

Engaging Young Alumni Notes: Melissa Cihlar

YP Events:

- This year we partnered with sponsors of our JSC discount card for YP events. This rewards our sponsors and is an incentive to come back on our discount card. They are also more willing to give free private rooms, discounts, raffle items, free apps, etc.
- Most places have food but you do run into bars/breweries that don't offer it. I had a connection that knew a food truck and once I explained there wasn't a budget since it was a free event but had 100 people RSVP they said they'd come out for free (there is usually a fee just to get them out). People love food trucks and they will stay there instead of leaving for food!
- It's good to switch up locations

Reaching YP:

Word of mouth

Social Media (FB promoting 25 miles around city ages 22-40)

Having FSU send email to recents grads

Young Alumni Chair emailing YP distro list (more on this below)

Attending/booth at YP Expos for exposure

Social Media:

- How you promote on social media does makes a difference!
- We've promoted events differently - a link to the Facebook event page vs. Eventbrite/Universe RSVP link. You may reach people with the RSVP link but if they don't register right then, you could lose them. If you promote the Facebook link and they click yes or maybe, you can post updates encouraging to RSVP and reminders. Facebook also sends out a couple reminders as the event is nearing.
- The Eventbrite/Universe RSVP has been more accurate.
- Inviting YP to the Facebook event page is a great way to spread the word. They can invite others and comment, which gets more exposure.

Email:

- When you get them to RSVP on Eventbrite/Universe, you get their email address. I've started compiling email addresses and send out emails once a new event has been posted online. Then one reminder email a couple days before. The only people that have asked to get off the list are the ones that move - then they ask if I have info on YP events in their new town!
- A lot of YP are not aware of what the clubs have to offer. When I meet one, I ask for their email address and tell them I'll sign them up for Club emails as well as my distro list for YP events.

Door prizes:

- Great way to get email addresses
- When promoting an event online ask that they register prior to the event. If you have a raffle, you could have their RSVP enter them in the raffle. If they don't show up, you still have their email address
- Koozies, hats, alumni flags and gift cards from the event location are the biggest hits (and easiest for both genders)
- Setting up a table with FSU flair attracts attention and creates awareness of the club

Locations:

- Jax is the largest city distance-wise, plus we also have St. John county next door. We've had events in a central location in town as well as farther out at the beach. The beach by far has had the best attendance, for weekday and weekend events. A lot of the YP's live at the beach so we've started doing the majority of events there. Even people from an hour away will drive to the beach on a weekend. Our events don't run late so they can go out after and make a whole day of it.

Scheduling:

Attendance has improved:

- On a weekend outside of football season
- At the 4:00pm to 7:00pm weekend time slot which doesn't tie up a day or night
- When event is interactive (game-watch, streaming team highlights, places with things to do, i.e. brewery with ping pong, life-size Jenga)
- When there aren't as many YP events scheduled (once a month is too often)
- When dogs and children are welcome
- Scheduling around other big events (the Derby, March Madness, World Series, etc.)

Successes:

- We've had more people, new faces and more diverse crowd!
- We've stopping calling them YP events to avoid confusion. I've heard that people say they thought it was for new grads only! Now we refer to them as JAX NOLES UNDER 40. However, if I'm talking to a recent grad I will use the "YP" route. On the other hand, once people hear 40 and they are "a little over" they ask if they can still come ("they are younger at heart"). Sure, we say! Has improved attendance

Misses:

- We learned that a set happy hour doesn't work (i.e. Spear-It Thursday, the 1st Thursday of the month). I've heard there were community functions on that same schedule or only a few people show up because they know if they miss it, there will always be "next month".

- Even if the event is once a quarter, if it's in the same location as the last time it loses appeal (tried to tie happy hours into our game watch place and it was too much).