

# Promote Your Programs and Events Using Snapchat

by Del Suggs, M.S.Ed.

**Snapchat** is currently the most popular social media on most campuses. If you are unfamiliar with it, Snapchat is basically a messaging app with a self-destruct feature. Posts— texts, photos, and videos— disappear (theoretically) after a preset length of time. It can be a very useful means of marketing your programs and events. Remember, however, that Snapchat is currently used almost exclusively by people under 30. That means if you market with Snapchat, many of your non-traditional students will not receive your marketing message.

While Snapchat is very different from other social media, it does have one similarity with apps like Instagram and Vine: spontaneity (or the appearance of spontaneity) is very important. These apps are for capturing the moment. That means your posts need to appear spontaneous— even if they're actually planned days in advance.

Here's an example of using Snapchat to market an event you have coming up. You could post photos of your team together or make a short video clip of what happens behind the scenes on Instagram and Facebook. But you would make a Snapchat story of all of the brief moments that occur throughout the day—like the seconds before you turn on the sound system for the coffeehouse, or light up the

grills for the cookout.

Another difference with Snapchat is that you can draw over your images or videos. That means you can make your photos unique so that they stand out, and are much more entertaining than what you might have posted on Instagram or Facebook.

The key takeaway from this is that your approach to the content you put out on Snapchat should be different than the way you create Tweets, Status updates, Posts and other social media content.

Snapchat is fun. Use it as a way to humanize your CAB by presenting your members working hard behind the scenes at an event, or in the office. Casual is best. If your photos look like they came from a photo library on the web, it will be an instant turn-off to your users. Instead, seek to entertain them.

There are a few adjustments you can make to the app, to make it work best for you. Use these to make your snaps stand out.

**Drawing tools.** You can draw on your image in any color and any place.

**Text add-ins.** You can type out text to add to your image. Choose any color or font, and place it anywhere you want.

**Emojis.** You can add emojis to your images.

In addition, there are also features and settings that you can use to make your Snapchat more successful. Give these a try!

**Change the view time.** You can manually adjust the length of time your images can be viewed. The default is ten seconds, but you can adjust that to make it longer. That may lead to increased engagement.

**Make sure your profile is public.** The default for profiles is "private." It's easy— click on the ghost in the top center of the main screen, and click the red star in the top right corner.

Now that you've got a very basic understanding of Snapchat, let's look at how you can use it to market your CAB events. There are any number of ways to use Snapchat, and here are a few suggestions to get you started.

**Build anticipation.** Do you have an event going on now, or one going on soon? Create hype as much as you can through anticipation and capitalize on it. If you have an event coming up, continue to share images and videos of the preparation or of exciting new developments and details to come. Snapchat is based off of short clips. Creating a series of Snaps or even Stories to build

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up anticipation for an event or program release can help spread the word organically, and even add a viral element when done correctly.

## **Combine Video & Images.**

You can easily combine images and video in your marketing. You're not limited to creating Stores that are just a series of photos, or one long video. You can combine both of these visual elements into one and have it transition smoothly.

**Tell Stories.** The best use of Snapchat is to tell stories, and bring your viewers along for the ride. You can try to be avant garde, but the traditional style of story with a beginning, middle and end works just fine.

## **Promote your Snapchat.**

Share your Snapchat username on all of your social media sites, your website and Facebook page, and to your email list, prompting users to follow you. Don't forget to use your Snapchat QR code— the ghost you can scan to connect to your account.

**Giveaways.** You can offer an incentive up front to follow you, such as a chance to win a prize or get early admission to a show if they follow you. This can be surprisingly effective.

**####Use the following in callout box####**

## **The Five Best Practices for Snapchat**

**Create urgency.** Creating a sense of urgency is a great marketing tool to motivate users to buy tickets or attend a program or event. Snapchat has a built-in urgency, with it's "see it before it disappears" aspect gives viewers that feeling. Create posts that capitalize on this natural urgency to motivate users to action— announce pop-up events, special discounts on tickets, or exclusive access to a program— to get more results and higher engagement.

**Test content in private messages.** Since Snapchat is so different from other platforms, it's a good idea to test your content in a private message to a friend first, and see how it will perform. To test content on Snapchat, send a Snap to some of your users in private snaps and measure their engagement. It will be easier to monitor their engagement in these smaller batches, and it lets you test content before sharing it with all of your followers as stories.

**Fit your content to the platform.** Snapchat as a platform feels more casual, fun, and fleeting than some other platforms (which is probably part of the reason it appeals to Millennials so much).

Showcase your CAB and its personality, and don't worry about pictures that aren't perfectly photo-shopped.

## **Use both videos and images.**

Sharing a mix of images and videos can keep users interested and engaged; images are easy to edit and quick to view, and videos (in all their ten-second glory) are dynamic and feel alive. The more options you have, the better— at least in this case.

**Tell a story.** Snaps now automatically play, one after the next, if there are multiple that a user can view. This is also true for stories. You can use these images and videos to tell a story across multiple posts, which can both build engagement and interest, and allows you to overcome the briefness of the time limit for both images and videos.

Snapchat can be a powerful marketing tool for your programs and events. Grab your phone and get busy snapping.

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