



ometimes it seems as though no matter how hard you try to publicize events and activities,

the student body does not seem to know about them. No matter how many posters you hang or how many announcements you make, the word does not get around. You always hear comments such as “There was a dance? I didn’t know about it!”

Don’t let frustration with this ability of students to tune out announcements and walk past posters and fliers without noticing them get you down. Try some of the following techniques that have proven effective for student activity groups across the United States.

Sandwich Boards

Student leaders at Del Oro HS in Loomis, CA, create sandwich boards—two boards, hinged at the top—to place around campus with information about upcoming events. At East Fairmont (WV) HS, student council members attach two pieces of posterboard loosely together with yarn so that students can wear them around school or in the lunch room.

In a unique variation of this tech-

nique, student council members at Bridgeport (WV) HS dress up a pet dog in a costume to parade around at lunch and place a sign board across its back.

Wristbands

The student council at Clark County HS in Las Vegas, NV, uses wristbands for pre-sale tickets. Members put the brightly colored wristband on the person at the sales table and tell them it is their admission to the event. “People will ask them what it is for and they become part of your ‘word of mouth’ publicity,” said Sandy Ginger, student activities director. “Once people know what the bands are for, they also get an idea of who and



Photo by Lyn Fiscus

how many people are going to the event. If it was for an after game dance, we gave them to the cheerleaders and the team free the week before we started selling them," she said.

Shoe Messages

Clark County students also write messages on masking tape on the bottom of their shoes so when they sit at their desks and put their feet back (toes toward the floor) people behind them see the message.

Bubble Wrap

Who can resist popping the bubbles on bubble wrap? The TREND national office reports that its members print their event fliers on bright neon paper and mount each flier on a big sheet of bubble wrap. Or, they have a big piece of bubble wrap with a sign next to it that reads, "Pop a bubble if you plan to come to the Battle of the Bands." The sign also includes details about the event.

Unique Materials

TREND members also mount posters on unique materials such as fake fur, which they buy as remnants in fabric stores. For example, they use fake leopard fur for a poster publicizing a social event: "All party animals are invited to Battle of the Bands."

Decorative Hats

Student council members at Washington (MO) HS are masters at advertising events by creating

headpieces using newspapers, balloons, paper plates, and inexpensive plastic hats and visors. They paint and decorate the hats to relate to the theme of the event. For example, for a Winter Homecoming theme of "Alice in Wonderland,"

council members all wore top hats that they made into unique versions of the Mad Hatter's hat. "Our school has a 'no hat' policy, which the principal makes an exception to for our publicity hats. So a bonus of our publicity method is that council members enjoy having the chance to be special," said Karen Dawson, student council adviser.

Plastic Visors

Plastic visors are a favorite method of advertising for student council members at Cactus HS in Glendale, AZ. Students use pipe cleaners to decorate and paint to write on the visors, then wear them around their necks or upright on their heads. "If you use craft paints the visors can be reused because the paint will peel right off of the visors," said adviser Debbie Schupbach.

Foam Board Pins

Another method of advertising used at Washington HS is to make pins out of florescent foam board. Students cut the foam board into various shapes and glue them together in layers, gluing a pin back or safety pin to the back so the pin can be worn. On the front of the pin they use a permanent marker to highlight the information they want people to know.

Sidewalk Chalk

Chalking on sidewalks is used by student council members at Union HS in Tulsa, OK, to publicize events. Chalk creates highly visible messages and

washes right off, either with a hose or by letting rain do the clean-up. Washington HS student council members take this technique a step further and offer a \$25 cash award for the best chalk creation to advertise an upcoming event, like Homecoming. "Students come up with real masterpieces of advertising," said Dawson, who particularly likes the technique because it involves artistic students who might otherwise be left out and provides an opportunity for them to receive recognition for their talent.

Computer Screen Saver

Clark County student leaders also create a screen saver with information about their events for computers in the computer labs at schools, on the office work stations, and on department office computers.

Chain Link Fence Messages

Student council members at Washington HS, Clark County HS, and Cactus HS use cups, tissue paper, ribbons, and streamers to spell out big messages in their chain link fences. "It turns an unused area into a publicity tool," said Dawson. Cactus adviser Schupbach adds, "It's a pretty inexpensive and easy way to advertise when not much information needs to be conveyed."

Teaser Items

To publicize student council events at East Hartford (CT) HS, student leaders carry around carrots with the long green stems. When someone asks them why they have a carrot they reply, "Oh, just to remind me to tell you about (whatever event you are trying to advertise)." Tie colorful ribbons to the green stems for extra impact.

Giveaways

Hand out lollipops or bubble gum with little flags on them that remind students about the event.

Come up with a slogan that reflects the theme of the event. Or, put your message in fortune cookies and give them out.

Window Transparencies

Design a one-page flier and photocopy it on a sheet of transparency film. Color it with permanent markers, then hang in a window so the sunlight will shine through, creating a stained glass effect.

Table Tents

Use stiff paper or lightweight poster board to create a three-sided poster resembling a tent that will stand on the tables in the lunchroom, main office, or the library.

Bus Signs

Ask bus drivers if you can hang signs in the buses, similar to those found in public transportation.

Clock Signs

What do students (and teachers!) do a million times a day? Look at the clock! Why waste this valuable advertising space? Student leaders at Richland Center (WI) HS create clock signs to hang in the middle of the clocks, where they are sure to be noticed. Whatever you do, don't cover so much of the clock that people can't still tell the time! An alternative idea is to hang a sign near the clock that says, "Want to know what time it is? It's time for (state your event)."

Locker Coupons

"If you hang locker signs they could get torn down, but if you put up discount coupons they become valuable," said Ken Theide, student council adviser at Richland Center. Members create coupons for things like two dollars off the homecoming dance, buy one get one free, etc.

Staged Fight

What's the quickest way to draw a

crowd in a school? Richland Center staged a fight between twins who were very popular with their peers, good students, and out for activities. "During lunch they were off in an area and began yelling at each other, near fisticuffs, with books slammed and nose to nose. Everyone ran to see what could be a potential major fight. Then, just as everyone arrived they stopped, paused, and recited an announcement to come to the dance Friday after the game," said Thiede. "We thought it through and checked with the lunchroom monitors and administration, but forgot to tell the secretaries, who instinctively summoned the police. Oh well, that was a good learning experience, yet a very effective and unique way to promote an activity."

Footprints

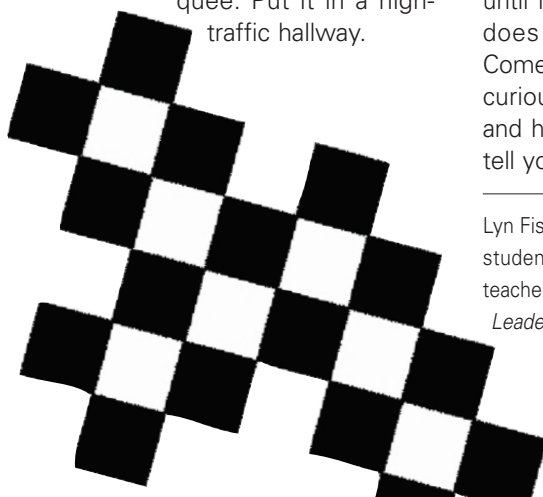
Cut out footprints in your school colors. Stick them to the ground so that they lead up to a big promotional poster. Students will follow the footprints to the poster to see what's up.

Ceiling Signs

Hang signs on the ceiling. Putting them flat on the ceiling works, as does making small signs each with one word and hanging them in a series so that as students walk down the hall they get the whole message.

Chaser lights

Put chaser lights around your best poster so it looks like a movie marquee. Put it in a high-traffic hallway.



Balloons

Hand out colorful helium balloons with your message imprinted or hand-written with markers.

Poster Shapes

Junior class members at Plattsburg (MO) Accelerated HS create posters in colors and shapes corresponding to the event, such as chili pepper shaped signs for a chili supper, record platter or CD case shapes for a dance, Christmas trees and packages for a Christmas dance, and so forth.

E-Books

The student activities director at Alhambra (CA) HS creates "e-books" (electronic books) that replicate the entire school website on a disk as an executable file so parents and students can access all school information without going online. They distribute the e-books at Back-to-School Night.

Mystery Signs

Cold Spring Harbor (NY) HS activities director Marc Comerchero loves a good suspense for students, so his student council members create mystery signs for special activities. Three weeks before the event they start hanging large posters around the building that say:

SAT. DEC. 12 IT'S COMING!

After those posters are up a few days, they start adding information to the advertising, including a little more information every few days until finally the event is revealed. "It does work to some extent," said Comerchero. "Kids do come in very curious about the mystery posters, and hate it when I say, "Sorry, can't tell you." But they come!" ■

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