

NAADD CORNER



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It is important to understand the power and meaning of branding. I was always taught that a brand is the overall impression that a company/team leaves upon its affected customers/fans. Branding also means managing the perception that others hold of your organization and, oftentimes, yourself. Pretty powerful stuff! As development officers and fundraisers, we are constantly trying to showcase the very best of our student-athletes, coaches, sports programs and staff members to our donors and constituents. We understand that gifts are driven by aligning passions and by doing a great job of storytelling – demonstrating the causal effect of a donation. Or, as we like to say, “putting skin on a gift.”

However, this inspirational communication is difficult to achieve without an effective brand. A simple example of this would be delivering a birthday

gift in Christmas wrapping. Unless that individual's birthday is on or around Christmas, it doesn't make sense. It could be the greatest, most thoughtful gift ever, but the initial impression is, “Is this person nuts?” Or, “Are they too cheap to do it the right way?” Or, even worse, “Do they not even care?” The same holds true for our respective development shops. How is your message being packaged and delivered, as well as what is the external perception of your unit? People will donate more to an entity that is organized, genuine, has a professional appearance and approach, engages at a high level and has a compelling case for philanthropy. And, all of these aspects are rooted in branding.

Our fundraising unit for UTEP Athletics, the Miner Athletic Club, recently went through a complete rebrand in order for us to better resonate with our fan base, the public and, in the end, increase donations and the number of donors. We stuck with the Miner Athletic Club name because it has brand awareness but it also ties in our mascot name, which evokes passion and spirit. I've also always been a big believer in including “club” as part of the development unit's name. As humans, there's an innate desire to belong and to be part of something. We changed our logo to match our university's mascot mark (which played on the spirit aspect

again), but we also wanted to feel less corporate/cold. We revised our mission statement and tagline to better reflect the new core values and mission statement of UTEP Athletics as a whole, as well as to create a pseudo elevator speech. We want people to read these and clearly understand our objectives, but at the same time become inspired and, hopefully, join our cause.

Additionally, we launched a new website, MinerAthleticClub.com, to tie all of our brand elements together and, ultimately, do a better job of sharing our story. We also analyzed our social media efforts and what we were trying to accomplish in that space. It wasn't good enough to just have a presence, we needed our social media channels to aid in our objectives. Fundamentally, it was important that every part of our brand complimented each other and helped advance our unit. In addition to revising the look and feel of the Miner Athletic Club, we also updated our annual fund contribution levels and benefits, donor giving options and opportunities, and tried to make the process of becoming a Miner Athletic Club member as turnkey and simple as possible.

NAATSO CORNER



Nicole Sullivan

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It's hard to believe it's already been a couple of months since the NAATSO Convention and we are now looking at our fall sports head-on. I wanted to share just a few tips for Convention follow-up/decompression and some insight on mobile purchasing and ticket options.

NAATSO Convention Follow-up

First, if you haven't already, be sure to send a quick note (or an email if you so choose) to 2-3 individuals that you had a chance to meet. Be sure to mention something you spoke about; it lets the other person know that you were really engaged in the conversation and not just sending a generic note.

Next, make sure you are seeing how you can implement the various best practices and concepts that you learned while in Orlando on your own campus. I love going to the Convention as it

allows me to meet others in the industry and provides a time for natural networking. However, what I love most is hearing the different strategies and ideas that other institutions are working on and how it has (or hasn't) been successful for them.

If you are on that leadership track, going back to your immediate supervisor and/or senior-level administrator(s) and presenting to them the ideas you learned and how they could be successful for your department is a great way to show initiative and that you're focused on the success of the overall athletics department.

Lastly, I'd encourage you to share what you learned with your teammates who may not have been able to attend. The various PowerPoint presentations can be found on the NAATSO discussion board in the Member Community!

Flexible (Mobile-Friendly) Ticket Options

It's always a good feeling when you learn that what you have implemented aligns with the current trends in ticketing, right? In our office, we have been making it a focus over this last year to really build on the experience and flexibility for our fans.

Paciolan's CTO, Keith White, had an informative presentation entitled 'The Future of Technology' at the Convention. He mentioned that 64 percent of purchases are made via mobile devices and mobile purchasing is charting upwards: currently at \$14 billion but expected to reach \$23 billion by 2023.

One of the best things that we can do as ticketing professionals is to make it easier for our fans to get tickets in hand for the games that they want. In 2018, we introduced a mobile-only pass package here at FSU for our recent graduates. We have found that they love being able to redeem the handful of games they can make while also being able to link their seats with their friends to make for a fun experience. Additionally, being able to just show their phone at the gate to be scanned instead of a physical ticket is one less item they have to keep track of on game day.

We should all be excited for the future of ticketing, especially as technology continues to advance and more flexible options are being created.