



PROGRAM PROMOTION PLAYBOOK

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HOW TO USE THIS PLAYBOOK

This playbook is designed to empower Northern Arizona University (NAU) faculty and staff with a hands-on, practical guide for promoting academic programs. It goes beyond strategy to show the **why** behind each campaign and **how** to bring it to life—providing clear, actionable steps to turn ideas into impactful results that connect with your audiences. **By following its recommendations, NAU faculty and staff can plan and deliver program promotions that are targeted, consistent, and impactful.**

It highlights the marketing channels, platforms, and tactics most effective for reaching students, families, alumni, and community partners. Designed to be thoughtful, audience-specific, and data-informed, this playbook offers a flexible framework that can be applied to any academic program or opportunity, regardless of college or discipline.

Think of this playbook as your **campaign field guide**. Use it when you are ready to plan, launch, and manage program-specific promotions.

Use this guide to:

- Select the right mix of channels, platforms, and tactics for your campaign goals
- Coordinate campaigns that blend digital, traditional, and experiential marketing efforts
- Ensure alignment with NAU's brand and accessibility standards
- Reference best practices during planning, execution, and reporting

Playbook goals

- Guide you step by step through planning and promoting your program, offering, opportunity, experience, or initiative
- Provide practical tools, strategies, and ideas to help your audience learn about your program and take the next step
- Establish a clear, consistent approach across NAU while allowing flexibility to highlight what makes your program unique
- Simplify collaboration with NAU's marketing and communications teams by creating a shared framework for planning and executing promotional efforts

Important notice

If your NAU unit has dedicated marketing and communications support (e.g., a Communications Manager), please collaborate directly with them on any marketing or communications campaigns. This ensures consistency, efficiency, and alignment with institutional and college standards. Thank you!

MARKETING JOURNEY

Marketing works as an interconnected journey, where each element serves a distinct purpose and advances audiences toward a shared destination.

- **Strategy** defines the purpose and direction of the journey — why you're traveling and who you're trying to reach.
 - **Strategy = the map and destination** — it shows where you're headed, why it matters, and who you're traveling for.
- **Campaigns** are coordinated, time-bound initiatives that bring your strategy to life by combining multiple tactics across one or more channels and platforms to achieve a specific goal.
 - **Campaign = road trip** — a planned journey that follows your map toward a defined destination that may involve multiple highways, vehicles, and maneuvers along the way.
- **Channels** are the broad pathways or mediums you use to reach your audience (e.g., social media, email, print).
 - **Channel = highway** — the main route you take to reach people, chosen based on where your audience travels most often.
- **Platforms** are the specific tools, services, or environments within a channel where your content appears (e.g., Instagram, Emma or Mailchimp, *The Arizona Daily Sun*).
 - **Platform = vehicle** — the specific vehicle (e.g., car, bus, or bike) you choose to travel on that highway, selected for where specifically and how you'll connect with your audience.
- **Tactics** are the concrete actions you take on a platform to engage your audience (e.g., running Instagram ads, sending a segmented email, publishing a print ad).
 - **Tactic = driving maneuver** — the way you operate your vehicle — passing, signaling, or turning — to make progress toward your destination.

Marketing strategy: why + who

A marketing strategy defines why you are marketing and who you are trying to reach — the purpose, audience, and goals behind your efforts. It begins with understanding your audience — their needs, motivations, and behaviors — and aligning those insights with your organization's priorities and marketing objectives. A clear strategy ensures your campaigns are cohesive, efficient, and impactful, rather than scattered across disconnected efforts.

Marketing types (the approach to your strategy)

A marketing strategy may emphasize one or more channel types or approaches, including:

- **Digital (online) marketing** – Uses online channels such as websites, social media, email, search, and digital advertising. Digital approaches support targeted outreach, performance measurement, and data-driven optimization.
- **Traditional (offline) marketing** – Uses offline channels such as print, TV/radio, direct mail, and outdoor advertising. Traditional approaches support broad awareness, geographic targeting, and tangible brand presence.
- **Experiential marketing** – Creates immersive, interactive experiences — whether in-person, digital, or hybrid — that foster emotional connection and increase engagement.

We will explore the marketing types listed above in more detail throughout the playbook.

Integrated marketing (strategic umbrella)

Integrated marketing is a high-level strategic approach that ensures all marketing efforts — across digital, traditional, and experiential channels — work together with a consistent brand voice, visual identity, core message, and value proposition. This approach strengthens recognition, trust, and relevance across all touchpoints and improves results by aligning the message everywhere your audience encounters the university.

Integrated marketing may be activated through **multi-channel, hybrid, or omnichannel approaches**, depending on campaign goals, scope, and resources.

- **Multi-channel approach** – Uses multiple channels to reach audiences (e.g., email, social, print, events), though channels may operate independently, without a cohesive experience.
- **Hybrid approach** – Intentionally blends digital, traditional, and experiential channels within a single campaign to create connected experiences (e.g., a direct-mail piece with a QR code linking to a landing page, or an event sign-up that feeds an email nurture flow).
- **Omnichannel approach** – Connects channels through shared data and coordinated messaging to create a seamless, audience-centered experience. It builds on hybrid execution by enabling ongoing personalization, adaptive messaging based on behavior, and continuous journeys across touchpoints. In this model, each interaction informs and shapes the next—for example, a QR code scan leading to a personalized landing page, website behavior shaping email content, email interactions (e.g. clicking a link) leading to follow-up ads shown online, or event participation updating customer relationship management (CRM) records.

These approaches support a unified brand experience while allowing flexibility in how campaigns are executed.

PESO MODEL: paid, earned, shared, and owned

An alternative to grouping marketing channels into digital, traditional, and experiential is the **PESO Model: Paid, earned, shared, and owned media**. This approach helps you see how different forms of media work together to maximize the reach and effectiveness of your campaign.

A strong campaign **blends multiple PESO categories**. Thinking in terms of PESO helps ensure your campaign isn't relying too heavily on one channel and makes your message more visible and credible.

PESO breakdown

Media type	Definition	Focus	Example
<i>Paid</i>	Advertising you pay for to reach more people	Expanding your reach or visibility beyond your existing audience	Google or Facebook ads, TV or radio spots, sponsored social posts
<i>Earned</i>	Attention you gain when others talk about your program	Building credibility through outside recognition	Local news stories, features in The NAU Review, alumni stories in the media, national rankings
<i>Shared</i>	Content your audience helps spread	Encouraging engagement and word of mouth	Social media shares of student stories, parents posting about events, community members sharing program updates
<i>Owned</i>	Channels you control and manage	Sharing information directly with your audience	Program webpages, brochures, newsletters, blog posts, landing pages

Why this matters for higher education

A strong campaign **blends multiple PESO components**. For example, a program promotion campaign might use:

- **Owned:** A landing page with program details
- **Paid:** A social media ad campaign
- **Earned:** A press release picked up by local media
- **Shared:** Alumni and students posting about the program on social platforms

Thinking in terms of PESO helps ensure your campaign isn't relying too heavily on one channel and makes your message more visible and credible.

Pro Tip: You don't need to use all four PESO components or types of media in every campaign, but understanding PESO helps you see where your message could be amplified beyond your own efforts.

Marketing framework

Successful program promotion starts with understanding how the core elements of marketing work together. This framework breaks marketing into four key components — campaigns, channels, platforms, and tactics — to help NAU units plan strategically, communicate clearly, and execute effectively.

Each component plays a distinct role: campaigns define the overall goal and timeframe, channels determine where audiences are reached, platforms specify the tools or environments used, and tactics outline the specific actions taken to drive results.

By understanding these layers and how they connect, teams can build more intentional, measurable, and cohesive marketing efforts that reach the right audience with the right message at the right time.

Marketing campaigns (what + when)

A marketing campaign is a coordinated, time-bound effort that brings your strategy to life and achieves specific goals—such as generating leads, increasing applications, or promoting an event. **Campaigns turn strategy into action** using a mix of channels, platforms, and tactics to deliver a unified message to a defined audience and ensure your efforts are intentional and measurable.

A campaign typically includes a:

- Clear purpose and goal
- Defined audience(s)
- Core message or theme
- Visual strategy (the planned use of design, imagery, and branding to support campaign goals)
- Set timeframe
- Mix of coordinated channels and tactics
- Metrics to evaluate performance

Effective campaigns integrate the right combination of **channels**, **platforms**, and **tactics** to deliver timely, relevant outreach to the target audience when it matters most.

Marketing channels (where)

Marketing channels are the broad pathways you use to reach your target audience. They are the mediums or venues you use to communicate, focusing on reaching and influencing target audiences to build awareness, generate leads, and drive enrollment, engagement and retention.

Choose your channels based on where your audience spends time and how they prefer to consume content. When used strategically, multiple channels work together to reach the right audience, at the right time, and inspire action — whether that's building awareness, generating interest, or driving engagement.

Marketing platforms (specific where)

Marketing platforms are the specific tools, services, or environments within a marketing channel where campaigns are executed and audiences are reached. Platforms provide the space or technology that enables you to deliver, manage, and measure your marketing activities.

Marketing tactics (how)

Marketing tactics are the specific methods or actions executed within a platform (posting, sending, placing ads, tabling, distributing print materials, hosting an event) to engage your audience and achieve a particular objective.

Overview: marketing framework

Aspect	Campaign	Channel	Platform	Tactic
<i>Definition</i>	A coordinated series of tactics across platforms and channels	The medium or pathway	The specific tool or environment within a channel	The method or activity executed on a platform
<i>Focus</i>	Why you deliver your message (goal-driven initiative)	Where you deliver your message	The “place” where activities occur	How you deliver your message
<i>Scope</i>	Broad, multi-tactic, multi-channel	Broad	More focused than channel	Narrow, specific
<i>Timeframe</i>	Time-bound with start/end dates	Ongoing	Ongoing	Often ongoing or per campaign
<i>Example</i>	“Back to School” marketing campaign	Social media, email, website, television, radio, print, events	Facebook, Emma, nau.edu, NBC, KNAU, brochures, info sessions	Running Facebook ads, sending segmented emails, placing a digital ad, airing a TV spot

MARKETING TYPES

Selecting the right marketing type is a foundational step in building an effective strategy. Each approach — digital, traditional, and experiential — offers distinct advantages depending on your audience, goals, budget, and desired impact. While some campaigns may focus heavily on a single type, the most successful strategies often combine multiple approaches to maximize reach, engagement, and results. Understanding how these marketing types work individually and together can help you create more intentional, audience-centered campaigns that align with your broader objectives.

Digital marketing (online)

Digital marketing includes social media engagement, email campaigns, content marketing, and website optimization. These channels provide cost-effective ways to reach prospective students, parents, alumni, and community members where they spend much of their time — online. The following section outlines general strategies and best-use channels to help NAU academic units effectively promote their programs across a variety of digital and offline platforms.

Key digital channels and tactics

- **Content marketing** – all forms of content (blog posts, videos, podcasts, infographics, eBooks) to attract, educate, and engage an audience.
- **Digital advertising** – promotional content such as visual ads delivered through internet-based channels (websites, apps, or digital screens).
- **Email marketing** – newsletters, announcements, and automated outreach to nurture relationships.
- **Social media marketing** – platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn to build community and engagement.
- **Website optimization** – landing pages and evergreen content that convert interest into action.

🔄 **Integrated marketing** combines the strengths of multiple channels to create campaigns that engage audiences across multiple touchpoints. These tactics often begin with an in-person experience and extend their reach through digital amplification — bridging physical and online spaces to maximize impact. Integrated strategies are especially powerful for building community, generating buzz, and encouraging active participation.

Content marketing

Content marketing includes creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract, educate, and engage target audiences. Sharing stories, insights, and educational resources builds awareness of NAU programs, demonstrates expertise, and fosters ongoing engagement with prospective students, parents, alumni, and the broader community. Content marketing also helps NAU content to rank higher in search engine results pages and AI results.

Content marketing platforms and tactics

- **Blog posts** on WordPress websites, Squarespace, Wix, and Medium sharing program updates, student success stories, and thought leadership content.
- **Video content** and webinars on YouTube, Vimeo, TikTok, and Instagram Reels highlighting instructional or informational videos to educate audiences and showcase NAU programs.
- **Podcasts** on audio platforms such as Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Google Podcasts offering in-depth discussions, interviews, and program insights to engage audiences in audio format.
- **Infographics** and **case studies** present key information visually to simplify complex topics and highlight program outcomes on blogs and websites and social media.

Blog posts

Blog posts are a powerful tool for promoting academic programs because they allow you to share engaging stories and highlight the achievements of students and faculty. By creating informative, search-optimized content, blogs can attract prospective students who are actively seeking information about programs, careers, and campus life. Topics such as how a specific major prepares students for a related career, practical tips for applicants, or guidance on framing research projects provide real value to your audience while positioning your institution as a trusted resource. This combination of storytelling and SEO-driven content helps increase site traffic, build program awareness, and support prospective students in their **decision-making journey**.

NAU blog examples

NAU's official blog content covers a wide range of topics, including news on campus, research highlights, student and faculty features, academic programs, and student life, with individual blogs dedicated to specific areas like the NAU College of Engineering, the Arizona GEAR UP program, and teaching resources.

- [The NAU Review](#): The official news source for Northern Arizona University, featuring articles on campus research and initiatives. The NAU Review delivers top headlines to the Lumberjack community every Tuesday and Thursday during the academic year.
- [NAU College of Engineering Career Development Blog](#): Provides content on career mapping for engineering majors.
- [Arizona GEAR UP Blog](#): Focuses on news and student stories related to the Arizona GEAR UP program, which helps middle and high school students prepare for college and succeed in life beyond high school.
- [NAU Teaching Academy Blog](#): Features "Teaching with Fire," a blog with resources and insights on effective teaching strategies for college classrooms.
- [NAUgo Blog](#): Highlights features and updates for the NAUgo mobile application, including tools for students and faculty. NAUgo is Lumberjacks' one-stop mobile app for staying informed, connected, and up-to-date. NAUgo has distinct experiences for Flagstaff campus students, Statewide students, and Faculty/Staff. It also has a Guest experience for visitors to the Flagstaff campus.
- [Peer Jacks Blog](#): Offers content related to student life, including study area recommendations.
- [NAU Business Blog](#): A blog for the Department of Business Administration & Leadership degree programs that discusses initiatives like the Undergraduate Negotiation Competition.

Video content

Video tutorials and webinars are highly effective for academic program promotion because they offer an engaging, immersive way to showcase the unique aspects of your program. Through photography, videography, and live presentations, you can highlight student experiences, classroom interactions, hands-on projects, and faculty insights. Videos allow prospective students to see your program in action, making it easier for them to visualize themselves on campus or in the classroom. Webinars provide an interactive platform for real-time engagement, allowing audiences to ask questions, explore program details, and connect with faculty or current students. Together, these formats create a dynamic and authentic way to communicate your program's value, build trust, and inspire interest among potential applicants.

NAU video examples

Explore the official YouTube account for [Northern Arizona University Social Media \(@NAUSocialMedia\)](#) for examples of engaging video content.

Podcasts

Podcasts are digital audio programs that listeners can access on demand via a computer or mobile device. Like a radio show, podcasts typically feature episodes focused on specific topics, stories, or interviews — but unlike traditional radio, listeners can subscribe and engage whenever it's convenient for them.

Podcasts are particularly effective for:

- Sharing stories and experiences in an engaging, conversational format
- Highlighting expert voices, research, and thought leadership

- Building community by featuring diverse perspectives and voices
- Providing educational content that can be revisited anytime

For higher education, podcasts offer a personal and authentic medium to showcase what makes a program or university unique. By giving prospective students, alumni, and community partners a deeper, more relatable insight into student life, faculty expertise, and program offerings, podcasts help strengthen connections, build trust, and inspire interest in the institution.

Podcast best practices

- Stick to a **regular release schedule** (e.g., biweekly or monthly) to help listeners know when to tune in.
- Use a clear format — intro, main content/interview, key takeaway, call to action.
- Keep episodes around **10–20 minutes** — long enough to convey meaningful content, short enough for busy listeners.
- Share **clips on social media** — especially on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, or LinkedIn.
- Track:
 - Download counts & episode listens
 - Listener drop-off rates
 - Click-throughs from show notes or episodes to program pages
 - Referrals and subscriptions
- Leverage NAU production resources
 - [Cline Library Production Studios](#): Cline Library’s three specialized production studios provide hardware and editing software ideal for recording interviews, podcasts, or voiceovers — great for polished audio projects. (They aren’t intended for general study use.)
 - [Onboarding guidance from ITS](#): NAU’s Information Technology Services includes step-by-step instructions for audio recording, editing tools, and hosting workflows for smooth production deployment.

NAU podcast examples

- [LumberChats: Inside NAU](#): A look into campus life from students, staff, and faculty perspectives.
- [Forests, Fire, & Futures Podcast](#): The NAU School of Forestry’s podcast series, Forest, Fire, and Futures, explores the dynamic world of forestry education, research, and innovation.
- [NAU’s “Science History Podcast”](#): Created by Prof. Frank von Hippel, this monthly series traces important moments in the history of science.

Infographics and case studies

Infographics and case studies are powerful tools for communicating complex information in a clear, engaging, and visually appealing way. Infographics use visuals, icons, charts, and concise text to distill key concepts, trends, or data points, making them easier for audiences to understand and remember. Case studies provide real-world examples that showcase program outcomes, student success, or innovative initiatives, offering context and credibility.

At NAU, best practices include keeping visuals clean and focused, highlighting measurable results, and aligning content with institutional branding and messaging. Examples include infographics that summarize program statistics or pathways, and case studies that spotlight student achievements, faculty research, or impactful community partnerships. Using these tools helps make information more accessible, memorable, and shareable across digital and print platforms.

NAU infographic example



NAU case study example

Graduate Spotlight: Turning Research Into Real-World Impact

Program: MA in Communication – Documentary Studies Emphasis

Alex Ramirez applied classroom learning to real-world environmental communication projects through a faculty-led research initiative. By producing a short documentary and presenting findings at a statewide summit, Alex gained hands-on experience that led to a **full-time nonprofit position** right after graduation.

Highlights:

- Faculty-mentored research on local environmental issues
- Documentary featured in NAU outreach
- Statewide presentation and professional networking
- Job secured post-graduation

Key Takeaway: NAU's emphasis on applied learning and community partnerships helps students turn academic work into meaningful impact.

🕒 Integrated opportunity: Content marketing is both a digital and potentially a traditional channel strategy, though it has a **strong digital focus**, as it centers on creating and distributing valuable content to attract an audience, which is most effectively done through online platforms like blogs, social media, and email. However, **it can also incorporate offline elements**, such as print materials for trade shows or magazines, making it a strategy that can leverage multiple types of marketing tactics.

When distributed strategically through channels like websites, email, and social media, it not only attracts and informs audiences but also drives lead generation and interest in your programs. **In essence, content marketing works because it provides relevant, helpful, and shareable information that encourages audiences to engage with your institution and take the next step toward enrollment.**

Digital advertising

Digital advertising includes any paid or unpaid promotional content delivered through internet-based channels. These tactics offer precise audience targeting, measurable performance tracking, and flexible creative formats. Digital advertising can support awareness, engagement, leads, and conversions for academic programs or institutional initiatives.

Digital advertising platforms and tactics

- **Digital display advertising** such as on or off-campus digital signage and online ads on internal or partner websites or on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.
- **Digital video advertising** including short-form video ads shown before, during, or after online video content, such as YouTube pre-roll, social media video ads, and over-the-top (OTT) campaigns.

Digital signage

Digital signage is a practical and accessible way to complement other marketing efforts, generate awareness, drive traffic to program pages, and encourage target audiences to act.

Digital bulletin boards across NAU's Flagstaff Mountain Campus offer a dynamic way to increase visibility and reinforce key messages within the campus community. Strategically located in high-traffic areas, these screens use motion and frequent rotation to capture attention — making them ideal for promoting academic programs, events, deadlines, and student opportunities.

Positioned in major student hubs, digital signage provides broad, consistent exposure to current and prospective students, faculty, and visitors. Because the screens leverage existing NAU infrastructure, they allow departments to share visually engaging content without incurring additional advertising costs.

By placing your message where your audiences naturally gather — hallways, dining areas, and common spaces — you can build awareness, enhance campaign visibility, and complement other marketing efforts across channels. For more information or submission guidelines, contact digitalsignage@nau.edu.

Digital display advertising (online ads)

Paid digital advertising allows you to reach target audiences based on geography, interests, demographics, and online behavior. These campaigns can significantly increase visibility, drive qualified traffic to program landing pages, and support lead generation or application goals. Paid placements require a budget and guarantee placement through payment, and include paid social ads (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn), digital display banners, digital video ads, and OTT ads.

Paid digital advertising requires decisions about budget, platforms, creative formats, targeting strategy, and measurement. Because paid campaigns directly impact brand and enrollment strategy, they must be coordinated with NAU's marketing and communications teams.

Collaboration ensures campaigns:

- Align with institutional priorities
- Follow targeting and data best practices
- Use budgets efficiently

- Reflect NAU's brand standards
- Include accurate analytics and reporting

Digital video advertising

Digital video advertising consists of short video ads delivered online before, during, or after video content. This format supports storytelling, emotional resonance, and higher engagement rates than static display ads. Typical placements include:

- YouTube pre-roll or mid-roll
- Video placements on publisher news sites
- Social media video ads (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok)
- Embedded video ads on partner networks
- Over-the-top (OTT) advertising

Over-the-top (OTT) advertising

A subcategory of digital video, **over-the-top or OTT** campaigns deliver full-screen, non-skippable, TV-like commercials video ads directly to consumers through internet-based streaming services, bypassing traditional cable or satellite providers. These campaigns leverage platforms like Netflix, Hulu, and YouTube TV to reach viewers on internet-connected devices, using the internet "over-the-top" of existing infrastructure to deliver the content and ads. This approach allows for more targeted, measurable, and personalized advertising compared to traditional TV.

Email marketing

Email marketing allows institutions to send targeted messages to prospects, students, and alumni to nurture relationships and drive conversions. When crafted with intention and based on best practices, emails can generate interest, increase engagement, and encourage applications through personalized and shareable content.

Because emails can easily be forwarded, campaigns have the potential to reach audiences beyond the initial recipients, amplifying program visibility. This makes email a strategic tool for delivering timely updates, promoting events, and maintaining ongoing communication that strengthens connections with your audience.

Email marketing platforms and tactics

- Personalized messaging through **Emma** or **Mailchimp**
- Automated email journeys through **Marketing Cloud**
- Parent and family newsletters sent to segmented email lists through **CampusESP**

Emma or Mailchimp

Unit-specific newsletters are a powerful way to build and sustain relationships with key audiences such as faculty/staff, alumni, donors, community members, industry partners, and segmented current student populations while tailoring content to their unique interests. Whether the goal is to inform faculty and staff, strengthen ties with alumni and donors, or engage industry partners, regular newsletters provide a reliable platform for sharing meaningful stories and timely updates.

Content might include:

- Student and alumni achievements
- Faculty accolades and research milestones
- Upcoming events and important dates
- Unit initiatives and community partnerships

Using platforms like Emma or Mailchimp enables audience segmentation, branding customization, and performance tracking, ensuring your communications are both targeted and strategic. If your unit already produces a newsletter, consider submitting your content for inclusion. Leveraging established audiences and communication rhythms helps your messages reach the right people in a familiar, trusted format.

Marketing Cloud

Salesforce Marketing Cloud, a digital marketing automation and analytics platform with Salesforce integration, provides a centralized, branded, and data-driven platform to deliver targeted communications at scale to prospective and current student audiences. By connecting with students directly in their inboxes, where official university messages are most likely to be received, your outreach remains both visible and credible.

Strategic email campaigns can keep students informed, engaged, and on track throughout their academic journey. Examples include:

- News-style updates that build community and highlight key resources
- Deadline reminders that encourage timely action
- Personalized student journeys that deliver tailored information based on academic milestones, interests, or status

These campaigns strengthen student retention, promote academic opportunities, and ensure critical information reaches the right audiences at the right time.

Because Marketing Cloud campaigns require thoughtful planning and coordination to maintain message quality and prevent over-sending, all current student email requests are reviewed and managed through NAU's marketing and communications teams.

To get started, submit your request to either the Student Affairs or Academic Affairs Marketing team. If your request aligns with institutional priorities and is approved for Marketing Cloud, the team will assist with audience segmentation, scheduling, and messaging strategy to ensure your email reaches students effectively.

Campus ESP (Lumberjack Family Hub Newsletter)

The [Lumberjack Family Hub Newsletter](#) is NAU's official communication channel for parents and families of current students. As a trusted and centralized source of information, the newsletter is a key tool for sharing important updates about university initiatives, deadlines, events, and student support resources.

Parents and families play a significant role in supporting their students' academic success. By providing them with timely, accurate information, NAU helps strengthen their connection to the university and empowers them to be informed advocates for their students.

To share content through the newsletter, units can submit relevant updates, announcements, or stories that align with its purpose. This coordinated approach ensures message consistency and maximizes the visibility of your content among an engaged and invested audience.

Social media marketing

Social media marketing involves using platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X (Twitter), TikTok, and others to promote brand awareness, foster community engagement, and drive traffic to key digital destinations. Social media is a critical part of the digital marketing mix because it allows institutions to build authentic relationships with audiences, share stories in real time, and amplify messages across a wide network of users. By leveraging these platforms strategically, NAU can increase visibility for academic programs, highlight student and faculty achievements, and connect with prospective students, current students, alumni, and community partners. Social media marketing can be approached in two primary ways: **organic (earned)** and **paid**.

- **Organic or earned social** focuses on growing and engaging audiences through unpaid content, such as regular posts, stories, videos, event promotions, and interactions. The goal is to build trust, strengthen community, and encourage sharing, which can naturally expand reach over time.
- **Paid social** involves allocating budget to boost content, run targeted ads, or promote specific actions — such as event sign-ups, leads, or applications — among broader or highly defined audience segments. Paid campaigns can extend your reach well beyond existing followers and help achieve specific marketing objectives quickly and at scale.

With hundreds of active social networking platforms available, it's important to focus your efforts on the channels where **your prospective students and target audiences are most active**. A strategic mix of organic engagement and targeted paid campaigns helps ensure that your social media efforts build both **long-term community loyalty** and **short-term results**, such as lead generation or event participation.

Social media platforms

- **Facebook** – organic posts, ads, and groups
- **Instagram** – stories, reels, posts, influencer collaborations
- **LinkedIn** – B2B networking, thought leadership, sponsored posts
- **TikTok** – short-form video marketing, influencer campaigns
- **X (Twitter)** – trending topics, conversation marketing, ads
- **Pinterest** – visual inspiration, product pins, ads
- **YouTube** – long-form video, shorts, video ads

Social media tactics

- Organic content posting (videos, images, stories)
- Paid social ads (targeted campaigns)
- Influencer collaborations
- Community management and engagement
- Social listening and sentiment analysis

Create and maintain your own social media platforms and connect with NAU's social media team (social@nau.edu) to expand your reach. In addition to collaborating with and submitting content for the NAU social media accounts, keep the NAU Alumni Association social media accounts on your radar as well; tag #NAUAlumni to be featured.

Instagram

A highly visual platform ideal for reaching audiences through Reels, Stories, and photo carousels. The “Gram” excels at showcasing student life, department culture, campus energy, and day-in-the-life content.

- Highlight events with organic content (Reels, Stories, and photo sets)
- Share student wins through short videos or carousel spotlights
- Promote opportunities using Stories, link stickers, and targeted boosts
- Build an authentic narrative through takeovers and influencer-style collaborations
- Share lighthearted content — memes, GIFs, quick polls — and engage through comments, questions, and stickers
- Monitor trending topics and student sentiment through hashtag and comment analysis

Facebook

Still widely used by Gen X and parents, Facebook is ideal for event reminders, celebrations, and long-form posts that reinforce institutional pride and connection.

- Promote events with organic posts, shareable graphics, and boosted event ads
- Spotlight faculty and alumni through long-form content or video posts
- Distribute news, blog links, and departmental updates
- Celebrate milestones using photos, videos, or group announcements
- Build community among families, alumni, and local partners through active comment engagement
- Track conversations and sentiment within parent groups and community spaces

LinkedIn

Ideal for reaching professionals, alumni, and industry partners with a focus on networking, career/professional development, and thought leadership.

- Highlight student internships and alumni accomplishments through professional storytelling posts

- Share faculty research, thought leadership pieces, and industry insights
- Promote employer collaborations and partnerships using organic posts or targeted sponsored updates
- Strengthen reputation by engaging with comments, resharing partner content, and tagging organizations
- Monitor industry trends and alumni sentiment through social listening and analytics

YouTube

Great for long-form (over 10 minutes), searchable video content that showcases programs, facilities, and student stories in more depth. Podcasts can also be shared here, and videos can be embedded or repurposed across other platforms.

- Create virtual tours, interviews, and tutorials as organic long-form uploads
- Develop program showcases, career-ready demos, and student features
- Use Shorts for quick, high-impact clips that complement Instagram or TikTok content
- Promote key videos or campaigns through paid pre-roll or targeted YouTube ads
- Build community by responding to comments and organizing videos into playlists
- Track viewer behavior and search trends to inform future content creation

Website optimization

In the higher education realm, a purposefully designed website is a powerful tool that supports every facet of our work — from creating a first impression that has a lasting impact on prospective students to providing vital resources that support our daily work. The digital experience is a key factor in student recruitment and enrollment efforts, which propel our mission forward and sustain our financial position. Optimizing our web presence strengthens NAU's digital identity and ensures that our platforms are as dynamic and engaging as the communities they serve.

Website optimization focuses on improving the performance, usability, visibility, and overall effectiveness of a website to better meet user needs and achieve key goals — such as increasing traffic, boosting engagement, and driving conversions. A well-optimized site makes it easier for prospective students, families, and other audiences to find information, navigate content, and take meaningful next steps, such as exploring programs or submitting applications.

Pro tip: Connect with the Academic Affairs Marketing (AAM) team for guidance on website optimization.

Web optimization platforms and tactics

Platforms

NAU's website ecosystem includes a variety of web environments, each designed to support specific audiences and goals. This ecosystem spans external recruitment sites and information hubs, internal operational sites, research and lab pages, advancement and alumni engagement platforms, virtual career centers, continuing education sites, and more.

Tactics

All tactical updates should align with NAU's brand standards, accessibility requirements, and digital best practices to ensure a consistent and trustworthy user experience across the institution's web ecosystem.

- **Accessibility** – ensures that digital content is designed and developed so everyone — regardless of physical, sensory, or cognitive ability — can perceive, understand, and interact with the web.
- **Content optimization** – ensures that on-page text, images, and metadata are accurate, clear, and structured to improve search visibility and user understanding
- **Conversion rate optimization (CRO)** – increasing the percentage of website visitors who take a specific, desired action.
- **Performance** – improves page load speed, mobile responsiveness, and overall technical efficiency to keep users engaged and reduce friction.
- **User experience (UX)** – creates intuitive navigation and thoughtful design patterns that help users find information quickly and interact with the site with ease.

Accessibility

Accessibility is essential for ensuring all users can access and engage with your content. It enhances usability for everyone, improves search performance, and supports compliance with legal and institutional standards.

- ADA-compliant design and content
- Proper color contrast ratios and keyboard navigation
- Alt text on all images
- Descriptive link text (not “Click here”)
- Logical reading order or hierarchy in which content is read
- Appropriate text size for web
- Body text no smaller than 16px, with text scalable to at least 200% of its original size

Content optimization

Ensures that web content is clear, student-focused, and easy to find — helping visitors quickly understand who you are, what you offer, and what to do next. Strong content optimization supports search visibility, reinforces key messages, and guides users toward important actions.

- Clear, concise, student-focused copywriting
- Strategic use of headings and keywords
- Compelling, explanatory calls to action (CTAs) like “Schedule a visit”
- Updated directory profiles with current bios, photos, and details to create a more welcoming, informative experience for students, faculty, and staff. Review the [How and where to update public profile details](#) guide (NAU login required) for guidance on updating directory profiles.
- Informative meta descriptions (short summaries that appear under your page title in search results) that explain webpage content and encourage users to click.

Conversion rate optimization (CRO)

Focuses on increasing the percentage of visitors who take a desired action — such as requesting information, registering for an event, or completing a form. CRO strengthens the effectiveness of your web content by removing friction, improving clarity, and guiding users toward meaningful next steps.

- Engaging and clear CTAs (e.g., “Request Info,” “Sign Up”)
- Forms that are short, accessible, and easy to complete
- Tracking and testing CTA performance

Performance

Ensures that your website loads quickly, functions smoothly, and responds well across devices. Strong performance reduces user frustration, supports accessibility, and improves search rankings — helping visitors stay engaged and find what they need without delay.

- Fast page loading times by managing image/media sizes and minimizing redirect history
- Optimized images
- Minimal broken links
- High engagement indicated through page views, click activity, and bounce rates

User experience (UX)

Creates intuitive, user-friendly pathways that help visitors quickly find information, understand options, and act. Strong UX supports accessibility, reduces confusion, and ensures that pages feel consistent, welcoming, and easy to navigate across devices.

- Simplified page layouts
- Clear navigation menus
- Breadcrumbs and sub-navigation to improve site structure
- Cross-links to central NAU resources
- Mobile responsiveness with prioritized vertical scrolling and easy tap targets
- Intuitive user flows (e.g., from a program page to the “Apply” button)

Traditional marketing (offline)

Traditional marketing includes a range of offline tactics that help build community awareness, extend the reach of digital campaigns, and create tangible touchpoints with key audiences. These methods are often localized, making them especially effective for engaging on-campus and regional communities. While budgets and timelines may limit the scale of traditional campaigns, well-planned offline strategies can significantly reinforce brand presence and drive engagement.

The following section outlines general strategies and best-use channels to help NAU academic units effectively promote their programs through traditional marketing approaches. These tactics can stand alone or work alongside digital efforts to create a comprehensive, integrated promotional strategy.

Key traditional channels and tactics

- **Broadcast advertising** – television or radio used to reach broad audiences with audio-visual messaging.
- **Community and network promotion** – relationships with local organizations, alumni, campus groups, and professional networks to share program information through trusted, person-to-person channels.
- **Out-of-home (OOH) advertising** – any high-visibility visual advertising that reaches people when they are outside their homes, as opposed to on personal devices like smartphones or tablets. This includes outdoor transit and street furniture ads, banners, and billboards.
- **Print marketing, advertising, and earned media** – tangible materials and paid placements to connect with audiences, raise awareness, and reinforce messaging. This includes brochures, flyers, posters, postcards, magazines, and newspapers.

🔗 **Integrated marketing** combines the strengths of both digital and traditional channels to create integrated campaigns that engage audiences across multiple touchpoints. These tactics often begin with an in-person experience and extend their reach through digital amplification — bridging physical and online spaces to maximize impact.

By tying offline/experiential activities to a digital component (e.g., QR codes, short links, sign-up forms, or landing pages with UTM parameters), you can capture concrete metrics — such as scans, clicks, form fills, and conversions — that are difficult to measure with traditional channels alone. These strategies are especially powerful for building community, generating buzz, and encouraging active participation.

Broadcast advertising

Audio-visual messages delivered through mass media channels, primarily television and radio, where ads are scheduled to air during program breaks or specific time slots to reach broad audiences effectively.

Broadcast advertising platforms and tactics

- **KNAU Arizona Public Radio** – NPR affiliate based at NAU; sponsored ads excellent for reaching educated, community-focused listeners statewide.
- **Great Circle Media Stations** – includes KAFF Country, 93.9 The Mountain (rock/alternative), Sunny 97.9 (adult contemporary), and Fun Oldies 1450 AM, strong reach in northern Arizona.
- **iHeartRadio Northern Arizona** – Includes stations in nearby markets like Prescott and Sedona; can bundle multiple stations for broader reach.
- **NAZ-TV (NBC Affiliate)** – Serves northern Arizona, Flagstaff, and Prescott.
- **KAFF-TV** – select regional programming; often connected with Great Circle Media promotions.
- **Phoenix Metro Stations with Northern Arizona Reach**—Some campaigns can be purchased regionally via networks like ABC15, 3TV, FOX 10, CBS5 to reach both local and statewide audiences.
- **Spotify Ads** – Target by location (Flagstaff, Arizona) and audience demographics.
- **Pandora Ads** – Similar location and demographic targeting options.
- **iHeartRadio Digital Streaming** – Reaches online listeners of local stations with targeted ads during relevant programming.

Media buying

Media buying is the process of purchasing advertising space or time on traditional platforms such as print publications, radio, television, outdoor billboards, or transit advertising to reach a specific target audience.

At NAU, media buying typically involves collaborating with one or more of NAU's marketing and communications teams to strategically place ads that support program promotion, events, or institutional priorities. The process includes identifying the right channels for your goals, negotiating costs and placements with vendors, and scheduling ads to ensure your message reaches the right audience at the right time—while maintaining alignment with NAU's brand and marketing standards.

Community and network promotion

Community and network promotion leverages NAU's relationships with local organizations, industry partners, alumni, and campus networks to expand program visibility and build trust. By tapping into established communities — both on and off campus — units can share information through channels that feel personal, credible, and locally relevant. These efforts strengthen NAU's presence in the region, foster word-of-mouth awareness, and connect prospective students with programs through the people and networks they already know and trust.

Community and network promotion platforms and tactics

- **Local and regional partnerships** such as chambers of commerce, workforce development groups, community nonprofits, and school districts to extend outreach and strengthen community visibility.
- **Professional and industry networks** including industry associations, advisory boards, employer partners, and LinkedIn communities to share program updates, career pathways, and professional opportunities.
- **Campus networks and student communities** like student organizations, learning communities, residence halls, advising centers, and academic clubs that help promote programs through peer-to-peer engagement and targeted outreach.
- **Alumni platforms and ambassador networks** including alumni email lists, affinity groups, LinkedIn alumni communities, and departmental newsletters to encourage alumni storytelling, mentoring, and referrals.
- **Community events and public listings** such as festivals, fairs, conferences, and regional event calendars that help build visibility and connect programs with local audiences and adult learners.
- **Cross-university collaborations** with NAU colleges, departments, minors, and certificates to co-host events, coordinate communications, and reach shared or complementary audiences.

Local and regional partnerships

Local and regional partnerships connect NAU programs with community organizations, nonprofits, school districts, workforce agencies, and regional employers. These relationships extend the university's reach beyond campus and create meaningful pathways for collaboration, visibility, and mutual support. By working with trusted community institutions, programs can share updates, highlight opportunities, and reach prospective students where they already live, work, and learn. Local and regional partnerships are particularly effective for:

- Expanding program awareness within nearby schools, organizations, and community groups
- Reaching adult learners, families, and nontraditional students through established local channels
- Strengthening relationships with workforce partners and regional employers
- Supporting recruitment efforts through community events and collaborative programming
- Building credibility by aligning with respected community stakeholders

For higher education, local and regional partnerships offer a powerful way to demonstrate how academic programs respond to community needs and contribute to regional workforce development. These collaborations help build trust, share resources, and create relevant opportunities — from co-hosted events to internship pathways — while reinforcing NAU's commitment to serving northern Arizona.

To activate and sustain local and regional partnerships, consider:

- **Sharing program updates**, flyers, and announcements with local nonprofits, schools, agencies, and community organizations.
- **Collaborating with local employers and advisory boards** to highlight career pathways, internships, and workforce-aligned programming.
- **Featuring community leaders, educators, and regional partners** in talks, spotlights, or storytelling series to showcase real-world experiences and career insights.

Professional and industry networks

Professional and industry networks connect NAU programs with associations, advisory boards, employer partners, and field-specific communities — both locally and nationally. These networks offer direct access to professionals who influence hiring, shape industry standards, and support real-world learning opportunities. By engaging through formal partnerships and personal faculty or staff connections, programs can share updates, highlight career pathways, and strengthen ties to the fields students aspire to enter. Professional and industry networks are particularly effective for:

- Showcasing how academic programs align with workforce needs and emerging industry trends
- Strengthening internship, practicum, and job-placement pathways
- Highlighting alumni and employer success stories that reinforce program relevance
- Reaching adult learners and career changers seeking advancement or specialized credentials
- Building long-term relationships with employers who rely on NAU talent

For higher education, professional networks help demonstrate the real-world value of academic programs by showing how classroom learning connects to career outcomes. Engaging employers, advisory boards, and industry associations reinforces NAU's reputation as a workforce partner and positions programs as responsive to industry demands. These relationships also help inform curriculum, support recruitment, and create ongoing opportunities for collaboration. To activate and sustain professional and industry networks, consider:

- **Leveraging faculty and staff professional connections** to share program information, research updates, and opportunities within industry circles.
- **Collaborating with employer partners and advisory boards** to share program updates, highlight career pathways, and promote internships or recruitment pipelines.
- **Participating in industry events** such as conferences, association meetings, and professional gatherings to build visibility, strengthen professional relationships, and showcase program strengths.
- **Sharing stories and achievements** through LinkedIn communities, professional groups, and alumni networks to reinforce credibility and career outcomes.
- **Inviting industry partners to contribute** to panels, guest lectures, or storytelling series that expose students to real-world perspectives and career journeys.

Campus networks and student communities

Campus networks and student communities connect programs with the people who shape daily life at NAU — student organizations, learning communities, residence halls, advising centers, and academic clubs. These groups are highly influential in helping students discover opportunities, build belonging, and engage with programs that support their interests and goals. By leveraging these established communities, programs can share information in authentic ways that resonate with current students. Campus networks and student communities are particularly effective for:

- Reaching students where they naturally gather, live, study, and socialize
- Supporting peer-to-peer learning, mentorship, and community-building
- Increasing awareness of academic programs, events, and resources
- Engaging first-year students and those exploring majors through trusted channels
- Amplifying messaging through student leaders and advisors

For higher education, campus networks are vital for connecting students to opportunities beyond the classroom and building a sense of belonging. Peer-to-peer communication is especially powerful: students trust information shared by friends, club leaders, RAs, and academic mentors. Leveraging these channels helps programs strengthen engagement, increase event attendance, and inspire students to explore new pathways. To activate and sustain campus networks and student communities, consider:

- **Partnering with student organizations and campus groups** such as academic clubs, learning communities, and residence halls to share updates, promote events, and highlight program opportunities.
- **Encouraging peer-to-peer referrals** by empowering current students to share opportunities within their clubs, academic circles, workplaces, and social networks.
- **Working with advising centers and peer mentors** to distribute information to students exploring majors, minors, certificates, or career pathways.
- **Collaborating with student leaders and club officers** to include announcements in newsletters, group chats, and event programming.
- **Featuring student voices through spotlights**, “day in the life” features, or storytelling initiatives that reflect authentic student experiences.

Alumni platforms and ambassador networks

Alumni platforms and ambassador networks connect NAU programs with graduates who can speak authentically about their experiences, career paths, and the impact of their education. Through alumni email lists, affinity groups, LinkedIn communities, local alumni chapters, and departmental newsletters, programs can mobilize graduates as storytellers, mentors, and advocates who help strengthen credibility and extend outreach into professional and community spaces. Alumni platforms and ambassador networks are particularly effective for:

- Showcasing real-world outcomes and career trajectories that resonate with prospective students
- Building trust through authentic voices and lived experiences
- Expanding program visibility through alumni professional and social networks
- Supporting recruitment events, panels, and info sessions with relatable perspectives
- Fostering long-term relationships that reinforce program pride and connection

For higher education, alumni ambassadors offer a powerful way to humanize programs and demonstrate long-term value. Their stories and professional insights illustrate how academic experiences translate into meaningful careers. Engaging alumni through storytelling, mentoring, and advisory roles also strengthens the program’s reputation and broadens its reach across industries and communities. To activate and sustain alumni platforms and ambassador networks, consider:

- **Leveraging alumni networks** to promote programs through professional associations, LinkedIn groups, local alumni chapters, and workplace connections.
- **Inviting alumni to participate** in info sessions, student panels, recruitment events, and mentoring opportunities.
- **Sharing program updates and successes** through alumni email lists, affinity groups, departmental newsletters, and LinkedIn alumni communities.
- **Developing alumni storytelling opportunities** such as career conversations, *How I Got Started* stories, or *Day in the Life* spotlights that provide authentic insights and strengthen community connections.
- **Collecting alumni testimonials and success stories** that highlight program value, career readiness, and personal growth to build trust and credibility with prospective students.

Community events and public listings

Community events and public listings connect NAU programs with local audiences, adult learners, families, and regional stakeholders through in-person gatherings and widely used public communication channels. Events such as festivals, fairs, conferences, and partner-sponsored programs create opportunities for face-to-face engagement, while digital listings and community calendars expand visibility beyond campus. Together, these platforms help build awareness, strengthen regional relationships, and demonstrate NAU’s role as an active community partner.

Community events and public listings are particularly effective for:

- Reaching adult learners and nontraditional students within the northern Arizona region
- Increasing awareness of program offerings among families, community groups, and local organizations
- Supporting visibility for info sessions, workshops, and recruitment events
- Building trust through consistent participation in local community activities
- Connecting programs to regional workforce, education, and civic initiatives

For higher education, community-facing outreach demonstrates the university's commitment to local impact and creates accessible entry points for prospective students who may not be reached through traditional digital channels. Participating in events and maintaining a strong presence on public listings allows programs to meet audiences where they are — physically and virtually — while reinforcing NAU's identity as a community-engaged institution. To activate and sustain community events and public listings, consider:

- **Participating** in local festivals, fairs, conferences, and partner-sponsored gatherings to engage directly with community members and showcase program strengths.
- **Promoting NAU events, info sessions, and workshops through local community** calendars, partner organization websites, regional event listings, and chamber of commerce platforms to extend visibility beyond campus, reach adult and nontraditional learners, and strengthen ties with the northern Arizona community.
- **Sharing upcoming events and opportunities** with community partners who can help distribute information through their own networks.
- **Collaborating with local organizations to co-host** events or workshops that align with community interests or regional workforce needs.

Cross-university collaborations

Cross-university collaborations connect programs with NAU colleges, departments, minors, certificates, and academic initiatives that share similar audiences or complementary academic pathways. These partnerships create opportunities for unified messaging, shared outreach, and expanded visibility across campus. By working together on events, communications, and student engagement efforts, programs can reach a broader range of prospective students and highlight the interdisciplinary strengths that make NAU distinctive. Cross-university collaborations are particularly effective for:

- Reaching students exploring related majors, minors, or certificates
- Highlighting interdisciplinary pathways and shared academic strengths
- Coordinating outreach across advising networks, student organizations, and campus communities
- Increasing event attendance through co-hosted or cross-promoted programming
- Ensuring consistent, student-centered messaging across campus units

For higher education, cross-university collaboration demonstrates how different academic units work together to support student success. These partnerships help streamline communication, build stronger recruitment pipelines, and showcase the breadth of opportunities available at NAU. Shared events, coordinated campaigns, and unified messaging also help students navigate academic options more easily and make informed decisions about their pathways. To activate and sustain cross-university collaborations, consider:

- Partnering with NAU colleges, departments, minors, and certificate programs to co-host events, workshops, info sessions, or student panels.
- Coordinating communications through shared outreach materials, joint announcements, and aligned messaging across websites, newsletters, and student-facing platforms.
- Leveraging advising networks and student organizations to distribute information to audiences interested in related academic areas.
- Cross-promoting opportunities between programs with overlapping or complementary student interests.
- Developing collaborative storytelling or spotlight features that highlight interdisciplinary connections and shared student experiences.

Out-of-home (OOH) advertising

Out-of-home (OOH) advertising refers to high-visibility marketing placements in physical spaces that capture attention where audiences live, work, and commute. By appearing in high-traffic campus and community locations, OOH provides consistent exposure for students, faculty, staff, and local residents — creating repeated touchpoints throughout daily routines. This steady, real-world presence reinforces awareness of NAU programs, events, and initiatives while strengthening brand recognition in a tangible, memorable environment. OOH also pairs effectively with digital campaigns by driving audiences to engage online through QR codes, hashtags, and event or program links, extending the impact of each placement beyond the physical space.

OOH platforms and tactics

- **Transit and street furniture ads** including bus shelters, benches, kiosks, or public transportation wraps
- **Banners** placed on and off campus, at athletic events, and sponsored community events
- **Billboards** placed in high-traffic areas near campus or in target communities

📍 **Integrated opportunity:** QR codes, short links, or augmented reality (AR) elements on outdoor signage — such as billboards, banners, or transit ads — can connect viewers to digital content, event registration, or program information for increased engagement and measurable response.

Transit and street furniture ads

Transit and street-furniture ads — including bus shelters, benches, kiosks, and public transportation wraps — offer high-visibility opportunities to reach students, faculty, staff, and the broader Flagstaff community in everyday transit environments. These placements maximize exposure to commuters and pedestrians, creating consistent touchpoints across campus and throughout the city that reinforce awareness of NAU programs, events, and engagement initiatives. By integrating brand messaging directly into the spaces people move through daily, transit and street-furniture ads strengthen NAU's visual presence, support localized campaigns, and encourage participation. They also complement digital efforts by driving viewers to engage further through QR codes, event links, or social hashtags.

Banners

- **Union and DuBois banners** – Banners placed near the University Union and DuBois Center offer prominent visibility in two of the most heavily trafficked areas on campus, making them an effective way to promote events, initiatives, and key deadlines. These large-format displays act as consistent, tangible reminders for students, faculty, staff, and visitors, helping to strengthen awareness and encourage participation. Union and DuBois banners support internal communications, amplify partner initiatives, and maintain alignment with university brand standards, ensuring messages are both impactful and cohesive. NAU units and registered student organizations can reserve banner space for approved events; for availability, placement options, design guidelines, policies, and to initiate the reservation process, contact Campus Events at campusevents@nau.edu.
- **Nackard Pepsi banners (Flagstaff Mountain Campus)** – Nackard Pepsi banners provide NAU units with a free, visually striking option for promoting events, initiatives, and messages both on and off campus. These banners help campaigns stand out in high-traffic areas and extend reach to broader community and regional audiences. Units simply design their banner using the provided template, and Nackard Pepsi handles the printing — making it an accessible, streamlined way to boost visibility and engagement. The Unions and Activities Office (UAO) coordinates this process and can provide the banner template and design guidelines; for assistance, email Unions@nau.edu.

Billboards

Billboards offer large-scale, high-impact visibility for campaigns that need broad reach across the Flagstaff region or along key commuter corridors. Their size and placement make them effective for reinforcing major initiatives, promoting time-sensitive messages, and increasing recognition among community members, visitors, and prospective students traveling through the area.

Because billboards represent a significant public-facing expression of the NAU brand, all placements require collaboration with and approval from [NAU Brand and Strategic Communications](#) to ensure alignment with institutional standards, message strategy, and appropriate media selection. Units interested in pursuing billboard advertising should consult with NAU Brand and Strategic Communications early in the planning process to review goals, creative direction, timelines, and procurement steps.

Print marketing, advertising, and earned media

Print marketing, advertising, and earned media use tangible materials, paid placements, and editorial coverage to connect with audiences, raise awareness, and reinforce key messages. These approaches create high-impact physical and reputational touchpoints, capturing attention in high-traffic campus spaces and community hubs, highlighting programs or events in visually engaging formats, and reaching audiences who may be less active online. Together, they support recruitment, community outreach, and partner engagement by pairing credibility with visibility, while clear calls to action, such as QR codes, URLs, or phone numbers, help guide audiences toward next steps and bridge print with digital campaigns.

- **Print marketing** uses tangible materials such as brochures, flyers, posters, postcards, and newsletters to inform, engage, and promote NAU programs, events, or initiatives. These materials create a physical touchpoint that complements digital campaigns, reinforces messaging, and supports awareness and participation. Strategic distribution — on campus, in the community, or at events — helps ensure messages reach audiences where they live, work, and study.
- **Print advertising** includes paid placements in newspapers, magazines, trade publications, and other print outlets to increase program visibility and reach targeted audiences. Specialty or niche publications can help maximize cost-effectiveness while connecting with prospective students, alumni, professionals, or community members. Print advertising offers a trusted, established channel for amplifying key initiatives and time-sensitive messages.
- **Earned media or public relations** refers to unpaid editorial coverage such as news articles, feature stories, interviews, press mentions, and expert commentary secured through public relations efforts. This includes press releases, media advisories, story pitching, and faculty or program expert sourcing. Earned media builds credibility and public trust by sharing NAU stories through independent outlets, extending reach beyond paid and owned channels while strengthening institutional reputation.

Print marketing, advertising, and earned media platforms and tactics

- **Posters and flyers** – place visually engaging posters and flyers in campus buildings, student centers, libraries, community hubs, and partner locations to capture attention in high-traffic areas, promote events, programs, or initiatives, and reinforce key messaging.
- **Brochures and handouts** – share brochures and handouts at recruitment fairs, open houses, conferences, and community events to provide detailed program information, highlight academic offerings, and engage prospective students, families, and partners.
- **Direct mail campaigns** – send postcards, letters, catalogs, or event invitations on- or off-campus to reach targeted audiences with actionable elements such as QR codes, URLs, or phone numbers, driving participation, leads, and follow-up engagement.
- **Event collateral** – circulate materials such as open house guides, college fair handouts, and program brochures at events to provide high-impact touchpoints, engage audiences, and reinforce messaging.
- **Newspapers** – *The Lumberjack* (NAU's student newspaper), *Pine* (NAU's alumni magazine), *The Arizona Daily Sun*, *Flagstaff Live*, community papers, and regional/national publications.
- **Magazines** – *Pine* (NAU alumni magazine), trade journals, and niche publications (e.g., higher education magazines, career-focused journals).
- **Trade journals** – program-specific journals in fields like nursing, engineering, or business
- **Print advertising and features** – showcase programs, initiatives, and events through advertisements and content in university, local, regional, or trade publications to increase visibility, reach specific audiences, and promote programs through trusted, credible channels.

- **Press releases and media advisories** – Share timely announcements about program launches, events, research, awards, or milestones with local, regional, and trade media to generate editorial coverage and broaden reach.
- **Feature story pitching and editorial placements** – Pitch story ideas that highlight faculty expertise, student success, research impact, or community partnerships to journalists and editors for in-depth coverage.
- **Faculty and expert sourcing** – Position faculty and program leaders as subject-matter experts for interviews, quotes, and commentary in print and online publications, strengthening credibility and thought leadership.
- **Media interviews and coverage amplification** – Support interviews and earned coverage in print outlets, then extend their impact by sharing links or excerpts across NAU-owned channels.

📍 **Integrated opportunity:** QR codes, short links, or augmented reality (AR) elements can link print materials to digital content for enhanced engagement and tracking.

Print marketing

Posters and flyers

Display printed marketing materials throughout campus on bulletin boards and student areas and off campus in local coffee shops and community centers. Printed posters (11x17) and flyers (8.5x11) promoting NAU events can be dropped off at the University Union and du Bois South Union information desks to be distributed on bulletin boards throughout the buildings. Posters and flyers are more than just announcements — they're a way to connect with the NAU community, spark interest, and encourage participation in events, programs, and initiatives that enrich campus life. By placing your materials in high-traffic areas, you increase visibility and make it easy for students, faculty, and staff to engage with your message. All event posters and flyers must be submitted and approved prior to being posted. This ensures your materials meet campus standards and reflect positively on your organization while maximizing their impact. For guidance or to submit materials, contact Campus Events at campusevents@nau.edu.

NAU branded templates

Take advantage of NAU-branded marketing templates to maintain a consistent and professional look across all communications. Templates are available with both [institutional](#) and [college-level branding](#) and can be customized with your unit's content. Below are examples of how each template type can be used:

- **Brochures** – Ideal for distributing at recruitment events, academic fairs, conferences, or campus visits. Use brochures to highlight academic programs, research initiatives, student opportunities, or departmental achievements.
- **Flyers** – Perfect for promoting upcoming events, workshops, information sessions, or key announcements on campus or in the community.
- **Posters** – Useful for advertising public lectures, performances, student showcases, or major campus events in high-traffic areas.
- **Notecards** – Great for handwritten thank-you notes, donor acknowledgments, faculty/staff recognition, or follow-up correspondence after meetings or events.
- **Postcards** – Effective for targeted mail campaigns, event invitations, save-the-dates, or quick program overviews for prospective students and partners.
- **Certificates** – Appropriate for awards, recognitions, training completions, or participation in special programs and events.
- **Conference presentation posters** – Designed for faculty, staff, or students presenting research or projects at academic conferences. These templates ensure NAU's brand is represented consistently on a national or international stage.
- **Letterhead** – Best used for formal letters, official communications, partnership outreach, or printed memos.

NAU Printing Services

NAU Printing Services is a full-service, state-of-the-art print shop offering a wide range of small and large-format printing solutions. Visit the [Products and services](#) page for items that must be purchased through NAU Printing Services. Access non-branded [templates for creating print-ready files](#) with safe areas, folds, and bleeds for commonly ordered products.

Print advertising and earned media

Print advertising includes paid placements in newspapers, magazines, trade publications, and other print outlets that increase program visibility and reach targeted audiences through trusted, high-credibility channels. Specialty and niche publications can further improve cost-effectiveness by connecting directly with prospective students, alumni, professionals, or community members already engaged in relevant topics. Complementing these paid efforts, public relations activities, such as press releases, media advisories, expert pitching, and feature stories, extend reach through earned media coverage, highlight faculty expertise, and elevate significant achievements or events. Together, print advertising and earned media create a balanced approach that blends strategic placement with authentic storytelling to strengthen visibility, build public trust, and amplify impact across both traditional and digital channels.

The Lumberjack (NAU student newspaper)

As NAU's student newspaper, [The Lumberjack](#) connects directly with the campus community, keeping students, faculty, and staff informed and engaged. Featuring programs, events, or initiatives in The Lumberjack raises awareness, drives participation, and ensures your message reaches an active, student-focused audience through a trusted, high-visibility platform.

Pine alumni magazine

In circulation since the 1950s, the historic *Pine* publication ties Lumberjack alumni to each other and to NAU. *Pine* is published and mailed to alumni and donors twice a year by NAU Advancement Foundation (alumni@nau.edu). Featuring stories, highlights, and advertising in *Pine* helps build alumni pride, engagement, and loyalty, reaching a dedicated audience of alumni and supporters.

Experiential marketing

Experiential marketing focuses on creating immersive, interactive moments, such as campus events, pop-ups, ambassador-led activities, and hands-on demonstrations, that allow audiences to experience a program or initiative in meaningful, memorable ways. In higher education, these experiences help prospective and current students form authentic emotional connections to academic programs, student life, and university values by engaging directly with people, spaces, and stories. Rather than simply communicating information, experiential tactics invite audiences to participate, explore, and imagine themselves as part of the NAU community.

Sometimes called engagement marketing, experiential marketing is also known as event marketing, live marketing, brand activation, on-ground marketing, field marketing, or participation marketing. Each term emphasizes real-time, human-centered experiences that bring a brand or program to life.

Key experiential channels and tactics

- **Engagement marketing** – prioritizes meaningful interaction and relationship-building with audiences through hands-on or participatory activities.
- **Event-based marketing** – centers on structured gatherings such as fairs, showcases, open houses, festivals, or special campus events that create memorable touchpoints.
- **Live marketing** – highlights real-time interactions, demonstrations, or performances that invite direct audience involvement.
- **Brand activation** – uses interactive experiences to bring a program's identity, mission, or values to life, such as themed installations or immersive storytelling.
- **Field marketing** – involves on-the-ground outreach like tabling, street teams, peer ambassadors, or mobile engagement efforts.
- **Guerrilla marketing** – employs unexpected, unconventional, and often low-cost tactics (e.g., scavenger hunts, sticky notes, chalk art, flash activations) that spark curiosity and drive high engagement.

🔗 Integrated marketing: Blend in-person and digital engagement to create interactive, memorable experiences. Integrate digital extensions into live experiences — such as event check-ins that trigger personalized follow-up emails; virtual photo booths that generate shareable social content; interactive kiosks or displays that sync with an app or landing page; virtual and hybrid events hosted on platforms like Zoom or Hopin; and interactive campaigns such as QR code-enabled activities, pop-up displays, or hands-on demonstrations at fairs and community events. These digital tie-ins extend engagement beyond the physical moment, driving ongoing connection and measurable impact. Connecting offline experiences to digital touchpoints also allows you to capture engagement metrics that are often difficult to measure through traditional channels.

Engagement marketing

Engagement marketing focuses on creating interactive, relationship-centered experiences that allow audiences to connect personally with NAU's programs, people, and values. These experiences invite participation rather than passive observation — encouraging students, families, and community members to explore, ask questions, and imagine themselves within the NAU community. By creating meaningful, hands-on moments across campus and in the surrounding region, engagement marketing strengthens emotional connection, increases visibility, and supports recruitment and retention through genuine, human-centered interactions.

Engagement marketing platforms and tactics

- **Peer-led connection and outreach** – Peer-led connection and outreach harness trusted student voices — Student Ambassadors, club leaders, peer mentors, and trained communicators — to build authentic, informal connections across campus. These micro-engagements might include quick conversations, mini-guided walkabouts, or ambassador table drops that help students ask questions and build trust with someone who has lived the experience.

- **Pop-up and on-campus activations** – Pop-up activations bring quick, memorable interactions into high-traffic campus spaces through themed tables, mini-demonstrations, spontaneous ambassador touchpoints. These low-barrier moments spark curiosity, introduce program highlights, and engage students who may not attend scheduled events.
- **Hands-on or immersive experiences** – Hands-on and immersive experiences use workshops, demonstrations, and try-it-yourself activities to showcase what learning feels like inside an NAU program. These interactive moments help students visualize career pathways, connect with faculty expertise, and experience academic content in action.
- **Engagement-driven giveaways and kits** – Giveaways and engagement kits — including stickers, apparel, water bottles, campaign-themed swag, or direct-mail packets — reinforce program identity and reward participation during events or pop-ups. These tangible items extend the experience beyond the moment and encourage follow-up via QR codes or included calls to action.

Peer-led connection and outreach

Peer-led connection and outreach leverage the influence of Student Ambassadors, club leaders, peer mentors, and trained student communicators to create authentic, informal touchpoints across campus. These interactions often take place in everyday environments — residence halls, dining areas, lounges, or high-traffic campus spaces — where students naturally gather. Because prospective and current students trust insights from their peers, these micro-engagements can be especially powerful in addressing questions, easing concerns, and helping individuals picture themselves in a program or major. Through quick conversations, table drops, mini walkabouts, or casual introductions, peer-led outreach humanizes program messaging, strengthens community connection, and encourages students to take meaningful next steps such as attending an info session, exploring a program page, or connecting with an advisor.

Pop-up and on-campus activations

Pop-up and on-campus activations create brief, unexpected moments that interrupt the everyday flow of campus life in a positive, engaging way. Rather than relying on scheduled attendance, pop-ups meet students where they already are — making it easy for them to pause, explore, and learn something new with minimal commitment. These activations are especially valuable in higher education because they generate curiosity, boost visibility for programs or initiatives, and help students discover opportunities they may not have actively sought out. By offering quick, approachable points of connection, pop-up activations can build momentum for larger campaigns, drive participation in upcoming events, and encourage students to take simple next steps that deepen their involvement with NAU.

Examples of pop-up and on-campus activations

- **Themed pop-up tables** – Set up a small, branded table in a high-traffic area to share quick information, hand out materials, or answer questions.
- **Ambassador “drop-ins”** – Student Ambassadors circulate through dining halls, lounges, or outdoor areas to spark quick conversations and distribute info cards or QR codes.
- **Micro-demonstrations** – Very short, attention-grabbing demos (e.g., a quick coding trick, a smoke simulation for fire science) designed to draw students in.
- **Prize wheels or mini-games** – Low-barrier activities that attract passersby and reward participation with small giveaways.
- **Sticker or swag drops** – Offer stickers, pins, or other small items tied to a campaign to build visibility and encourage students to stop and engage.
- **Mobile info cards** – Hand out compact cards with key program highlights, deadlines, or QR codes linking to more information.
- **Surprise “flash activations”** – Short, unexpected moments, such as a mascot pop-in, a quick demonstration, or an ambassador cluster, that add energy and visibility in crowded areas.

Hands-on or immersive experiences

Hands-on or immersive experiences give students an opportunity to interact directly with a program's learning environment in a meaningful but approachable way. These activities focus on letting students experience elements of a discipline — whether through guided exploration, brief skill practice, or exposure to tools and methods used in the field. Unlike quick pop-up engagements, immersive experiences encourage deeper focus and help students build a clearer understanding of what studying in a particular major or department is really like. Through short, authentic glimpses into academic life, these experiences strengthen student confidence, highlight program identity, and support informed decision-making about majors, minors, and career pathways.

Examples of hands-on or immersive experiences

- **Mini-workshops or micro-lessons** that let students try a core skill (e.g., quick coding demos, GIS mapping, vitals checks).
- **Interactive academic demonstrations** such as tree-core sampling, robotics displays, water or soil testing, or design-tablet stations.
- **Tactile discovery tables** featuring specimens, tools, artifacts, or lab equipment students would encounter in the program.
- **VR/AR simulations** that showcase fieldwork, labs, clinical settings, or immersive learning environments.
- **Short “solve this problem” challenges** or creative build activities tied to program strengths or real-world scenarios.
- **Faculty- or ambassador-led micro-demonstrations** that highlight research, creative work, or applied skills.
- **Portfolio or creation stations** where students produce a quick artifact, such as a sketch, mini-poster, audio clip, or coded snippet, to take with them.
- **Equipment try-outs** that let students briefly handle instruments, cameras, field kits, or lab tools used in the major.
- **Interactive decision pathways** where students choose a scenario and see how different majors or fields would approach solving it.
- **Micro-research stations** where students contribute a quick data point, such as survey responses, reaction tests, or language puzzles, and immediately see the results visualized in real time.

Pro tip: Use this quick test to choose the right engagement approach: If the goal is to grab attention quickly, choose a pop-up activation. If the goal is to illustrate the student experience, choose a hands-on or immersive experience.

Engagement-driven giveaways and kits

Engagement-driven giveaways and kits use tangible, branded items to create memorable touchpoints that reinforce program identity and extend the impact of an interaction. Unlike general promotional items, these materials are intentionally tied to specific campaigns, events, or engagement goals — helping students make a connection between the item and the information or experience they received.

Giveaways can draw students into an activation, reward participation, or serve as reminders that encourage follow-up actions such as visiting a website or attending an info session.

Kits—whether handed out at events, used in ambassador outreach, or mailed to prospective students—offer a curated experience that communicates care, builds affinity, and helps audiences feel welcomed into the NAU community. When used strategically, giveaways and kits strengthen brand recognition and support deeper engagement across both digital and in-person channels.

Examples of engagement-driven giveaway and kits

- **Participation rewards** used during pop-ups, scavenger hunts, or demos to encourage interaction and sustain traffic.
- **Welcome or interest kits** for prospective students that pair small, branded items with program materials, ambassador notes, or QR cards.

- **Direct mail engagement kits** designed for admitted students, prospects, or partners that spark curiosity and prompt follow-up action.
- **Ambassador outreach bundles** that support peer connection by giving ambassadors ready-made materials for hall visits, club drop-ins, or informal conversations.
- **Table-ready packs** that equip staff or ambassadors with quick-grab items for walk-up engagement in high-traffic campus areas.

Promotional items

Promotional items are branded materials, such as stickers, apparel, water bottles, pens, or tote bags, that help increase visibility, strengthen brand recognition, and create a sense of connection with NAU. These items can support a wide range of activities, from recruitment and outreach to campus events and community engagement. Units often use branded apparel (t-shirts, hats), practical items (water bottles, tote bags, pens), or campaign-specific pieces (stickers, pins, small tech accessories) to reinforce program identity and provide audiences with a tangible reminder of their interaction with NAU. Bundled welcome kits for prospective students or new community partners can also include a curated mix of these items to create a warm, memorable introduction to the university. To order promotional items or swag, visit [Northern Arizona University's Trademarks and Licensing](#) website. NAU's Trademark and Licensing team protects and promotes the university's indicia (names, logos, graphics, marks, etc.) to ensure proper use of NAU trademarks, maintain strong relationships with retailers and licensees, support campus units and student organizations, and generate revenue that funds campus programs and facilities.

Event-based marketing

Event-based marketing focuses on structured, scheduled gatherings that bring students, families, and the broader campus community together for a defined purpose. These events offer dedicated time and space for deeper learning, connection, and exploration — whether through presentations, organized activities, showcases, or facilitated conversations. Because they follow a planned agenda and draw intentional attendance, event marketing is especially effective for highlighting academic strengths, reinforcing institutional identity, and supporting students at key milestones in their NAU journey.

Event-based marketing platforms and tactics

- **Orientation and student transition events** welcome new students and families, introduce essential campus resources, and help set expectations for academic success. These structured gatherings rely on planned agendas, presentations, and facilitated interactions to support students during key entry points in their NAU experience.
- **Academic and program-focused events** offer deeper insight into a department's strengths through faculty-led presentations, structured program overviews, research spotlights, or formal showcases. These events help students understand academic pathways, explore potential majors, and connect with faculty and current students in meaningful ways.
- **Institutional and milestone events** celebrate significant achievements, campus-wide initiatives, and moments of community pride. These can include campaign launches, recognition ceremonies, dedications, or celebrations that reinforce NAU's mission, values, and identity.
- **Topic-specific information sessions and workshops** provide targeted, agenda-driven content on subjects such as financial aid, career development, graduate school preparation, health and wellness, or academic success strategies. These scheduled sessions help students make informed decisions and navigate important processes with clarity and confidence.

Orientation and student transition events

Orientation and student transition events welcome new students and families into the NAU community through structured programming that introduces essential resources, academic expectations, and campus culture. These gatherings help students build early connections, develop confidence in navigating university life, and establish a foundation for success during important transition periods.

Tactics include:

- Welcome Week gatherings and launch events
- Orientation programs with scheduled presentations and resource overviews
- Family welcome activities and student transition workshops

Academic and program-focused events

Academic and program-focused events highlight the strengths, achievements, and learning experiences within specific departments or disciplines. These structured events help students explore majors, engage with faculty and current students, and understand the academic environment through organized showcases, research presentations, and guided experiences. Tactics include:

- Department showcases and research days featuring student projects, labs, and faculty-led demonstrations
- Program spotlight sessions or curriculum presentations
- Study abroad, service learning, or experiential learning fairs tied to academic pathways
- Student organization fairs that connect interest-driven communities with academic opportunities

Institutional and milestone events

Institutional and milestone events recognize significant achievements, celebrate university-wide initiatives, and strengthen community pride through formal gatherings. These events help elevate NAU's mission and identity while bringing together key stakeholders across campus. Tactics include:

- Dedications, ribbon-cuttings, and campaign launches
- Award ceremonies and recognition events
- Community-wide celebrations or signature university traditions
- High-visibility campus gatherings aligned with institutional priorities

Topic-specific information sessions and workshops

Topic-specific information sessions and workshops deliver focused, agenda-driven guidance on subjects that help students make informed decisions or navigate key processes. These structured sessions support academic success, financial literacy, career development, and other essential aspects of the student experience. Tactics include:

- Campus career fairs connecting students with employers, internships, and career pathways
- Financial aid information sessions or FAFSA workshops
- Graduate school preparation or professional pathway briefings
- Academic success, wellness, or skills-based workshops led by university partners.

Live marketing

Live marketing focuses on real-time interactions, demonstrations, and performances that bring energy, immediacy, and audience involvement into the promotional experience. Unlike scheduled events that follow a structured agenda, live marketing emphasizes the moment — the dynamic exchange that happens when audiences witness something unfolding in front of them. These experiences can spark curiosity, showcase expertise, and create memorable impressions by allowing students to see, hear, or participate in something as it happens. Live marketing works especially well for highlighting hands-on disciplines, creative talent, research activity, or student-led innovation, helping audiences form an emotional connection through shared, in-the-moment experiences.

Live marketing platforms and tactics

- **Live demonstrations** – real-time demonstrations of tools, techniques, experiments, or creative processes that allow audiences to observe learning or research unfolding in the moment.
- **Real-time performances or showcases** – performances, such as music, theatre, dance, digital storytelling, or design showcases, that highlight student talent and bring academic work to life through immediate, in-person experience.
- **Hackathons and competitions** – time-bound, challenge-based events where participants collaborate, problem-solve, or create prototypes, offering a dynamic way to highlight program strengths.
- **Live Q&A or panel interactions** – interactive conversations where faculty, students, alumni, or industry partners answer questions in real time, allowing the audience to shape the dialogue and gain authentic insights.

Live demonstrations

Live demonstrations allow audiences to watch a process or technique come to life in real time, offering an authentic glimpse into how a discipline operates. These dynamic moments make complex ideas approachable and highlight the applied nature of NAU's learning environment. Examples include forestry faculty demonstrating fire-behavior models, engineering students showcasing rapid prototyping, or health sciences ambassadors performing basic vitals checks.

Real-time performances or showcases

Real-time performances or showcases bring creative and academic work directly to audiences, generating energy and emotional impact. These experiences highlight the talent and collaboration within NAU's arts and performance communities. Examples include scenes rehearsed by Theatre students in a public space, chamber ensembles performing pop-up sets, or student designers revealing interactive media projects.

Hackathons and competitions

Hackathons and competitions immerse students in fast-paced, challenge-driven activities that highlight innovation and teamwork. These events showcase the connection between NAU programs and real-world problem solving. Examples include coding sprints hosted by SICCS, sustainability design challenges led by Environmental Sciences, or business pitch competitions organized by the W.A. Franke College of Business.

Live Q&A or panel interactions

Live Q&A sessions and panel interactions create real-time dialogue between audiences and experienced voices across NAU. These sessions provide authentic insights that help students navigate academic pathways, research opportunities, and career decisions. Examples include alumni career panels, faculty "Ask Me Anything" sessions, or student ambassador conversations during major exploration events.

Brand activation

Brand activation uses immersive, interactive experiences to bring a program's identity, mission, or values to life in ways that feel meaningful, memorable, and emotionally resonant. These activations move beyond traditional marketing by creating spaces, moments, or narratives where students can experience what a program stands for — its culture, priorities, and unique perspective. Brand activation is especially effective for differentiating programs, launching new initiatives, or creating high-impact presence during key campus moments.

Brand activation platforms and tactics

- **Themed installations** – visual or environmental setups, such as discipline-inspired displays or gallery-style walls, that express a program's identity through design, imagery, and interactive elements.
- **"Step into your major" experiential pop-ups** – immersive pop-up scenes that recreate a small part of a program's world (e.g., a mock clinic, newsroom, or field station) to help students envision themselves in the major.
- **Immersive brand experiences** – multi-sensory experiences that combine visual storytelling, hands-on elements, and guided interactions to convey a program's mission, values, or culture in a memorable way.

Themed installations

Themed installations use visual design and environmental elements to express a program's identity in a bold, immersive way. These setups may feature imagery, artifacts, or student work that reflect the values and focus of the discipline, such as a forestry installation showcasing field tools and ecological maps, or a CHHS display highlighting community health initiatives. By transforming a physical space into a storytelling environment, installations create memorable moments that invite students to pause, explore, and form a connection with the program's mission and strengths.

“Step into your major” experiential pop-ups

“Step into your major” pop-ups offer students a brief, hands-on glimpse into what it feels like to be part of a specific academic field. These scene-based activations might include a mock newsroom for journalism, a mini clinical setup for nursing, a design tabletop for visual communications, or a field-research station for environmental sciences. By allowing students to interact with tools, scenarios, or simulation elements from the discipline, these pop-ups help them visualize themselves in the major and spark curiosity about academic and career pathways.

Immersive brand experiences

Immersive brand experiences use multi-sensory or narrative-driven elements to communicate a program's culture and purpose. These experiences might incorporate guided storytelling, soundscapes, hands-on components, or curated displays, such as a Social Work pathway that highlights community impact stories, an “innovation corridor” showcasing student-built technologies in the School of Informatics, Computing, and Cyber Systems, or a theatrical behind-the-scenes experience from the Department of Theatre. By blending story and environment, immersive brand experiences convey not just *what* a program teaches but *why it matters* and the type of community students are joining.

Field marketing

Field marketing focuses on mobile, high-visibility outreach that brings program information directly into high-traffic campus spaces. These efforts emphasize coverage and repetition—ensuring that students encounter key messages as they move through residence halls, walkways, dining areas, and gathering spots. Unlike engagement tactics that rely on interaction or immersive moments, field marketing prioritizes physical presence, quick touchpoints, and on-the-ground distribution. This approach works especially well for promoting upcoming deadlines, raising awareness during campaign launches, or reinforcing key messages across multiple locations in a short period of time.

Field marketing platforms and tactics

- **Street teams** – small teams that circulate through campus to distribute information, such as flyers, QR cards, or campaign materials, while maintaining a consistent physical presence across multiple locations.
- **Mobile engagement carts or kiosks** – portable, branded carts or kiosks that can easily move between high-traffic spots to share materials, promote upcoming opportunities, or provide simple takeaways without requiring a formal setup.
- **Hallway, transit-route, and hub distribution points** – staff or students stationed briefly in key movement corridors, such as residence hall lobbies, dining hall exits, bus stops, or academic building entries, to distribute timely information during peak foot traffic.

Street teams

Street teams provide fast, high-visibility outreach by circulating through busy campus areas to distribute quick information such as flyers, QR cards, or campaign reminders. Their mobility allows them to reach a wide audience in a short amount of time, making this approach especially effective for promoting deadlines, event reminders, or new initiatives. At NAU, street teams can be deployed along high-traffic routes like the University Union walkway, South Quad, Science and Health corridors, or the pedway between central academic buildings — ensuring students encounter key messages as they move across campus.

Mobile engagement carts or kiosks

Mobile engagement carts or kiosks offer a flexible, portable platform for on-the-ground promotion. These branded carts can be relocated throughout the day to follow peak student traffic, positioned outside the Union during the lunch rush, near Cline Library in the afternoon, or by the Fieldhouse during recreation hours. They are ideal for distributing small materials, sharing QR codes, or providing quick campaign visibility without the need for a full event setup. Their mobility ensures consistent presence during critical promotional windows.

Hallway, transit-route, and hub distribution points

Distribution points stationed in high-flow locations help teams deliver timely information exactly where students naturally gather or pass through. At NAU, these locations might include residence hall lobbies during move-in periods, dining hall exits during peak meals, bus stops along the Mountain Line route, or academic building entrances between class breaks. Because these areas concentrate foot traffic, they allow marketing teams to reach large numbers of students efficiently while reinforcing campaign visibility across multiple parts of campus.

Guerrilla marketing

Guerrilla marketing relies on unexpected, unconventional, and often low-cost tactics designed to surprise audiences and spark curiosity in everyday environments. These tactics thrive on creativity over budget, using physical spaces, spontaneous moments, or bold visuals to capture attention and encourage organic word-of-mouth. For NAU units, guerrilla marketing can be an effective way to generate buzz around campaigns, promote new programs, or reach students in memorable ways that stand out from traditional marketing. Because these activations are typically fast, playful, and highly visible, they work best when tied to a clear message or call to action that encourages further exploration.

Guerrilla marketing platforms and tactics

- **Flash activations or surprise performances** – short, unexpected moments, such as mini-performances, coordinated movements, or live reveals, that draw immediate attention and create shareable experiences in busy areas like the Union, central pedways, or South Quad.
- **Chalk art and temporary street graphics** – eye-catching chalk murals, visual prompts, or 3D illusions placed along campus walkways to spark curiosity and direct students to upcoming programs, events, or QR-linked content.
- **Sticker or sticky-note takeovers** – clusters of branded stickers or intentional sticky-note displays placed in approved areas to highlight program facts, quotes, deadlines, or quick calls to action that students discover throughout their day.
- **Bookmarks or micro-distribution drops** – low-cost leave-behind items like bookmarks, cards, or small inserts placed in high-traffic study areas, such as Cline Library, campus cafés, academic lounges, to surface key messages where students naturally spend time.
- **Scavenger hunts or QR trails** – interactive challenges that guide students through campus or digital spaces using clues, QR codes, or hidden markers tied to program themes. These can drive traffic to websites, social channels, or specific campaign messages.
- **Creative stunts or visual installations** – bold, unexpected displays, such as oversized objects, themed props, geocache-style placements, or temporary buildouts, that become conversation starters and reinforce program identity in memorable ways.

Flash activations or surprise performances

Flash activations use quick, unexpected moments — such as mini-performances, choreographed sequences, or theatrical reveals — to capture immediate attention in busy campus spaces. These activations work because they interrupt routine movement with energy and excitement, prompting students to stop, film, or share the moment. At NAU, flash activations could include Theatre students performing a short scene outside the University Union, a music ensemble popping up for a 30-second riff on Central Quad, or a spirited ambassador burst during Welcome Week. When tied to a QR code or follow-up message, these surprise moments create organic buzz while reinforcing program identity.

Chalk art and temporary street graphics

Chalk art and temporary graphics transform walkways, underpasses, and gathering spots into eye-catching promotional spaces. These installations use color, illustrations, or clever messaging to spark curiosity as students walk across campus — especially in high-traffic areas like the pedway between Kitt and Cline, the Union patio, or the pathway near the Science & Health buildings. For NAU programs, this could include 3D illusions promoting STEM labs, chalk timelines highlighting Social Work impact stories, or directional prompts guiding students to an event. Because they are temporary and low-cost, chalk activations are ideal for short campaigns or time-sensitive promotions.

Sticker or sticky-note takeovers

Sticker or sticky-note takeovers create delightful, unexpected moments by placing clusters of small, branded pieces in approved areas where students naturally pause — mirrors in bathroom stalls, study-room doors, residence hall elevators, or public bulletin boards. Each note or sticker can highlight a program fact, inspiring quote, quick tip, or simple QR code. At NAU, this could look like the School of Earth and Sustainability leaving science-themed notes during Earth Week, College of Health and Human Services sharing wellness reminders around the Union, or the Department of English placing creative writing prompts across campus. These takeovers work because they feel personal, playful, and easy to engage with on the go.

Bookmarks or micro-distribution drops

Bookmarks and micro-distribution drops use small, leave-behind items to spark interest in subtle, high-impact ways. These pieces can be placed in library books, study carrels, campus cafés, residence hall lounges, or even tucked into lab manuals students pick up during the semester. At NAU, bookmarks could be distributed at Cline Library during finals season with QR links to tutoring or advising, or placed in campus cafés with program spotlights or event reminders. Because they appear where students least expect them, these micro-drops feel discovery-driven and create memorable touchpoints without requiring face-to-face engagement.

Scavenger hunts or QR trails

Scavenger hunts and QR trails turn campus into an interactive exploration game, guiding students to different locations or digital touchpoints tied to a program theme. Participants may collect clues, scan QR codes, or complete mini-tasks to win prizes or unlock program information. At NAU, this could include a campus-wide Forestry trail ending at the School of Forestry building, an Engineering puzzle path through lab spaces, or a College of Arts and Letters storytelling hunt that unlocks creative prompts at each stop. These activities generate movement, excitement, and social sharing while driving students to key messages or events.

Creative stunts or visual installations

Creative stunts and temporary visual installations are bold, attention-grabbing displays designed to start conversations and encourage social sharing. These might include oversized objects, themed props, or unexpected environmental interventions. At NAU, this could mean setting up a giant “build-your-degree” board outside the Union, a temporary “Innovation Wall” for students to add ideas during Engineers Week, or a Sustainability pop-up of reclaimed materials on Central Quad. These stunts work because they feel unusual and intriguing—inviting students to interact, photograph, or share them online.

🌀 Integrated opportunity: Blend physical surprise with digital amplification — like sidewalk art or pop-up installations featuring scannable QR codes, near field communication (NFC) tags, or AR effects that unlock hidden content, promotions, or challenges. This fusion of creativity and technology transforms spontaneous encounters into shareable digital moments that expand reach and track engagement.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Campaign example

Bachelor of Science in Engineering Technology

NAU's new Bachelor of Science in Engineering Technology (BSET) equips students with **hands-on, applied training** in high-demand fields like semiconductors and metrology. With flexible delivery options and cutting-edge labs, the program supports **Arizona's growing workforce needs** in advanced technology sectors.

Campaign goals

- Drive awareness of BSET ahead of Fall 2025 launch.
- Enroll first cohort of students across Flagstaff, Phoenix, Tucson, and statewide/online.
- Build recognition among transfer students and community college partners.
- Strengthen employer partnerships and pipeline messaging.

Campaign considerations

- **Budget:** Confirm college-level support for print, promo items, and events.
- **Distribution:** Posters/flyers at community colleges, workforce centers, NAU sites.
- **Ownership:** Campaign lead assigned within SEM + college marketing.

Target audiences

- **First-year students:** Ages 17–19, tech-curious, hands-on learners, hesitant about “math-heavy” engineering.
- **Transfer students / Bachelor of Professional Studies Reduced-Credit Pathway:** Community college completers, motivated by efficiency, affordability, and career alignment.
- **Adult learners and career changers:** Ages 25–45, seeking advancement or pivot, need flexible options.
- **Parents of prospective students:** Ages 40–60, ROI-driven, looking for strong outcomes and career security.

Key messages by audience

First-year students

Voice: Curious, Inquisitive, Confident

“Engineering doesn't have to mean endless equations. NAU's Engineering Technology degree gets you straight to the skills.”

Transfer students

Voice: Motivated, Tenacious, Collaborative

“You've already put in the work—now let's take it further. Flexible pathways + industry-ready labs = a career launchpad.”

Adult learners and career changers

Voice: Bold, All-In Solver

“You're not starting over—you're leveling up. NAU's Engineering Tech program meets you where you are and gets you job-ready.”

Parents

Voice: Invested, Confident

“Your student deserves a future-ready education. This hands-on program connects directly to Arizona’s fastest-growing industries.”

Unique selling points

- **Labs and experiential learning:** Semiconductor and metrology training labs.
- **Industry access:** Intel, TSMC, Micron, On Semi, NXP, and TE Connectivity.
- **Flexible pathways:** Statewide, online, and blended formats.
- **Career-ready outcomes:** Fills urgent workforce gaps in AZ tech.
- **Exclusivity:** Few universities nationwide offer comparable programs.

Career pathways

Graduates prepared for roles in:

- Semiconductor manufacturing
- Metrology and quality control
- Advanced manufacturing operations
- Process and equipment support (Intel, TSMC, Micron, etc.)

Channels, platforms, and tactics

Digital marketing

Channel	Content marketing
Platform	Blog posts
Tactic	Articles on metrology, CC-to-tech pathways, “engineering without calculus.”
Audience	Prospective transfer students

Channel	Content marketing
Platform	Video content
Tactic	Lab time-lapses, student stories, myth-busting; short and long-form videos
Audience	Prospective first-year students

Channel	Email marketing
Platform	Emma or Mailchimp
Tactic	Program launch, community college outreach, faculty/partnership updates.
Audience	Prospective students: adult learners, transfer students

Channel	Email marketing
Platform	Marketing Cloud
Tactic	Student success stories, internships, and equipment updates.
Audience	Current undecided students

Channel	Social media
Platform	Instagram and/or YouTube
Tactic	Student/lab reels, memes, “career glow-up” posts, lab demos, student vlogs, explainer series (“Engineering ≠ Endless Calculus”)
Audience	Prospective students

Channel	Social media
Platform	Facebook
Tactic	Program updates, community partnerships, parent-targeted posts.
Audience	Parents/families

Channel	Social media
Platform	LinkedIn
Tactic	Employer spotlights, alumni outcomes, workforce collaboration content.
Audience	Alumni, industry partners, graduating students

Traditional marketing

Channel	Broadcast advertising
Platform	On-campus outlets (KNAU)
Tactic	Paid ads focused on student spotlights, lab stories, partnerships.
Audience	Current NAU students

Channel	Print marketing, advertising, earned media
Platform	Community colleges, workforce centers, and NAU sites.
Tactic	Posters, flyers, postcards
Audience	Prospective and current students

Channel	Print marketing, advertising, earned media
Platform	Local/statewide media outlets (Great Circle Media, AZ Daily Sun)
Tactic	Press pitches about workforce pipeline, economic development, CC-to-career stories.
Audience	Prospective transfer students, career changers, and adult learner students

Channel	Print marketing, advertising, earned media
Platform	On-campus media (<i>The Lumberjack</i> and the <i>NAU Review</i>)
Tactic	Pitch student spotlights, lab stories, partnerships
Audience	Prospective first-year students, current students

Channel	Print marketing, advertising, earned media
Platform	Trade journals
Tactic	Advertisements highlighting career prospects
Audience	Adult learners, career changers

Experiential marketing

Channel	Engagement marketing
Platform	Pop-up and on-campus activations
Tactic	Pop-up booth featuring interactive myth-busting with puzzles, hands-on kits, program swag.
Audience	Prospective and current students

Channel	Engagement marketing
Platform	Engagement-driven giveaways and kits
Tactic	Distribute stickers, t-shirts, notebooks, water bottles.
Audience	Prospective and current students

Channel	Guerilla marketing
Platform	Sticker or sticky-note takeovers
Tactic	Sticky notes posted in STEM buildings.
Audience	Prospective and current students

Channel	Guerilla marketing
Platform	Creative stunts or visual installations
Tactic	Tech sketch wall/chalkboard/whiteboard for student invention ideas.
Audience	Prospective and current students

Channel	Guerilla marketing
Platform	Scavenger hunts or QR trails
Tactic	Scavenger hunt with QR code trail linking to labs, trivia, and videos.
Audience	Prospective and current students

Appendix B: Glossary of marketing terms

This glossary defines marketing terms used throughout the Program Promotion Playbook.

Academic program promotion: The strategic process of raising awareness, interest, and enrollment in a specific academic program through targeted marketing campaigns.

Audience: The group of people you are trying to reach with your marketing (e.g., prospective students, parents, alumni, community partners).

Awareness: The extent to which your target audience recognizes, remembers, or becomes familiar with your program, offering, or brand. In marketing, awareness is often an early-stage goal focused on increasing visibility and ensuring the right audiences know your program exists before deeper engagement — such as inquiry, application, or participation — can occur.

Brand: The overall perception of NAU and its programs, shaped by consistent messaging, visuals, tone, and experiences.

Brand alignment: Ensuring program-level messaging, visuals, and tone are consistent with NAU's institutional brand standards and values.

Call to action (CTA): A clear prompt encouraging the audience to take a specific action (e.g., “Apply Now,” “Schedule a Visit,” “Request Information”).

Campaign: A coordinated series of marketing tactics across one or more channels and platforms designed to achieve a specific goal.

Channel: The broad medium or pathway used to deliver a marketing message (e.g., email, social media, print, events).

Communications flow / journey: A planned sequence of messages and touchpoints designed to guide prospective students through the enrollment process. Often automated. Also referred to as a drip campaign.

Content marketing: Creating and sharing valuable, relevant content (e.g., blogs, videos, podcasts) to engage audiences and highlight program strengths.

Conversion: When an audience member completes a desired action, such as submitting an inquiry form, attending an event, or applying to a program.

Conversion rate optimization (CRO): A digital marketing process to improve a website or campaign by increasing the percentage of website visitors who take a specific, desired action.

Customer relationship management (CRM): A technology system used to manage and analyze interactions with prospective, current, and former students, enabling personalized communication, automated marketing, and data-driven decision-making.

Drip campaign: A series of automated, scheduled email messages sent over time to nurture prospective students through the enrollment funnel. Also referred to as a communications flow or journey.

Earned media: Publicity gained when external parties share your story or achievements, such as local news features, rankings, or alumni testimonials.

Engagement: Audience interaction with marketing content, such as likes, shares, comments, event participation, or email clicks.

Enrollment funnel: The stages a prospective student moves through — from awareness and interest to application, admission, and enrollment.

Guerrilla marketing: Creative, low-budget, high-impact tactics designed to surprise and engage audiences in unconventional ways.

Hybrid marketing: A marketing approach that intentionally combines digital, traditional, and/or experiential channels within a single campaign to create connected, cross-channel experiences. Hybrid marketing bridges online and offline efforts to expand reach, reinforce messaging, and encourage audiences to engage across multiple environments.

Integrated marketing: A strategic approach that aligns all marketing efforts — across digital, traditional, and experiential channels — under a consistent brand voice, visual identity, core message, and value proposition. It ensures that audiences experience clear, coordinated, and connected communication wherever they encounter a program or institution, strengthening awareness, trust, and engagement. Integrated marketing can be executed through multi-channel, hybrid, or omnichannel strategies depending on campaign goals, resources, and the desired level of connection across audience touchpoints.

Key performance indicator (KPI): A measurable value used to evaluate campaign performance (e.g., number of applications, click-through rates, social shares).

Landing page: A dedicated webpage focused on a specific program or campaign, designed to drive a single, defined action (e.g., filling out a request for information).

Lead: A person or organization that has shown interest in your program, offering, or opportunity and may be a potential future participant, customer, or applicant. Leads are typically identified when someone takes an action — such as filling out a form, signing up for an event, or requesting more information — that indicates interest and opens the door for further engagement.

Lead generation: The process of attracting and capturing interest from potential audiences, such as prospective students, parents, or community members, to encourage them to learn more about a program, offering, or opportunity and move toward taking a next step, such as requesting information, signing up, or applying.

Marketing: The strategic process of reaching the right people, at the right time, with the right message to communicate the value of a program, offering, or opportunity. In higher education, marketing goes beyond advertising or promotional materials — it involves identifying target audiences, crafting compelling messages, and using a mix of strategies, channels, and tactics to build awareness, generate interest, and encourage audiences to take meaningful actions, such as learning more, signing up, applying, or getting involved. Effective marketing also includes measuring results and refining efforts over time to maximize impact.

Marketing strategy: The high-level plan that defines why you are marketing, who you are trying to reach, and what you want to achieve. It establishes the purpose, target audience, and goals behind your marketing efforts by aligning audience needs, motivations, and behaviors with organizational priorities. A strong marketing strategy guides decision-making, shapes messaging, and ensures campaigns are cohesive, intentional, and effective.

Message: The core information, value, or idea you want your audience to understand, remember, and respond to about your program, offering, or opportunity. It communicates what makes your program relevant, distinctive, and valuable to a specific audience, and should be tailored to their needs, interests, or motivations. Effective messaging helps ensure your marketing is clear, consistent, and compelling across channels, platforms, and tactics.

Metrics: Measurable data points used to evaluate the performance and impact of marketing efforts. They help determine what is working, what is not, and where adjustments may improve results. Metrics can include actions such as impressions, clicks, QR code scans, form submissions, conversions, event attendance, or engagement rates, providing concrete ways to assess how effectively a campaign is building awareness, generating interest, and driving audience action.

Multi-channel marketing: A marketing approach that uses multiple channels, such as email, social media, websites, print, or events, to reach audiences across different touchpoints. While these channels may support the same overall goal, they often operate independently and may not provide a fully connected or coordinated audience experience.

Omnichannel marketing: A highly coordinated marketing approach that connects channels, platforms, and audience data to create a seamless, personalized experience across all touchpoints. In omnichannel marketing, each interaction informs the next, allowing messaging and engagement strategies to adapt based on audience behavior and create a continuous, audience-centered journey.

Out-of-home (OOH) advertising: Visual advertising that reaches people outside their homes, such as billboards, posters, transit ads, and campus signage.

Over-the-top (OTT) campaigns: Video advertising delivered through internet-based streaming platforms (e.g., Hulu, YouTube TV), enabling precise targeting and measurable performance.

Owned media: Marketing channels controlled by NAU or its units, such as program webpages, newsletters, brochures, and digital signage.

Paid media: Advertising purchased to reach wider or more targeted audiences, including digital ads, sponsored social media posts, and broadcast media (radio/TV spots).

PESO model: A framework that categorizes media into four types: Paid, Earned, Shared, and Owned — often used together in integrated campaigns.

Platform: The specific tool, service, or environment within a channel where marketing activities occur (e.g., Instagram, Mailchimp, YouTube).

Print marketing: Tangible marketing materials such as brochures, flyers, posters, postcards, and direct mail pieces.

Return on investment (ROI): A measure of marketing effectiveness that compares outcomes (e.g., applications, enrollments) to resources invested.

Reach: The total number of people who are exposed to or have the opportunity to see your marketing message through a specific channel, platform, or campaign. In marketing, reach helps measure how widely your message is distributed and how effectively you are increasing awareness among your target audience.

Search engine optimization (SEO): Optimizing web content to improve visibility in organic search engine results.

Search engine marketing (SEM): A broader search strategy that includes SEO and paid advertising (e.g., Google Ads) to increase visibility in search engine results.

Segmentation: Dividing a larger audience into smaller groups based on shared characteristics or behaviors to enable more relevant messaging.

Shared media: Content that spreads through audience participation and amplification, such as social media shares, parent referrals, or word-of-mouth.

Social media marketing: Using social platforms (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, LinkedIn, YouTube) to promote programs, share stories, and engage audiences through organic and paid content.

Stakeholders: Internal or external groups with a vested interest in a program or campaign.

Tactic: A specific activity executed within a channel or platform to support campaign goals.

Target audience: The primary group a campaign is designed to influence (e.g., prospective undergraduates, graduate students, parents).

Touchpoint: Any interaction between your program and your audience, such as seeing an ad, opening an email, visiting a webpage, or attending an event.

Tracking/analytics: The collection and analysis of performance data to measure effectiveness and guide optimization.

Website optimization: Improving webpages to ensure they are accessible, search-friendly, user-centered, and designed to convert interest into action.