

CBI National Student Electronic Media Convention

50 Low-Cost or No-Cost PR Ideas in 50 Minutes



Panelists

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Disclaimer

Not every idea is doable for your station

Many involve a sales effort to get prizes & sponsorships

Brainstorm off of this list and customize for your particular situation

We are radio people, so we'll speak from our experience, but many of these ideas are easily adapted to television, newspaper and online student media operations

Public Relations

Doing whatever you can do to gain attention

Some of these ideas are basic while others may raise a few eyebrows

Please adjust to the culture of your campus and community

1) Promotional Items

For giveaway at station, on- and off-campus, at station events

Stickers, magnets, buttons, t-shirts, pens, coffee cups, flash drives, koozies, stress balls, temporary tattoos, etc.

Get sponsor(s) to cover part/all of cost

Do trade-out w/local vendor to reduce cost

Add sponsor logos, coupons

2) Display Booth/Tent

Find a sponsor to cut cost

Use for all appearances

After some time, you may need more than one

Combine with a mobile sound system for exposure, e.g. ION Tailgater (\$115)

3) Business Cards*

Reduced costs if ordered online

Generic cards for all directors/manager or specific cards for each if budget allows

Specialty show DJs can get own cards, list show times, etc.

Create cards for special events, hand out at strategic times to draw attention to something on the air the next day

*Handbills may be more cost-effective option. Put on heavier stock paper to reduce instant throwaways or losing in purse, back pocket

4) Press Releases

Campus marketing/media relations and local media outlets

For station events/happenings

For station member accomplishments

For sports broadcast schedule

For fall/spring semester broadcast schedules

Email/social media distribution

5) Public Affairs Programming

Great PR move for building community relationships

Fulfill FCC requirement

For any programs you air, send a note or email one month prior to the semester starting to professors in topic area

They may include listening as extra credit

6) T-Shirts

All staff must wear at events

For station events/fundraisers

Have sponsors defray cost with sponsorships on shoulder(s) and back

7) Music Promo Stuff Giveaway

Occasional/regular purging of promotional
CDs/LPs

Posters/Stickers/Buttons/Shirts

8) On-Air Marathon

One DJ or DJ duo for a long period of time

Arrange prizes in advance that listeners can call in and pay for as a station fundraiser

Sponsorships can be sold and/or tradeouts set up for food, coffee, energy drinks, etc.

College Radio Day (October)

Vinylthon (College Radio Day – April)

9) College Radio Day

Tie-in with annual event created to raise awareness of college & high school radio stations

Go live for 24-hours

Create special versions of on-air shows

Do trade out with local sponsors for coffee, food, prizes

Promote through college media services, other local media

10) Bumper Stickers on College Vehicles

Ask before putting them on:

- college maintenance vans
- sports team buses / vans
- shuttle buses
- golf carts
- university police cars

11) Shuttle Bus Radio Play

Ask that shuttle bus drivers play your station

Hold contest that rewards bus drivers playing your station

12) Scout Tours

Contact and provide station tours to Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Brownie and Girl Scout tours

They have a Communication Component they need to complete

Can also work for Explorers Posts

Have them do liners for your station

13) Open House Tours

Make station open and available for tours for prospective students during college recruitment days

Find out which department is responsible for campus tours & college recruitment days, and provide them with an information sheet about your media outlet

Include administration and alumni

14) Green Team

Have brightly colored shirts printed with logo and any sponsors

Arrange regular meetings to clean up parks or roadways

Sponsor a highway

Press release to local newspaper & other media for possible coverage

15) Social Media Fans

You post a picture of them with the logo somewhere in the picture.

Set up voting for “favorite”

Viral—their friends come to your social media to vote and share on their personal accounts

Check specific contest rules

16) Ticket Giveaway

Take callers on-air

Entry forms at station events

Respond to posts on social media

Text to studio line, e.g. RadioFX, ZipWhip

17) Campus Concerts

Arrange with Student Government or programming board to allow you to hang banners around stage area

Run promos on-air & promote show on social media

Have DJs introduce the band

Serve as media sponsor for event

Meet & greets w/performers

18) Coupon Sheet/Booklet/ Program Grid

Sell contracts to local advertisers

Minimum amount gets free coupon

Eight maximum and no competing
businesses

Hand out at Freshmen Orientation

First exposure to new residents

19) Listener Database

Permission Marketing

Have listeners sign up via your website

Sign up listeners at your promotional events

Get email information from your prize entry forms

E-mail them a blast once per week tops of what they can win, listen too or where to go

Sell sponsorship(s)

20) Promo Videos

Shoot & edit promotional video

Post to media outlet website, on social media

Play video during recruitment presentations to classes, high school groups, at job/internship fairs

21) Profile Videos

Media outlet

Staff members

Listeners

Local businesses that play your radio
station

22) Events Calendar

Every day & month listing of happenings

On-campus, community, area, regional events

Station events included on calendar

Promote the calendar on-air, drive traffic to website

Sell sponsorships

23) Food Tray Sheets/Table Tents

Advertise station happenings

Sell sponsorships

Arrange with food service to put on dining hall trays

Use heavier stock paper to make less flimsy

24) Display Case/Bulletin Board

Create display of station promotional materials, awards, pictures

Include digital picture frame in display case

In your building or student center

25) TV Station Guide

Students new to the campus don't know the TV channel assignments

Provide a channel list with your TV station logo

Of course, your station is listed in the largest font

26) Move-In Day

Set up in common area near freshman halls

Give out station recruitment fliers

Give out station promotional handouts

Recruits both listeners and potential members

27) Campus Bookstore Promotion

Held at the start of fall & spring semesters

Giveaways from local businesses, drawings for tickets, prize wheel, classic video gaming, product samples

Live music

Tie-in with vendors to generate \$\$\$

28) On-Campus Movie Night

Station member stands up front before movie and hypes station events

Station video promo/feature runs before movie

Pass out promotional items before or after show

Distribute samples from local business, i.e. yogurt shop, for \$\$

29) Birthday/Holiday Cards

Have cards printed with logo/staff picture and signed by the staff

Send to listeners that have won prizes during the year or registered on web site

Provides a follow up listener touch

Can also send to sponsors/supporters

30) Job/Internship/Org Fairs

Sponsored by campus orgs

Interface with students & professionals

Create awareness of media organization,
attract future staff members

31) Frequency Tie-in with Ticket Prices

Work with college activities, Student Government, local promoters to have ticket prices contain station frequency such as \$8.99

Also can have group put station logo on tickets, posters, web graphics & other promotional materials for the event

32) Blood Drive / Marrow Match

Work with American Red Cross or Cancer Society

Call-ins from the site

Give away station material to those donating

Interviews for person-in-the-street type news piece

Set up as competition between residence halls

33) Cable TV Bulletin Board

Program listings & description

Stream station audio

34) Signage

Post signs directing traffic to your media outlet in strategic locations in & around your building and on campus

Place logo signs on the major roads heading to the campus while students are moving in.

Also works for major sporting events if you're broadcasting the game.

Can ask athletic dept. to display graphic w/station call letters & logo at stadium, on scoreboard, or digital billboard

35) Halftime Entertainment

Register fans for halftime contest

Ideas include football toss, frisbee toss, bowling, tire roll, dance-off, sack race

Coordinate prizes with athletic department

Prizes provided by sponsors, i.e. gift certificates, short-term car leases

36) Provide Music Playlist To Play During Pre-game & Halftime

Make sure to include drops with station name and a few station promos between songs

37) Tournaments

3-on-3 basketball, golf, bicycling, disc golf, soccer, softball, kickball, racquetball, 5k running race, trivia, Super Smash Bros

Entry fees go to charitable organization

Entrants get t-shirts, trophies, cash prize

Sponsors cover cost of t-shirts, water, food, etc.

Station & sponsor banners placed at venue, start/finish line, along route

38) PA Announcements

Use at all campus sports events

Give script to Sports Information Office well in advance

Stick with generic material so it's evergreen

39) Game Placards

For TV games

Make up placards for fans with station logo
and a family friendly phrase

When fans hold up, TV exposure

40) Tailgating

Set up promo tent at tailgate

Hand out swag, food, free music, bottled water, etc. – provided by local sponsor

If there's live music, ask to make stage announcements, introduce band(s)

Broadcast game play-by-play

41) Homecoming Float

Find out Homecoming Theme

Try to combine theme with broadcasting when brainstorming ideas

Put listeners/viewers on float

Post float pictures to the station website to have voting—drive traffic to the site

42) Preferred Parking

At campus concerts / big events

Work with Campus Safety Office

Set aside prime parking for those with station bumper stickers on their car (or if they agree to allow you to put one on)

43) New Music Listening Parties

Arrange with a business (coffee shop, music store, etc.) for location

Free downloads, t-shirts, stickers & swag given away at event

44) Super Sticker Stops

Your station members put sticker on the car and give away free soft drinks, prizes, etc.

45) Free Car Wash w/ Bumper Sticker

For xx minutes—tie in station frequency

Only for basic wash so car wash has potential to make money on extras

Best during non-winter months for car wash cooperation

46) Holiday Testimonials

Take a recorder around town

Have local business owners record a holiday message

Play in rotation on air

Business owners will hear from others that they heard it on the air

They now have proof people listen to your station

Sell them on value of advertising

47) Political Debate

Host political debate featuring candidates for local offices

Partner w/other student media outlet(s)

Partner w/community organizations, i.e. League of Women Voters

Invite student & community political orgs

Positive “town and gown” event

Hold event on- or off campus?

48) Newspaper Listings

Back of TV Guide (Sunday paper)

Sports broadcasts in sports section

List broadcasts in student paper game story

49) Coffee Club Card

Tie in with your morning show

Buy xx number cups, get one free

Can't advertise on air if non-commercial

50) Open Mic Nights

At local business

If you decide to air live, make sure you have
delay with a competent board op

MC existing open mics

51) Graduation Giveaway

Set up graduation type prizes (resume printing, dry cleaning, interview training, portfolio, etc.

Register to win

52) Giant Garage/Yard Sale

Indoors or out, sell plots to people that want to dump junk

Have staff help moving stuff in & out for vendors

Advertise heavily on air and off

Clothing swap

53) Clothing/Food Collection

Arrange delivery to local clothing or food bank

Have prizes for those donating

Set up at a heavy traffic public location

54) Trunk or Treat

Bags w/ logo & sponsor

Solicit businesses to fill trunk with candy—
one car per business

Arrange with a car dealer xx number of car
trunks on their lot

Kids Trick or Treat at the car dealer

55) Invasion of the Party Crashers

Travel from party to party on the weekend
doing call-ins – use your delay! – and hand
out swag, prizes

Consider doing this on road game days at
local sports bars

Do live drops

56) Logo Lights / Pumpkin Carving

Contest for listeners/viewers to create your station name in holiday lights or pumpkin carvings or “vote” signs

57) Collaborate with local charity

Contact local charity group

Promote events/drives

Clothing drives, food drives, etc.

Arrange drop-off location

Local charity group distributes gifts

58) 12 Days of Christmas

Tie days in with radio-related items, “Five golden throats!”

One prize the first day, two the second day, etc.

59) Free Willy

Local turkey farm, pick one and name him Willy

If listeners/viewers don't donate enough canned goods for local clothing shelf, Willy dies

High traffic locations for collection

6o) Information/Product Handouts

Contact local businesses and/or product manufacturers

Get station staff to hand out samples at big events (opening of school, games, concerts)

Charge companies & make \$\$\$

61) New Car Show

Arrange with local auto dealer to bring 3-5 models of cars on campus to display with a representative

Schedule just prior to the end of the year when seniors will be in the market

Charge dealer an appearance fee for your trouble

Can be used for new or previously enjoyed dealers

62) Used Car Sale

Secure a giant parking lot

Set aside spots to put used cars

Charge a set fee per car to display

Advertise heavily to draw a big crowd

Involves advertising for car sellers well in advance

63) Teacher of the Week

School of the week

Nominations and voting on station website

Winning teacher guest DJ's a show

64) High School of the Month

Guest DJ each week on designated day

One week freshman, next week
sophomore, etc.

Vote on station website to drive traffic

Can also profile student
athletes/coaches/teachers

65) Miniature Golf

Set up at holes (frequency tie-in)

Hole in one on those holes while you're there wins

Call-ins

66) Movie Night

One night per week is station night w/price frequency tie-in

Station member stands up front before movie and hypes station events

Station video promo/feature runs before movie

Call-ins from the lobby before show

Can have concessions price tie-in as well

Occasionally have free screenings

67) Dartman

Listeners challenge one of your on-air personalities/columnists to darts

Also works for bowling, video games, etc.

Can raise money for charity

68) Stuff The Car/Bus

Can be used with clothing or food drives as mentioned earlier

Acts as a visual for the public

Can also be used for local immediate needs such as flood victims, armed services, etc.

69) Prize Hound Contests

Velcro Ball/Bean Bag Toss

Prize Wheel

Dice Throw

Pick a Card (any number from deck that is in station frequency wins)

70) Scavenger Hunt

Tie in with tickets to big events, i.e. music festivals, major concerts, to get the most promotional bang-for-your-buck possible

On-campus and/or off-campus?

Avoid needing a car and need for speed
(liability reasons)

71) Temperature Guess Game

Sign sponsor for prize

Listeners register online with day for the first day the temperature will reach 70 degrees (for northern climates)

Ties broken by random drawing

Also works for "First Inch of Snow"

72) Remote Trips

Major attractions/events in your area, i.e.
Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland or
Radio Hall of Fame in Chicago

Pro sporting teams in your area

Music festivals

Away games

73) Costumed Handouts

Borrow a costume from Theatre Dept or
rent a costume from a local shop

Handout flyers, coupons, etc.

74) Dress Your Pet

High traffic location

Halloween pet costume contest

Categories include “Most Looks Like Their Owner”

Local pet stores donate prizes

Work with pet shelter to encourage adoption

75) Hair from the Herd

Locks of Love

Arrange and promote months in advance to give people time to grow their hair long enough.

76) Free Grocery Giveaway

Arrange with local grocery store for xx dollar gift certificate for xx weeks

People register at grocery store all week

Live broadcast on day of drawing

Must be present to win or call the station within xx number of minutes or draw another name

Can't advertise registration on air if non-comm

Questions/Suggestions

We want 'em!

Email

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