



How To Effectively Market Your College Event

Put yourself in the shoes of your students. Where do they look, whether in physical locations, or online locations, for information about music, comedy, and events? Where do they go to get information? Where are they most likely to see information you want them to see? Do students read the campus newspaper? What sections do they actually read? Do they watch campus TV, listen to campus radio? What programs do they follow? It is very important to direct your time, money, and effort in the right direction.

The best ways to get the word out to students:

Email marketing:

Send out student-body wide emails to promote your show. Many students read these, or will at least see the subject of the email before they delete it. Also, email your various campus groups, teams, and organizations. Use your alumni email list as well. Are their groups in your community that have email lists? Youth organizations, etc?

Also, use other schools in the area. Reach out both electronically and physically to area campuses with email blasts, web postings, posters, and flyers.

Posters:

Make sure that you get posters printed that are visually pleasing and catch the eye of people walking by. The important information about the show should be clear and easy to read. Hang them up in the residence halls, the student union, library, class buildings, and at other events. Make sure there is every opportunity to see your poster wherever a student may go.

Again, make sure you use other campuses in your area. Also, where does your target audience “go” to find out about music? Coffee shops? Bars? Clubs? Sporting events? Make sure your information is everywhere your audience is.

Chalking:

Most students walk around campus on a daily basis. If it is allowed at your school, try going around with chalk and writing details of your event on the sidewalks.

Flyers:

Print out quarter-sheet flyers that can be a mini version of your poster and hand them out at other events, or canvas the campus handing them out. People will be forced to take one, or just to hear about the event. Get them off campus as well, especially at area concerts and sporting events.

Newspaper Ads:

Depending on the popularity of your school newspaper, it can be worth it to purchase ads. To make them most effective, try to get them on pages where students read information

most often, or next to popular columns. Make the information large and easy to read, make the ad simple so it draws attention. Use other area school newspapers as well.

Facebook:

One of the easiest ways to get the word out is Facebook. It's totally free and easy advertising. Most students spend a lot of time on Facebook, so it's a good way to get information out. Make an event and have students invite all their friends to it. Facebook ads can also be cheap, and you can target them specifically to your school, as well as to area schools who may want to attend the event. Facebook is an absolutely necessary marketing tool.

School website:

Try to get an announcement about the show on the front page of the school website, where students go to get news, to sign into email, etc. All students will visit this page often.

Web postings in general:

Post messages on fan sites and official sites as well. Find blogs about music in your area and for the band, and make sure they all detail your show.

Announcements:

Make sure you make announcements about the show at all your preceding events. Contests to win free tickets are a good way to do this, or just make an announcement that tickets are on sale.

Radio Advertising:

Radio stations can be an effective tool if you use them properly. Reach out to stations in your area about your show and have them propose a marketing plan to you. Choose the station that will reach the most people about your event without a huge price tag to you.

Table Tents:

Many dining halls and food courts have table tents on each table where you can advertise. As most students eat in these places regularly, they can be a great, effective place to advertise.

Table Promotion:

Setting up a table in a high-traffic area with flyers, posters, free giveaways, raffles of tickets, and as a place to buy tickets, can be very effective marketing. The free giveaways can be as simple as buying bulk candy to give away, or as complicated as printed novelty items with specific information about your event.

Most of the ideas posed above are inexpensive, but require a dedicated committee and a lot of time. Make sure you have students who are willing to put in the time to help your show sell.

Ultimately, make sure everyone who might be a potential ticket buyer is basically overwhelmed by your marketing. The biggest error schools make is to assume a show will sell. If people aren't constantly reminded about your show and told where to get tickets, you will not sell well. Think about where your audience is, and get there!

GETTING POSTERS AND PROMOTIONAL ITEMS

There is a standard list of promotional items used to promote shows with. While this is by no means all you'll need, it's a good start for what you should not be without:

- 8x10 photos
- High-resolution image files
- CDs/DVDs
- Posters
- Biographies

These will all help you in print, radio and television campaigns. You can acquire these through record companies, management companies, booking agencies and middle agencies. Depending on how ticket sales progress, you may also want to try and set up:

- Phone or email interviews
- Ticket give-a-ways
- Meet-and-greets

In terms of school-designed posters, flyers, table tents, etc., there are a number of companies that exist to help you create them quickly and easily. One of the best known is Silver Screen Design. They can be reached at (800) 593-4052, or on their website: <http://www.silverscreendesign.com>.