

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

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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

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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

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Reaching Internal Audiences

- Newslines calendar
- Elevator calendars
- Campus Connect News and Events
- On campus flyers
- College, department or center Web sites and newsletters
- Alumni

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Newsline and Elevator Calendars

- Send information for inclusion in Newsline and elevator calendars to Newsline editor Jocelyn Sims at jsims2@depaul.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

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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

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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

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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

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Targeting Students

- The DePaulia
- Over 200 student organizations can be reached through Student Life Web site:
<http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/slfe/organizations/organizationList.aspx>
- Faculty announcements in related classes
- Social networking sites

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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

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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

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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?

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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

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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*

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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*

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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/

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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)

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Local Events-Oriented Web Sites

- lincolnparkconnect.com
- Metromix
- chicagobusiness.com (Crain's on-line calendar)
- chitowndailynews.org (currently on hiatus)
- gapersblock.com

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Fee-Based Ways to Reach Potential Audience Members

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

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Advertising

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

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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

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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

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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

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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

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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

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Post Event Publicity

- Photos and short summaries of events can be sent after events to Newslines for consideration
- Be sure to identify all major subjects of the photo
- Photos of events should be sent to event sponsors and participants

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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

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