

The Ultimate Guide To Brand Ambassador Marketing

Welcome to The Ultimate Guide To Brand Ambassador Marketing – our new guide dedicated to teaching you the ins and outs of how to start, run, and manage an effective brand ambassador program for your company.

Whether you're a business, artist, festival, startup, or otherwise – brand ambassadors can be among the most powerful and effective ways for you to engage your target audience and spread the word about your brand or offer.

This guide will show you how.

Part 1: What is a brand ambassador?

A brand ambassador is someone who represents your brand, product, event or service. In this section, we'll further define this term, outline brand ambassador marketing programs (both online and offline), and explore their benefits.

Part 2: How to recruit brand ambassadors

By now you should be comfortable with the terms “street team” and “brand ambassador”. Even better, you understand the idea of creating marketing programs around them and you know exactly why it’s so important.

In Part 2 we talk about how, when and where to recruit your very own. This is the first step to putting together your program(s).

Part 3: How to motivate (or pay) your brand ambassadors

Now that you know where to find brand ambassadors and street teamers, we’ll cover how to incentive them. #protip: this may or may not involve monetary compensation!

Part 4: How to manage brand ambassador program

With a team in place, it’s time to talk about how to structure and run your program going forward. Do it right, and you can create a sustainable process for increasing leads and sales without spending money on ads. Do it wrong, and you risk damaging your brand – not to mention wasting valuable time and money.

BONUS: How Red Bull manages its brand ambassador program

Take a rare peek behind the curtain and see how one of the world's most successful brand ambassador programs is run.

Part 1: What is a Brand Ambassador?

Let's start by defining the term: A brand ambassador is someone who represents your brand, product, event or service. These are people that are essentially doing your marketing for you.

A longer winded definition would mention that the work that they do is a combination of online and offline tactics that effectively spread the word about whatever it is you do. Often, this happens on a very personal and direct level. Some might call it peer to peer, grassroots or word-of-mouth marketing. Call it what you want – it works. In fact – 90% of consumers are more likely to make a purchase if recommended by someone.

Cool, so now you've got these "brand ambassadors" who dig your work and are willing to push it for you. But how exactly can you maximize this relationship? Better said – how can you make it as easy as possible for them to reach the biggest audience on your behalf? Before we go any further, let's break this concept down into two separate categories – online and offline.

Offline Brand Ambassador Programs.

You have a few options for offline promotions by leveraging Street Teams. Sampling and product demos are an extremely common way for Brand Ambassadors to market on your behalf. A good example of this would be the beverage brand that sets up a tasting booth at your local grocery store, or Red Bull with their mobile “wings teams”.

Another option is the distribution of marketing materials. For example, you might have a street team canvas an area – putting up or passing out posters, flyers, pop-ups, bandit signs and stickers around campus, in local shops or community bulletins. You get the idea.

** Quick note about sticker bombing. You’re going to see a ton of this in metropolitan areas like New York, San Francisco, LA etc. This type of Guerrilla marketing is extremely effective in the entertainment space or for certain lifestyle brands. But, a word of caution – it’s not always *exactly* legal so make sure you check local regulations. **

The last last form of offline marketing is good old fashion face-to-face engagement. Ever get chatted up by the Greenpeace guys outside your favorite grocery store? They’re brand ambassadors out there street teamin!

Some common examples of industries that do well with Street Teams are events (concerts, music festivals, conferences etc), real estate, and even political campaigns. Come election time, keep an eye out for all those campaign signs and door hangers. These distributive marketing materials are typically put up by volunteer and/or paid Brand Ambassadors. Tracking and managing them has become infinitely easier in the last few years thanks to the emergence of [street team reporting apps](#)

(<http://www.simplecrew.com?mx=16617120129255-00de2ad4811062-24414032-384000-1661712012aa16>).

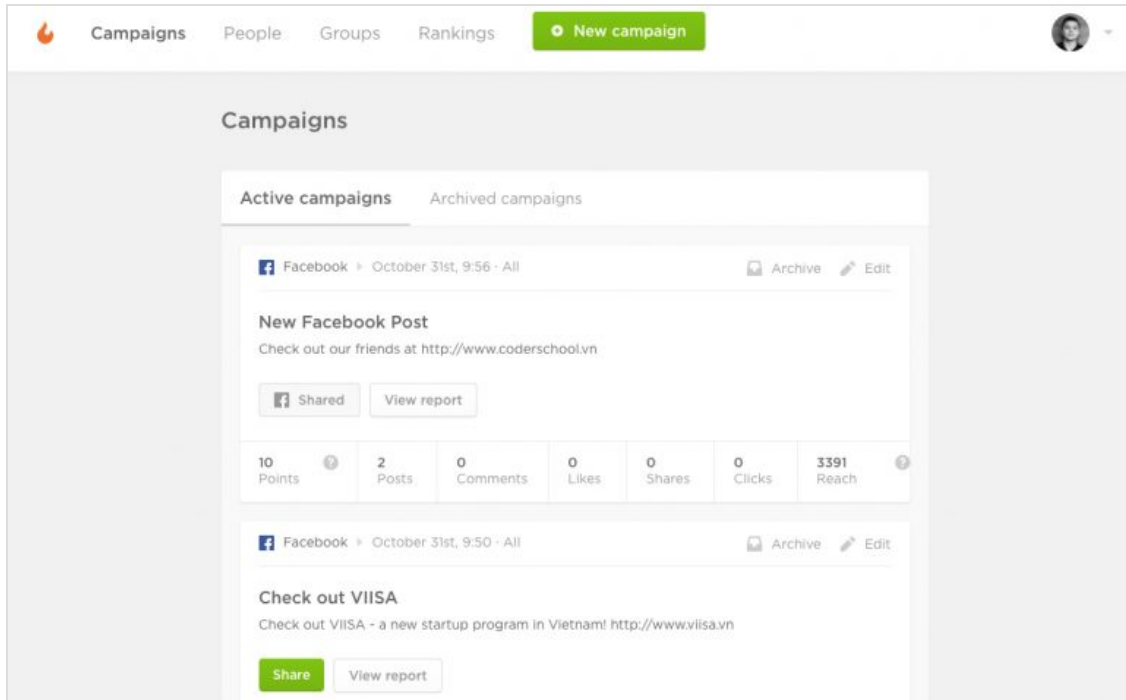
Ok, that takes us through offline Brand Ambassador marketing (aka Street Teams).

Online Brand Ambassador Programs.

Let's dive right into online Brand Ambassador strategies. In today's day and age there's definitely no shortage of digital water coolers. Your target audience is there – hanging out, talking with friends. Lucky for you, you have a guy (or girl) on the inside (hint: Brand Ambassadors!).

Your Brand Ambassadors infiltrate – but not as an advertisement – as a real person (you know, because they are!). They might invite their friends to your Facebook events or to Like your Fan Page. They might even share links and

other content with their friends and family on things like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Or maybe they review your business on Yelp or TripAdvisor.



The emergence of brand ambassador software (<https://www.crewfire.com>) makes it easier than ever to manage and scale brand ambassador social media campaigns.

This is just the tip of the iceberg, but I think you get the point.

Why does it matter?

If you leave this post with one thing it should be this – **A well thought out Brand Ambassador program is the most powerful marketing channel that you have at your**

fingertips – yet I’m willing to bet you’re not making the most of it.

Be different. Be real.

Leveraging Brand Ambassadors sets you apart by cutting through the noise – it means being different by being tangible. It means engaging your audience, fans, or supporters by getting them directly involved in peer-to-peer marketing.

This is especially true if you’re in the entertainment or lifestyle space. Believe it or not, you have Brand Ambassadors already – they’re sitting on the sidelines just waiting for a chance to get in the game. With a Brand Ambassador program, you’re giving them a chance to join the movement by pushing your brand – that’s what we call a win-win situation.

Hyper targeted campaigns.

Let’s talk for a minute about demographics. Marketing is always about identifying your target audience and showing up where they hang out – both online and offline. Sure, you could put up a billboard or run Facebook ads. But what if your message is carried into those venues by a peer who

knows and believes in you? This is the magic behind a well crafted Brand ambassadors program – the special sauce if you will.

So you wanna “go viral”?

Join the club... Going Viral is probably the most overused term and misunderstood phenomenon of our time. It's immensely complicated, to say the least. There's a ton of variables to consider here, and while we're not going to get too far off track, there is one thing we can all agree on – someone has to get the ball rolling. If you build a community of Brand Ambassadors around you, it stands to reason that you can accelerate viral growth from within.

Create a personal experience... Not an advertisement.

We've sorta indirectly touched on this a few times already, but it's an important distinction between Brand Ambassador programs and other marketing channels so let's drive the point home.

Think about when someone looks you in the eye to hand you a flyer, or a pours you a sample of wine at the grocery store, or invites you to a party – you feel special. You are **experiencing** a brand – but on a more human level than a TV

commercial, highway billboard or Facebook Ad. You weren't tricked by a clever automated marketing campaign – you were engaged by a real person – maybe even a friend.

Feels good, right?

Wrapping it up.

I hope you now have a better handle on what Brand Ambassadors / Street Teams and more importantly – why you should be leveraging some version that makes sense for your brand and audience.

Next, we'll dive into one of the topics we get asked about most: How do you recruit Brand Ambassadors?

Part 2: How to recruit brand ambassadors

Welcome to part two of the Brand Ambassador guide – **How to recruit.**

By now, you should know exactly what a Brand Ambassador is (and a Street Team!).

Now, let's jump right into recruitment.

You have two main ways recruit Brand Ambassadors. Just like in the last instalment – we’re going to separate this into two categories – online and offline.

Online recruitment.

Let’s talk about online recruitment first because I think it’s probably going to be the key driver (at least for most of us). When I was managing Street Teams and Brand Ambassador programs for music festivals, concert venues, Red Bull and eventually for my own businesses, online recruiting was my bread and butter. The heart of which is the almighty “sign-up form”.

This is essentially a four step process. The bare bones of which is this:

- 1. Create a sign-up form on Google Docs (or some other third party form builder)**
- 2. Share it via email,**
- 3. Social media,**
- 4. and embed it on your website.**

As you circulate this form, your team will grow. Simple right?

Depending on your industry, also consider posting on job boards like Craigslist. This is exactly how I found one of my early Brand Ambassador role with Red Bull. Many of our customers in the real estate space are also finding their Brand Ambassadors via Craigslist (ie. “We Buy Houses” street teams)

Last, but definitely not least – use Facebook Groups. In general you want to go where your potential Brand Ambassadors hangout. Spoiler alert – nine times out of ten, they’re on Social Media. I’m pointing out the obvious but feel free to get creative here.

Offline recruitment.

Particularly if you’re an offline business, circulating offline sign-up forms is a great addition to the process outlined above. This works really well for the entertainment space and lifestyle brands. I’m talking about old school clipboards (+1 for blending the two with a tablet or smart phone!).

In this scenario you’re taking people’s names and email addresses by hand, onsite. Why are people going to hand over their private information? That comes down to incentives, which is the topic of the next instalment. But here’s a little foreshadowing – let them know that they can participate in promoting / marketing for your brand and in return they’ll get compensated for it somehow. Again, for the

entertainment space, you'll find that this can be extremely powerful because people want what you're selling enough to work for a free ride – think sporting events, concerts, music festivals, gallery openings, that kind of thing.

And if you really dig deep, you'll find that it's not all in the name of a good time. If you think about it, some brands are peddling a lifestyle, a community even. They are appealing to someone's identity. If you are able to recognize and tap into that – Brand Ambassadors are easy to come by.

Myself for example – going to concerts and music festivals has always been a big part of who I am. When I do that, I have an opportunity to engage with other eventgoers and ultimately become even more of a part of that lifestyle and culture than I was before.

This is a fantastic opportunity for brand managers to recruit people who are passionate about music and want to get more involved in making that night and that event the best it can be. Remember, it's not always about money.

The multiplier effect.

Ask your existing team members to recruit from their network. As simple as it sounds – it's often overlooked.

Not to get too far into the weeds, but a classic example is the Mormon missionary. if you think about it, these are Brand Ambassadors. They're going out there into their community (often door to door) recruiting people to join their cause.

Similarly you should be asking your team members to do the same – maybe not door to door but you get the point. If your brand ambassadors are passionate about the job and passionate about your brand, give them the opportunity to bring their friends into the fold.

If you build it, they will come.

When possible – hold your own events. Or try setting up a table / booth at other events. Anything where your people can rally around you and show truth in numbers. This helps build community and, more importantly, helps your team recruit others. At the end of the day, you want this to be engaging and fun. (Don't forget that last part)

Some quick tips and tricks.

Remember, this is not a one-time thing. This is something that's ongoing. It's extremely valuable to keep your pipeline open and always be recruiting.

ABR.

We're going to coin that right now, you and me. Always be recruiting.

Recruiting – Check!

In the next part we're going to take a deep dive into incentivizing your team. Nothin's free, right?

We'll look at exactly how you can motivate and/or pay your brand ambassadors.

Part 3: How to motivate (or pay) your brand ambassadors

I'm really excited about this one because it's probably the most important and frequent question I get.

With very few exceptions, Brand Ambassador teams require some sort of incentive to work well. This is going to fall into two distinct categories – monetary incentives and non-monetary incentives.

Before we dissect those two, I want to introduce a concept called the Motivation Crowding Theory. Wikipedia defines it as follows: the idea that extrinsic motivators such as

monetary incentives or punishments can undermine intrinsic motivation.

Read more on [Wikipedia](#)

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motivation_crowding_theory) (opens in a new tab).

Basically it means that if you pay someone to do something they love, they begin to lose their natural motivation. In other words, if you start paying a volunteer, it stops being fun and starts being work.

If you have people that are passionate about your brand, the events, or the lifestyle – The take home point here is this: If you can find ways to motivate them without using monetary incentives then you can really channel their passion and intrinsic motivation.

Conversely, if you do start to pay them cash, they'll inevitably start doing it for the money. Whether it's a little or a lot, it'll change their motivation and their behavior. This is classic behavioral theory right here.

Sure there are exceptions and I definitely challenge you to test this stuff out with your own teams – but this concept in mind as you go.

With that, let's talk about motivating your team without cash incentives.

Non-monetary brand ambassador incentives.

The first thing we all have to offer is recognition and it's the lowest hanging fruit. Every job well done should receive some sort of recognition, at the very least.

Off the top of my head, one of the best examples I've seen of this is a singer / songwriter named Austin Mahone. I've never heard his music, but I have seen his brand ambassadors going hard on Twitter. He routinely runs word-of-mouth Twitter campaigns in which he gets literally thousands of fans to share his content.

The incentive? Nothing more than a simple tweet from Austin himself.

His results may be unique (unless you're a teenage popstar with 10 million Twitter followers). But, I assure the concept is neither new, nor unique.

In fact, humans are motivated their whole life by recognition – I think my parents are still sporting my “Student of the Month” bumper stickers from back in the day.

Rank	Name	Points	Posts
1	Alan Agent	0 Points	0 Posts
2	Alan VanToai	0 Points	0 Posts
3	Oscar Jesionek	0 Points	0 Posts

With brand ambassador tools (<https://www.crewfire.com>) like CrewFire, it's easy to see who your most effective and most active micro-influencers are.

Another example of this – I used to work for the street team management company, FanManager. Every month they'd feature a rockstar street teamer on their homepage in recognition of a job well done. Something like this can be really powerful – especially when you're young and you don't have much work experience. I remember when I was featured, I took a screenshot of it and even included it in my resume for a long time.

Depending on your circumstance, you can use this sort of “shout-out” in many ways. As we've seen, it can be effective online via Social Media, a website or an email newsletter. You can also try offline recognition by utilizing phone calls, letters, meet-n-greets, and sound checks (for our live event peeps).

The next thing you can try is giving away free products, tickets and / or services. Depending on your business this can be a very effective and easy way to get people involved. If you make shirts, offer shirts. If you run a restaurant, give away a free dinner. If you are software startup, give away a free month on your platform. You get the idea.

For bonus points, get more creative and find ways to give things that you don't produce in house. For example, you may be able to offer your interns college credit. Or maybe you can work with your vendors to offer your team a discount on other products or services.

When it comes to non-monetary incentives, this is really just the tip of the iceberg. In the end, your strategy is going to be unique to your brand and your team. The moral of the story is get creative!

What can you provide at no cost that really motivates your team to do their best work?

Monetary brand ambassador incentives.

The other side of the coin is, of course, monetary incentives. You have a few options here, depending on your brand and business model. Just like with the non-monetary incentives, this is not a one-size-fits-all solution but hopefully I can get you moving in the right direction.

The first option is to pay by the hour. Let me first say that this is my least favorite since it usually only motivates people to be physically present for a certain amount of time. But, depending on the nature of work, this may suffice. One word to the wise – If you're not actually going to be there, make sure that you have some sort of system in place to track time and hold people accountable for their work.

The second option is to pay on a per unit basis. In other words, you provide X dollars for each unit of Y that is completed. A good example of would be the bandit sign street teams that are out posting things like “we buy houses” or political campaign signs. These guys could be paid per sign distributed.

Again – you want to make sure that you have some sort of system in place to hold them accountable. If you're paying per sign, you need a way to know how many signs were distributed. Photos are a great way to do this, and it's exactly why we built our first product, SimpleCrew. If you want to keep your team accountable with time-stamped and geo-tagged photos, be sure to check it out. A little shameless plug there 😊

The third option for monetary incentives is an affiliate commission. This is probably the most efficient way to incentivize people since they only get paid for referring a new customer. In this way you are paying for leads (or even

paying customers), instead of impressions. But, for this to work, keep in mind you must have a way to track the conversions back to the referring team member. Some affiliates like to use a software like **Crewfire** (<https://www.crewfire.com>) to track how active their affiliates are and what results they're getting.

We see this all the time online. Uber, for example, supplies users with a unique code which can be distributed in different ways around the interwebs. Every time someone uses that code to sign up for the app, the referring user will get credit to their Uber account. Dropbox, Chase, PayPal and AirBnB all offer a similar program which rewards people who get others to sign up for new accounts.

Affiliates can be a really powerful way to motivate your customers to become Brand Ambassadors. Some will do so casually by inviting a friend or two and some will channel their inner digital marketer by leveraging other websites, email newsletters or even community boards like Craigslist on your behalf. Many people make a good living doing nothing but affiliate marketing.

A good example of offline affiliate programs can be found in many Vegas nightclubs. You might see a flyers being passed around town that say something like "good for one free entry before midnight". Usually the flyer will also be marked with the street teamer's name or unique referral code. At the

end of the night, the venue can see tally up the number of flyers turned in at the door and compensate their promoters according to how many people actually came.

Community Building

Whether you choose monetary or non-monetary compensation (or some combination of the two), I highly recommend that you spend some time and effort building a community around your team.

We have mentioned it before in this series and will probably mention it a couple more before we're done. It's that important.

Creating a sense of community (offline, online or both) around your team makes this whole thing more effective and fun.

What happens when you hit the gym with a partner? Or cram for a final with a study group? You stay longer, you work harder, you learn from each other, and most importantly – you have more fun! It's no different when it comes to Street Teams and Brand Ambassadors.

Another awesome benefit of building a community is feedback. As the owner or brand manager you'll have your finger on the pulse of your team simply by participating in

your own community. You'll be able to get really clear picture about what's working and what's not. This is an extremely important component to any business practice, not just Brand Ambassadors – always get feedback from the people that are taking part.

Part 4: How to manage a brand ambassador program

Some may seem obvious but you'd be surprised how often they are overlooked.

The goal for this post is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of your team and overall Brand Ambassador program.

Let's jump right in.

Onboarding Brand Ambassadors

Let's start at the beginning with some tips for onboarding your team. In general, think about onboarding like a lever – a little bit of effort up front goes a long way in the end. I say this because the way you onboard a new team member really sets the tone for both their work ethic and your collective relationship down the line.

This is what it looks like to set up a new member for success
– Properly introduce each new member to a well organized, well incentivized team. Let them know that they are free to be themselves and have a good time as long as they get sh*t done. Tell them exactly what's expected of them and give them the tools they need to succeed.

Setting the tone early will help a good fit get started faster and will filter out the bad ones automatically.

Welcome to the family!

The first thing I recommend is to create some sort of a new hire / new team member orientation packet. Depending on your brand and the type of hire, this packet will differ in size and content. But, the general idea here is to welcome them to the team and set their expectations.

Try starting with a welcome letter. As the brand owner / manager, let your personality shine. Thank them for joining your cause, welcome them to the team, explain the history of the company, the direction of the brand, a description of the role, etc. This is a useful thing – not just for Brand Ambassadors, but for all new recruits at the company.

Define success.

Next you'll want to clearly define your team's objectives, this is where you can get a little more granular about what they'll be doing and how they'll be doing it.

If it involves fieldwork for example, you might want to put together a calendar of events and a directory of locations. If they'll be engaging your customers you might want to prepare them with some example scenarios – maybe some common objections and ways to overcome them. These are just some examples.

Tools of the trade.

Make sure they have the right tools for the job. Sounds obvious right? It's not.

You would be surprised how many times people fail to think this through before onboarding a new team member. Try not to get into the habit of putting out fires as they arrive.

Do they need a media pass to get into the event? Do they need to know who to contact about the guest list? Do they need digital copies of the your flyers or photos from the event? What about login credentials for their new email account?

Whatever they need, don't make them hit a wall and have to ask later. Momentum is crucial in the beginning so make sure they hit the ground running.

As you can see, there's no one-size-fits-all solution here. But hopefully you see the take home point here – When people join your team, you don't want to be throwing them into the deep end and hope they figure it out.

Instead, you want to start them off on the right foot with a clear path to success. I promise it's worth it. Everyone will be happier, less stressed out and more effective.

Freshman orientation.

So how should you distribute this information? Again this is going to depend on your brand and the nature of work to be done by your team. But, you have a few basic options – you can do it on a case by case basis as new team members sign up or you can batch it through some sort of orientation event (could be online or offline).

An orientation event is my favorite because it also works towards the community building we talked about in the last couple parts of this series. Think of it like a new member party – again depending on your brand, choose the environment and mood accordingly. This can be simple to lavish but basically you want to put together some sort of

gathering where you can go over the orientation information, show them a sense of community, and introduce them to your brand. It's important to note here – even if you are not paying your Street Team – you are invested in their success. From here on out they represent your brand both online and offline. If you fail to set them up for success, it could have very real consequences.

So, at this point you've thought out and created a welcome pack. You've rallied a team and gotten them together for a good old fashion orientation and team building.

Let's move on to managing a functioning program.

Communication and community.

One of the most powerful free tools you have at your fingertips is Facebook Groups. Creating a group for your team gives them a digital hangout. Somewhere they can connect, share information, articles, links, cat gifs etc. One of the great thing about Facebook is any time something is posted in the group, everybody gets a notification. And since most people live on Facebook anyway – you're sure to keep people attentive and engaged.

Email is the more conventional way to keep in touch but many times, younger people don't really manage email that well. You might find that messages occasionally get lost in a

sea of unread junk mail. Also, you're not getting the same community effect often provided by Facebook. But, especially for one-on-one communication email is still a popular and effective channel for communication.

Same goes for phone calls and SMS – Very to the point and a great response rate, but again it's hard to build community over a group text or conference call. Also people tend to guard their phone number and even email a bit more than their Facebook.

Another totally viable option for group communication is Slack. And it's free! (They have a premium tier if you want to do things like video chat and historical searching but for most of us the free plan will work just fine). We actually use Slack each and every day inside our businesses.

It's built specifically for business so depending on your brand, you may not want to gather your team around something so casual and personal as Facebook. Also certain demographics aren't on Facebook as much as they used to be. For these use cases I definitely recommend Slack. But for many brands – particularly the event and promotion space – Facebook tends to work just fine.

Accountability and reporting.

This was, until recently, a huge pain point for most brand managers. Imagine you have a team of 200 Brand Ambassadors out there in the street distributing thousands of flyers around a large metropolitan area.

How on earth would you keep tabs on something like that?

Back in the old days, you'd have to ask them to take photos of their work and send you emails or sms. Then you'd have to piece them together to get a big picture view of your campaign. But you still wouldn't know exactly when or where the photos were taken. And your team would be out there operating in a vacuum. You can see how this system was very ineffective and inefficient.

Having been a participant (both as a street teamer and manager) in this system my business partner and I created **SimpleCrew** (<http://www.simplecrew.com?mx=16617120129255-00de2ad4811062-24414032-384000-1661712012aa16>). Now your team can quickly snap photos throughout the day as they work. They can even have fun with it by checking up on their peers to see what they are up to. Most importantly, SimpleCrew auto generates a real-time, rollup report that shows you all the photos organized on an interactive timeline and map. This is going to save you a ton of time by increasing accountability, communication and even community building. Check it out if you manage a Street Team.

Similarly, if you're doing online programs, you're going to want to keep tabs on your team's social media activity. This is especially true if you're providing performance based incentives. It could be as crude as requiring your team to post screenshots of their posts in the Facebook or slack group, or they can send them to you directly via sms or email. But, in my humble opinion, you should probably step up your game with the **brand ambassador management platform CrewFire** (<https://www.crewfire.com>). Check it out if you're interested in streamlining accountability and reporting for your team's online activity.

Bonus: How Red Bull manages its brand ambassador program

Congrats you've graduated from the Brand Ambassador guide! To celebrate, I thought it would be fun to pull it all together by examining Red Bull's world class Street Team / Brand Ambassador program.

Back in college, I worked for **Red Bull** (<https://www.redbull.com>) as a student Brand Manager. Now, keep in mind that was between 2008 – 2010. I'm sure it's evolved a bit since then but I can tell you that the core concepts are the same. I'll also tell you it worked.

Back then the Red Bull Wings Team girls were everywhere and Brand Ambassadors were throwing events left and right. As a result, the brand was strong and growing rapidly across the US.

Ok so let's talk about what I learned... and how you can use it to improve your own program.

I'll set the stage with a broad stroke overview as I saw it. I think the Regional Marketing Manager in our area was like Baltimore, DC and Virginia. He would also travel to Philadelphia or Delaware sometimes to support marketing initiatives in those states, but he definitely managed a few markets pretty large markets and was involved in a couple more.

The Field Marketing Manager, as I remember, had a similar territory size. They were both full-time positions.

Then, you had the boots on the ground. At the lowest level you have Brand Managers and the Wings Team.

You have probably seen the Wings Teams before. These girls are highly visible by design. They are out there cruising in a Red Bull Mini Cooper, or at events with the Red Bull coolers or a slick Red Bull backpack. They're always chatty, they're always smiling and they are always passing out free Red Bull products.

On the other hand, you have the Student Brand Managers. Generally our tasks were to create relationships with influencers in the region, and provide support to the Field and Regional Manager on a variety of marketing initiatives.

Each of the four positions I've described were paid (plus unlimited, free Red Bull product). But generally speaking, the Wings Team and the Student Brand Manager positions are part time while the Field and Regional Managers are full time.

Community

In my opinion, Red Bull does a lot of things right in terms of branding and marketing. But one thing they absolutely nail is community. There was such an awesome community around Red Bull. It's a lifestyle brand that people are proud to be a part of. And in many cases we were rewarded with all sorts of awesome perks for being a part of the family. By design, it was a super fun experience – plain and simple.

Take a second here to really think about how you can channel some of this stoke for your own Ambassador program. Think about how you can leverage the sexiness of your brand, free products, and cool events, a vibrant family-like community, etc. All of these things are absolutely at the core of how Red Bull manages its street level marketers with such great results.

Communication

This is another topic we've covered several times throughout the series. Let's look at how Red Bull fostered both community and communication amongst its absolutely massive collegiate network. At that time Red Bull had something called Red Bull U (I think it's still alive at RedBullU.com). It was something like an online community forum or message board. It also had a directory component. Within the forum we were asked to share our successes, best practices etc. Basically what was working for us at the time.

I think at that time, there were about 1,000 student brand managers operating in the United States. This was the portal for the entire program and it was hoppin. We were all in there sharing, talking and learning together. It was an awesome community and a great resource. I learned a ton and actually made a lot of friends through it.

I mentioned earlier – there was a database of other Student Brand Managers inside the private forum. When I would travel to other markets like New York City or Denver, I would look up the local SBM and get them to deliver free product to wherever I was going. I went to a birthday party in New York City on a rooftop one time, and was able to get a few girls in a Mini Cooper to swing by with a ton of free Red Bull.

Or back in 2009 I went and saw the Disco Biscuits at Red Rocks. We were hosting a big after-party, and were doing a party bus at the show and everything. I was able to coordinate with the local SBM out there to stop by with a dozen or so cases of Red Bull.

Think about the power of that network. How great it would be for someone, especially someone early in their career where they don't really have a professional network built out yet, if you could plug them into an existing network that you're already building.

This online forum and directory was really the ultimate cross section of communication and community done right. It's something I got a ton of value out of. And you know what? Red Bull ultimately got a ton value out of it as well.

Takeaway here is that I definitely recommend some sort of database or community. You could do something similar with slack, or better yet, a simple Facebook group as we discussed in Part 4 – [How to manage your Brand Ambassador Program](#).

Seeding the product

One of my main objectives was what's called seeding product. As a Brand Manager it was my job to get as much Red Bull as possible into local bars, venues, events, etc. And

for the most part, I was giving it away so it was always fun walking into the joint like Santa Claus. So seeding the product basically boils down to representing the brand at local events.

Small fires

Another super fun objective we had was “small fires” – which are basically publicity stunts. For example we had pop-up vending machines at our disposal. This was where we had a vending machine that distributed free Red Bull and we could throw it anywhere on campus that we wanted to. In hindsight maybe it wasn’t 100% legal, but we did it and it worked. We could put a vending machine in the middle of fraternity row, or put a vending machine randomly in a less traveled hallway in one of the dorms or something like that. It was super fun.

Another example was a national initiative called the Red Bull Airdrop. We took a huge palette of Red Bull during exam week and put it in the middle of the quad outside the big library overnight. It had this whole army get-up thing where there were parachutes on the other side of it, making it look like it fell from the sky. As you can imagine this created quite a buzz around campus. People were gathered around, taking pictures, drinking red bull, texting friends, etc. Huge win.

Red Bull Move-In was something we did for incoming freshman every year. We basically loaded up a bunch of carts with Red Bull cases and marched them through the dorms to stock the lounge fridges with free Red Bull. We even wrote “Welcome to College” cards for all the students. This worked well and was super fun because there is already a huge buzz around moving into your freshman dorm. Red Bull got to play a small part in that. It created a really unique experience that they’ll probably remember for the rest of their lives.

Red Bull Flowers was something we did for Valentine’s Day. We made these cute flowers out of empty red bull cans and stocked a nice cold one in the middle. We put them up around campus, and then throughout the day we’d go around and re-stock them.

There were a few other things we’d do but you get the idea – create unconventional publicity stunts that get people talking about your brand. Or better yet – you want them to align themselves with your brand.

In the case of Red Bull – their values were a little bit on the edge, and little bit experimental, and anti-authoritarian. As you can imagine this resonated well with the young college crowd, concert goers and extreme sports athletes – and it still does today.

It's ok if that's not what you're about. But you need to figure out what it is you are about – first thing. Then imagine what kind of stunts you can pull that conveys that image to your market.

Events

Red Bull is involved (directly and indirectly) with a ton of events. Just a small example – we supported a local music festival called Knoxfest. We came in and set up a huge Red Bull branded wigwam – imagine a huge teepee, with a lounge area full of beanbags, couches, pillows etc. And of course, we gave away a ton of free Red Bull.

Something interesting to note here is that we'd never sponsor an event with money. We'd always come in and offer our infrastructure, offer our time, and offer our brand, and our products. But we would never support with cash. Keep that in mind if you're thinking about sponsoring events – think outside the box.

Global support

You might be familiar with some of the national, or even international initiative of Red Bull. Things like the Red Bull Air Race or the Red Bull Flutag or Art of Can.

Art of Can was a really cool one where people use Red Bull cans to create awesome works of art. To support this particular event, we put together an exhibition of the art in downtown Washington DC. There was a beautiful exhibition, a big cocktail gala, complete with live music, dancing, the works. Locally, we went around to the architecture program, and the art school, and we held our own Art of Cans competition on campus.

The Red Bull Air Race is a crazy awesome sport entirely dreamed up by Red Bull. It's basically flying airplanes through obstacles. To support this on campus, we created local paper plane airplane competitions. Then, the winners would get free tickets to the Air Race.

On top of that, we plugged into the international paper airplane competition, in which contestants are judged on three things: style, time and distance. So the winners of our local event, went on to the regional competition, and the winners of that went to the national competition, and the winners of that were flown to Europe.

Ok let's wrap this up. Hopefully I've successfully driven home the importance of communication and community amongst your team. These two go hand in hand and it's really the collective cornerstone to any successful Brand Ambassador program. The other things we can glean from Red Bull's street level operations are organization, product giveaways, event sponsorship and publicity stunts. And possibly the

most important take home – aligning your product, brand, team and customers around a “lifestyle”. This is really the glue that holds it all together.

I get asked about Red Bull a lot when people hear that I worked there. It really highlights some of the points we covered earlier in the Brand Ambassador series so I thought it would be valuable to share with you. Hope you enjoyed it!

If you have any questions or comments, don't hesitate to give me a shout at Support@CrewFire.com (mailto:Support@CrewFire.com). I'm happy to answer any questions, I read every email you guys send me.