Developing Your Audiences

A Practical Guide to Effectively Drawing Audiences to Your DePaul Events
What are the Goals of Your Event?

• Objectives could shape audience development and potential news coverage
  – Educate audience and foster discussion
  – Generate news coverage
  – Establish prominence of DePaul
  – Create industry networking opportunities
  – Meet the terms of a grant or other agreement
Developing Your Audiences

• A strong audience is key to a successful event.
  – Make audience development a key component of your event planning and allow enough time to work your plan.
  – Determine who your audience is and how you will reach them before you commit to an event.
  – If applicable, factor in potential costs of developing your audience.
Defining Your Audience

• Who are you looking to attract?
  – Other academics – both at DePaul and elsewhere
  – Other members of the DePaul community
  – Professionals related to event topic
  – Students
  – Alumni
  – Members of the general public
  – All of the above
Multiple Approaches Needed

• No one tool alone is likely to reach and attract a respectable audience to your event
• A combination of tactics will likely need to be employed for optimum success
Internal vs. External

• Are your audience members primarily internal to DePaul – or external – or both?
• The answer will drive the tactics that are most appropriate for audience outreach
• Bulk mail lists from DePaul are not available
Reaching Internal Audiences

• Newsline calendar
• Elevator calendars
• Campus Connect News and Events
• On campus flyers
• College, department or center Web sites and newsletters
• Alumni
Newsl ine and Elevator Calendars

• Send information for inclusion in Newsl ine and elevator calendars to Newsl ine editor Jocelyn Sims at jsims2@depa ul.edu

• Questions should be addressed to Jocelyn at 312-362-8690
Elevator Calendars

- Displayed in elevators throughout DePaul facilities and compiled from information submitted to Newsline
- Unlike bi-weekly Newsline calendar, elevator calendars are produced only once each month
- Deadline for elevator calendar items 30 days before the first of the month
Campus Connect News and Events Calendar

- The News and Events page on Campus Connect is the primary Web method of informing DePaul community members about your events.
- To post events here, find the Campus Connect administrator for your college or department by contacting Audrey Bledsoe at 312-362-8029 or at abledsoe@depaul.edu.
- A weekly e-mail blast on Sundays will list all events for the upcoming week.
Events Page on depaul.edu

- The main page on DePaul’s Web site for listing events is at http://events.depaul.edu/
- Campus Connect administrators are also able to automatically post items to the Events page on DePaul Web site
Reaching Alumni

- Alumni Relations is in regular contact with alums via a number of tools including e-mail and a Facebook page
- To have your event considered for publicity by Alumni Relations, contact Tracy Krahl at 312-362-5577
Targeting Students

• The DePaulia

• Over 200 student organizations can be reached through Student Life Web site: http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/slife/organizations/organizationList.aspx

• Faculty announcements in related classes

• Social networking sites
The DePaulia

• The DePaulia includes a limited calendar of public events
• Reach them at depaulianews@gmail.com or 773-325-7443
• Events to be covered usually require two weeks notice
• Deadline for ads is usually the Monday of the week it publishes
Free and Low-Cost Ways to Reach Potential Audience Members

- Build your own database
- College Web sites and newsletters
- Associated professional groups
- On campus flyers
- Social networking sites
- Other relevant Web sites
Related Professional Groups

- Does the topic of your event suggest any groups with whom you might be able to partner?
- Do those groups have membership bases that might form the core of your audience?
On Campus Flyers

• Prior to posting, flyers must be approved by the Office of Student Life (Lincoln Park Student Center, Room 201 or DePaul Center, Room 11027)
• For DePaul departments and centers, up to 25 flyers (8.5"x11") can be posted on bulletin boards around campus or 15 posters (up to 11"x17")
• Flyers must be posted with pushpins only
Effective Social Networking For Audience Development

• Social networks and blogs are now the 4th most popular online activity ahead of personal e-mail*
• Complements other communication channels, both online & offline
• Engage audience via channels where they are already active
• Viral messaging

*Nielsen Online, March 2009
Social Media Channels

• Facebook
  – Students (85% of undergrads use Facebook*); access/use regularly; friend notifications

• Twitter
  – Off-campus audience; offers quick glance; ability to easily share with others (“Retweets”)

• LinkedIn
  – Mostly off-campus; news feed & e-mail notifications

• Blog
  – Attendee comments, discussion; general awareness

*computerworld.com, April 2009
Reaching Local Lincoln Park Community Members

• Wrightwood Neighbors Association:
  – Erin Andersen eanden@gmail.com

• Sheffield Neighbors Association:
  – sheffieldneighborhoodassociation@hotmail.com

• Lincoln Park Chamber of Commerce:
  – Padraic Swanton pswanton@lincolnparkchamber.com

• Lincoln Park Connect:
  – http://lincolnparkconnect.com/calendar_request/
Free Media Calendars

• Several Chicago area publications have calendars of upcoming events – though placements are not guaranteed:
  – The Reader (lit@chicagoreader.com)
  – Time Out Chicago (mnusser@timeoutchicago.com)
  – Chicago Magazine (jwehunt@chicagomag.com)
  – New City (calendar@newcity.com)
Local Events-Oriented Web Sites

- lincolnparkconnect.com
- Metromix
- chicagobusiness.com (Crain’s on-line calendar)
- chitowndailynews.org (currently on hiatus)
- gapersblock.com
Fee-Based Ways to Reach Potential Audience Members

• Mailing lists for direct mail and association e-mail lists for e-mail invites
• Advertisements
Advertising

• Unlike news releases, ads can guarantee placement of message
• Ads *cannot* guarantee audience members
Advertising

• Determine deadlines and plan accordingly
• General circulation daily newspapers – such as *Chicago Tribune* and *Chicago Sun-Times* – are very expensive – as much as $2,000 for typical tombstone ad
• Community newspapers and targeted trade publications and Web sites will be more economical and effective
Advertising

- Negotiate costs for media space and determine creative deadlines
- Allow at least one month to create an ad and gain internal approval
- Send ad/creative to publication by deadline
- Track your campaign. Did your advertising generate the response you established in your objective?
If an Event is Newsworthy

- Media Relations will write news releases for events that may generate news coverage.
- News releases are only written for events open to the public.
- Few event announcements receive prior coverage from newspapers – especially larger dailies.
If a News Release is Warranted

• Once DePaul Media Relations decides it is going to publicize an event through a news release, the following information is required:
  – Full names, relevant titles, biographies of all speakers. Digital photo head shots are useful
  – Topic and relevance of the event
  – Location of where the event going to be held
  – Date and time of the event
  – Cost of the event
  – Phone and e-mail contacts for additional information or registration if required
If the News Media Are Invited

• If you invite the media, you must be prepared to allow them all into the event for free
• If broadcast media attend, you must be able to handle their technical needs (mult box, risers, etc.)
• Determine if your speaker(s) are available for media interviews before or after the program
Additional Concerns

• Event sponsors should be acknowledged at event in printed materials, signage and verbally
• If your event could spark controversy, contacting Media Relations in advance can help prepare for news inquiries
• Potential problems should be reviewed with Public Safety Office to determine whether additional security may be warranted
During Your Event

- To highlight DePaul’s role in the event, signage, banners, table skirts and backdrops should be used whenever possible.
- All speakers should note their affiliations – especially DePaul hosts.
- For events held in hard to find locations, signage should be posted directing audience members and the media.
Post Event Publicity

• Photos and short summaries of events can be sent after events to Newsline for consideration
• Be sure to identify all major subjects of the photo
• Photos of events should be sent to event sponsors and participants
Post Event Analysis

• Sign in sheets that solicit e-mails for future events
• Lessons from your current audience that can help with your future events
• Survey your audiences at your event to determine how they learned of event
• Survey cards with check off boxes are most effective