



## **A FRESHMAN'S GUIDE *to* BAYLOR EVENT MARKETING**

*You don't need a Ph.D. in Marketing  
to make your event stand out!*



## Introduction

Most of us don't think like marketers. We don't take the time to ask the questions "what motivated ME to actually buy this product or attend this event? How many times did I see an ad for it before I acted? Did a friend recommend it to me? Have I ever attended an event I saw promoted via social media?" You get the idea. That line of thinking just isn't something that average people think about as they go about their day. But it forms the very heart of what a good marketer thinks about.

This guide is meant to give you the very best shortcut *Cliff's Notes* introduction to promoting events on the Baylor campus. If you read this and follow the directions, you will maximize the potential for making your event as epic as it can be. And let's face it... **your student organization is investing a TON of time into planning and executing your event. All of that goes to waste if no one shows up...**



**"A failure to plan  
is a plan to fail."**

## To Promote or Not to Promote

There ARE reasons not to promote your event. Your weekly org meeting is likely not something you want or need to put on a billboard. It's too small. Your BBQ event may be subject to limited resources, and you don't want to run out of hotdogs for your org members. Your event may be a safe space demographically or based on interests. If those things apply, then this guide isn't for you. This guide assumes that your event is open to more than just your organization's members, has the resources to invite the campus, and may be dependent on involvement from outside your group to be successful. (If your event supports a philanthropy, getting outsiders to attend means more donor dollars for your org.)

# 5W's



## Let's Dive In...Start with the 5W's

Where do we begin? That's simple...at the very first event planning meeting. If your organization has a communications or marketing chair, that person is one of the most important voices at your table in your event planning. **FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.** They are responsible for making sure they have the answers to the "5W's" right from the outset.

You know the 5W's. You learned them in elementary school. Who? What? When? Where? and Why? We've compiled the following template to help steer your planning at your very first event planning meeting. You may assume that the answers to those questions are obvious, but look closely at the small text explaining each entry on the form to understand why it may not be as obvious as you think...

And it bears repeating...**if you don't have a location secured, you don't have an event.** Get your location secured EARLY in the planning process. Reserving a room or space can take time on our campus.



## Event Promotion Template (“The 5 W’s”)

### **What is Your Event (WHAT?):**

*In its simplest sense, this is a title.*

### **Target Audience (WHO is invited to your event?):**

*This may seem obvious, but it's not. Many events on campus may be limited to just students. Some include faculty/staff. Some include alumni. Some include the community. Who is invited? This dictates what marketing channels are appropriate.*

### **Date/Time (WHEN?):**

*If you don't have this nailed down from the start, you are behind the curve.*

### **Location (WHERE will your event take place?):**

*Like the date and time, if you don't have your location nailed down from the start, you are behind the curve. Securing space on campus can be challenging. This needs to be one of the first things you do in your event planning.*

### **Description of Your Event (WHY?):**

*At its best, this description will consider all the reasons that folks would want to attend your event. A well-written description absolutely will make the difference in event success by “selling” your event to prospective participants. They haven't sat in your planning meetings. They don't know what to expect.*

# Design

**It needs to be good.**

**It also needs to be effective.**

Once you have your event planned, chances are you are pretty excited about designing your event graphics. Sadly, most student marketers get a bit too hung up on creating a work of art. Don't get us wrong. We're not advocating that you make an ugly poster with a clip art logo! But there are a lot of event posters that are beautiful and yet tell viewers absolutely nothing about the event. **Beautiful does not mean effective.**

You need to assume a couple things:



- **Students are ridiculously busy, and you'll only have their attention for a couple seconds if you are lucky.** So you need to communicate as much as you can, as fast as you can, in limited space. Kind of the opposite of this guide you're reading.
- **Students likely don't care about your beautiful work of art.** Sad, but true. They care about whether your promotion and event is **relevant to them**. You need to get into the mode of thinking "how would I respond to this if I knew nothing about it? Would I want to attend? Or would I scroll past this in my Instagram feed?" Trust your gut as a consumer, and be honest about the effectiveness of your ad.
- It's crazy this has to be said, but once you design your event graphics, **you have to distribute them**. Just posting it to your Org's Instagram account ONCE the day before the event is NOT going to be effective. You need to get your artwork out all over the place, in digital and in print if possible.
- **You should include the WHAT, the WHEN, and the WHERE in big bold print.** You should showcase the **WHY** graphically (use a cool graphic or maybe a photo from last year's event. Allow your audience to imagine themselves there having a good time.)
- While you are designing your poster, from the very start, **produce your graphics in all the formats you will need** including 1:1 (Instagram post), 9:16 (Instagram story), 16:9 (Digital Signage on Campus and What's New BU email), and if you are going to print it out, then likely 8.5"x11" sheet, 11"x17" poster, 4.25"x5.5" postcard (quarter sheet).

## Event Promotion Timeline

**1-6 Months from Event:** Fill out the 5W's plan and have it ready at or soon after your first planning meeting. As soon as you have your details locked down, get your event in the university calendar. If your event has a university webpage, get it updated. More information below.

**1 Month from Event:** If the event is going to be ticketed, begin ticket sales and advertising. If there is a formal invitation/RSVP, this is the best time to begin promotions. A month provides enough time for people to plan without being so far out that the event gets forgotten. If your event is not ticketed, you can begin promotions 2 weeks out from the event.

**2 Weeks from Event:** Begin a promotions push on social media. Submit your event for email inclusion. More information below.

## University Calendar

Getting your event into the All-University Calendar is not appropriate for all events, but in general, if your event is supported by a university department, then it should go into the calendar. For instance, Howdy is a philanthropic sorority event, but it's supported by Baylor Student Activities and the Baylor Activities Council. Similar for Haunt, Diadeloso, Christmas on 5th Street, Bed Races, etc. If you need to get your event into the calendar, email **thomas\_barnard@baylor.edu**. He has the access to get your event added. You'll need to provide your 5Ws so he can easily copy and paste it into the calendar. If you have a question about whether your event is appropriate for inclusion, email the same and just ask.

## Mass Emails (What's New BU / Baylor News Digest)

You may think that email is oldschool and not relevant, but you'd be wrong about that. Email is the defacto standard communication channel of business and will remain one of the most important and consistent channels for marketing in the future. On average, 50% of our student body open the weekly What's New BU emails. We know because we track these statistics. That means that in one ad, you can get your event in front of more than 10,000 students. No other marketing channel delivers that level of result on campus. Is email important? YES.

Submitting your event to be included in What's New BU is easy. There is a form on the Student Life website that asks you for your 5W's. You can find a link at the bottom of any WNBU emails. Or you can simply email that information straight to **WhatsNew@baylor.edu**.

Baylor News Digest content can be submitted by clicking on the link at the bottom of any of the BND emails you've received in the past.

## Instagram

**Posts:** 2 Instagram posts the first week and daily posts the week leading up to the event.

**Stories:** 1 Instagram story per day for two weeks.

These posts and stories can be simple countdowns (“One week until XX Event.”) or they can be different images from last year’s event. They can even be the same exact poster graphic repeated over and over. **Repetition is GOOD.** It feels lazy if you aren’t a marketer, but repetition is the foundation of good advertising. It takes as many as ten+ ad viewings (impressions) to actually sell a product or event to a consumer.

**DELETE / REPEAT:** Any particular post or story you make will only be seen by 15-25% of your followers on average, and rarely outside your follower group. So you need to be making multiple posts to maximize effectiveness. There is no shame in deleting yesterday’s post and running the same thing today. Delete. Repost. That keeps your profile page clean while getting repetition into the feed. **Or just delete them all once your event is over.**

**TAG, TAG, and TAG:** Instagram will allow you to tag up to 25 or so other accounts in a post. ALWAYS tag @BaylorUniversity in every post. And tag as many others as you can that might run your post in their stories. @BaylorNSP, @BaylorCLL, accounts for different dorms, @BaylorStudentActivities, @BaylorStuLife, etc.

**The importance of tagging can’t be understated!** The reason for that is that you really need to get outside your own channel. For instance, let’s say your student org has 1000 followers to your Instagram account. We have to assume at the start that 50% or more of those are students who have graduated already and won’t be attending your event. So we’re down to 500 relevant followers. And for any post or story you make, you’re only going to have about 20% of your followers see it. So you post your graphic and literally maybe 100 relevant people see it. That’s not going to be a successful promotion.

**Getting outside your own account is crucial.** When other accounts run your post as a story or repost your story (assuming you tagged them in the story) then your event is seen by another large group of students who may not know about your event. If @BaylorUniversity reposts it, then it gets a massive distribution to 170,000+. (If you make a post that gets picked up by other accounts, do NOT delete that post until their stories have ended.)

**Get your members to repost on their personal accounts!** If you are a fraternal org, make it a rule. If you are a student org, ask your members to repost anything that comes out of the org account. **THIS WORKS!**

**DO NOT BE FEARFUL OR DISCOURAGED.** You know the old adage “you have not because you ask not.” Tag away. DM some accounts and ask if they’ll run your event in a story. If you don’t ask, you’ve already guaranteed a ‘no.’ If you ask, you may just get a ‘yes.’

## Other Social Media

If your org has TikTok, Facebook, Twitter (X), Threads, etc. GO FOR IT! Use all the channels. Each one has different best practices and you should familiarize yourself with them. There is no harm in getting out there in as many channels as possible. That said, in general, students are on Instagram and TikTok.

## Chamber Billboards

If you can afford to put up a big sign on campus, the Baylor Chamber of Commerce prints them and installs them for you. Dig into the details on the Baylor Chamber website. Be sure to plan in advance for this. It takes some time.

## Chalking

Talk about oldschool. Chalking is about as simple as it gets. Your members and some chalk. There are rules about what you can and can't do in chalking. You can find those on the Baylor Student Activities website. BUT...chalking is actually really effective. Why? Because it's weird. You don't see that much of it and you've got a very captive audience as students walk to and from classes. The uniqueness of it in today's digital marketing landscape really makes it stand out. And yet, very few student orgs do it. An example of one that does it really well is Vertical Student Ministries. CREW does some too.

## Tabling / Other 1:1 Sales Techniques

There is more to tabling than just selling event t-shirts. You can table without selling anything. On event week, you can even post your student leaders around campus at lunch time and have them be "town criers" (look it up, it's a really old tradition) who tell students to "Come to XX event on Friday night!!"

You might consider making some handouts like little flyers or postcards. Get your designs approved through Student Activities and hand them out to students around campus. Just like chalking being unique in our digital world, there is nothing more powerful than actually seeing a student endorse something and invite you personally.

## Digital Signage

Digital Signage on campus is managed independently in each building. If you'd like your event promoted on digital signs, you need to format it in 16:9 (1920x1080 px) and provide it for inclusion. Email your graphic to [thomas\\_barnard@baylor.edu](mailto:thomas_barnard@baylor.edu). He can add your graphic to signs in the SUB, East Village Dining, and supply it to other sign managers in the SLC, Libraries, dorm facilities, etc.



## University Webpages

If your event is on the scale of having a university webpage (Christmas on Fifth, Family Weekend, Homecoming, etc.), then you need to have your information onto the site **at least a month before the event for a community audience** like Christmas on 5th or **at least 3-6 months in advance for alumni and parents** who may need to make travel plans to get to Waco. 3 months is the minimum on that last one due to potentially needing to secure airplane tickets, hotel rooms, etc.

The university website is not a place that most current students go for information about events, but it is the **PRIMARY** place that constituents off-campus find their event information. If your event includes outside audiences, you need to place it high in your planning. Websites are managed by different areas of campus and you should speak with your staff sponsors about who to go to for updates.

## Frequency

Research has shown that it takes at least ten points of contact before a consumer makes a buying decision for a product or service. That means that **students may need to see your event advertised as many as ten times before they take the time to actually consume it and decide to attend.** With that in mind, the question of “should we use social media?” is a solid “yes.” And “should we use email?” ...”yes.” And “should we use other methods?”... “yes.” You should do all the things.

## Checklist

☐ 5W's Worksheet

☐ Location Secured

☐ Time/Date Set

☐ Event Promotional Designs

☐ University Calendar

☐ Chamber Billboards

☐ Email Marketing

☐ What's New BU

☐ Baylor News Digest

☐ Social Media Marketing

☐ Instagram

☐ Tiktok, Others

☐ Digital Signage

☐ Baylor University Website

☐ Tabling / Other techniques?

# Closing Thoughts

There are a ton of events on campus. And we can't expect every student to attend every event. It's crazy to think that they'd even attend 1% of the 10,000 or so events that take place each year. But there are two last thoughts you should consider:

**It's about the one.** Even with huge advertising and promotions, you may not end up with thousands of students at your event. But you may end up with ONE student who falls in love with your org and finds their home. It's worth promoting your event for that one. Every event can be a recruitment event!

**It's about branding.** At the end of the day, including your event in the emails, the calendar, and all the social media brings attention to your student organization. It puts your org front and center in the eyes of university staff and administrators. It showcases that your org is on the move, is growing, is thriving, is worthy of investment and partnership.

