

# COMMUNICATING ON A BUDGET

[ MAXIMIZE YOUR ENGAGEMENT WITH FREE,  
OR LOW-COST COMMUNICATION TOOLS ]

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# IT'S NEVER BEEN SO EASY.



- Smaller ports across Washington often do not have a communications team (or dedicated staff member) for creating community outreach materials
- Budget constraints can make hiring communications specialists particularly challenging
- Professionals are sometimes necessary, but the internet has a wealth of helpful tips, free templates and low-cost tools you can use for public engagement
- It's never been easier for someone without a public relations or graphic design background to craft professional-grade communications pieces

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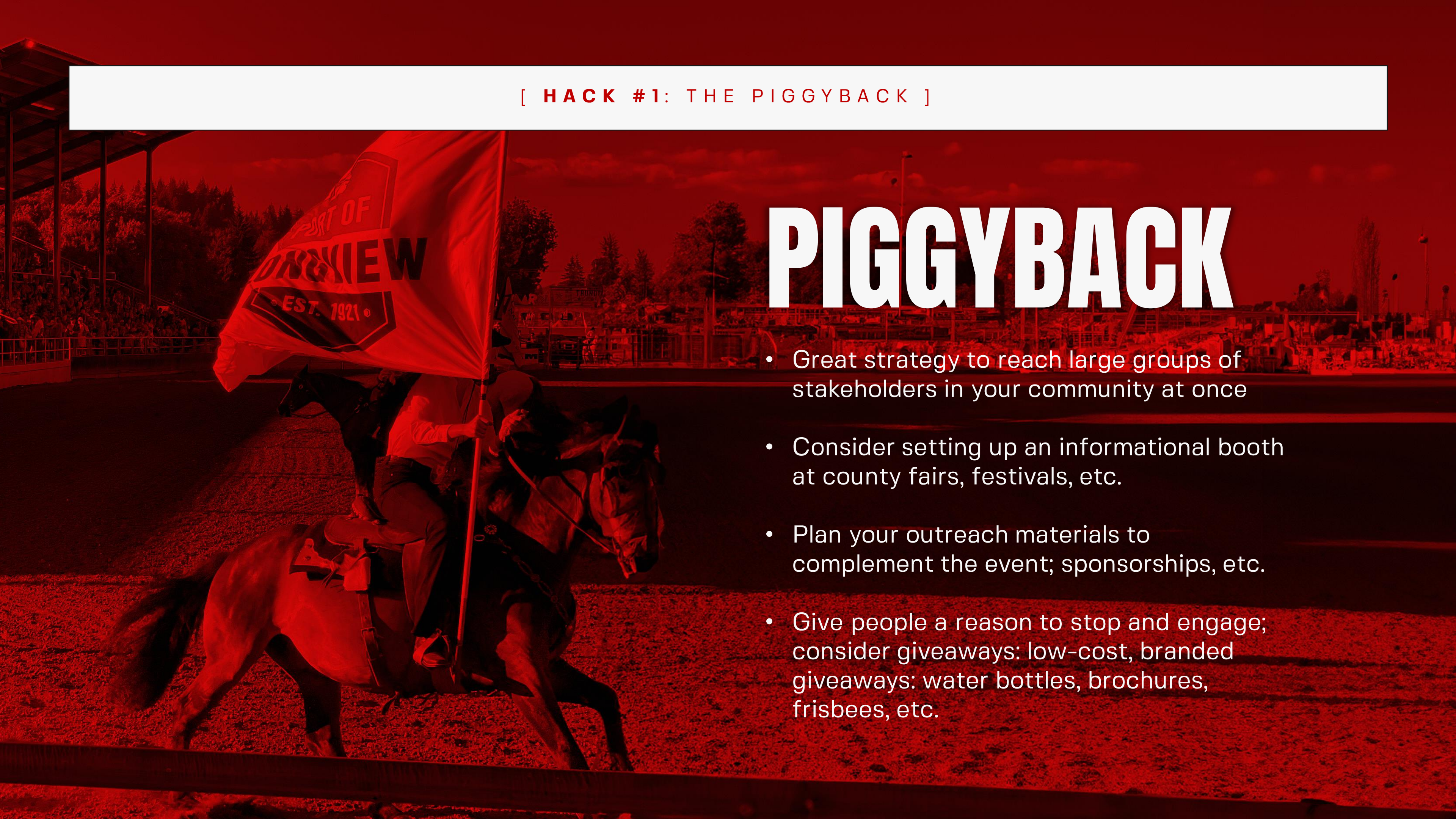
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[ HACK #1: THE PIGGYBACK ]

# PIGGYBACK

- Great strategy to reach large groups of stakeholders in your community at once
- Consider setting up an informational booth at county fairs, festivals, etc.
- Plan your outreach materials to complement the event; sponsorships, etc.
- Give people a reason to stop and engage; consider giveaways: low-cost, branded giveaways: water bottles, brochures, frisbees, etc.

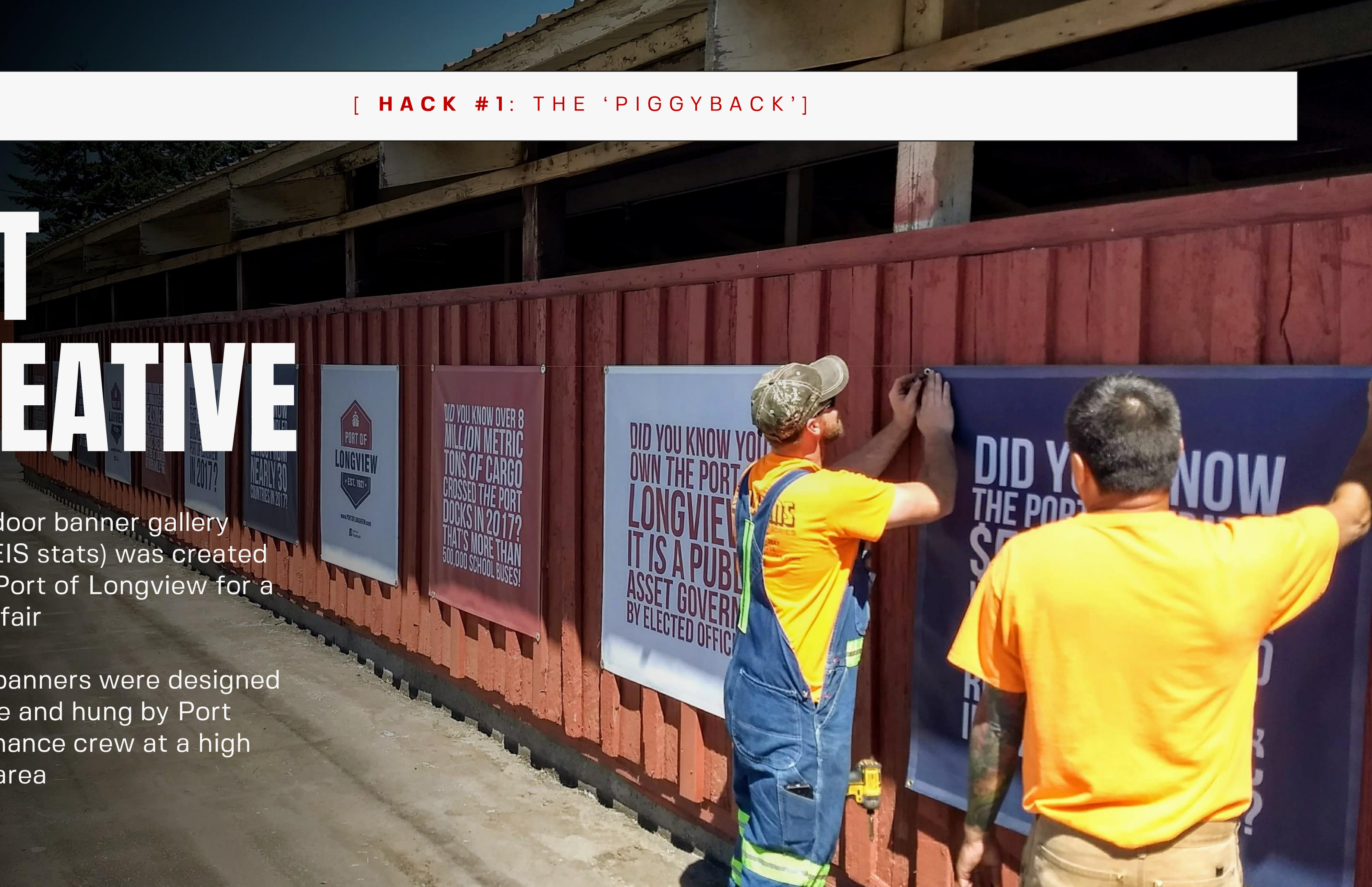




[ HACK #1: THE 'PIGGYBACK' ]

# GET CREATIVE

- An outdoor banner gallery (using EIS stats) was created by the Port of Longview for a county fair
- Fabric banners were designed in house and hung by Port maintenance crew at a high traffic area





[ HACK #1: THE PIGGYBACK ]



# SEEK WAYS TO ENGAGE

- Research and take advantage of local career fair days at area schools; explain local job opportunities, etc.
- Contact local service clubs (Rotary, Lions, senior citizen centers, etc.) for speaking engagements; tell your stories; explain initiatives and how they benefit stakeholders



[ HACK #2: IN-HOUSE GOLD MINES ]

# IN-HOUSE GOLD MINES

- Discover your in-house 'gold mines' by harnessing talents, certifications and special skills of internal staff
- New responsibilities can empower employees and boost morale; creates new opportunities
- A well-rounded staff benefits the whole organization



# HARNESS YOUR STAFF

- Port of Kalama staff has graphic designer for newsletter and FAA certified drone pilots for aerial photography; saves tens of thousands each year
- Port of Woodland staff now sorts and mails all newsletters; a process formerly handled by paid consultants
- If no staff resources, consider outreach at public schools for photography / graphic design





[ HACK #3: BACK TO SCHOOL ]

# BACK TO SCHOOL

- The internet is rich with free and low-cost learning platforms
- Broaden your skills, and keep them fresh by learning new software at your own pace
- Consider signing up employees for training as part of professional development



[ HACK #3: BACK TO SCHOOL ]

# LEARNING MADE EASY

Get to know a few of the most widely-used online education platforms here:



**Udemy**



**LinkedIn Learning**



**Skillshare**



# FREE & LOW-COST TOOLS

- Hundreds of free and low-cost templates (PowerPoint, Excel, Word, etc.) available now on your PC with a MS Office or MS 365 subscription
- Create and edit slideshows for free with MS Photos editor
- MS Publisher is readily available on Windows PC's for simple flyers, invitations, labels etc.
- Create compelling social media ads and premium video content with MS Clipchamp
- Discover the powerful design tools inside Adobe Express



[ HACK #4: FREE & LOW-COST TOOLS ]

# Create designs that inspire

START CREATING WITH:



TRENDING SEARCHES Business Celebrate Facebook

Productivity

- All productivity templates
- Budgets  

	Planned	Actual	Variance
Revenue	\$1,000	\$1,200	\$200
Expenses	\$1,500	\$1,800	-\$300
Profit/Loss	\$1,500	\$1,000	\$500
- Cover letters  

VICTORIA BURKE  
Manager
- Invoices  

Noa Vidal Designs
- Minutes  

TEAM MEETING MINUTES

## Fresh picks

# FREE OFFICE TEMPLATES

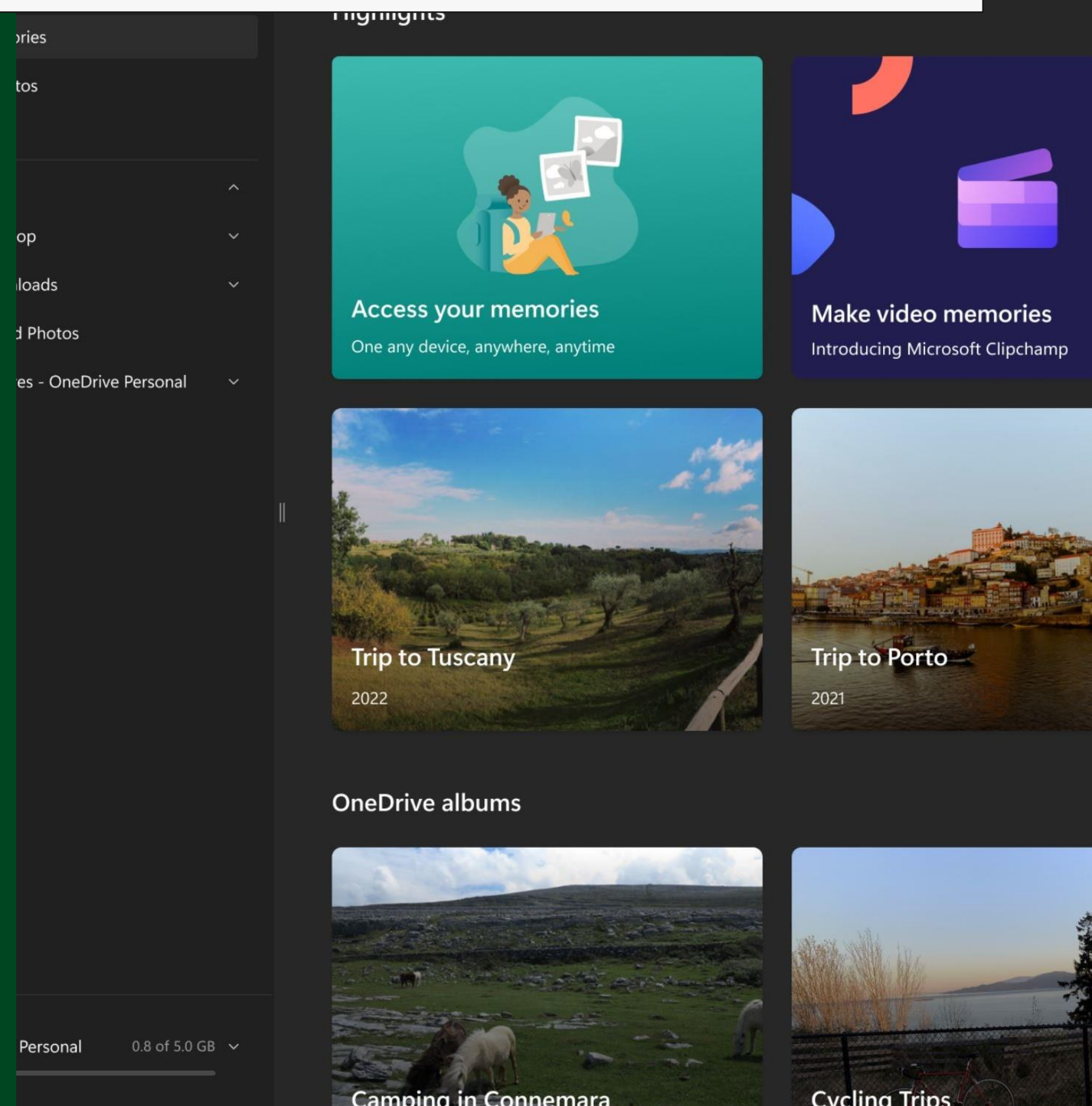
- Windows users w/ MS Office or MS 365 enjoy press release, invoice, letterhead and other WORD templates
- PowerPoint slide masters and Excel templates also available
- MS 365 subscribers receive additional content through 'Microsoft Create' at [create.microsoft.com](https://create.microsoft.com)



[ HACK #4: FREE & LOW-COST TOOLS ]

# DISCOVER MS PHOTOS APP

- Type the word 'photos' in your PC search bar to access this often-overlooked app
- Microsoft's free photo editor can perform basic editing functions: crop, zoom, etc.
- Build free HD slide shows by selecting two or more images, right click and select 'start video'





# LEARN MS PUBLISHER

- Included free in MS 365 subscriptions
- Easily create polished, professional layouts, greeting cards, labels, newsletters, annual reports, etc.
- Large variety of pre-designed templates





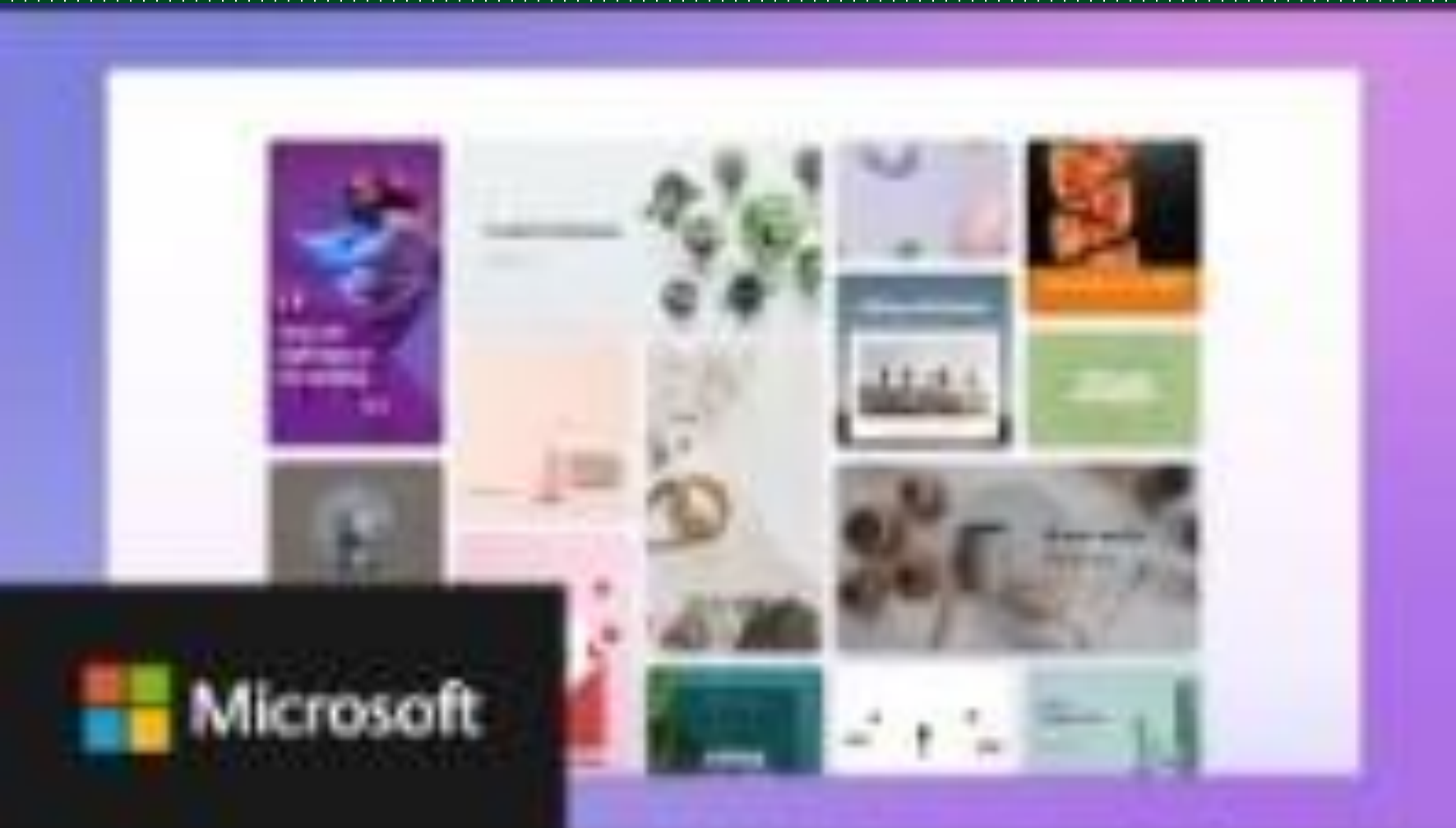
# INTRODUCING CLIPCHAMP

- Clipchamp is Microsoft's powerful new video editor for professional grade videos of all kinds; type 'Clipchamp' in search bar
- Free version allows 1080P export resolution, filters / effects
- Premium version offers 4K export resolution; additional filters and effects





[ HACK #4: FREE & LOW-COST TOOLS ]



# MEET MS DESIGNER

- Included free in MS 365 subscriptions
- Uses AI to quickly create high quality graphic communications of all types; just by typing in what you want
- MS Designer also uses AI to assist writing text



# HONORABLE MENTIONS

## 1. ADOBE EXPRESS:

Monthly subscription service lets users create web page 'stories', social media videos, graphics and a range of features for today's communicators.

- Web page 'story' example with Adobe Express:

<https://express.adobe.com/page/ZiR1b9bSTLJFQ/>

## 2. CANVA:

Graphic design tool for beginners; create logos, collages, flyers, banners, resumes, etc. Free with limited content; subscribe for premium features.

## 3. PEXELS / UNSPLASH:

Download free, high-res stock photography for your next project; no attribution required



# BE SOCIAL SAVVY

- Develop consistent brand guidelines and 'voice'
- Build trust by being a consistent presence on the right social media channels
- Review your internal social media policies; WA state law identifies social posts as a public record
- Strengthen 'social listening' skills
- Build brand awareness: check accounts and post consistently; aim for 2-3 per week; respond promptly to DM's to earn respect, stakeholder loyalty



[ HACK #5: BE SOCIAL SAVVY ]

# BRAND YOUR CONTENT

- Consistency is key in style AND voice; use your individual branding colors/logo when possible and keep messaging consistent
- Your content should be recognizable, no matter where your followers see it

**Port of Kalama**  
Published by Dan Polacek · February 17 ·

Did you know the Port of Kalama is the second largest exporter on the U.S. West Coast? It's an impressive stat that people don't typically associate with a town the size of Kalama. In 2022 alone, the Port exported nearly 14.5 million metric tons of cargo valued at \$6.4 billion dollars! 🤓

**THE PORT IS THE 2ND LARGEST EXPORTER ON THE U.S. WEST COAST.**

Port of KALAMA

See insights and ads [Boost post](#)

You and 81 others 6 comments 20 shares

Like Comment Share



[ HACK #5: BE SOCIAL SAVVY ]



# WHICH ONE WORKS BEST?

- Don't choose an app because it's trending; decide if you have the bandwidth for regular posting
- Does the purpose of the platform fit your brand?
- Know your audience; do they spend time on the app you're wondering about?
- Focus on creating thoughtful content for fewer platforms rather than spreading too thin



# BE A GOOD 'LISTENER'

- Regularly scan social media channels for mentions of your organization name, specific keywords or anything you want to monitor; subscription-based media monitoring tools can help
- Keeping your digital ear to the ground will let you track any 'mentions', giving you the opportunity to comment or mitigate when necessary





# LEVERAGE YOUR PHONE

- Features on today's smart phones rival expensive, professional grade DSLR cameras
- Is your content and, or website responsive (mobile-friendly?)
- Why you should start using QR codes in printed materials





[ HACK #6: LEVERAGE YOUR PHONE ]

# SHOOT LIKE THE PROS

- Don't break your budget with pricy cameras or video tools; your smart phone is THE most powerful tool in your comms arsenal
- Cell camera/video features change rapidly; consider upgrading if more than 2 years old
- Explore iPhone / Android PRO mode for best image and video outcomes







# ARE YOU 'RESPONSIVE?'

- Ensure your Port website is responsive (mobile friendly); improves functionality on tablets, laptops and other smaller devices
- Responsive websites reduce loading time of pages; less waiting
- Easier to read text and navigation controls ensure return visitors to your site



[ HACK #6: LEVERAGE YOUR PHONE ]

# START USING QR CODES

- 89 million smartphone users engaged with QR codes last year; up 26% from 2020
- QR codes provide a fast, reliable way to drive users to your digital content
- QR codes make traditional printed media interactive; bringing 'offline' materials online
- Create free QR codes @
- <https://www.qrcode-monkey.com/>





# Thank you!

QUESTIONS?