

HOW I SET UP THE DISTRIBUTION PARTY

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BEND, OR



YOU HAVE TO MAKE IT WORTH THEIR TIME AND MONEY.

- Contact the local military recruiters; the Army National Guard is a major supporter of our yearbook program. Most have “toys” like rock-climbing walls, inflatable obstacle courses, etc. that are all free because it is great PR for them. They show up, set them up, and run their events, which means no extra work from us. These events are a highlight to students because once they get in the party, all of the inside activities are free.
- Call local vendors. I recommend ice cream vendors, food vendors, and henna tattoo artists. The vendors handle all of their own set-up and sales and donate 15% of their profits to our yearbook program.
- Call a radio station to emcee the event. They have all of their own equipment and will do it for free if you advertise in the school for them. We also get them to donate concert tickets to us to raffle off, which is a great selling point to party attendees.
- Giveaways- I have a few local food/sweet/coffee places that donate gift cards for us to raffle off to attendees.



PLAN AHEAD TO SET UP FOR SUCCESS:

- Pick a date and advertise it heavily- on school calendars, countdown posters, school-wide automated phone call, announcements and yearbook staff members doing presentations in classes.
- Have the party during school hours. If the party is after school, students who are athletes or ride the bus will not be able to attend. Our party starts 45 minutes before school gets out and continues on for an hour and a half after school.
- Sell tickets starting two weeks out. Tickets are \$2 and anyone can attend, not just those who bought books. This ticket gets them into the party where they can pick up a yearbook, play on all the fun toys, enjoy the music, buy food, hang out with their friends, and be entered to win prizes (business giveaways, concert tickets).
- Those who don't attend the party must wait until the following week to pick up their yearbook. Our party is on a Thursday and non-attendees must wait until the following Monday to pick their book up.



THINGS I'VE LEARNED:

1. Don't be discouraged your first year. It takes a while for the party tradition to take off. Our first distribution party had 150 students. Our sixth year, we had nearly 700.
2. Don't plan too much for your staff to do during the party. I like for the yearbook staff to be able to enjoy the party too. My staff pairs up and hands out yearbooks. When the lines dwindle, they alternate who works the table and who can go play for a bit. We don't have to worry about setting up anything except where we hand out books. Our vendors and businesses handle all of their own set-up/take-down and sales. Once we tried selling pizza ourselves and not only did it not sell very well but we had to have someone go pick up the pizza and then work the pizza table the whole time. It's easiest to keep our role in the party simple.
3. Our second year, we raised the entry price to \$4. We made the same profit, but had fewer people. We decided that more people is better, and now over half of our school attends. \$2 is easier to sell to kids too.
4. Have a staff or parent volunteer work the door. Not many kids are comfortable turning students away who don't have a ticket or try to push their way in.
5. One year we hired a DJ. It was expensive, the music wasn't loud enough and of course the students didn't like the music very much. By getting a local radio station to emcee, it makes them look good to the community and it is no money out of our pocket.
6. Invite staff to help so they see what the party is about. It helps the staff get buy-in and support the event. I sell it to teachers that the students get their yearbooks signed during the event so that signing won't disrupt their classes later.



THE PARTY PAYS OFF:

- Money!! We spend about \$40 to have posters printed up. We make about \$1500 in profit.
- We hand out more than 90% of our books in one day.
- We end our school year with a memorable celebration that revolves around all of the hard work the yearbook staff has done. It brings the school together.