

# The Publicity Manager's Guide

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*Please Note: This guide is a work in progress, and currently just contains a bunch of unconnected facts that may be useful. Add to it as you learn and have the Guild webmaster keep the official version up to date. If you'd like to turn the list into a real guide covering how to do things, go for it! As you learn specific information (prices, web addresses, contact names) add it to the guide.*

## 1 Publicity Schedule

*Rough and NOT comprehensive, doing almost anything earlier won't hurt. Design deadlines are included, make sure your designer is working an appropriate time before the deadline*

### One week before opening

- Pick up and sell t-shirts
- Hang drop poster
- Have publicity crew poster (and reposter after Thursday grunging as necessary)

### Three weeks before opening

- Arrange with The Tech for a reviewer to come see the show during the first weekend
- Give final t-shirt design to t-shirt company
- Have publicity crew hang teaser posters and reposter after grunging as necessary
- Have MTG Board approve final poster design
- Plan printing and distribution arrangements for any alternative publicity (bookmarks, business cards, etc.)
- Finish free postings, press releases, paid ad arrangement

## **Six weeks before opening (four weeks at latest, even for IAP show)**

- Have MTG Board comment on initial teaser, t-shirt and poster designs
- Contact t-shirt company
- If publicity will use photos of real actors, talk to actors and costume designer now, plan schedule to make sure photos are available for later deadlines
- Begin free postings, press releases, arranging paid ads, listings on event calendars, etc.

## **RIGHT NOW (whenever you take the job)**

- Read the guide
- Ask questions of the board or previous pub managers, even if you don't need the answers right away
- Discuss schedule with your publicity designer and producer
- Check with the producer and technical director to make sure that you get a publicity crew, and discuss with your crew what they'll do (this includes postering, but could also include anything else you can comfortably delegate to them)

## **2 Posters**

### **Teasers and show posters**

- All show posters should be approved by the Managing Board
- Show contracts will dictate information that must be on posters including relative sizes of different names. Get this information from the producer and to your designer early.
- Poster printing costs will use the bulk of your budget. Postering just campus can go through hundreds of posters, and an effort to poster at other schools and off campus can eat more. *Sweeney Todd '05* used most of 200 color and 500 b/w posters over a roughly 5 week advertising period.
- Consider producing a b/w version of the publicity poster to use in parallel with the color, both to save cost and to use for off campus advertising.
- Try to use bright colors on the poster, especially for the title. Many postering areas (including the infinite) are poorly lit, and darker colors may not read well. Having b/w posters to use in poorly lit areas is a good idea as well.

### **ASA postering rules**

- One poster per event per board. Only in designated ASA postering spaces. Don't poster over other MIT events. Posters are "grunged" on Thursday nights. <http://web.mit.edu/asa/www> can give further details.

### **Costs at CopyTech**

- 8.5X11 black and white \$.04/side
- 8.5X11 color \$.50/side
- 11X17 black and white \$.08/side
- 11X17 color \$1.00/side
- large format posters (up to 42" wide)
  - black and white \$7/square foot
  - color \$8/square foot
  - color on photographic paper \$9/square foot
- You can arrange to send CopyTech PDFs at [ctc-sendfiles@mit.edu](mailto:ctc-sendfiles@mit.edu) and have them printed and paid for through our CopyTech account, so anyone can pick them up.
- Find more information at <http://web.mit.edu/ctc/www/>
- Get our account number from the producer or the board.

### **Gnomon Copy**

- (<http://www.gnomon-copy.com>) in Harvard square will also do copies, especially 11X17s, but is 25-50% more expensive than Copytech. You can send them a PDF ([info@gnomon-copy.com](mailto:info@gnomon-copy.com)) and pick up copies later in the day.

### **Drop poster**

- Large format posters can be hung in Lobby 7 (vertical), the Student Center (“positions”) and the Infinite Corridor (“panels”). Lobby 7 space can be reserved at the beginning of a semester through the information office (in Lobby 7), SC and IC can be reserved through CAC at the beginning of the semester (usually the producer does the actual reserving). MTG can reserve up to 2 weeks in each space per semester. The IC space is covered by a plexiglass pane that can make it hard for posters to be seen due to glare (the glass is scratched up). Make sure the designer takes this visibility issue into account; dark posters can be hard to see here.
- Large format printing at CopyTech costs roughly \$100-150 for a 3 1/2' square, glossy color poster. Glossiness aids with visibility and Copytech will work with you to make sure you're happy with the color. You can also find someone with access to a large format printer on campus, or a neatly hand made drop poster will do just fine. The Guild has some poster making supplies in the office.

### 3 Press Release

- Contact Lynn Heineman (heine@media.mit.edu) for a set of address labels to advertise a theatrical production. The list will include about 300, choose 60 to 100 that seem most relevant (free events calendars especially).
- You can print-fold-mail press releases yourself or use MIT mail services to do it for you. If you mail more than 200 pieces you can take advantage of a bulk mail rate. It is recommended (and much cheaper) to prepare the mailings yourself with the cast's help. Press releases are highly worth doing, and can get the show listed on many web and print events calendars.

### 4 Paper ads

#### The Tech

- Any ASA student group is entitled to 1 page of free advertising in the Tech per year. We generally distribute this as 1/4 page per show, which amounts to a 4" by 6" or 6" by 4" ad.
- Get a reviewer by contacting the Arts page at arts@the-tech.mit.edu and a photographer from photo@the-tech.mit.edu. It can also be helpful to contact the current editor-in-chief and to use any cast members who write for the Tech to get a timely response. Make it clear to photographers that no pictures may be taken during actual performances, and that they must either send a photographer to a dress rehearsal or get photos from MTG.

#### Off-campus

- The Metro – Line ads no longer exist. Pricing is on the order of \$200 for a single-day, business-card-sized ad.
- Boston Globe and Herald have special non-profit pricing if you ask.
- Advertising in area papers is generally out of budget for most MTG shows.

#### Ad swaps

- with other MIT groups- check with the board if any already exist or set up swaps. Groups on campus:
  - Dramashop
  - Shakespeare Ensemble
  - Dance Troupe
  - Community Players
  - Gilbert & Sullivan Players
  - LSC (slides can sometimes be exchanged for LCS inserts in our program, especially for summer and IAP shows)

- Ad swaps can be set up with groups at BU, Emerson, Harvard, Tufts, Wellesley, etc. E-mail addresses for contacts can be found by searching groups websites.

## 5 Free publicity

### at MIT

- All MTG shows should be publicized through the MIT Events calendar. Information can be found at <http://web.mit.edu/arts/about/office/artscomm/publications.html> about the Events calendar and other free on campus publicity options.
- Make sure you contact Lynn Heinemann ([heine@media.mit.edu](mailto:heine@media.mit.edu)) in the Office of the Arts to get on the arts calendar. She will also ensure the information will get on the LED crawl in building 56.
- MIT Cable will run a PowerPoint ad periodically on channel 12 (MyInfo TV), the channel that is run continuously on the Lobby 10 TVs. Prepare a PowerPoint slide or presentation. More info can be found at <http://web.mit.edu/mitcable/www/myinfotv.html>

### Outside MIT

- Boston Globe
  - [http://www.boston.com/cgi-bin/globe\\_events.cgi](http://www.boston.com/cgi-bin/globe_events.cgi)
- craigslist
  - <http://boston.craigslist.org/cal/>
- Boston Phoenix
  - [http://www.bostonphoenix.com/boston/listings/place\\_listing.htm](http://www.bostonphoenix.com/boston/listings/place_listing.htm)
  - (See THEATER LISTINGS.)
- NETheater411.com
  - <http://www.netheater411.com/>
- The Cambridge Chronicle and Tab each have events listings. Please add contact information if you use these.

## 6 Fun options

- Mailbox stuffers – 1/4 page mailbox stuffers, distributed to dorm mailboxes, can serve as advertising and give a small (\$1 off usually) discount when presented during the first weekend or similar terms
- Business Cards or Bookmarks can be great for having at the ticket booth

- Anything that is flyer like (such as bookmarks) can be given to the Information Office in Lobby 7 to keep in their little pamphlet section
- LSC slides – LSC is often willing to swap slides for program ads or inserts. Find current information on advertising with LSC at <http://lsc.mit.edu/info/slides.shtml>. They prefer high-resolution PNG image files.
- Athena hats (technically prohibited by Athena and the ASA)
- Chalkboards on campus can serve as advertising with a little energy, large classrooms take a lot of ingenuity (10-250, 26-100, Green bldg.), but Student St. in the Stata Center has lower overhead and (so far) seem to stay up longer if you put a note like “Please do not erase until [closing show date].”
- Space on the projector slide shows on the Infinite Corridor is reasonably priced, and MITAV is frequently willing to swap for program ad space with student groups. The cost is currently \$100 for a M-F slot, and \$100 for a Sat/Sun slot. More information can be found at [http://web.mit.edu/av/www/MoreHtml/Corridor\\_3.htm](http://web.mit.edu/av/www/MoreHtml/Corridor_3.htm). Prepare a PowerPoint slide show (.pps file) that is about 20-60 seconds long.
- Anything you can think of is worth trying if you think it will bring in enough people to pay for itself (at \$10/non-MIT attendee, it doesn't take much)
- The Guild briefly attempted to survey audience members to see how they heard about us. Repeating this and tracking the data would be a good idea someday. (Note from Steve – this is currently being done as part of the standard Guild ticket reservation form.)

## 7 T-shirts

- We've recently had success with New England Design ([www.nedesigntshirts.com](http://www.nedesigntshirts.com)) near Fenway Park in Boston. Talk to Maria, or tell anyone there that you're from MTG. They can reliably do a two week turn around time, and often faster in an emergency (i.e. you screwed up). They can be contacted through their website, by email at [info@nedesigntshirts.com](mailto:info@nedesigntshirts.com), or by phone at 617-247-202.
- T-shirts typically cost between \$10 and \$15; the more that are ordered, the cheaper the individual shirts are.
- The design should be roughly 10"x15" to fill an entire side of the shirt, or 3-4" square for an image centered over one side of the chest. Add more accurate data on appropriate image sizing over the next few shows.
- Distribute t-shirts early: If they're ready by the beginning of prod week they will serve as good advertising and it will be much easier to make sure they're all sold.

## 8 E-mail lists

- Timing of e-mail spam should be coordinated with the Board (through the board's publicity director). A simple template for general e-mail spam is- all the spam you've received from the Guild in the past. In general, you should change your "From:" address to mtg-announce@mit.edu to ensure that responses reach the right folks (that list should include the president, current producer, and secretary). The "To:" should also be mtg-announce and other lists should be bcc:d.
- MTG has a "super secret spam list" that contains all the lists in the "We bcc:d the following lists" statement. The lists on the super secret spam list are generally self-explanatory, mtg-info includes older show lists, mtg-new, mtg-web-info, and mtg-interest for folks that have used the webform, signed up for a list at an activities fair, etc. Ask the board for current details on that super secret spam list.