

# How to Position and Market Your Local RU Chapter

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BY: BENJAMIN SMITH | IFBDESIGN

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## THE PROCESS

The objective of this white paper is two-fold. First, to explain how to position your local chapter in your local community through brand awareness. And secondly a strategy for marketing your local branch within the community.

## POSITIONING

Your brand position follows the mission and core values of RU Recovery Ministries. You must communicate the added benefit that you bring to the community clearly and concisely. RU Recovery is a faith-based recovery program bringing transformation to the people of INSERT CITY NAME.

Before you can reach out to your community, you need to onboard the people within your local chapter, starting with the staff and the students to mobilize the new heartbeat of your group. You need them to be on board and active in spreading your message, in the same way, you as leaders, would.

Your chapter staff should be equipped to become ambassadors in the community around them. Everything you do to reach your community should maintain that same voice and culture; that is the RU Mission and Values.

Part of positioning is making sure that you are using the RU brand package consistently in everything you do.

## SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

### UNDERSTANDING THE PURPOSE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

One of the mistakes that are often made in social media by churches, ministries, and organizations alike is turning your social media platform into an announcement board. The key to understanding social media is in the name itself "social." If your ministry, church, or business isn't social on social media, then you probably are not going to see much success in this area. It's about getting people aware of your brand and engaged in your content.

### LIKES VS. ENGAGEMENT

Likes are lovely, and they are essential, but a page could have 10,000 likes and no engagement into their content. When you first start your Facebook page, we suggest encouraging people internally to like and follow your Facebook Page through bulletins, announcement slides, and videos. Request that your members not only follow your page but select the See First Option to guarantee your content shows up in their news feed.

Engagement is more than likes; it is comments and shares. Build the conversation around your post. People talking about your content promotes it to the top of the News Feed. Facebook rewards engagement.

Sharing helps expand your content's reach to even more people.

## ALWAYS POST TO START CONVERSATIONS

You need to start a conversation with every post. The goal is to get interaction. Ask a question. Doesn't always have to be spiritual. The keyword here is "social."

*For example:*

"What did you get out of this week's lesson?"

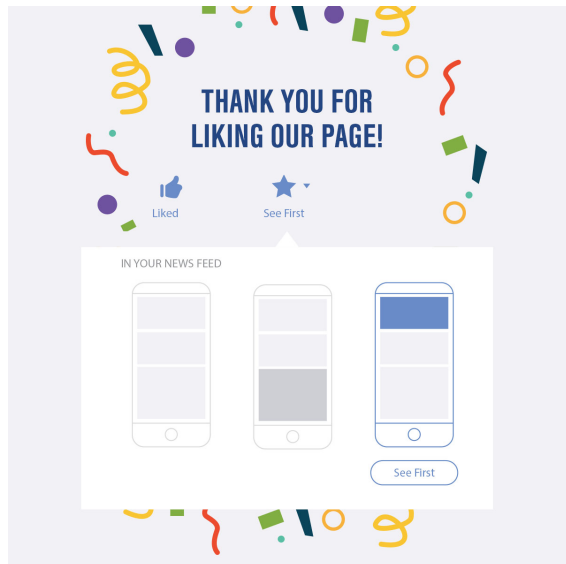
"Did you read anything interesting in the Bible this week? Post in the comments below."

"Edwards Apple Orchard just opened up! It's a Rockford Tradition for the Fall. Is anyone here going this year? Let us know!"

Take 180 Seconds today to Pray for the 180 People who die every day from an Overdose!

Another post type that people love is Before and After photos along with an amazing testimony. Shoot a video of their testimony as well.

## GETTING FOLLOWERS



### SEE FIRST CAMPAIGN

When people like a post, you have an opportunity to invite them to like your page. You need to follow up with an encouragement for fans to follow the page and see your content at the top of their news feed.

Most people do not see your content on your Facebook Page. They see it in their news feed. Facebook's algorithm organizes the news feed based on the user's preference of what pages they have set to follow and see first. Facebook puts friends and groups at the top and business pages at the bottom of a news feed unless the user requests explicitly always to view your content at the top. So you must run a "See First" campaign where you encourage your followers to set their preferences for your page to "See First."

## BUILD A COMMUNITY WITH GROUPS

Groups are a great way to engage your followers and to gain new followers. You can create groups and link them to your official page. You can base these groups on students, or workers, etc. But also consider creating a non-RU related group name oriented towards your community. Like "Faith-Based Recovery Support Group CITY NAME."

You may need to enlist the help of a Facebook savvy volunteer to moderate and keep up with new members. You could make up a cool title for them like "Facebook Outreach Representative"). Instruct them to post at least once a week in those groups with a

conversation-starting post. Provide some graphics for them to help get things started. Use these groups to have conversations that could lead to recruiting news students for your Friday Night class.

## **INSTAGRAM**

If you have a shutterbug in your chapter, consider starting an Instagram account. The key to Instagram is hashtags. That is how you get discovered and followed. Never use more than four hashtags per post. Use addiction oriented hashtags, but also local community-oriented ones like #TransformationYOURCITY.

A word of caution. Do be careful about posting photos of students in your program. Make sure they are ok with having their picture online at an addiction program. You might consider having a media release for them to sign.

## **FACEBOOK ADS**

For a minimal cost, you can push out ads targeted to your city. Push special guest-friendly events and fresh content that you create to give away to the community. I would recommend a starting budget of at least \$50.00/month for advertising.

# **COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

There are several ways you can connect with your local community. Remember that you are a partner with the surrounding community.

## **PARTNER WITH CHURCHES IN THE AREA**

Meet with pastors in your area and let them know you have an addiction program. You are not trying to steal their sheep, but rather help that pastor by helping someone in their church become free from addiction.

## **CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS & LEADERS**

Join your local chamber of commerce. Attend business luncheons. Introduce yourself to business leaders and introduce them to the RU Plus program for Employees. Many businesses may even donate to your chapter or help give students in your chapter jobs.

Connect with doctors and mental health experts in your community as well. See if they are open to a whole man approach in helping the spiritual side of addiction as well as the physical and mental. You never know unless you ask.

Connect with your local law enforcement, firefighters, and EMT's. Hold a First Responders appreciation event.

Have a booth at the county fair. Join the parade with a float supporting addiction recovery.

## **CONNECTING WITH THE MEDIA**

The media is always looking for a good human interest story, especially with the opioid crisis. And there are many routes to getting into the press.

Get a list of media contacts and introduce yourself and what your program is doing for the community. This single contact may be just enough to get a story in the media.

Create a Press Kit for your local chapter that gives the media anything and everything they might need to do a story. This kit includes a logo, colors, background information, statistics, etc.

Create a PSA. Public service announcements (PSAs) are non-paid informational listings for community calendars or commercials and distributed to local radio or television outlets. PSAs are useful for events like an Open House or National Recovery Month.

Send out a Press Release. Press releases, or news releases, are 1-2 page announcements sent to the media so they will cover a story or event. A statement is similar to a short news story, which sometimes repurposed as a stand-alone article in a newspaper. Press releases should be approximately 500 words and formatted in short paragraphs. They should contain the most critical information at the top, followed by supporting details and include a quote from a key figure.

Write an Op-Ed. An op-ed, short for "opposite the editorial pages" of a newspaper, is a way to express opinions and perspectives on a particular subject or initiative. Writing can promote understanding of addiction in your community, town, city, territory, or state and the role of your local RU Chapter.

Letters to the editor are brief letters (no more than 150 to 175 words) written to express an individual's or organization's point of view. A Letter to the Editor should be written as a response to another news story (within a couple of days of the story's appearance) and should highlight your local RU Recovery Program.

## **HOLD AN EVENT**

### **1. Hold an Open House**

Pick a Friday to hold an open house for your RU Recovery Program. This event is an opportunity for friends and family members that have addicted loved ones to come out learn about how the RU Program can help. On this day, during the 2nd talk, have a select group set aside for those who are visiting your program to introduce the RU Program and to take questions and answers.

### **2. Town Hall**

Hold your own Town Hall and invite speakers from the community that supports Faith-Based Recovery. Join or attend community events that center around drug prevention and help. If there is a Town Hall event on the Opioid Epidemic, contact the organizers to see if you can't get a moment to represent the Faith-Based Recovery community.

### **3. Free Community Car Wash**

Wash cars for free on a designated day in the community to raise awareness for faith-based recovery and your local chapter.

### **4. Proclamation Signing**

A proclamation is an official announcement by a public official, usually a political figure. The signing gathers people together to generate enthusiasm and awareness for a common cause.

By declaring September Recovery Month, public officials can alert members of the community that prevention, treatment, and recovery support services are available.

#### 5. Walk, Run, or Rally

A walk, run, or rally can draw large crowds of all ages and backgrounds, fostering a celebratory community atmosphere. Campaign for sponsorships from local businesses and organizations dedicated to addiction recovery in the local community. Walks or runs often consist of pre-determined lengths and routes with social opportunities intermingled.

#### 6. Cookout, Dinner, or Picnic

Barbecues, dinners, or picnics are easy ways to unite friends, families, and neighbors in a positive environment. These events can be tailored to encourage treatment, celebrate recovery, or support a person's reintegration into society.

#### 7. First Responders Appreciation

First responders in your community often only see the worst part of addiction. Show them there is hope by holding an event where they can connect with your students and hear stories of victory. Have an award for every first responder that shows your appreciation for their service.

When planning these events, consider engaging civic leaders and elected officials to participate.

## **CONNECTING WITH POLITICAL LEADERS OF YOUR COMMUNITY**

Speaking Publicly Before the City Council. Most city council meetings offer time for anyone from the public to speak and present. You should consider going once a month to submit a progress report on your local chapter's impact. Bring along a student to testify of their victory.

Meet with the Mayor. Find out if it is possible to meet with the Mayor regularly. See if you can get a Mayoral Proclamation on Faith-Based addiction recovery in your community.

One elected official in your community that knows the devastation of addiction all too well is the County Coroner. This relationship would be a valuable ally in faith-based recovery. Invite him or her to a Friday Night. Take an interest in his position and the useful statistics their office provides overdoses.

## **CONCLUSION**

All of these working together could make a significant splash in your community. But follow-through is important. Don't let any of this hard work go to waste by not following through with your newfound contacts regularly. Don't do this once. Do it all the time.