

strategies for increasing yearbook sales

The best way to generate yearbook sales is to create an interesting book that people will want to buy. But in addition to that, there are always some simple marketing tips and tricks that your staff can try.

Take advantage of opening night

At most schools, there is an annual “Open House” or “Back to School” night early in the year, and the night presents a wonderful opportunity to sell yearbooks. Think about it – this may be your only chance to have that much face time with parents to explain exactly what the yearbook is all about and why it would make a valuable purchase for them.

Other opening nights make perfect places to set up a yearbook sales table too, such as the first PTA meeting and the first band concert.

A little pricing psychology

You know how much it costs to produce your yearbook, and you should have a good idea of your desired “list” price. Sell your book at that price, telling customers that rock-bottom price is only good if they buy the yearbook before a certain date. Those customers think they’re getting a big discount and a great deal, while you get to boost your sales. Then, if you have subsequent sales, and offer the book at distribution, sell it for... say... a 10% to 15% increase each time.

The personal touch

Your yearbook keeps an index of which students appear in the book, and on what page, right? Use this information to create some buzz by sending out personalized postcards that let the student know they’ll be in the yearbook. “Hey Elizabeth, did you know you are on page 38 of the yearbook? Buy yours now at...” This same idea can be done by simply handing out personalized fliers to the students at school with the same information.

Go after the big fish

Every school is filled with large groups and organizations. Frequently, those groups have organized parent booster clubs, like the band. Make a specific sales pitch to those parent clubs.

Class in session

Your school probably has a Marketing class, and they might make perfect candidates to sell the book. Essentially, you outsource the job and get back to work on creating your masterpiece. The young entrepreneurs get a fun project to work on.



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End of the season memories

Sports coverage is a big part of almost any yearbook. So what better place to market your book than at the end-of-the-year team banquets and celebrations where the athletes and, more importantly, their parents will be celebrating and reminiscing about the season.

Make it competitive

One sure way to motivate yearbook staffers is to turn yearbook sales into a contest. For example, the staff member who sells the most yearbooks wins an iPod.

Can you see me?

The yearbook needs to be highly visible throughout your school, which means the staff needs to basically conduct its own marketing campaign. Wear staff T-shirts, hand out postcards and fliers promoting when the book goes on sale, and sponsor school events. Get the name of the yearbook in front of the student population as many times, and as many different ways, as you can.

Target the community

Several local businesses might have an interest in purchasing your yearbook. The library, police department, doctor and dentist offices, real estate agents – it never hurts to ask. And while you're at it – try advertising the yearbook sale in the community section of your local newspaper.

One-stop shopping

Many schools have increased their book sales by adding the cost of the yearbook into the regular registration fees, thus making it easier for their customers to pay. Just get the approval of your principal to make it an optional check box on the fee list.

Market to everyone

Just as you would always strive to have diversity in the yearbook, you should always make sure to bring some diversity to your yearbook marketing as well. For instance, if your school has a large Spanish-speaking student population, target them with mailers and posters written in Spanish.

Ready, set, hike!

At most schools, football is a popular sport and the games are well-attended events. Use that to your advantage. Put up an advertising banner, set up a sales booth, or hand out coupons at home games. You can also advertise in the game programs.



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Grade competition

Take advantage of the loyalty every student has for his or her own class by turning yearbook buying into a contest. The grade that buys the most yearbooks wins a signing party at the end of the year.

Hit them at home

Divide up the school directory among all the yearbook staff members, and have them start making direct-to-home sales telephone calls.

Straight from the source

Strong testimonials can often lead to powerful ads. Nothing is likely to convince a parent to buy the yearbook more than being able to read some strong, positive testimonials about previous editions of your school's yearbook.

Sneak preview

Some schools have had great success by teasing their audience with a small sample of the contents of the yearbook. The entire book doesn't have to be kept a secret. For example, set up a Light Pro during lunch and display a couple of the book's most attractive spreads and an order table.

Automatic calls

Do some research in your area to see what companies might offer automatic dial services. You provide the list of customers and phone numbers, and they make the calls and play the automated yearbook sales message of your choice when the phone calls are answered. Or, use the school's automated phone system, if they have one.

Get creative!

The bottom line is – there are always new and creative ways for yearbook staffs to encourage yearbook sales. In the past, some staffs have offered special discounts for groups of siblings. Others have set up a sales table at the Homecoming game, and sold the book to last year's returning seniors, who still have friends at the school.

