WAYS TO MARKET AND PROMOTE

Promoting club/group activities and communicating with alumni in the local area are vital to running an effective club/group. Taking the time to develop a simple marketing plan for programming can yield dramatic results.

Marketing for club/group may include the following:

- Volunteer recruitment
- Event promotion
- Board recruitment

Although communication is one of the most important elements of club/group success, it is essential to note that “communication” does not lie solely in the hands of the communications chair. Rather, it is essential that every club/group leader makes communication a priority.

PLANNING

To get the most out of any communications program, it helps to have a solid plan in place. Create a communications schedule to follow, even if not every event is determined. Start by putting events that the club/group knows of on a calendar, decide what promotion channels to use, and then work backward to fix dates to send out messages to local alumni.

PROMOTION CHANNELS

There are a number of ways to share information with your constituents, and the Alumni Association provides several promotion channels, including online event listings, emails, social media, and peer-to-peer outreach, as well as print materials for clubs/groups in the United States. These channels are available throughout the year but have deadlines when details are due to club/group leadership or staff liaisons.

EVENT LISTING

The Alumni Association maintains websites for the most of existing alumni community called UChicago Community Online or UCCO. These sites will include a brief description of the clubs/groups, contact information for alumni leaders, news of each community, and a list of upcoming events with registration capabilities. Club/groups
are encouraged to submit content for their web pages, as well as develop social
media pages to complement the community's UCCO sites.

When an event is listed on a UCCO site there is an automatic feed that allows the
event to appear on the main Alumni Association event page.

If your region does not have a UCCO site, request assistance from your staff liaison or
mailto:alumniassociation@uchicago.edu.

EMAILS

Email is the quickest and most common form of communication for clubs/groups.

If a clubs/groups has an assigned UCCO site, there is an established email list and
campaign management software. The site is able to send out email campaigns to all
alumni who have opted in to receive emails in that area. There are two different styles
of UCCO sites, volunteer managed and Alumni Association managed. If regional
volunteers maintain the UCCO site, they have the responsibility of sending out email
campaigns. If the Alumni Association maintains the UCCO site, an email will be sent
out biweekly. An event must be submitted through a UCCO site before it can appear
in a promotional email.

If your clubs/groups does not have a UCCO site, request assistance from the staff
liaison to create an email announcement for your club/group to be sent from the
Alumni Association. Any leadership interested should contact their staff liaison for
guidance and production timeline information.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media offers another opportunity for alumni to discover your club/group
events and programs and can also engage and recruit alumni to the board.

Social networking sites, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter, are online
community resources for alumni. If a club/group is considering using one or more of
these sites, keep in mind that given the rapidly changing landscape and differing level
of adoption and comfort by alumni, the use of these sites should be part of a
balanced communications strategy. We recommend that club/groups task social
media outreach to a board member who is already using these platforms.

Of the social platforms noted above, the most popular for club/groups is Facebook.
Clubs/groups have either a Facebook page that alumni can “like” or group that alumni
can join.

Some of our clubs/groups have their own LinkedIn groups and use that as a way to
connect virtually and to share event information. The Alumni Association has its own
LinkedIn group with more than 20,000 members. Join this group to post local
club/group events, but remember to direct viewers to the online registration page.

Club/groups that maintain Twitter accounts should post several tweets about their
events—with Twitter, a one-time posting is often missed, so multiple tweets with
reminders about the event are acceptable. It often helps to include @uchicago and @uchicagoalumni in a tweet so the message can easily be retweeted to the followers of the official UChicago Twitter or Alumni Association feeds.

PRINT MATERIAL

For clubs/groups located within the United States, the Alumni Association will cover the creative, printing, and mailing costs for postcards. A postcard can be an effective way to notify alumni of your club’s/group’s upcoming activities. Any leadership interested in creating a postcard should contact their staff liaison for guidance and production timeline information.

PEER-TO-PEER OUTREACH

Alumni volunteers are encouraged to promote events to their social network via personal emails or their personal social media platforms. Timing can vary, but it is probably ideal to schedule this peer-to-peer outreach approximately one month before an event, following up with a reminder the week of the event.