

## DEVELOPING A MARKETING PLAN

Marketing is communication and as such will involve everyone on the meeting committee. It is extremely important to develop a marketing plan that will encompass the period of time from when your committee is established through the dates of the meeting. Marketing encompasses the following areas applied separately or in combination:

**Advertising**—Announcements about your meeting, distinguished from other forms of communication by the fact that there is a fee involved, e.g., paid inserts in publications.

**Publicity /Promotion**—Methods to bring attention to the meeting through a variety of venues, including those listed here; the means by which you make people aware of the meeting.

**Public Relations**—Creation of a positive attitude toward your meeting; dissemination of information that informs, enlightens, and creates an understanding of what you are trying to accomplish; e.g., articles or announcements about the meeting, the speakers, the technical program, and special events that appear in various publications.

**Sales**—Any aspect of your meeting available for purchase; e.g., exposition space, advertising space in your program, and sponsorships.

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The Publicity Chair is responsible for developing and disseminating promotional materials to publicize the meeting and should be in close contact with the other committee chairs in order to coordinate marketing efforts. If marketing efforts can be combined, your message will be more effective and more memorable. Your ACS meeting planner is available to assist you in all aspects of producing and coordinating these efforts.

#### Create an Identity

First, develop an overall theme for the meeting, a “tone” and a “look”, which includes the typeface to be used, and a color scheme. These elements should be part of any promotional materials sent out. Anyone contacting the public on any facet of the meeting should work with the Publicity Chair. Any information being sent about the meeting should always include

- ◆ the meeting name and dates,
- ◆ the logo,
- ◆ the web page address, and
- ◆ contact information.

*It is imperative that the Program Chair develops guidelines for promoting the meeting to make sure the message is consistent and direct.*

#### Develop Useful Contacts

Contact the local Convention and Visitor’s Bureau once the meeting committee has been formed. You will be assigned a contact person who will work with you to promote your meeting, as well as provide other support services. Get to know this person as soon as you have set the date for the meeting. Have the CVB person attend an early committee meeting and bring information and samples of the services available. You will find a gold mine of information and assistance available to you for many aspects of your meeting.

Contact the marketing departments of the chemical industries in the area and ask for their guidance on who to contact and how to reach your target audience. They deal with many of the same people you are trying to reach. Universities also have PR and marketing departments who can be of assistance.

### **Create a Promotional Calendar**

The Publicity Chair should develop a promotional calendar that parallels the meeting timeline. The promotional timeline should begin no later than 18 to 24 months before the meeting date. The calendar will identify what, when, and where to promote. Your ORM meeting planner should receive a copy of the timeline, as s/he will be providing contact lists for some of these announcements.

### **INITIAL MARKETING EFFORTS**

About two years before the meeting, and after the committee has been selected, the marketing effort begins. An announcement in the form of a press release should be prepared that includes the host section, the location, and the year for the regional meeting. If the meeting dates have been set, they should also be included along with the names of and contact information for the committee members. If a logo and theme statement have been selected, mention those as well. If all these items have not been finalized, then consider them as opportunities for follow-up press releases.

The ACS Regional Meetings Web Site, <http://www.acs.org/meetings/regional/index.html>, lists Regional Meetings for the current and next year and includes a link to meeting home pages. When your page is ready, notify your meeting planner of the URL so it can be linked to the ACS Web. Your web page can and should change and grow as your meeting develops and should include your full program as a working document. Once the meeting Web Page is online, send another press release throughout the region announcing this event and encouraging people to visit the site frequently as plans for the meeting are posted.

At the time the topics for the technical program are being developed, the program chair can send a broadcast e-mail to local section chairs and/or members requesting suggestions for topics and speakers of interest to those in the region. Include an update on committee activities that might be newsworthy.

### **Other Topics to Publicize**

- ◆ Announcements of well-known chemists who will participate or be honored at the meeting
- ◆ The topics of the technical program
- ◆ Any unusual or unique events or presentations
- ◆ The opening and closing dates of the online abstracts program
- ◆ The opening and closing dates for registration
- ◆ Rooming accommodations
- ◆ Award winners to be honored
- ◆ Workshops, panels, etc.

### **Where to place Announcements and News Stories**

- ◆ Local section newsletters
- ◆ Division newsletters
- ◆ University publications
- ◆ Company newsletters
- ◆ ACS publications
- ◆ Other scientific publications
- ◆ Local media outlets

In the year the meeting will take place, publicity should increase, with announcements more frequent the closer you get to the meeting dates. The final stage of the campaign should kick off at the regional meeting that is held the year before yours.

### **At the Preceding Regional Meeting**

The regional meeting the year before yours is an excellent place to promote your meeting. Some opportunities include:

- ◆ Placing a full-page ad in the program book, one- or two color.
- ◆ Displaying signs, flyers, and publicity materials in the registration and/or exhibit area. Ask the Exhibits Chair of the current meeting if there is room in the exhibit area for a tabletop exhibit about your meeting. Your local Convention & Visitors Bureau is a great resource for information about the community where your meeting will be held. They will provide you with handouts at any time.
- ◆ Distributing inexpensive items to promote your meeting such as ballpoint pens, magnets, and business cards imprinted with your meeting's logo. Your ORM planner can assist you with identifying cost effective vendors. (However, purchasing advertising space in publications related to your meeting topics might be a more effective way to promote the meeting.)
- ◆ Asking the Program Chair of the current meeting if overhead/slide announcements promoting your meeting could be displayed in meeting rooms before papers begin and during breaks. Provide the slides or overheads.

### **ACS Publications**

The American Chemical Society offers several outlets for promoting your regional meeting. Local Sections publish newsletters, and the ACS Office of Local Section Activities produces an online service called *Cut & Paste*, a bi-monthly publication for newsletter editors. Forward any articles you may have to your ORM planner. This is an excellent way to publicize your meeting. A listing of the *Cut & Paste* deadlines through 2004 is included in this section. Your meeting planner will work with you to get articles placed.

ACS divisions have newsletters, too. Division publications are an excellent way to promote the technical program to the appropriate audience.

*Chemistry* is an ACS quarterly newsletter that goes out to all members and is published by the Membership Division.

### ***Chemical & Engineering News (C&EN)***

*C&EN* reaches ACS members worldwide. Your meeting planner works with you to prepare the Call for Papers and the Final Program for publication in *C&EN*. It is a good place to advertise the meeting, as well.

The ACS Meetings Department publishes a 10-year calendar of meetings semiannually in *C&EN*, in January and July. This calendar is also updated monthly and maintained on the ACS Web Site at <http://www.acs.org/meetings/>. Your ORM planner will be responsible for updating and correcting the information for your regional meeting. Please notify your planner of any changes that may occur.

A *Call for Papers* is also published semiannually. Each meeting will get a paragraph or two announcing its program and call for papers information. Your ORM planner will contact you for information well in advance of the publication date.

You will need to prepare a *Final Program* for publication in *C&EN* approximately 6 – 8 weeks prior to your meeting. The article will include general information on your meeting—a calendar of events such as banquets, luncheons, awards presentations, and workshops; an outline of planned symposia and major technical sessions by day (and time, if possible); and registration, travel, and housing information. The advance registration form will appear with the program. Your ORM planner will let you know the publication schedule and will work with you to meet deadlines.

In addition to the news items, 1/3, 1/2, or full-page ads may be placed in *C&EN* at the in-house advertising rate, plus production costs.

### **Direct Mail**

If you should decide to mail information, prepare at least two mailings to all Society members within the region—one to announce the *Call for Papers* and the opening of the abstract program, and at the time of the Final Program and closing date for registration. The Call for Papers should include a list of the areas of chemistry in which papers are being solicited and symposia with recognized speakers. These announcements should be mailed (or e-mailed) to local section members, to professional journals in your topical areas, and to the pertinent division and local section newsletter editors.

Direct mail is costly and keeps getting more expensive. There are alternatives to mailing to the entire regional membership.

- ◆ Target local sections that are geographically in close proximity to the location of your meeting. If possible, send this limited mailing first class.
- ◆ Send announcements of your meeting to the secretaries of the local sections and request that they be copied and distributed at local section meetings.

- ◆ Use e-mail. Your meeting planner will supply you with the e-mail addresses of all of the members in your region who have one included in their membership record. Short broadcast e-mail announcements that include a link back to your home page are extremely effective.

The final program should provide more detailed information, but not the complete technical schedule. Your meeting registration form and housing information should be included. It should reach members about 2 months before the meeting.

### **ACS Office of Communications and Local Media**

As soon as the abstracts program closes, about 12 weeks before the meeting, and the papers have been selected, e-mail a copy of the abstracts to the ACS Communications office. There, a staff member will read the abstracts, select those considered to be of the broadest appeal to the general public, then prepare press releases for the media in the region alerting them to your meeting.

Work with the ACS Communications office to reach the local media—newspapers, radio, and television. Invite local media to your meeting. Provide them with information about events that would be of particular appeal to the general public. Following the meeting, you might want to generate articles for professional publications about any presentations that introduced something new in the field, a summary of the comments by a noted speaker, or anything unusual that may have transpired at the meeting. These press releases should be sent to the aforementioned sources as relevant.

### **HOW YOUR ACS MEETING PLANNER CAN ASSIST YOU**

Your ACS meeting planner can provide you with the following:

- ◆ Contact information for
  - The previous meeting's committee—their experience is invaluable
  - Local Section Chairs, Officers, and Members, including e-mail addresses for those who have provided them
  - Previous exhibitors at regional meetings
  - Exhibitors at national meetings from your region
  - Chemistry chairs from the Directory of Graduate Research
  - Student Affiliate chapters and their advisors in your region
- ◆ Graphics support
- ◆ Printing support
- ◆ Advertising support for ACS publications such as *C&EN*
- ◆ Preparation and scheduling for printing the Call for Papers, Registration Forms, and Final Program for *C&EN*
- ◆ Articles on the Regional Teacher of the Year for your use
- ◆ Placement of meeting information in the Local Section online *Cut & Paste* program for LS newsletter editors and the division online news service.
- ◆ Flyers for your distribution

## **ORM MARKETING PLAN FOR REGIONAL MEETINGS**

The ACS Office of Regional Meetings recognizes the pressing need to make regional meetings more visible to members of the Society. At present, they are occasionally referred to as “the best kept secret at ACS”. To increase awareness of these dynamic, and very important, resources the Office of Regional Meetings has identified several ways regional meetings can be brought to the attention of members of the chemical community. These include:

- ◆ A heightened presence at the ACS national meetings
- ◆ An integrated approach to marketing by partnering with the other offices of ACS that participate in regional meetings
- ◆ A more detailed marketing plan and appropriate training for the meeting chairs to implement on behalf of their meeting

## **NATIONAL MEETINGS**

ORM is developing a plan to make regional meetings more visible at national meetings. To that end we have purchased a new booth to project a more professional image. We have also arranged to have flyers on display at the ACS Membership booth in the exhibit hall and in the lobby registration area. Other ideas we would like to implement include:

- ◆ Placing flyers designed to showcase regional R & D at ACS Divisions tables
- ◆ Placing regional meetings information in registration packets
- ◆ Displaying at Sci-Mix
- ◆ Cross promoting with our ACS partners at their activities at the national meeting
- ◆ Distributing a general flyer listing the meetings and important dates associated with them
- ◆ Signage at locations where ACS partners are operating at the national meeting
- ◆ Develop a questionnaire to glean information on members’ knowledge and perception of regional meetings

But national meetings are just a piece of the marketing pie. To make regionals continue to grow and thrive will require a joint thrust beyond national meetings and *C&EN*. With that in mind, we need to evaluate how we are promoting our presence at and support of regional meetings and see how we might combine our efforts and resources to create an even stronger, more visible, message to members.

The people we want to reach include

- ◆ Undergraduate students
- ◆ Graduate students
- ◆ Members in all categories
- ◆ Potential members
- ◆ Technicians
- ◆ Educators
- ◆ Volunteers

We would like to know what these people respond to and what needs we need to fulfill to make them want to attend a regional meeting. What do our regional meetings need to do to attract more of them?

### **SUPPORTING REGIONAL MEETINGS IN STRENGTHENING THEIR MARKETING**

At present, we have supported regional meetings by promoting them several times in *C&EN*. We do a *Call for Papers* just before the online abstract system opens, and we do a *Final Program* just before registration closes. We publish the schedules of the meetings twice a year in *C&EN* and *Today's Chemist at Work*. We have submitted articles to the *Journal of Chemical Education* on the winners of the Regional Teacher of the Year Award in spring and fall issues, and if the meeting has an especially strong program for teachers, as did SERMACS 2002, we publish an article about that, also. Our Communications Department develops news stories for multimedia distribution to generate additional regional interest in the meeting. And beginning this year, we will distribute information at Pittcon.

Currently, we encourage the regional meeting PR chairs to send bulletins to local section chairs and members announcing the forthcoming meeting, and to send periodic updates focused on opening and closing dates for abstracts and registration, symposia topics that will be presented, notification of any special program or speaker who will be present, and reminders regarding rooming accommodations.

We have also encouraged regions to develop one-page flyers that are sent via e-mail with the request that the recipient download them and post them in their workplace. They also contact college and university chemistry departments and ask their assistance in getting the word out regarding the meeting.

But much more can be done, for example:

- ◆ Contact other professional journals outside those of ACS and get the meeting listed in that publication's calendar of events.
- ◆ Use demographics to plan the program based on the interests of the majority of the regional population
- ◆ Contact college and university PR offices and seek support in getting the word out.
- ◆ Utilize the energy and inventiveness of the student affiliates to promote the program at schools in the area.
- ◆ Submit articles to campus publications at schools in the area.
- ◆ Work with PR chairs of other local sections in the region to get information to businesses and educational facilities in their part of the region.
- ◆ Promote the appropriate symposia to its divisional counterpart and encourage division members to submit papers.
- ◆ Promote the benefits of regional meetings:
  - Good chemistry
  - Location
  - Networking opportunities
  - Cost
  - And the fun they can be!

**CAUTION, HANDLE WITH CARE**  
**THE ACS LOGO IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK**



When using the ACS Logo, please ensure that its use conforms to ACS Board Regulation IX.2. If you have any questions about the use of the logo, please contact your OMR planner.

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## Deadlines for “Cut and Paste”

### Year 2004

<b>DUE DATES</b>	<b>MAIL DATES</b>	<b>COVERAGE</b>
January 9, 2004	January 10	March →
March 10, 2004	March 12	May →
May 10, 2004	May 14	July →
July 9, 2004	July 11	September →
September 10, 2004	September 12	November →
November 10, 2004	November 14	Jan. 2005 →

### Year 2005

<b>DUE DATES</b>	<b>MAIL DATES</b>	<b>COVERAGE</b>
January 10, 2005	January 10	March →
March 10, 2005	March 12	May →
May 10, 2005	May 14	July →
July 8, 2005	July 11	September →
September 9, 2005	September 12	November →
November 10, 2005	November 14	Jan. 2006 →