

Use Facebook!

From: Ray G.

Facebook has been key in organizing Sunsara Taylor's campus tour. At NYU, it was one of the main ways students found out about and discussed the tour—and the Facebook event page and YouTube videos spread online independent of us.

Students at a school within NYU told us everyone heard about Sunsara Taylor and the tour through Facebook. Many students had gotten an invitation to the Facebook event page and links to Sunsara Taylor's YouTube videos. Students who saw the burkha/thong skit were directed to Facebook and YouTube from our fliers. And there was contentious debate on their Facebook "Walls" and "messages." There was a definite synergy between blanketing the building with fliers that directed people to Facebook and YouTube, performing the skit there during class changes, and the online discussions spreading.

We were able to send messages to all students interested in the event. An NYU student's open letter was "tagged" as a "note" to a tour organizer's friends, and debate started on the organizer's "wall," and the "walls" of everyone involved.

We also tried Facebook advertising. This kept Sunsara Taylor and the Tour fresh in the minds of students who knew about it, and also let other students find out about it for the first time. At first we ended up narrowly targeting our student audience with key words, and the ad would only show about 10,000 times a day. It was a quick learning curve, and soon we made three ads, two targeting high school and college students attending NYC schools (but not necessarily "residing" in NYC as they may or may not tell Facebook) with the event page, and one targeting NYC college students for Sunsara Taylor's YouTube Tour announcement. By leaving the "keywords" and "city of residence" fields blank, and changing our bid throughout the day, we were able to show our ads almost 500,000 times a day and get as many ad "clicks" as we could afford. (Based on your target audience, whether the ad is for a Facebook page or other website, and time of day and Facebook traffic, the "suggested bid" per click for the ad will change drastically throughout the day. We had to change it 3 times a day to both stay competitive with other ads, and then save money on the off-hours.) Hundreds of students clicked-through to the Facebook event page and the YouTube announcement in the week before Sunsara Taylor's talk.

Facebook needs some expertise and a lot of creativity to be used in a meaningful and big way. I've outlined some of the most successful strategies we've used. I know there are many more I haven't discovered yet.