

COLLEGE BROADCASTERS, INC. NATIONAL STUDENT ELECTRONIC MEDIA CONVENTION
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BY BRI AAB, MICHAEL D'ARGENIO AND JAMIE LYNN GILBERT

NC STATE
STUDENT MEDIA

STATION PROMOTION

THE KEYS TO A GREAT PROMOTIONS DEPARTMENT

CBI has been immensely influential for WKNC. Having little crossover between the type of promotions that other student groups and regional radio stations do, we have had to write from scratch effective promotional plans to appeal to a vastly different student body and local community to cater to the most relevant audiences.

The primary focus here was to flesh out the feasibility of certain ideas and to appeal to your target audience. With these things and a good targeted audience, a lot of our promotional ventures will meet more success overall. Speaking with other colleges and attending this panel helped Michael and I nail down some concrete ideas for the coming semesters:

ATTENDEES:

**BRI AAB, WKNC PROGRAM
DIRECTOR**

**MICHAEL D'ARGENIO,
WKNC OPERATIONS
MANAGER**

**JAMIE LYNN GILBERT,
STUDENT MEDIA
ASSISTANT COORDINATOR
AND WKNC ADVISER**

1. This is most interesting thing we picked up: finding sponsors for promotional items off-campus. Many stations that cannot get enough funding for their promotional items from their respective universities get funding from local sponsorships that will plaster their name on one half of your koozie, T-shirt, magnet, sticker, and you can put your name on the other half. While split sponsorship is not always ideal, if we can find local sponsors that already represent the type of audience that we strive to promote, then this could build great community relationships as well as get our name spread.
2. Selling our merchandise online. Currently, the only way to buy WKNC merchandise is to attend one of our sponsored events or going to School Kids Records for our T-shirts. Bigcartel.com is a free way to put our merchandise online and make a percentage profit year-round.
3. More concerts. This is such an easy way to get attention from campus students.
4. iPhone/Android application or Website compatibility. We host things like our playlist and the Rock Report that get huge attention on our Website that we are trying to move to a phone interface currently. We could promote this move online and on-air by doing contests, partner with venues or record stores to do discounts and allowing listeners to write in to DJs to request songs.

Submitted by Bri Aab

ROUNDTABLE: RADIO & TV PROMOTIONS

This panel really helped us pinpoint some holes in our promotions department in helping up emphasize our unique quality as a radio station – a media outlet less explored by our students. There are so many things that we can do by capitalizing on the rarity of the exposure of radio to college students that mainly include remote broadcasting options. Remote broadcasting is something that we've done in the past, and it garners huge listenership amongst our current audience, but has done little to improve our on-campus listenership. This is logical; if a student is not aware of what WKNC is, that student will not tune in for our remote broadcast at Hopscotch. The radio promotions panel taught us the importance of on-campus remote broadcasting in heavily student populated areas (i.e., the Brickyard, Tucker Beach, Court of North Carolina). Remotely broadcasting from one of these locations would garner interest in a very tangible, interactive way: students

can come see how DJs operate a sound board, they can request songs, and they can see the process of going on air. This would cement WKNC's presence to students that may never have heard of us before.

A way to improve our influence in the campus community, as suggested by the promotional panel, would be to involve our listeners in charity events. We currently have one charity project per year, which benefits the station entirely: Double Barrel Benefit. Otherwise, we can have groups participate in can drives, fundraising concerts, and on-air contests (play pop music until listeners reach a goal of x amount of money, live video stream of a DJ playing music in the studio until she/he passes out/leaves). This would help motivate our staff to get together and promote the station in an altruistic and fun way.

Submitted by Bri Aab

RADIO PR: SPREADING THE WORD

A SWOT Analysis stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and is a public relations strategy that radio stations can use to determine the success or failure of promotions in events and publicity. Something that we have going for us is our relationship with the local community. The downside of this, however, is the strained relationship that WKNC has with its on-campus community. The leaders of this session empathized with WKNC in that way; they were forced to go through a name and frequency change as the result of encroachment of frequencies. They were charged with the task of publicizing this change to their audience in an effort to maintain listenership, but when they tried to promote their name change they were confronted with the fact that most of the student body was not aware of their existence.

The station leading this session used a SWOT analysis to determine the success of each of their promotional endeavors. One of the major promotional events that we hold periodically is our Fridays on the Lawn outdoor concert series, which has shown to both great success and depressed attendance sporadically. Michael and I spent some time with other station leaders to create our own action plan and SWOT analysis of our events to gain their insight and hopefully evade their unique problems that we haven't yet faced.

S: All volunteers came and did their part in making this event run cohesively. In the past, we had a serious problem with having DJs run sound, handle catering, and promote the event in the week beforehand on campus. A way that we have promoted volunteering to our staff is to make it a necessary condition of having a DJ shift. We also began advertising the necessity of volunteering for our station in the training class rather as a way to get students involved and invested earlier on in the process.

W: The general attendance was much less this year than it had been in the past. We spent a lot of time analyzing how this had come to be, and we determined that it could not be the sole position of the general manager and promotions director to execute something that should grab the interest of hundreds of students. By involving more staff, you're getting more students to come automatically simply by attracting different friend groups – especially if you're utilizing a staff like ours, which holds approximately 120 students. Also, the promotions leading up to the event around a week before we were told are to be the most vigorous. Most of polled attendees from concerts at other colleges with similar stations and concerts to

ours found that the week of promotions gained most of the attention from the student body.

O: We have a really great partnership with Marco's Pizza after Fridays on the Lawn that we feel we can utilize for future events. Catering has historically been the most difficult part of getting an event like this together, and having that out of the way leaves room for students to find more creative partnerships with community. Some partnerships we've had the opportunity to make have been with HeadCount and Vitamin Water, and we'd like to try to gain more local attention for future events.

T: While this panel focused on other student media groups as the primary cause for threats in terms of advertising, we actually lumped student media in the opportunities category, as they have been pivotal in our past advertising and charge no cost for it. Instead, we believe that our threats stem mainly from NCSU athletics. So far, the trend has been if there has any type of State game, our attendance for Fridays on the Lawn has been dismal. In the future, we plan to keep on this to avoid poor turnout and have less of a competition for our on-campus students.

Submitted by Bri Aab

BOOMSLANG: PLANNING A MUSIC FESTIVAL

This session was interesting to say the least, and it helped to raise a lot of questions that needed to be discussed. This session talked about something that is very essential to most college radio stations: music festivals. The only problem was that this session was about a music festival that was funded by an enormously gross budget and was hardly student-run. These facts made this session not relatable to almost all in attendance. At WKNC, our music festival (Double Barrel Benefit) is completely run by our staff of full-time students and done with next to no money. This is the reality for most college radio stations. Most stations do not have advisers to do all the work for them and do not have hundreds of thousands of dollars to pay bands. Instead, the students must do all the work and find sponsors to fund the events.

Although this session talked about some unreal heights all other college radio stations are unable to attain due to funding, the conversation did spark some ideas for next year. We have been talking about the idea of having a second music festival in the fall with non-local music acts. This would give us a chance to showcase other music that we play on our station. In addition to this we also found some new promotional tools. We are going to work on building up a rapport with local media authorities such as independent newspapers and blogs to get the word out to them about our festivals. In addition to this, we will create a street team that will work to spread the word downtown. Although this session was not very applicable to many stations, it helped us realize how great of a festival we put on. This means that we need to increase the promotional side of things so that more people can enjoy this great opportunity.

Submitted by Michael D'Argenio

ROUNDTABLE: GATHERING & USING INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE

We went to this conference with the goal of trying to improve our promotions department. At WKNC, we put on some great events and have many amazing

opportunities. All the hard work in putting together great events has been done; the biggest problem is that not enough people know about us or the events that we put on. This session proved as a very useful tool to show us how to generate information about our audience and translate this information into extending our reach. Gathering information about your audience can be incredibly difficult. User statistics can be generated from the online stream, but it is very hard to get an actual representation of your user base. Instead, these numbers give you comparative data. This information can be used to know what shows are more popular than others. Knowing your audience and knowing who you are accidentally omitting from your audience is a very integral part of running a successful radio station.

In addition to looking at the online stream, you can also look at the analytics for your Website. Some important key factors to look at are what pages are being visited the most and how long your audience stays on a page. From this information you can find out what tools on your Website are being used or not and adjust your Website accordingly. After the discussion that ensued at the end of this session, I thought it would be beneficial to create a weekly newsletter for our listeners. This would serve to help get information to our listeners that they otherwise might not see. In the newsletter we can include charts, new album reviews, a round-up of the Rock Report including giveaways that we are doing this week, artist of the week, etc. Email newsletters are particularly helpful because most of us do not always think to check the Website. By studying our audience, we were able to address a need that will really help serve our audience better.

Submitted by Michael D'Argenio

ROUNDTABLE: TURN YOUR WEBSITE INTO A PLATFORM FOR CONTENT AND BRANDING

This session served as a discussion in which we learned how to view and use our Website as more of a tool. First, as in with most things, you need to evaluate where you are. Figure out what pages people visit, how long they stay, etc. Once you have fully evaluated your site, figure out how you can better streamline your site. Improve your layout to fit the data you found to try and get people to stay longer and absorb more information on each visit. Try to arrange your Website so that they get hooked and get the important information first before they might get turned away. If you organize your Website in a way that makes sense, you can really help you and your audience out.

Another important aspect of branding your station is using social media. At WKNC, we try to make heavy use of our Website, blog, Facebook, and Twitter. One important thing that I learned from this discussion was to try to integrate our different platforms more. We are going to start running a promo on air that will advertise our Facebook page and Twitter account so that we can reach out to more people. DJ profiles are another important tool that we have lost track of. This allows DJs to share important information with listeners. Most DJs have not updated their profiles for the current semester and some do not even have anything listed. We have a lot of great content out there on our sites and our social media platforms. We just have to market this information better to get it out to a broader audience. This session really helped us take a step back and reevaluate how we are presenting ourselves on the Internet.

Submitted by Michael D'Argenio

STATION MANAGEMENT

ROUNDTABLE: STUDENT STATION MANAGERS

Even though I am not currently the station manager, this session was incredibly helpful to help prepare us for what we would experience next year. We were able to see how station managers from all over handle the many different situations they find themselves in from day to day. The discussions sparked a lot of good ideas that we hope to begin initiating soon. As the discussion continued, we realized more and more how many stations had several different meetings a week. At WKNC we have staff meetings every month or two months and board meetings only when necessary (a couple times a semester). After hearing many anecdotes from different managers, we realized the importance of having more frequent meetings. We discussed the idea of having board meetings once a week and staff meetings at least once a month. This will give us a chance to digest everything that is going on and correct things as they happen and instead of doing so retroactively. In addition to increasing the frequency of these meetings, it is also necessary to start departmental meetings. These meetings will be where a lot of the ideas will be born. The general manager and program director should also sit down and have quarterly review meetings with the paid staff members. These meetings will be brief performance reviews as well as a time to discuss ideas for the future. By increasing the frequency of meetings, we are hoping to make the station function as a more cohesive unit.

Another issue that we have with our staff at WKNC is making people do work outside of the radio shift. There is a lot going on at the station constantly, but many DJs just come in for their shift and leave. This is because many DJs do not feel personally invested or have personal ties to the station. One way that we could help improve this problem is by having mandatory board tests at the beginning of every semester. That way we can assure quality going out over the airwaves, but we can also sit down one-on-one with each individual DJ. By doing this, we will make them have a more personal relationship with the station and help them find more ways to get involved. An increase in meetings and social events should also help resolve this problem. Once people have personal stakes in the radio station, the entire station will benefit.

Submitted by Michael D'Argenio

I'M IN CHARGE, NOW WHAT?

As a member of the board of directors that was promoted from a volunteer promotions position to a paid managerial staff member, I found this session to be especially useful. For one, it helped me understand why my adviser has mandated certain guidelines and practices that I had once found more ritualistic than logical.

There were a few great takeaways from this session in the question/answer section:

Q: A student repeatedly promises to change and improve but does not.

A: This student will not discontinue this cycle until she is faced with a more serious consequence. Repetition of disobedience results in suspension and eventually termination.

Q: A student that is otherwise a hard worker and great representation of your station is facing adversity or even a hard semester.

A: Have an assistant absorb some of those responsibilities for a reasonable amount of time before promoting and demoting. What's the harm in taking on some volunteers? Do not allow this to drag on; more than two weeks allows for that director to fall too far behind in her work.

Q: A student cannot focus on reasonable goals or execute plans effectively.

A: Have meetings with directors during their office hours every month or so to jointly create a checklist of what needs to be accomplished and how. Leave room for creativity!

Q: A student only works when there is a fear of punishment/when you are around, but you receive complaints from other directors that she is not attending office hours or completing her day-to-day required tasks.

A: This behavior is common in students, as they are stretched thin between classes, work, and their job at your radio station. Despite the friendships made with the people you work with, it is important to recognize when a position becomes too much for a certain student to reasonably accomplish by herself. This problem can be checked by having board members and paid staff submit lists of goals and accomplishments with each pay period that can be definitely checked.

Submitted by Bri Aab

HELP! MY MANAGEMENT BOARD IS IN CRISIS!

A point made repeatedly at CBI was the importance of a strong executive board to rely on that feels motivated and wants to inspire the rest of the staff. WKNC has recently undergone a string of difficult personnel changes, specifically within the board of directors. There arise two situations in which retention is neglected: graduation of micro-managerial board members and general apathy and distraction of young adult students.

This first issue is one that affects all student groups. When a highly involved student graduates without having taken extensive time to train future leaders and underclassmen, the remaining staff is left short-handed and naive. It is vital to dedicate time to the sustainability of a staff, especially one so large. In this session, Michael and I were given several ways to offset this.

When a student becomes excessively involved to the point of absorbing the designated tasks of other students, a manager must override this director's decisions by more evenly delegating tasks. This spreads the opportunity for involvement and will garner more underclassman interest for your director to bestow her expertise upon. If executed in a way that exemplifies the director's strength of training and specific knowledge set, then your director will be proud to distribute power as that affirms her own.

The latter problem must be confronted immediately and with documented consequence. Having one-on-one meetings with your less interested staff forces them to confront outwardly the reasons behind their apathy. Otherwise, there is no benefit to allowing this behavior to continue, and the executive staff must remember that these positions are a privilege and must be respected.

Submitted by Bri Aab

LAW AND ETHICS

KEEPING IT LEGAL ONLINE: WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU POST

If you wouldn't take someone's car without permission, then you shouldn't take his or her photo either. These words by Frank LoMonte, director of the Student Press Law Center, set the tone for this session. LoMonte and Pamela Keeney Lina, counsel for Turner Broadcasting System, told the audience they should begin with the assumption that whatever image, graphic or composition they want to use – they can't use it. Whenever an image is posted on the WKNC blog, my first question is always "Where did you find this?" A better question to ask is "Who created this?" Indeed, unless the blog author took the photo herself, we may not be able to use it.

If you find a photo of a band, for example, and you want to use it there are three things you can do: 1) get consent from the copyright holder (likely the photographer); 2) recreate the photo yourself; or 3) license the photo from the copyright holder. Starting with the third option, WKNC will probably never pay to use an image by someone else so that's not a viable option. While option two may also seem unlikely, consider whether the station already has a file photo of the band. If it is local band, we may have taken a photo last time they were in the studio. It is also possible they have a photo taken by *Agromock*, *Nubian Message* or *Technician* we can use. Otherwise, we must rely on option one and obtain permission from the copyright holder.

An image, or anything else, has copyright protection as soon as it is created. The creator can assign a creative commons license to the work, which allows for specific uses in specific circumstances. Read a creative commons license carefully to ensure it is indeed granting you permission for how you plan to use the work. A creator can also place his or her work in the public domain, which means you are free to use it however you want. Taking an image which you do not own and writing "Courtesy of" does not protect you from copyright infringement, only plagiarism because you are citing the original source.

Submitted by Jamie Lynn Gilbert

ROUNDTABLE: DEVELOPING A STATION CODE OF ETHICS

Mirroring the codes of ethics established by national news media outlets, Jamie Lynn Gilbert demonstrated the necessity of adopting a unique and modified code of ethics particular to your college radio or television station. When students in authority positions and their advisers face ethical issues, it can be hard to mediate between students without a preset guideline of what to do in that occasion. The main goal is to achieve a decision that will reflect the opinions of your station while also remaining universal in applicability so that this decision can carry weight in the future.

While it is hard to foresee all possible conflicts, there is a way to set out general statements of station ethical code that can be relevant to any future dilemmas. Here, the roundtable was essential, as we were made aware of problems that other college radio stations have faced and how they confronted them while upholding former mandates and elevating their mission statements to include the experience. Having an adviser that has worked through every ethical issue in the book is also exceedingly helpful. We found at CBI

that there are so many colleges that do not have advisers that can be relied on for expertise and experience in issues of legality or simple know-how that students do not possess.

The action plan that the leader of this panel described is a simple process that is meant to be completed at the beginning of the year or semester, but left flexible enough to be amended when necessary. There is an eleven point plan, and the station manager, adviser, and possibly the board of directors should be involved in determining what points and additions should be made to have a cohesive and hopefully nearly exhaustive list of ethical dilemmas and what to do.

Submitted by Bri Aab

SELLING THE STATION AND YOURSELF

STARTING OR REBUILDING YOUR UNDERWRITING PROGRAM FROM SCRATCH

Bri and I chose to go to this session because underwriting is a very important part of our radio station. Not only can we make money, but we can also build a rapport with local companies and businesses. Underwriting is also a great way to repay sponsors for events. The first key to beginning or reworking your underwriting program is to evaluate your product. Analyze your radio station and decide on appropriate times and prices for underwriting based on when people are listening. Once you have put together a rate card, decide who you will and will not sell spots to. Decide whether the businesses will pay up front or be able to build their payments. Make sure that all these guidelines are set in stone so that you do not run into unforeseen problems and lose donors.

At WKNC, most of our underwriting and search for sponsors takes place outside of our offices. Many other radio stations in attendance at this session seemed to have their own underwriting team for their station. In the future, we are looking at bringing on a new staff member in our office to be in charge of the underwriting. Our plan is for this person to work for commission and help us try and get new contacts and sponsors. This way we will have a student who works only for us. A student will know our needs and be personally invested (and financially invested) in the station. Currently, most of our donor announcements are from the same several businesses. We hope that by hiring a dedicated student and rebuilding our program, we can help make underwriting even more beneficial for WKNC.

Submitted by Michael D'Argenio

ON-AIR PRESENCE & PRACTICE: LEARN THE LOOK, SOUND & STYLE THAN CAN LAND YOU A JOB

The session was formatted to be a panel discussion. The panel shared with us some very valuable life experiences about how to get your foot in the door to become a journalist. They gave an outline of what news corporations are looking for in a reporter in personality and appearance. They even taught us some vocal training exercises to help prepare you for being on the air. While these stories and suggestions will not necessarily work with helping us run a college radio station, their enthusiasm and knowledge of how to deal with others professionally in journalism was very helpful.

Submitted by Michael D'Argenio

NATIONAL STUDENT PRODUCTION AWARDS:

PAUL WILLIAMS, WINNER, BEST RADIO PROMO, "FRIDAY NIGHT REQUEST ROCK 'NEW STEREO'"

SELMA ABDULHAI, FINALIST, BEST RADIO FEATURE, "AMERICAN MUSLIMS REFLECT ON 9/11"