Publicity Tips

If you have an event you would like to publicize, start by answering these questions:

Must-knows

- How much lead time do I have to promote this event? We recommend at least four weeks.
- Are other events taking place at the same time that appeal to the same audience? Check the campus calendar to find out. If there is a conflict, can an event be rescheduled?
- What is the capacity of the venue? This helps determine the right degree of advance publicity.
- Are we charging for this event? How much? How do people buy tickets?
- Are we requiring RSVPs or registration?
- Do I have a publicity/marketing budget

Other key questions

What is my chief publicity goal?

- Attendance: If it is attendance, your focus will be on advance publicity.
- Donor/sponsor stewardship: If it is recognizing donors or sponsors, signage at the event, thank you letters and social media posts are good tools.
- General awareness: If it is general awareness, you may want to focus on getting media to cover your event, or on posting photos and stories after the fact on campus websites and via social media platforms.

Whom do I most want to reach?

Identifying and prioritizing your target audiences will help you use your time and resources strategically. List the audiences you most want to reach in order of importance, and think about where they get their information. That's where you'll focus your efforts.

Next steps

Get a name. Name your event. In as few words as possible, create a title that will be easy to share and will give your intended audiences a clear understanding of what the event offers them. Err on the side of clarity rather cuteness. Avoid jargon. Choose a short hashtag.

Get visual. Pull together speaker photos, book covers, photos from the University's digital asset management system, photos/video you shoot yourself, etc. It's
not necessary to create a logo for your event. You can successfully publicize an event without one.

Write a short description of your event. Imagine you are a member of your top target audience. What would compel you to attend? What basic information would you need in order to decide whether to attend - and to get there on time if you opt to go? Consider registration, parking, fees, speakers, start and stop times and other important facts. Be sure to include the location, and provide the full name of the venue. People may not know what the DUC is, for example.

Save the date. Go to the campus calendar and submit information about your event. Submit a photo or other art if you have it. Be sure to include all necessary information, including registration if required. Include links to your social media accounts.

Submitting your event to the campus calendar is the single most powerful way to publicize a Pacific event. It makes your event accessible to anyone who visits the university’s website, alerts the editor of Pacific Insider, and notifies the administrator of the central university social media accounts. You also automatically create a web page for your event. You can steer target audiences to this url (you may want to shorten it first, using a tool like those at bitly.com or owly.com).

Get social. If your unit has a Facebook page, create an event page. Draw on your visual assets and event description. If your unit has a Twitter account, start planning scheduled tweets; use your hashtag and, if you have room, add #UOPacific. Tweets with photos and/or links generate more engagement. Consider promoting your event on other social media platforms as well.

Web and email. Post information about your event on your web page, with the hashtag, social media accounts and campus calendar link. A unique web page usually isn’t necessary. Students and alumni can also be reached by emailing The Pacifican and the Alumni Association with news of your event.

Media calendar announcements. Depending on the capacity of your venue and the size of the outside audience you need to attract, you may want to submit your event information to area media. In general, try to submit announcements one month in advance. Using media outlets’ online forms is the best way to get advance publicity of your event. We have compiled a list of URLs to these forms to make this easier for you.

Paper tools. Depending on your budget, you may want to create fliers, postcards, banners or other marketing materials. Design samples are available to get you started. On-campus duplicating services provide design and production assistance for a fee.
What about a press release? Press releases for the purpose of filling seats at an event are not recommended. If you send a press release instead of submitting information online, your event is less likely to be publicized. If you are hoping for media coverage of your event (this does not help drive attendance because it is published or aired after the event), please email Media Relations at news@pacific.edu.

Additional support
The Office of Communications is available to consult on events that draw audiences of 100 or more. (209) 946-2311.

Five Common Event Publicity Mistakes To Avoid

- Submitting listings too late. Learn deadlines and respect them.
- Failing to follow outlets’ submission guidelines. Most publications today ask you to submit events online. This means you should fill out the online form rather than sending an email or press release.
- Omitting a piece of required information. Calendar editors don't have time to call you to fill in blanks, or to do their own research to find a speaker's title, or to look up the full name of an acronym. They'll just spike your submission.
- Getting the time or date wrong. You'd be surprised how often it happens.
- Calling an editor to find out if your submission arrived, to ask when it will run, or to question why it didn't run. If you follow the guidelines and include all of the relevant information, you've done all you can.