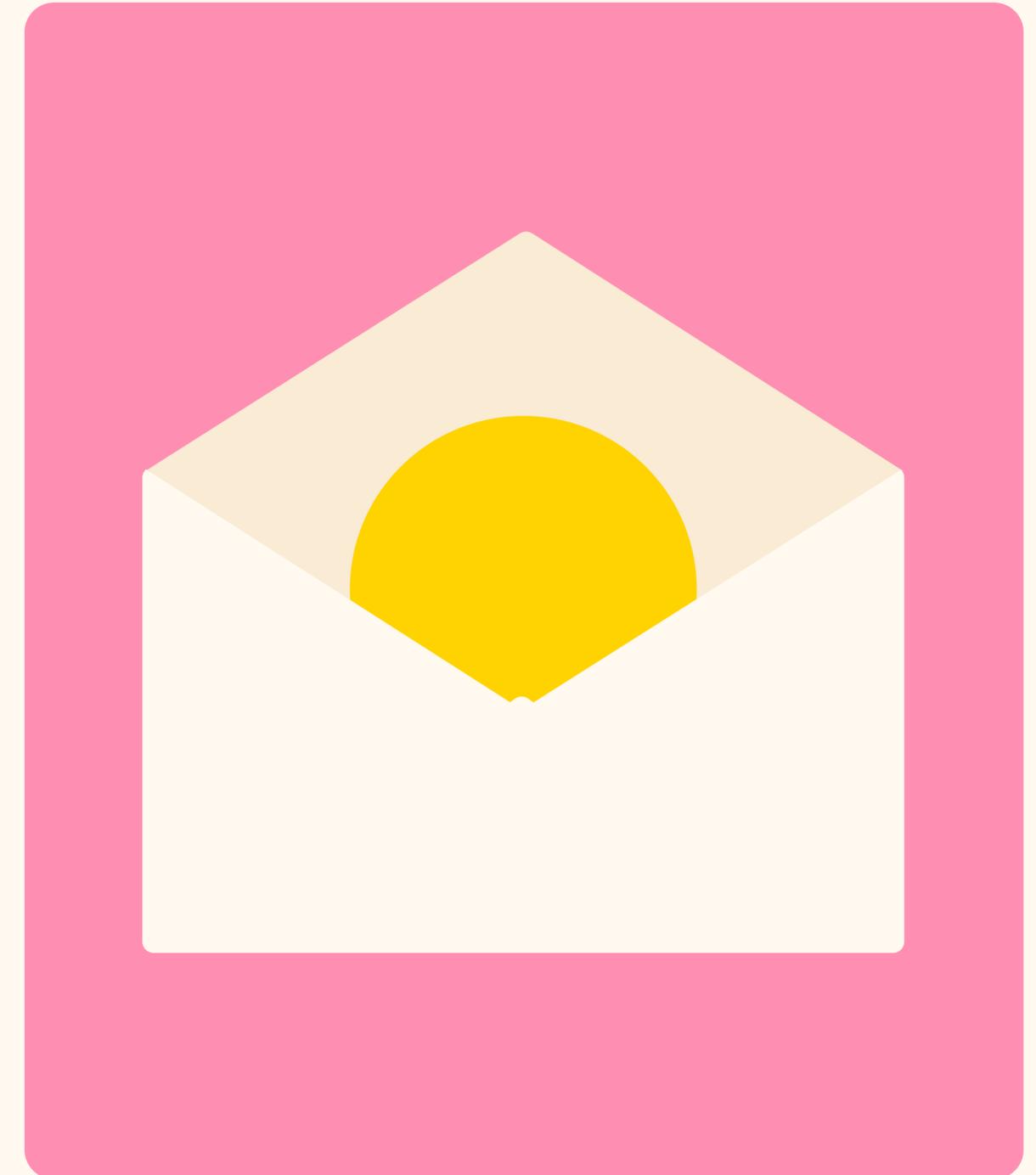
3 **How to plan your promotion timeline**

Start 6–8 weeks before for bigger events

Set out your communications plan including a timeline of which channels you are going to use and when you are going to post on them. Be clear and consistent in your messaging. Consider your resources – budget, time and people. Don't take it all on yourself, engage group members to assist and spread the word.

6 weeks before:

- Launch social media promotion
- Send to community newsletters and bulletin boards
- Contact local councillors and community leaders

8 weeks before:

- Book any local media interviews or features (contacting or posting enquiries on outlets social channels can be a good to way get in contact)
- Reach out to partner organisations for cross-promotion opportunities
- Create your main promotional materials. This should include photos or videos that give audiences a good idea of what to expect. See our **Visual Communications** toolkit for tips and templates.

circular.ie

2 weeks before:

- Post daily on different social media platforms
- Send press releases to local newspapers and radio
- Create urgency: "Only 2 weeks left to book!"

Day before:

- Reminder posts on social media
- Check local weather, traffic implications or other events happening that might impact your event and adjust messaging if needed

4 weeks before:

- Step up the frequency of your social media posting, using different images where possible
- Distribute physical flyers to local businesses and community centres
- Ask local businesses or community groups to share your posts on their social channels to add credibility and reach a wider audience
- Send reminder emails to your existing network

1 week before:

- Final push on all channels
- Personal invitations to people you'd particularly like to attend
- Confirm any media coverage

circular.ie

Event Promotion (Jan 2026)

Adapt timeline for smaller, regular events

For monthly repair cafés or swap shops:
- Start promotion 2 weeks before
- Focus on social media and existing member networks
- Build routine so people know when to expect events

For drop-in sessions:
- Promote consistently rather than intensively
- Focus on building awareness that you're always available
- Use regular posting schedule rather than countdown approach

Track your promotion efforts. Keep simple records of:
- Which channels you used and when
- How many people attended
- How people heard about the event (ask them at the event or consider asking them when they register or sign up)
- What worked best for different types of events

Ask people how they heard about you

Simple methods:

- Include a question on booking forms: "How did you hear about this event?"
- Ask verbally when people arrive: "What brought you along today?"
- Include in post-event feedback surveys. Find example questions here and consider creating a simple Google survey to email people.

Track responses and engagement in categories:

- Social media (how many likes/comments/shares did you get? Which platforms worked best for you?)
- Local media (Any mentions or links in newspapers, radio, or online?)
- Word of mouth (How many people came via friend, family, colleague?)
- Community networks (did other organisations or notice boards feature you?)
- Did your website or newsletter bring people?
- How many repeat attendees did you have?
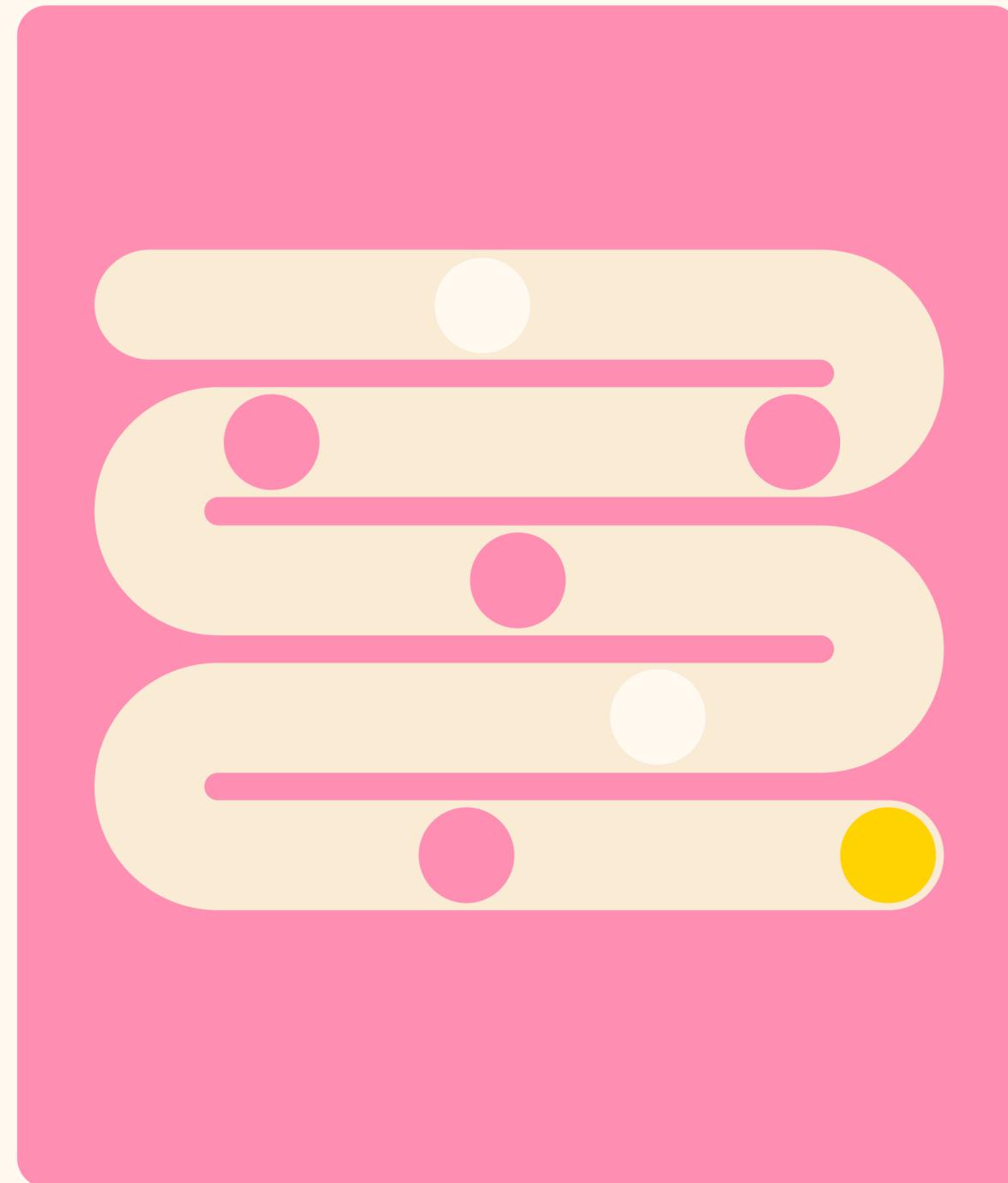
Monitor your promotion channels

Social media metrics that matter:
- Reach and impressions on event posts
- Clicks on event links
- Shares and saves of event content
- Comments and questions about the event
- Follower numbers is more important on some socials than others – for example, TikTok it is less important

Email performance:
- Open rates on event announcements
- Click-through rates to booking links
- Forwards and shares

Website analytics:
- Page views on event information
- Time spent reading event details
- Conversion from page view to booking

Compare costs and effort

Low-cost, high-impact channels:
- Word of mouth through existing members
- Cross-promotion with partner organisations
- Social media posting (time investment only)

Higher-cost channels to evaluate:
- Paid social media promotion
- Newspaper advertising
- Professional graphic design for materials

Time-intensive channels:
- Door-to-door leafleting
- Attending other events to promote yours
- Individual email outreach

Troubleshooting common challenges

"Our events are poorly attended"
- Start promotion earlier and use more channels
- Ask existing attendees what would encourage their friends to come
- Consider if timing, location, or format might be barriers
- Make the benefits clearer in your messaging

"We get lots of interest but poor show-up rates"
- Send reminder messages 1 week and 1 day before
- Ask people to confirm attendance closer to the date
- Address practical concerns (parking, accessibility, what to bring)
- Build reputation for events starting on time and being worthwhile

"Promotion takes too much time"
- Batch create promotional materials for multiple channels
- Use scheduling tools (Hootsuite, Sproutsocial) to spread posting over time
- Delegate promotion tasks to volunteers with different skills
- Focus on the 2-3 channels that work best for your audience
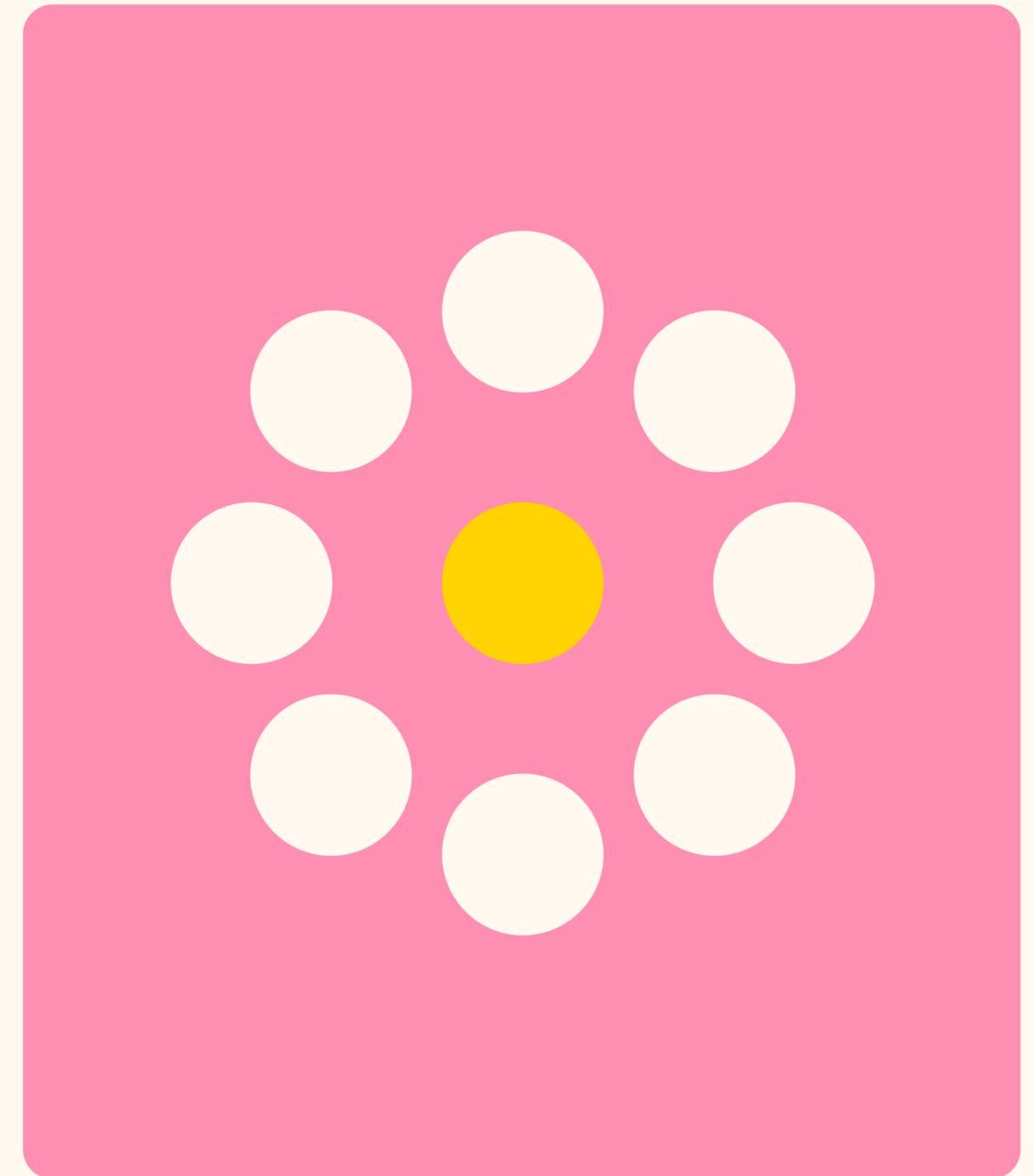
Troubleshooting common challenges (continued)

"We keep attracting the same people"
- Try different promotion channels to reach new audiences
- Partner with organisations that serve different demographics
- Ask existing attendees to actively invite friends from outside your usual circle
- Consider if event format or messaging might be excluding certain groups

"Local media never pick up our stories"
- Make your story newsworthy – tie to current issues or trends either within your local community, on a national level or world wide
- Provide ready-to-use materials (photos, quotes, background information)
- Build relationships gradually rather than expecting immediate coverage
- Offer expertise on relevant topics beyond just promoting events
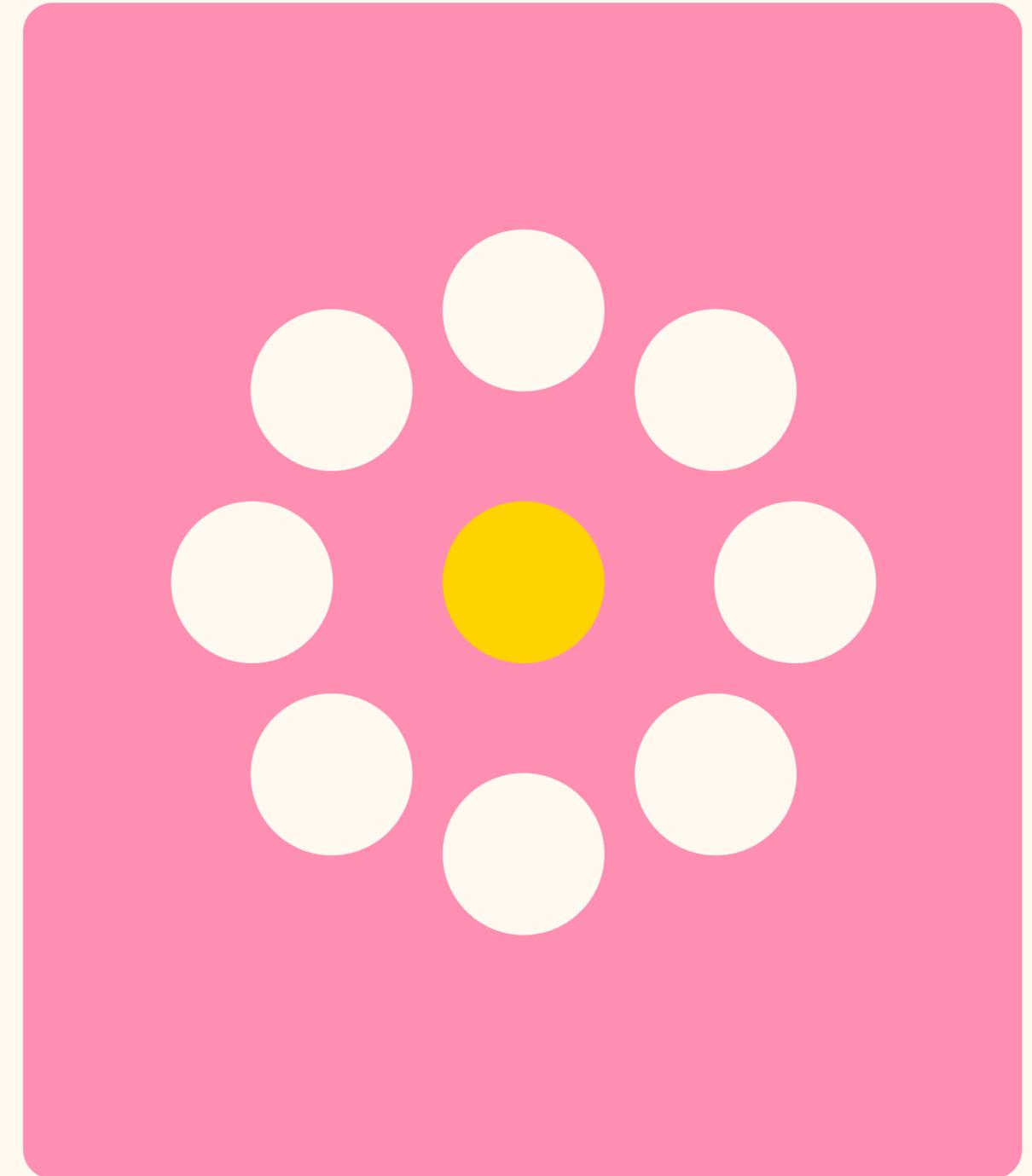
Summary

2 months before your event:
- Set promotion timeline based on event size and importance
- Identify 5-7 promotional channels you'll use
- Create master list of key messages and materials needed

6 weeks before:
- Design and create core promotional materials
- Reach out to partner organisations for cross-promotion
- Submit to community newsletters and local media

4 weeks before:
- Launch social media promotion campaign
- Distribute physical materials to local venues
- Send personal invitations to key people

1 week before:
- Intensify social media posting
- Send final reminders to email list
- Prepare materials to track how people heard about event

After the event:
1. Ask attendees how they heard about it
2. Note which promotion channels seemed most effective
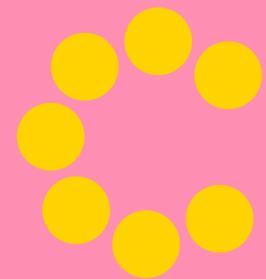3. Plan improvements for next event based on what you learned

Remember:
Consistent, genuine promotion that clearly communicates benefits will always work better than sporadic posting or vague event descriptions. People need to understand exactly what they'll gain by attending and feel confident they'll be welcome when they arrive.

Got a suggestion on how to improve this toolkit? Or have something you'd love us to cover?

Get in touch with Eibhlin today

circular.ie