

Feeding the Masses:



A Recommendation Report for Baylor University Campus Kitchen's Turkeypalooza

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Abstract

Participation in Baylor Campus Kitchen’s annual event Turkeypalooza has grown since its establishment in 2010, largely because of the involvement of other student organizations on campus. However, members of the student body who are not involved with partnering organizations are largely unaware of the event. Because of this, we decided to invent various methods for increasing student awareness and involvement in Turkeypalooza. We realized that the method used to increase participation should be relatively inexpensive, eye-catching, and accessible to a maximum number of students. Because freshmen are required to live on campus, and the freshmen enrollment is steadily increasing, we believe partnering with students through their participation in residence halls will be an effective way of increasing the number meals collected for and distributed to members of the Waco community. Therefore, we suggest instating a competition between residence halls modeled after the Energy Madness Competition.

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Table of Contents

Introduction..... 2

Research Methods and Results..... 3

Section 1: Choosing an Organization..... 3

Section 2: Preparing Interview..... 4

Section 3: Interview Results..... 4

Section 4: Alternatives..... 5

Conclusion..... 5

Recommendation..... 7

References..... 8

List of Illustrations

Figure 1: Map of Current Donation Box Locations..... 3

Figure 2: Current Turkeypalooza Flyer..... 4

Figure 3: Map of Residence Halls & Suggested Donation Box Locations..... 6

Figure 4: Residence Hall Donation Box Design Template..... 7

Introduction

On November 3, 2014, the students in Dr. Christina Iluzada's Technical and Professional Writing class at Baylor University received a group assignment to write a report identifying a goal or need of a local organization and to recommend a solution to this goal or need. Dr. Iluzada suggested choosing an organization that one or more members of the group was involved in or had some relation to, so our group chose Baylor University's Campus Kitchen (BUCK) organization. Specifically, our group decided to focus on the annual Turkeypalooza event put on by the organization around the time of Thanksgiving.

BUCK is a branch of the national non-profit Campus Kitchens Project, which is dedicated to ending hunger in communities across the United States. The organization is made up of three aspects: food recovery and delivery, cooking, and community gardening. All of these aspects work to provide food for the hungry of the Waco community in practical and resourceful ways. In conjunction with feeding the hungry, the organization is focused on educating students about the needs of their community. The Turkeypalooza event is one way BUCK strives to reach beyond its consistent student volunteers to get the broader student body involved in helping those in need.

Turkeypalooza is a food drive that takes place in the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving with the specific purpose of providing Thanksgiving meals for the homeless and others in need. BUCK partners with Shepherd's Heart Food Bank to deliver the food collected during the event. According to the flyer for the event, Turkeypalooza lasts from October 20th to November 21st. Campus Kitchen tries to gather meals at Martin House on Baylor's campus, but they also accept monetary donations of \$35. These meals are then used to feed the hungry and the money is used to purchase more meals for anyone who is hungry. A meal consists of the following items:

- 2 cans of cranberry sauce
- 4 cans of green beans
- 4 cans of corn
- 2 boxes of stuffing

Since the event started in 2010, the goal number of meals has increased from 60 to 200, and BUCK has begun partnering with other student organizations such as Student Government and PanHellenic to reach its growing goal. While the event is growing steadily, there are still parts of the it, such as advertising and communicating with other school organizations that can be much more effective and widespread.

We determined that our solutions for expanding this operation need to fit the following criteria in order to involve as many students as possible.

- The means for advertising should be inexpensive.
- The advertising for the event should noticeably stand out.
- The advertising should reach as much of the student body as possible.

Currently, Turkeypalooza is being advertised on Facebook, Twitter, and a limited number of spots on campus (Figure 1), but the advertisements are not bold enough to grab students'

attention unless they are looking for them. Also, the main location for collecting donations is currently the Martin House, which is in the secluded southwest corner of campus.



To get the maximum number of students involved, we suggest following the model of the Energy Madness competition by having the residence halls on campus compete in

collecting the largest number of meals. This way the majority of freshmen, a group increasing in size every year who have the easiest access to on-campus donation sites, will hear about the event and be motivated to help out.

Other actions which could be taken to increase participation are placing ads in more noticeable places like Fountain Mall, the entryways to the Baylor Science Building, and the lobby of the Student Union Building. Additionally, the student leaders of the event could increase their use of social media to promote the event. However, we believe instating a competition between residence halls is more likely to reach students and encourage participation.

In the following sections of the report, we will expand upon our research methods, results, and final recommendations for BUCK's Turkeypalooza event.

Research Methods and Results

Section 1: Choosing an Organization

The first action taken was finding the right organization to help. One of our team members was in contact with the organization Campus Kitchen, so they seemed to be the right choice. Campus Kitchen is a non-profit organization that started out by giving extra food from cafeterias and restaurants to individuals who were suffering from hunger in Waco. Students who work within the organization develop skills that help them to serve others and allow them to build long-lasting relationships.

Section 2: Preparing Interview

After deciding to help Campus Kitchen, we proceeded to interview them about their Turkeypalooza event. We generated a list of 15 interview questions asking what their goals are, whether or not they are meeting their goals, and what actions they are currently taking to help advertise the organization. These questions were sent by email so that the organization had sufficient time to come up with well thought-out answers that would give us a thorough understanding of what they are doing and what they want to achieve.

Section 3: Interview Results

This year, Campus Kitchen's goal for Turkeypalooza is to gather 200 meals for this Thanksgiving. Last year, they far exceeded their original goal. Additionally, since Campus Kitchen is an entity of Baylor, they receive funding directly from the university. This and the fact that they are a student organization and thus have access to Baylor's student body, helps them to carry out their various activities.

After gathering all the canned goods from Turkeypalooza, Campus Kitchen donates them to

Shepherd's Heart. Shepherd's Heart then sorts and distributes these goods to many local families in need. The partnership between Shepherd's Heart and Campus Kitchen began three years ago.

From our interview, we learned that the response to the Turkeypalooza event changes year to year. It greatly depends on the strength of the organizations advertising of the event. In order to improve their advertising the last couple of years, Campus Kitchen paired up with specific organizations such as Alpha Lambda Delta, Baylor Panhellenic, and currently, the Student Government. Campus Kitchen has actively contacted some of these organizations while others, like Baylor Panhellenic, have taken the initiative to contact Campus Kitchen first.

Campus Kitchen Primarily advertises through social media, chalking, and communicating with student organizations, and using flyers like the one shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2

In addition to the Martin House donation box, Campus Kitchen has decided to place donation boxes in the Baylor Science Building, Hankamer School of Business, Castellaw Communications Building, and Mary Gibbs Jones Building. The Baylor Science Building and Hankamer School receive a high traffic of students, so they are great locations for donation boxes. The boxes placed in the Castellaw Communications Building and Mary Gibbs Jones Building are there because those departments wished to be closely involved with the event.

All members of the Campus Kitchen Executive Council volunteer to help spread the word about Turkeypalooza, and they help Shepherd's Heart to sort and deliver canned goods. Most donations are in the form of meals as rather than money. However, Campus Kitchen finds it challenging to attract attention during the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons. This is because there are so many events and drives going on at the same time and Baylor students can only participate in so many.

Section 4: Alternatives

As a result, Campus Kitchen is seeking improvements to help them gather more food for those in need. This year they tried to provide many different opportunities for Baylor students to get involved with Turkeypalooza through organizations that they are already apart of, such as Alpha Lambda Delta or MSO. Campus Kitchen is constantly searching for other ways to improve both their communications with other school organizations and their advertising. By doing this, they can get more Baylor students participate and make Turkeypalooza a success.

We came up with several solutions. The first is to conduct an email campaign. Campus Kitchen could get permission to have emails advertising Turkeypalooza sent directly to Baylor students. The issue with this is that it could be challenging to get permission to have campus-wide emails sent often. Another solution is to be more active on social media. By using Twitter, Facebook, and other social media, many students would be able to stay updated on Campus Kitchen's events. However, not all students use social media and since there is such a large amount of information, Campus Kitchen's updates may not get noticed.

We have decided that the best method for Campus Kitchen to increase student participation in Turkeypalooza is to hold donation collection competitions between Baylor's various residence halls. Each residence hall would have their own donation box and whichever residence hall donated the most meals would earn a pizza party. The fact that each residence hall gets its own individual donation box would make it easy for Campus Kitchen to count meals. This competition would be a fun way to get more students to raise food for hungry families in Waco.

Conclusion

Our group decided based on the interview and our research that we would focus on student awareness, competitions, and partnership with other organizations on campus in order to improve BUCK's Turkeypalooza.

Getting other organizations to participate in Turkeypalooza will greatly increase BUCK's success by allowing them to take advantage of that organization's resources. These resources could be volunteers or funds. An organization that BUCK might benefit from partnering with could be a residence hall, fraternity, sorority, honor society, or anything where there is a network of people. For example, Alpha Lambda Delta offers points to their members who donate canned food. That food goes directly to BUCK for Turkeypalooza. This has already been proven to work in past events, so it would be better to get more organizations to do things like this. Also, organizations that are prominent on campus could help with raising student awareness.

Student awareness is important because students cannot participate in something they know nothing about. The main way to raise student awareness is through advertising. Advertising could take the form of flyers, email, t-shirts, or word-of-mouth. While they already have some flyers and donation boxes up across campus, there is room for improvement. More of a presence in high traffic areas, which are marked in Figure 3, would greatly increase student awareness of Turkeypalooza. We believe advertising in residence halls would also help increase participation in Turkeypalooza's because students living in residence hall are actively engaged in the community around them.

Competitions could both raise awareness and take advantage of other student organizations. For example, each group could have its own internal competition where whoever donates the most money or meals would



earn a prize. There could also be a competition between different organizations and the group with the most participation wins a prize. An example of such a competition's success is the Energy Madness Competition, which is an ongoing annual competition between residence halls to promote energy conservation. Whichever residence hall uses the least energy wins a pizza party, a banner to hang in their lobby, and a plaque. Participants are encouraged to spread the word about saving electricity to their entire residence hall. This style of competition could easily be tailored to suit Turkeypalooza. A competition like this would have people in the residence halls talking to their friends who are not in that organization about Turkeypalooza, and this leads back to raising awareness.

After analyzing all the possible improvements that could be made while keeping in mind that the advertising has to be affordable, noticeable, and reach a majority of the student body, we came up with a few recommendations.

Recommendation

We recommend that Campus Kitchen consider implementing a residence hall competition in order to increase student awareness and participation in the Turkeypalooza event.

In our research, we found that students respond well to advertising from their own peer groups. With this in mind, we have devised a strategy for increasing student awareness of and participation in Turkeypalooza that we feel will be highly effective. As great number of students are involved in residence halls, advertising Turkeypalooza through Campus Living and Learning as a competition between the halls could be a highly effective method for increasing food donations. Much like the Energy Madness competition, the students of the various residence halls could compete with each other for which hall donates the largest number of meals, with a prize such as a pizza party for the winner. We believe that this would be a great way to bring Turkeypalooza directly to the students, and thus better solicit their participation. In conjunction with the residence hall competition, we also suggest that donation boxes have large signs, and be otherwise eye-catching. These boxes would be easy and inexpensive to create, as the materials needed to assemble them are commonplace. Figure 4 is a suggested design for such a donation box.



Figure 4

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