

# Information Busters: Communicating with Your Campus Community

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## ABSTRACT

Marketing strategies are continually being evaluated against the influence and flexibilities of technology. Clearly, the old methods of advertising or making announcements are still influential, but everyone wants to add a twist. Baylor University is moving beyond standard paper ad media, such as flyers and posters. By using a variety of media formats (dynamic screen savers, trouble-free “messages of the day,” scrolling marquees, Windows Messenger, web pages and email notifications), Baylor has created more energetic and effective campus communication tools.

Using basic theories of marketing, beginning with a proactive strategy each year to developing creative slogans, the most effective communication occurs when the advertising or marketing is consistently utilizing every touch point system appealing to the client. Obviously, these imaginative tactics must incorporate the old rules: #1 Know Your Audience, #2 Value of Content Must Be Beneficial and #3 Ad Placement (rule of repetition and location, location, location). With the ever changing world of technology, it becomes difficult to ensure that information for the campus community maintains the basic marketing theories, and more importantly that it provides current news. Many college communities face this issue with changes in print monitoring systems, virus protection, and wireless services.

## Categories and Subject Descriptors

H.4.3 [Information Systems Application]: Communications Applications – *Information browsers*

**General Terms:** Management, Documentation, Performance, Design, Reliability, Experimentation, Human Factors, Standardization.

**Keywords:** PowerPoint, advertisement, marketing strategies, announcements, marquees, screen savers, Windows Messenger, communication.

## 1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Baylor University has a student population of approximately 14,000, with a student to faculty ratio of 19 to 1. Technology has changed the way Baylor communicates with the entire campus community.

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Although standard paper media is still heavily used on campus, the Information Commons Unit, a part of the Electronic Library, is exploring newer methods of providing students, faculty, and staff with information. As we explore new marketing methods such as dynamic screen savers, “messages of the day,” scrolling marquees, Windows Messenger, web pages and email notifications, we must be mindful of the old rules of marketing. We also have to remind ourselves that just because a new technology has become available it does not necessarily guarantee that it will be a useful tool.

## 2. HISTORY

In the past, we have relied too much on signage and paper advertising for upcoming campus events, important facts, new services, and major system-wide changes. Another major problem we faced was providing out-dated information to students via computer configuration because of the complexity of making necessary system-wide information updates. Students rapidly began to ignore signs because of their tendency to become quickly out-of-date and blend into the surroundings. Logos and graphics failed to continue to grab the attention of intended audiences. Consequently, new methods of advertisement were greatly needed to overcome this hurdle. Research was conducted and new methods attempted to help provide better campus-wide advertisement.

## 3. MARKETING STRATEGY

There are four essential keys to developing a marketing strategy [1]:

- Know your audience
- Value of content must be beneficial
- Ad placement
- Evaluating the overall effectiveness of the campaign

### 3.1 Know Your Audience

No matter what is being marketed, you must understand who the intended audience is before you attempt to begin. Remember that you would not speak the same way to an adult as you would a child. Knowing your audience helps decide what to say, how to say it, and where and when to say it. The more you know about the audience’s specific needs and wants enables the construction of an effective communication scheme. When you are analyzing who your audience will be, you need to keep the following questions in mind[2]:

- Who is your audience?
- What is the size of the intended audience?
- How much time will the audience spend reading?
- What questions might the audience have after reading the advertisement?

- What types of reactions might you expect?
- Will this message stay fresh on the audience's mind?
- Will students become more aware of resource available to the audience?
- How familiar is your audience with the topic?

### 3.2 Value of Content Must Be Beneficial

In order to remain effective, information must always be up-to-date and current. If the information does not add value you will fail to reach your audience in that instance and potentially damage future attempts. Many times they will not read any future messages because they will not recognize that new information is available. Thus, the method of communication will no longer work to your benefit.

### 3.3 Ad Placement

The emergence of technology has led to the opportunity to place advertisements in locations previously underutilized. The location of your advertisement is highly critical in order to reach your audience. In order to reach the maximum amount of people, you must target known areas of high traffic or "hot spots."

### 3.4 Evaluating the Overall Effectiveness of the Campaign

At the end of a marketing campaign life cycle, it is important to determine the success or failure of the entire process. The analysis of all tools utilized allows for the prevention of future mistakes in forthcoming promotions. Keep these suggestions in mind when evaluating the overall cycle.

- Was the promotion well received?
- Did it reach the intended audience?
- Did it provide the necessary information to prevent confusion?
- Am I using effective channels of distribution?
- What impact did new technologies have?
- Did placement in certain areas prove to reach more people?

## 4. USING TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES IN MARKETING

At Baylor University, we use the following technology resources to market to our campus community. These include resources that we have used in the past as well as some that are being used for the first time this academic year.

- Dynamic screen savers
- Message of the day
- Scrolling marquee
- Legal text
- Windows messenger
- Web Pages
- Emails

### 4.1 Dynamic Screen Savers

With the capability of advertising any campus event, urgent information, and campus services, the pre-Windows login screensaver has proven to be an effective marketing tool. These

screen savers are easily customizable at setup with the use of Microsoft PowerPoint. PowerPoint allows us to make sure that our slides grab the audience's attention by employing animations, transitions, fonts, and graphics appealing to a wide variety of clients. At Baylor, these screen savers have become a wide scale marketing solution, with the slide shows running on approximately 1,100 computers across campus. Departments can make requests to have information passed on through this technique. The uniqueness of this media is the ability to target specific locations with the information that is needed. If a department wants an event promoted only in the library, we have the capability of fulfilling the request. As updates are needed for the presentation, changes can be made to the presentation slide show with the changes filtering down to each of the client computers. In order to receive the updated presentation, the show must be restarted from the client workstations.

We have currently been using screen savers as advertising tools for the past two semesters and have seen an increase in the number of requests for information to be passed on to the campus community. We anticipate that this program will continue to be popular and believe that outside entities will begin to approach us to advertise local services in close proximity to campus.

### 4.2 Message of the Day

The current version of "Message of the Day" allows us to pass information on to a specific group of users. Unlike previous attempts at creating a "Message of the Day," the files are located on a share point with only shortcuts being located on client machines. This gives us the ability to make instantaneous changes to the content of the message. The changes are passed down whenever a new user logs onto a workstation. The first thing that the user sees is the "Message of the Day." See Figure 1 for a recent example of a message of the day.



Figure 1. PawPrints Message of the Day.

### 4.3 Scrolling Marquee

In visiting local restaurants and campus dining facilities, several individuals noticed how these locations utilized a marquee sign to advertise specials of the day, menu items, and upcoming specials and events. A discussion was started to determine whether or not this form of advertisement could be effective in a university computing setting. The decision was made to purchase a small unit to be placed in the main computing facility to determine the overall success of this idea before using funds to outfit other locations on campus.

### 4.4 Legal Text

A quick way to pass on directions on how to operate a campus computer is to use legal text to accomplish this goal. Legal text is

the pre-login message window. Once a patron presses the Ctrl+Alt+Del buttons on the keyboard of any Microsoft Windows machine, the message will be displayed before they can enter their UserID and Password. See Figure 2 for an example of a legal text message we use in the central library to give guests information on how to log on to the library workstations. Registry tools are needed to perform these changes and can be made in a matter of minutes. An example of how we have used this technology is to give guests to our library facilities the user name and password that will allow them to access the guest kiosk mode.

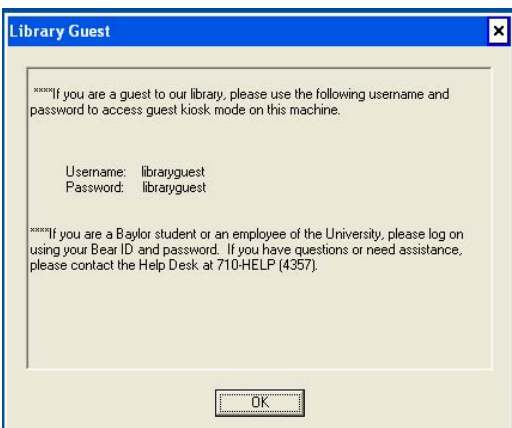


Figure 2. Library guest legal text message.

#### 4.5 Windows Messenger

Windows Messenger is a simple way of providing end users feedback in regards to our print management system. Each time a patron prints a document, a windows messenger window is displayed with the following information about their print allowance: name, balance and document name. However, we are limited to 130 characters in any message sent back to the user. This limitation requires that messages be well planned and very concise, to be understood, yet effective. In a Windows Active Directory environment, group policies are required to be in place that will permit the messenger service to be started in order to pass information both from the server to the client.

#### 4.6 Web Pages

Web Pages are widely used by all departments on campus to notify prospective students, current students, support staff, and faculty of upcoming events. One of our major concerns is to ensure that the content of our web pages does not become outdated or remain static. We currently use two different methods of creating and updating our web pages in order to overcome this problem.

The first method utilizes Macromedia Dreamweaver and the template functions built within this application. This gives flexibility in creation and design of the overall layout. Once this template has been formed, subsequent pages can quickly be developed to help give the webpage the functions and tools to make the website appealing and achieve the desired needs. One drawback of this method is that it becomes hard for multiple users to maintain the content and sometimes leads to pages becoming overwritten with old files because each user can have old versions of pages stored on their local machine. Therefore, when a user uploads the

entire site they can override newer versions that are currently housed on the server.

The second method currently being utilized is a “Content Management System.” With this method, staff members work with a representative from the Information Technology Web Services group in order to create the design and layout of all pages. There can be limitations to the design, but the ability of multiple users to make additions and changes negates this limitation. It no longer requires that a specific person be responsible for any single web page. Many people, including student workers, are then able to make changes and present a different perspective for the web project. It also provides a more robust method to keep pages dynamic and management becomes easy.

#### 4.7 Email Notifications

Email is the most common form of communication in business, educational institutions and for personal use. Email has been abused by many marketing companies and groups; however it remains an effective means of communicating information to a large group of users. Mail mergers are used to pass individualized messages to these large groups. This provides a means of personalizing messages containing bill information, room assignments, computer security vulnerabilities, and class updates. As always, trying to communicate this information in a way that prevents users from assuming that the information is SPAM is extremely difficult. If you do not accomplish this goal, this method is not effective because the majority of your intended audience will never even read it.

Our campus provides departments with public folders in order to provide students and faculty a mechanism to communicate departmental requests, organizational needs, and system information without requiring the use of a personal email account. This feature is widely used and greatly appreciated because of the benefits.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

As you can see, there are many different ways to advertise important information to a large targeted audience. Technology has aided in this process by providing new and exciting ways to portray ideas without having to use traditional signage. These techniques allow for changes to be quickly made to prevent information from not reaching the intended audience or not being current and up to date. Much can be learned from simple methods such as these and can be applied to any marketing strategy. Screen savers have been highly successful on our campus and will continue to be used as a primary marketing tool in the years to come.

#### 6. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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#### 7. REFERENCES

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