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TECHNOLOGY SHOWCASES
A PRACTICAL GUIDE

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WHAT IS A TECH SHOWCASE?

Event to bring visibility to technologies, startups, inventors, and founders that **leverages university research**

Highlight the opportunities and pipeline emerging from research universities



Photo Credit: Polsky Center archives. Photos taken by John Zich.



SHOWCASES WE HAVE HOSTED INDIVIDUALLY AND TOGETHER



- Biennial event focused on several tech areas
- **Goal:** To increase interest in the University pipeline and draw attendees to Champaign



- Annual event aimed to leverage attendance at large healthcare conference in January in SF
- **Goal:** To increase University profile in healthcare



- New multi-institution event hosted by major research universities in Illinois
- **Goal:** To highlight the opportunities emerging from the state



POINTS OF DISCUSSION

General Considerations | Should My Institution Host a Showcase?

Event Format | What Best Serves My Purpose?

Audience | In-reach and Out-reach

Presenters | Setting Up for Success

Logistics | Details, Details, Details...

Results/Impacts/Outcomes



SHOULD MY INSTITUTION HOST A TECH SHOWCASE?

Benefits

- Highlights Institution - **“go-to” place for innovation**
- Becomes a **“landing-point” for external partners**
- Offers exposure/networking for the participants
- Creates relationships that lead to investments or sponsored research
- Generates good **internal PR** for your TTO



SHOULD MY INSTITUTION HOST A TECH SHOWCASE?

Challenges

- Time commitment
 - for organizers
 - for presenters
- Budget constraints
- Navigating institution politics



SHOULD MY INSTITUTION HOST A TECH SHOWCASE?

General Considerations

- Will you have institutional support
- Evaluate research & start-up pipeline
- Differentiate from other campus & regional events like
 - Business Plan/Pitch competitions
 - Research Symposia



DETERMINING YOUR SHOWCASE FORMAT

- **HOSTING:** Joint vs Solo
- **LOCATION:** Home vs Away
- **EVENT TIMING:** Stand alone vs partner with another event
- **FREQUENCY**
- **THEME:** wide-range or a focused?



DETERMINING YOUR SHOWCASE FORMAT

- **ADD-ONS:**
 - Partnering meetings
 - Poster sessions
 - Start-up pitches
- **SPEAKERS:** Faculty/Startups/Blend?
- **EXTERNAL SPEAKERS:**
 - Keynotes
 - Panels



THE RIGHT FORMAT MAY CHANGE WITH TIME & CIRCUMSTANCES



ATTRACTING AN AUDIENCE



- Determine your target audience
- Use strategies to gather invitees by leveraging:
 - Colleagues & their outreach channels
 - Alumni groups
 - LinkedIn
 - Material from tradeshows & events
 - Speaker lists of VC events
 - Own speaker guest list
- Invitation only vs broad advertising

USE THE EVENT AS A REASON TO REACH OUT



MANAGING YOUR OUTREACH

- **Personal outreach** is critical
 - Consider personalized schedules for VIP's
- Use the event as a **reason to reach out**
- "Mass mail" is fine as support
- Plan your messaging
- Scheduled mailers
- Have an opt-out option / don't spam

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO **uic** ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY **I ILLINOIS** Northwestern University



WORKING WITH PRESENTERS

- Considerations when selecting speakers
 - Availability/enthusiasm
 - Translational bent
 - Balancing the list
 - Amplifying your institution's priorities
- Have a backup plan – not uncommon for speakers to drop out



WORKING WITH PRESENTERS

COMMUNICATION DURING THE PLANNING PHASE

- Balance frequency of communication and amount of information communicated
- Determine point person for communication
- Send a calendar request with critical information
- Be clear about AV
- Manage presenters slide decks:
 - Request them in advance



SAMPLE

EMAIL DESCRIBING PRESENTATION GUIDELINES TO FACULTY

Please prepare a 15-17-minute presentation on work from your research group and start-up, if applicable, that you would like to highlight. We are asking each presenter to reserve 3 minutes at the end of the presentation for audience questions. Your presentation should address the following points:

- The big problem your work addresses
- Your research
- Your vision for the potential impact/applications of your work

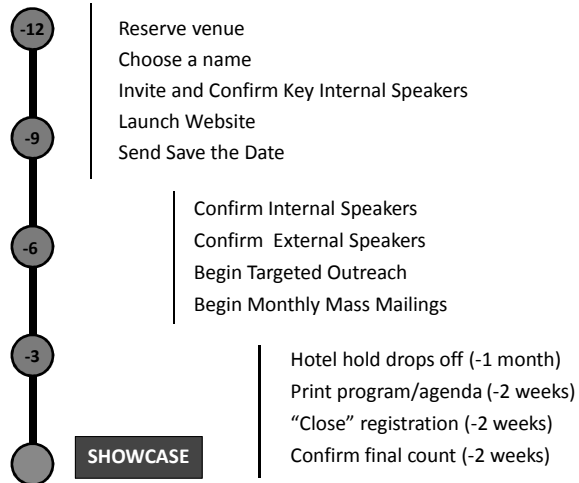
Although most members of the audience will have technical backgrounds, it is unlikely that they are experts in the field you're discussing. Thus, it is best to structure an overview presentation that conveys the "big picture" impact of your work. Please feel free to use your own slide template.

Please note, it is difficult to switch laptops at the Big10 Center, so we are asking that everyone bring their slides on a flash drive or send them to us in advance so that we can pre-load them. Presentations will be run from a PC.



PLANNING OUT YOUR EVENT

MONTHS



LOGISTICS

AGENDA & TIMING

Considerations when determining the event schedule

- Length of each presentation slot
- Role of moderator
- Include breaks for networking
- Don't overschedule lunch
- Consider attendees likely travel time when determining start & end times
- If you have simultaneous tracks, be conscious of who is speaking at the same time
- Keeping the event on schedule



LOGISTICS

VENUE & CATERING

Details will make or break your event

- Considerations when choosing a venue
- Tips for working with a caterer
- Reserving a room block
- Do you need a photographer
- Livestream?
- Get everything in writing aka mistakes we made (so you won't have to!)



LOGISTICS

OTHER

Don't forget

- Badges
- Signs
- Collateral



RESULTS / IMPACT / OUTCOMES

- Partnering/networking-- lead into startup formation
- Possibilities for Sponsored research
- Faculty collaboration
- Expanding network – for future communication and go-to for advise
- Expand TTO footprint on campus
- Create goodwill with faculty and department for TTO



THANK YOU!

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