

4 Marketing Insights For Fraternities & Sororities



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We love marketing. We love the creativity, the tag lines, the wackiness, and the emotion of great marketing. It's fun! We love the potential of massive marketing efforts, we love the scale and access of social media marketing, we love the influence of smart public relations, and we love the culture-building power of strategic advertising.

We also know that marketing can seem like a short-cut to major growth for a lot of fraternities and sororities, and those same organizations end up wasting a lot of time, money, and energy on marketing efforts that produce very little results.

There's a lot to say about marketing for Greek Life, but let's start with four marketing insights that many sororities and fraternities find to be helpful.



Know Your Audience



Heart Not Head



Be Remarkable



Make It Personal

**INSIGHT #1:****Know Your Audience**

This is the oldest axiom of marketing for a reason. For many organizations, the first thing they forget to do when they put together a marketing effort is to consider what the audience actually cares about. Instead, many fraternities and sororities design marketing efforts that make them feel good about themselves. Intelligent market research combined with a disciplined approach to storytelling that puts the potential member - the buyer - in the center of the marketing campaign is vital for organizational growth.

Who do you want as new members for your fraternity/sorority?

Anyone? Everyone? Average students? Only men with a 3.5 or better GPA? Women interested in supporting the success of Asian students? “High quality guys?” First-year students? Eagle Scouts? Individuals who exceed your written, measurable selection criteria?

Who is your fraternity/sorority experience NOT currently attracting? Who are the people who need Greek Life on your campus, but aren’t finding their way there? Who would make your organization better? Who do you want, but can’t get? Who do you never even interact with, and therefore don’t know if they’d be good members?

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GREAT MARKETING strategy can help you aim your messaging — whether that’s direct mail, posters, t-shirts, email campaigns, tabling, social media efforts, special events, or whatever — right at the people who you want to actually recruit. Great marketing strategy, in fact, can help DRIVE LEADS to your fraternity or sorority that are already qualified. It takes thoughtfulness, effort, and preferably some market research, but that’s exactly what we know how to do. Here are 10 questions/challenges to help you think of marketing ideas that would be more targeted to the people you ACTUALLY want.

1. Write down three totally different profiles (fictional) of your ideal member. Ask 3 of your fellow leaders to do the same. Discuss the similarities and differences.
2. Write down 10 characteristics of your ideal members.
3. Ask your top 5 members, who didn’t want to join before they came to college, what they were hoping to gain from their college experience before they learned about fraternity/sorority.
4. What do the most academically driven students on your campus care about? Where do they hang out? How do they spend their time? How could your organization make their day, week, or life better?
5. What do the most values-oriented students on your campus care about? Where do they hang out? How do they spend their time? How could your organization make their day, week, or life better?
6. What do the most leadership-oriented students on your campus care about? Where do they hang out? How do they spend their time? How could your organization make their day, week, or life better?
7. Describe 5 “types” of students on your campus that your fraternity/sorority doesn’t normally spend time with.
8. What would a 3.75 GPA varsity athlete who is passionate about their faith and has a part-time job get out of your organization?
9. Review your website, brochures, posters, postcards, etc. — what would high performing students NOT care about?
10. If your founders showed up on your campus today to start a chapter, what would be the first three places they’d look for qualified candidates?



INSIGHT #2: Heart Not Head

For many people, the choice to join a fraternity or sorority is a decision that is made with their heart, not their head. It is an emotional choice made out of a desire to belong, a longing to matter, and an affinity for the people in the group. Yet, many organizations fill their marketing efforts with bullet points, facts, and stats in an effort to convince people through logic. Good information is fine, but great marketing is emotional. Great organizational growth marketing is a conversation not an essay. It's Social Excellence on a larger scale. It is an expression and exchange of values. It is a heart to heart exchange of beliefs. A nod of deep understanding and an affirmation of mutual worth. Heart, not head.

Do us a favor. Before you read any further, go to your campus community's Fraternity/Sorority Website homepage. Try to look at it like a curious 17-year-old incoming student. Just look it over objectively.

WHAT STORY DOES IT TELL YOU ABOUT YOUR FRATERNITY/SORORITY COMMUNITY?

Is it compelling? Enchanting? Accurate? Up to date? Emotionally moving? About what you want it to be about?

We get to visit lots of these Greek Life websites. And these sites are too often... painful. From a marketing perspective, they sometimes do exactly the OPPOSITE of what you'd want them to.

The first page prospective members and their families find about your Greek community should do two things and two things only.

- Emotionally convey your primary marketing narrative (the one clear story your community wants to tell about itself).
- Make it easy for a prospect to give their name and contact information so they can be connected to real fraternity/sorority leaders.

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Instead, you probably found some outdated pictures, a wordy mission statement, lots of information about sanctions, grades, sexual assault, and hazing, or worse.

Not all fraternity/sorority community websites are bad. Just most of them. I hope yours is GREAT! If you think you have an example of an excellent website for your fraternity/sorority community, send it our way and we'd love to share it with the world.

Now, obviously, do the same thing (ask yourself, "What story does this tell about fraternity/sorority?") with your chapter website, your inter/national organization website, all your social media feeds, the front entrance of your fraternity/sorority house, the impression your chapter makes when it hangs out together on campus, the event calendar you have planned for the upcoming term, the outfits your chapter chooses to wear publicly. What story do these things tell? What emotions are evoked?

You can't convince someone to join your organization with bullet points, facts, and figures. You need to touch their hearts. You need to tickle their imaginations. You need to inspire their dreams. You need to ease their fears and anxieties. Fraternities and sororities are organizations that people join because of how they make them feel, and rarely because of what they make them think.

Think about this quote from a fantastic marketing author named Seth Godin, ***"Songs about romance don't tell you how to make out, they merely encourage it. It's not the data that people seek, it's the mood."***

This is very true for fraternity/sorority growth and marketing. Most people aren't seeking data to sway their lifelong decision to join your fraternity or sorority, most are seeking the right mood, feeling, or warm-fuzzy that makes them feel like joining is the right decision for them. Yet, when we ask most organizations that I work with, "how do you 'sell' your organization to potential members?" they respond with data...

- We have the best GPA
- We have the biggest house
- We win IM's all the time
- We have leather couches in our living room
- 84% of us end up getting good paying jobs

That data is fine, and it is good filler for for the 4th page of brochures and websites if you are desperate to use it, but it won't make the 'sale'. No, you need to convince someone to join your organization by helping them the experience the feelings of pride, honor, friendship, love, loyalty, kindness, grace, or whatever it feels like to you to be a member.

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The reason most people **DON'T** join your organization is because when they imagine themselves as a member, they either feel ambivalent or embarrassed. It's all about that feeling...

Do your members exude an aura of pride around them the second they step foot on campus? Do your members believe they're the best, that they'll only accept the best, and that people should act their best anytime they're around one of your members? When you watch your members' everyday actions, do you get a feeling of pride or do you get a feeling of mediocrity or even disgust? More importantly, what feelings do the men or women you want to recruit experience?

Our organizations create a mood around them. You can choose the mood you put out and that can dramatically impact the mood of your entire organization. Next time you walk into a meeting or event, puff out your chest, stand tall, and act like you're James Freakin' Bond or the most confident man or woman you've ever seen. Choose to be the smiling life of the party. Choose to be helpful, kind, and the most buoyant, personable person in the room. Set that mood in all your marketing and recruitment work. Setting that mood will do more for you than any statistics you share with a prospective member.



INSIGHT #3: Be Remarkable

Is your organization worthy of remarking upon? That's what it means to be remarkable. Is your group predictable, expected, or boring to non-members? Great marketing focuses in on a single, powerful, compelling story - a core marketing narrative. What is your organization about? Is your group structured in such a way that it provides easy-to-access and significant value in the lives of the people you most want to attract? Too many organizations have grown unremarkable over time. They've become comfortable, predictable, and stale. Be about something. Be remarkable.

Check out this [blog post](#) for a cool video and additional thoughts related to this insight.

Answer these 10 questions as you prepare your core marketing narrative.

1. Where are you going? What are you working to become? Remember, great marketing doesn't just have to be informational... it can also be aspirational.
2. What makes you different than all the other chapters on your campus?
3. How do you know if someone's really a fraternity/sorority member or a member of your chapter specifically? If they're not wearing letters, reppin' colors, or showing off their fresh new frat-tat, how do you know?
4. If you don't love what you're currently known for as a chapter, what do you wish you were known for?
5. In a single paragraph (5 sentences max), what is the most powerful way you can write about what you want your chapter to be known for?
6. What are the unique benefits of membership that someone gets from joining your chapter that they can't get anywhere else?
7. If a stranger walked through an organization fair with all the fraternities and sororities on campus represented, what should they notice about you that truly gets their attention?
8. What do you not want to be known for under any circumstances?
9. What are you for? Who are you for? Who are you not for?
10. What are you against? What problem are you trying to solve?



INSIGHT #4: Make It Personal

Growth-focused marketing for fraternities and sororities should always result in one very clear objective -- it should make it easier for more people to have real interpersonal interactions with your best members. All marketing, whether it's social media, billboards, magazines, events, sponsorships, promotional items, advertising, brochures, blimps, smoke signals, or sidewalk chalk... All marketing for organizational growth should create real human-to-human connection opportunities.

People join people. Make it personal.

Here are a handful of key questions you must answer to take a personal approach to marketing.

1. How will you train your members to create better interactions with non-members?
2. How will you create opportunities for genuine human connection between members and non-members?
3. How can individual members share their personal story as it relates to your chapter's core marketing narrative?
4. How do your individual members' social media presences reflect your organization's core marketing narrative?
5. How can you take a more "one-on-one" approach as opposed to "mass" approach to everything you do with marketing and growth?

About Us

Phired Up (along with TechniPhi) delivers **TECHNOLOGY, EDUCATION,** and **STRATEGY** to help transform the way people join fraternities and sororities. Our team of passionate fraternity/sorority professionals are engineers of a growth system that makes fraternities and sororities safer, healthier, and stronger. We want to help every chapter and every potential member feel the impact of that system.

Want to learn more about how we can help your Organization, Community, or Chapter? Visit our website at phiredup.com or click on the link below.

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