# Online Community and Marketing Toolkit

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# Overview

This handbook outlines various topics about creating community within your student group as well as creating community with the general engineering student body. Developing an online community can be accomplished through engaging your audience by effectively using social media platforms and while marketing your student group and events. A student group should have a strong brand when engaging on social media in order to portray unity with their mission and values.

# Build Your Brand

## Your Brand

A brand is a set of features that represents and distinguishes your organization from others. Your brand should be cohesive, simple and inline with your organization's mission statement and values. All the content created and posted should reflect the branding chosen; meaning, the same colours, fonts, logo and graphics are consistently used for all the materials created. Your branding should be reflective of your student group and should implement the input received from your members.

Your branding should:
– Give your organization an identity
– Make your organization memorable
– Support your organization in marketing
– Increase awareness and recognition of your organization

How to create your brand:
– Determine your target audience
– Establish your mission statement
– Define your core values
– Create your visual assets

## Example: Women in Engineering

**Brand colours:** Two shades of purple as well as white (Colour codes: **#3d2361**, **#6a4c8f**)
– Determination of the colour codes that are used for your branding is helpful in order for colours to stay consistent throughout all media!
**Brand fonts:** Lato, Ubuntu, and Helvetica
**Logo:** Has multiple versions - dark purple, white, both with and without text
**Example Posts:** Facebook Banner & Instagram posts
– All posts have similar colours that are consistent with the WiE brand which unifies all media put out by WiE
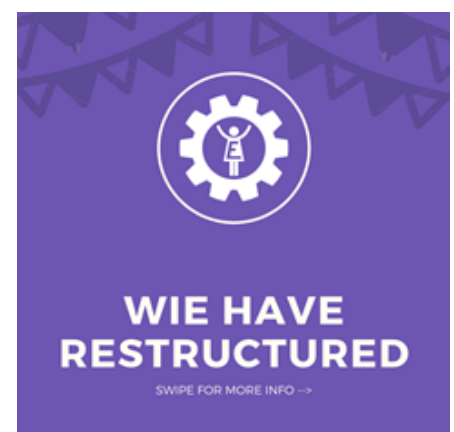
# Engage Your Audience

Engaging your audience is key for successfully building an online following and community within your organization and outside of your organization for member recruitment and retention. The following ideas can be used to engage your audience on a variety of different social media platforms:

– **Creating opportunities** for them to connect and interact with your group (eg. IG polls and reactions, interactive facebook posts, etc)
– **Receiving feedback from the members of the student group** in order to feel a sense of contribution and belonging while voicing their needs and wants
– **Recognizing and featuring outstanding and excellent members** of your community via various social media platforms
– **Facilitating competitions and giveaways** within your organization via social media
– **Inviting members from your community** or even outside of your immediate organization (e.g., Dean of Engineering) to take over your social media platform for a day
– **Connecting with similar organizations** outside of the Faculty and creating a relationship with them
– **Staying relatively active** on these platforms ensures brand recognition and increases engagement with followers.

# EDI Considerations

Whenever undertaking any online initiative, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is a lens that must always be considered. The goal of embedding EDI within your online presence is to ensure the material you are sharing will connect with the widest variety of people within your target audience.

For example:
– Ensure the content (pictures, stories, etc.) being posted depict a diverse audience that your followers would feel represented and included in
– Ensure the materials shared do not exclude and discriminate against a group of people
– Consider the context, any hidden messages and connotations associated with what you are sharing
– Use inclusive language that is target specific and welcoming to others
– Keep in mind the following differences within each subgroup such as age, gender, disability, religion, ethnicity, and sexual identity
– Avoid cultural appropriation and be conscious if your content is using or taking an aspect from a minority culture without knowing or honoring the meaning behind it.

# Interacting Online

## Social Media Platforms

There are various social media platforms to use when building an online following and community. Maintaining a healthy level of activity on these platforms will ensure organic and sustained growth throughout the academic year.

## Key Considerations

Posting only for marketing purposes (e.g., event marketing) is not effective since your followers will not grow solely on using those posts. In order to see growth on your platforms, create a posting routine and an account tradition (e.g., featuring members, accomplishments, etc.) regularly to increase engagement and outreach. Thus, when marketing for events you will have more followers to support your event.

## Facebook

Facebook is a very popular platform that student groups/teams can use to engage with their community as well as the larger engineering community. Facebook is a very popular platform that student groups/teams can use to engage with their community as well as the larger engineering community.

### FACEBOOK PAGE

**Target audience:** Anyone who stumbles upon your organization

– Groups/Teams should create a Facebook page and display information about their organization such as the "About Us and Contact Information" sections. The page should be kept up to date with the most relevant information about your group/team.
– A Facebook page is useful for creating Facebook events in order to advertise for your student group/team's events. It is also a method of communication where users who find your facebook page can inquire about your group.
– It is difficult to interact with an audience using the Facebook page, so often Facebook groups are created in which the Page can post information to the members of the group.
– This page can be used to reach out to other organizations within and outside of UBC to inquire and build relationships.

### FACEBOOK GROUP

**Target audience:** Interested and current members in your organization, Faculty staff

Groups/teams can consider making a new Facebook group every year or making one Facebook group and updating it's name every year to the current school year (e.g. "Women in Engineering 2023/2024"). These groups will be used by the student group/team to interact with the members of your group through posting of events, pictures, statuses, etc.

You can invite members in other groups to join your Facebook group and like your Facebook page by using your page to share your group in other groups. This is a good way to interact with other audiences, increase visibility of your group/team, and market your group/team to other engineering groups.

### STEPS TO BUILD YOUR FACEBOOK GROUP

– Join a Facebook group of interest (e.g. Official Engineering First Years 2023/2024) through your Facebook page. When you click on "Join Group" there will be an option for you to join as your Facebook page. Alternatively you can check how you are interacting with the group by using the left side bar. This must be done by an admin.
– Go to your group and select share group, a screen will pop up in which you can select "Share in group". Make sure to change who you are interacting as in the left bar to your page and not your personal account. Then type in the group where you would like to share and a blurb for your post. You must be a member of the group you are sharing before you can post in it.

### FACEBOOK MESSENGER

Facebook Messenger can be used purely for social communication and community building between members of your group or organization. It should not be used for information regarding the organization, resources, etc. This is a good platform to use for organizing social meetups and online hangouts via Zoom or other virtual chat platforms.

## INTERACTING ON FACEBOOK - TIPS & TRICKS

– Make sure that your page and group stays updated and active! It should always contain the correct information about your group as this is often the way that students interact with student groups/teams and find out about events and initiatives.

– After events, post pictures. This is a great way for your audience to see what kinds of things happen at your events and to get them interested or possibly involved for the next one. It is also a great way to engage the members who attended the event through tagging them in photos or posts related to the event they attended.

– Promoting your Facebook Group is essential for the success of your group since attracting members to join it will ensure your events are reaching many people within and outside of your organization, while building a strong online community.

– Engage members in your Facebook Group to maintain the members engaged and interested. For example, posting information, resources, upcoming dates, asking for input, etc. are all great ways to maintain the engagement.

# Instagram

The Instagram platform makes it easy to interact with your audience while showing them what it is your group does through pictures and stories.

## INSTAGRAM BIOGRAPHY

Your instagram biography is the first thing that your audience sees when they are on your profile page. It should either reflect  your organization's mission/values in a quick and catchy sentence or two OR announce important events or initiatives that are going on within your organization at the time. For example, if recruitment is happening you bio can mention that.

The website link feature in your biography can be updated frequently to feature any upcoming events, recruitment and involvement opportunities, your main FB page, etc.

## INSTAGRAM POSTS

**Target audience:**  Anyone who stumbles upon your organization

– Posts can be used to promote events and initiatives through digital graphics, photos taken at events, etc.

– Posts can also be used to engage the audience through member recognition (think Humans of New York style)

– Posts can also feature relevant people/content and encourage followers to comment by creating an engaging caption for these photos

– Create a tradition on your account, something that you group can be known for (e.g., recognition event featuring your members)

## INSTAGRAM STORIES

**Target audience:**  Anyone who stumbles upon your organization

Instagram stories are a great way to allow your audience to directly interact with your group. Some useful ways to do this are:

– Putting up a poll

– Creating a challenge or quiz

– Allowing them to ask your group questions and then posting answers in the following stories

– Creating a countdown

– Using the heart eyes emoji slider

## INSTAGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

**Target audience:**  Anyone who stumbles upon your organization

Instagram highlights can be used to feature different parts of your organization (e.g. sub-teams, committees, etc.), events/ initiatives that your organization does (e.g. a traditional event that is held every year), member recognition, or other important information that is relevant to your organization. You can change the icon on your highlights to a static symbol for a more minimalistic look or a picture.
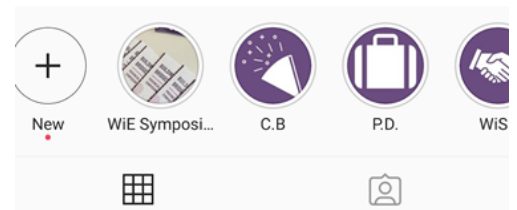
For example, the Women in Engineering Highlights (shown on the right) features their annual WiE Symposium and photos from each of their committees.

– Follow other engineering groups and have them follow you back - often other groups will reach out and ask you to share their post on your account's story. This is a great way to build a relationship with other groups so that you can also reach out and ask them to share your posts. This increases your group/team's visibility by introducing it to other groups and it is also a way for you to interact and engage with other groups.

– The story feature can be used more frequently and reminds your followers of upcoming deadlines. While a post on your timeline can be less frequent, and a story can be used to further promote your post.

– Instagram can be used as a platform to nudge your followers to checkout your main Facebook event page. Instagram should NOT be used only for marketing events, but rather SHOULD be used to build a community within and outside of your student group.

– **Key Example:** The left picture is an example of what NOT to do since all the posts are marketing events, while the right picture features both events and your student group.



– Instagram is a great platform to create team culture and community spirit within your organization. For example, post pictures from past events, post team pictures, post pictures of behind the scenes on your story during the event set up, invite Faculty members to take over your story for a day, etc.

# Website

**Target audience:** Anyone who stumbles upon your organization

The website of your organization is the face of your organization and is an all encompassing, detailed, and well organized page including all the key content of your organization, such as: this are:

– About Us
– Our Team
– Organizational Structure
– Mission & Values
– Relevant Resources
– How to Get Involved
– Contact Us/ Where Can You Find Us (links to social media, email, phone, address, etc.)
– Upcoming Events/Features of Past Events

All of this information should be easily accessible through the main menu of your page.

**Key Consideration:** The webpage should hold the most information regarding your organization. Your website should contain all the information about your organization, while all the other social media platforms should selectively choose the material to present from the website.

For example, your Facebook page will focus on the "About Us", "Our Team", while IG focuses on "Relevant Resources" and "How to Get Involved", and both Facebook and Instagram focus on marketing events.

# Slack

**Target audience:** Anyone who stumbles upon your organization

Slack is used by organizations in order to communicate with each other and to communicate information. Channels are group chats that can be created for specific groups within your organization (e.g. sub-teams, committees, etc.) Channels can also be created to share information about specific topics relevant to your group. You are able to set channels to private (only people you invite can join the channel) or public (anyone can join the channel). Slack can also be used to direct message specific members of your group.

For example, the WiE Slack has channels like #general (open to everyone) where announcements and interesting opportunities are posted, #random (open to everyone) where members can post fun things they come across, channels for each committee for that year (e.g. #wise2023), and private channels for specific groups (e.g. execs1920, eusupdates, etc).
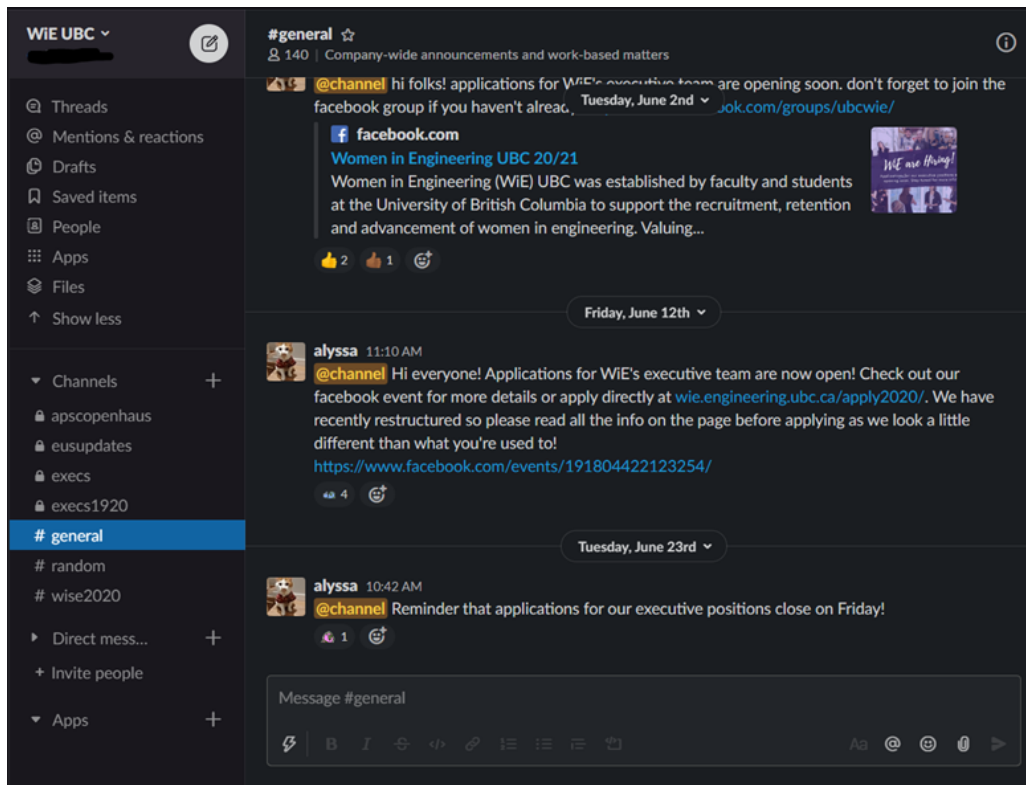


**BENEFITS OF SLACK**

**Target audience:** Slack allows for increased transparency and collaboration within your organization. It allows for the traditional barriers faced with email to be eliminated and significantly cuts email traffic. It can replace meetings and create a record of information and conversations had.

# Microsoft Teams

**Target Audience:** Group members of your organization.

Microsoft Teams is the UBC recommended mode of communication for student groups. Microsoft products are free for student groups – full instructions on Teams for UBC can be found here: https://lthub.ubc.ca/guides/microsoft-teams-student-guide/. Similar to other modes of communication, Teams allows you to create various channels within your team, which may be dedicated to different topics/subteams. One perk of Teams over other modes of communication is the direct link to other Microsoft Office products – you can directly integrate your OneDrive as well as MS Office word documents/spreadsheets to perform calculations or to take meeting notes.

# Discord

**Target Audience:** Group members of your organization.

Albeit more informal, Discord is slowly replacing Slack as a free alternative that is easily accessible by students. Slack often hides a lot of crucial features, such as message archives, behind a paywall, which makes it difficult to use without paying a fee. As Discord is already popular amongst university students, many groups tend to use it for internal as well as external purposes.

Discord works through spaces called "Servers", which can be made both public and private. Servers can be organised in various ways, using text channels, voice channels and so on. Members are assigned roles which determine their permissions in the server. You can set channels to private (invite-only) or public (open for anyone to join). Voice channels can serve as an alternative to Zoom meetings as they're hosted within the server and don't require an external link. Discord also supports direct messaging for one-on-one communication within your group. Similar to the Slack structure, your server can have channels like #general (open to everyone) for announcements and exciting opportunities, #random (open to everyone) for sharing fun discoveries, channels dedicated to each committee for the year (e.g., #wise2023), and private channels for specific groups (e.g., execs2024, eusupdates, etc.).

### FIPPA COMPLIANCY:

Students have a right to privacy protected by BC's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA). In a nutshell, we cannot store student identifying information on servers abroad or with services that share or sell user-data outside of our control. Both Slack and Discord are non-FIPPA compliant - be careful when it comes to sharing sensitive and self-identifying information on these applications, such as surnames, emails, student numbers and addresses. On the other hand, Microsoft Teams is FIPPA compliant.

# Zoom

**Target audience:**  Members of your organization, external meetings

Zoom is a video conferencing platform that can be used for online meetings with members of your group (e.g. planning sessions, check-ins, meetings with other groups/individuals, etc.)

Zoom can also be used for community building events in the online space. Examples of events and ice breakers that can be held on Zoom are:

– Movie night - share screen and stream a movie that everyone can watch together
– Games night using online platforms like Scribble.io, Jack Box, etc.
– At-Home Paint/Craft Night - have everyone gather materials around their house and make something

Sometimes, video calls can be awkward and silent, it is the facilitator's responsibility to make it more engaging. This can be done by prompting participation from your attendees through activities like the following:

– Fun check-in questions
  – What is the worst misspelling of your name?
  – What is your favourite family tradition?
  – Is a hotdog a sub, sandwich, or neither?
  – Is cereal a soup?
– At-Home Scavenger Hunt - have your attendees do a fun scavenger hunt in their homes and then show and tell the items they've found
– A quick game (e.g. Two Truths and a Lie)
– Have participants pass on speaking powers to one another instead of always asking someone to speak in order to make conversation more organic

# Mailing List

**Target audience:**  Interested and current members in your organization

A mailing list platform can be used for communicating information and events to your community through some type of consistent formatting such as a newsletter.  Individuals who are interested in your organization can then choose to subscribe to your mailing list and are able to opt out of receiving your content at any time by unsubscribing.  This is a great way to keep your audience informed of what is happening at your organization with low commitment and effort from your target audience.

When creating your email content, the following should be kept in mind:

– Do not spam your mailing list with several emails. Weekly or monthly content can be sent out recurring on the same day for consistency.
– The subject line should be catchy so that individuals are encouraged to open the email
– Important information can be emphasized through appropriate bold and italics
– If you are communication information for an event, keep in mind the timeline, as emails that advertise events should be sent out one or two weeks prior to the event to ensure that people see and open the email.

For smaller organizations (less than 2000 members subscribing to the mailing list) MailChimp is a good and user friendly platform for this media outlet.

## The EUS

**Target audience:** Engineering undergraduate students

e-nEUS is a weekly email newsletter that goes out to all current UBC Engineering undergraduate students. The e-nEUS goes out on Sunday evenings, from September to April, and on a monthly basis in the summer. Articles are accepted up to 12 noon the Wednesday before the e-nEUS comes out!

The e-nEUS is a great way to get word out about:

– EUS Events
– Industry Announcements
– Recruitment Notices
– and more!

**E-NEUS SUBMISSION FORM: HTTPS://ENGINEERING.UBC.CA/ENEUS**

**CONTACT THE E-NEUS EDITOR: ENEUS@APSC.UBC.CA.**

## Qualtrics

**Target audience:** Whomever the survey is created for

Qualtrics is widely used across UBC as it is a very user friendly tool. Qualtrics allows for data collection from users through the use of a survey and report generation. It is an excellent tool for teaching, research, and administration. Qualtrics has skip logic and branching abilities, allowing for more complex survey development.

Examples on ways to use Qualtrics:

– Feedback collection survey regarding your organization shared with your members
– An application/registration form to collect data and information
– An online event ticketing system

## LinkedIn

**Target audience:** Anyone who stumbles upon your organization

This is more of a minor platform, but is still essential to ensure brand recognition and awareness. Creating a LinkedIn page for your organization will increase its visibility and will allow members of your student group to feature your organization's page on their personal accounts. This increases your organization's visibility and possibly reaches members who are interested in your organization, while building a sense of community within your organization.

# Editing Content

## Editing Software

There are many industry-standard editing options available for a variety of needs. Some common choices include:

- **Graphics (Social Media Assets, Posters):** Adobe Photoshop, Canva (Free), Procreate
- **Vector Illustrations (Logos, Physical Merchandise Design):** Adobe Illustrator, Inkscape (Free), GIMP (Free)
- **Video Editing (Instagram Reels, YouTube videos, TikToks):** CapCut (Free), Adobe Premiere Pro, Sony Vegas, DaVinci Resolve

For student groups, free alternatives are recommended—and they often come with good templates too!

Canva is perhaps the most common editing tool currently used by student groups. The free version comes packed with a variety of fonts and graphics, and they continually expand their tools.

To avoid your graphics from looking too generic and "low effort", keep your branding consistent. This extends to graphic assets as well, including grids, gradients, swirls or geometric shapes. You can search for good templates to start from in Canva with a few clicks! They also have a [full tutorial online](full tutorial online).
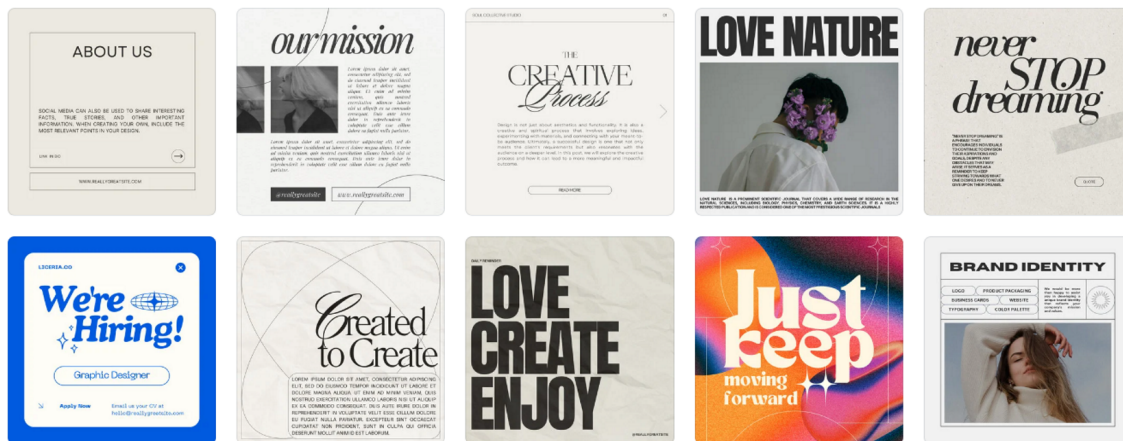


Create a theme for all the marketing materials (e.g., posters, Facebook cover banner, Instagram post, etc.). You can vary the information you display on each social media platform, but the theme should be the same to ensure consistency and to avoid confusing members in thinking it's a different event.

**TIPS & TRICKS:**

- Do not use more than two fonts and three colours per poster - ensure one colour is a core colour
- Keep the information displayed on the graphic  concise. For example, include the "when", "where" and the "what"
- Including QR codes on the physical posters and TV ads is beneficial to redirect interested members  to your Facebook event page and Qualtrics survey should you need a ticket.
- Note posters contain the most information, while the digital medias contain less since they are accompanied with captions and descriptions.
- A common issue faced by Engineering Student Groups (design teams in particular) is a lack of human resources devoted specifically to marketing. Online marketing and promotions tasks are often filled by team members who have other responsibilities as well. Adopting effective time management strategies can be helpful for these types of situations. **Have your templates prepped and ready to go.** Some prefer to keep reusing the same source/master document, and add/remove content as necessary.
- Encouraging group members to record/capture content during team events (with consent!) comes in very handy - pictures tell a thousand words. The images can then be uploaded to a photo stream, which can be used as needed for creating social media content for the group.
- Other handy tips include keeping caption templates at hand before time-sensitive events. If your team is attending a competition/event, there is always a high demand for content. Having blank captions prepared in advance (e.g. competition timetable, results of a round, asking for support from public, etc.) eases the stress that takes place during the competition itself.

## Content Suggestions

Although the type of content created online by a group is heavily reliant on their branding, it is recommended to be up to date with current trends if your goal is to receive maximum user engagement. Many students also look up a student groups social media to be up to date with recruitment timelines and to see what a regular day in the group looks like. It is suggested to post about such recruitment as well as outreach events, setting up reminders for those who are interested. If your group attends a competition/conference or has a huge breakthrough, make sure to spread the news!

# Marketing an Event 101
The key to effective marketing is promoting over a time period and not all at once.

## Key Considerations

Promote an event over time,  do not rush or spam your followers  on all your social media platforms on the same day. Do it slowly and you can ramp up the promoting and reminders closer to the date. The danger of promoting everything at once can lead to members forgetting the event exists once the date approaches and can be irritating for a member to be reminded on all the followed  platforms all at the same time.

## General Outline:

– Create the graphics/theme for the event using Canva
– Create the Facebook Event two weeks in advance of your event date
– Share with the relevant Facebook Groups
– Wait a day or two, then share on Instagram via post
– Use the Instagram story feature with the engagement features throughout the two week period
– Print posters and put up the posters throughout the Engineering buildings within the first week of marketing
– In the second week of marketing, share again in the Facebook group and possibly Instagram
– Use the Facebook Event Page the day before and during the day of event to remind and update members who clicked "Going" or "Interested"
– The day of the event use the Facebook group one more time as a final reminder

# In Person Promotion

In person promotion can be used to interact with and engage individuals face-to-face.

## How to talk about your group

When talking about your group to individuals it is important to consider what they already know about your group, how much time you have to talk about your group, whether what you are saying is engaging, and what information about your group is relevant. One method of conveniently doing this is the elevator pitch.

## Example: Women in Engineering

**WHO ARE YOU?**

"Women in Engineering is a student run organization that advocates for diversity and equity within engineering. We also strive to build a strong and supportive community for engineering students through our events and initiatives."

**WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?**

"WiE consists of enthusiastic students who support our mission and values. Many of the ways that students get involved are by joining one of our 4 committees (WiSE, Professional Development, Outreach and Education, and Community Engagement) and being involved in planning the events we hold for the engineering community. Students can also be involved by attending the networking and community building events that WiE hosts."

**HOW CAN THEY GET INVOLVED?**

"You can get involved by signing up for our mailing list or following us on social media to stay informed about our events, or joining one of our committees as a committee member if you want to be more involved.



**WHO ARE YOU?**
Your introduction should introduce yourself and your organization and a little bit about what your organization does.

Short & sweet: 10 to 15 seconds

**WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?**
Expand on what your organization is looking for from them.

What does being involved in your organization look like?

A little longer: 15 to 20 seconds

**HOW CAN THEY GET INVOLVED?**
They're interested in being involved. What opportunities do you have for them?

Encourage them to follow your social media or joining your mailing list.

A little longer: 15 to 20 seconds

## Posters and Other Physical Advertisement

**Target audience:** UBC Students

Posters can be created and posted in the various engineering buildings. Popular locations for posters that get high visibility around engineering are the Kaiser Atrium, CHBE Atrium,  and the Engineering Student Center. Posters can also be put in the Nest, Life Building, and various libraries to target students outside of engineering.

Posters can also be put in the bathroom stalls and on the TV monitors around engineering by contacting Wendy McHardy, the Marketing & Communications Director at wendy.mchardy@ubc.ca. Content should be sent via email two to three weeks in advance.

## Setting Up a Booth

**Target audience:** UBC Students

Your organization can set up a booth in spaces such as Kaiser, in the courtyard outside the Nest, inside the Nest, etc. Please see websites for each location on  how to book a space. The booth that you set up should have engaging content with an emphasis on interacting with people that pass by while promoting your event/group/initiative/etc.

Examples of interactive content include:

– Having a cool live demo
– Handing out merch or snacks for an interactive component (e.g. answering a question, following your organization on a social media

platform, etc.)

- Handing out merch or snacks for free!
- Doing a giveaway or a raffle
- Handing out little flyers about your event/organization

If you are promoting an event, while interacting with people, this is a great way to quickly pitch them about your organization or inform them of the event that you are having.

# Imagine Day

**Target audience:** First year engineering students

Imagine Day is a great way to get first year engineering students involved in your group. It will be crowded and hot, so your pitch to first years should be quick, snappy, and get them interested to want to stand there and hear more. This is a great opportunity to get them to follow your social media platforms and sign up for your mailing list through the interactive methods mentioned above. It can also be a good place to mention recruitment if that is happening for your organization. **Design Teams often report the highest number of applicants saying they found out about the team on Imagine Day!**

# Establishing Online Relationships

## Overview

It is key to establish online relationships with similar organizations both within and outside of UBC. This adds value to your group as it allows for possible future collaborations which increase your group's exposure and outreach.

For example, if your student group is centred around LGBTQ+ communities, begin fostering and developing relationships with other oncampus organizations such as The Pride Collective and external LGBTQ+ organizations at other Universities and within British Columbia.

These connections can add immense value to your group for the following reasons:

– Sharing information, knowledge and resources
– Learning from each other's mistakes and challenge
– Collaborating online and in-person through events
– Increasing exposure and outreach of your group

**EXAMPLES OF HOW TO CONNECT AND FOSTER A RELATIONSHIP WITH EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS:**

– Invite other organizations to host a workshop for your student group
– Present the value of what your student group brings to these organizations (e.g.,their organization can receive exposure to prospective graduating students)
– Create an online relationship through Zoom calls where both groups can benefit from sharing their plans, resources, etc.
– Find ways to collaborate online in a less formal way such as using some of your online platforms for hosting giveaways, or taking over each other's Instagram stories for a day
– Reach out to them on LinkedIn expressing interest in what they do, perhaps invite them to be part of an event that your organization is hosting
– Create a high-level infographic about your organization to easily communicate what your organization represents to industry
– Ask industry members who you already have a relationship with if they know anyone who would be interested in coming to your events
– If the relationship is pre-existing, follow up with them to see how they are doing and if they would still like to be involved with your organization
– If the relationship is pre-existing, send them updates about your organization (you can do this through the mailing list)

# Resources

## Still have questions?

You can book an advising appointment with Minoli Navaratnam (minoli.navaratnam@ubc.ca) in APSC Professional Development. We can:

–   Review the content of this module.

–   Discuss any other questions you may have.