



WGI's Guide to a Profitable Regional

WGI has put together some valuable information as to how to make and save money at your regional event! Several of the Event Partners have shared information as to how they have done this and our marketing department has shared information on advertising your event. We have also included a few forms that you may use to help make your job a little easier.

Profitable Items

Each WGI regional event should be looked upon by your organization as a fundraiser! Each one of these profitable items should have a dedicated team of volunteers (2-4 people) to ensure maximum profitability. Some of these items take time and legwork but will be profitable. There are several givens as to where you can be profitable at your regional event:

- Ticket Sales
- Concessions/Bake Sale
- Program
- Expo - group/vendor tables
- Practice facilities
- 50/50 raffle (if allowed)

Ticket Sales

The average ticket prices for a WGI event based on 2015 regionals are as follows:

	Color Guard	Percussion/Winds
Prelims:	\$14	\$13
Finals:	\$16.50	\$16.50
Combo:	\$25	\$23
Backside:	\$5	\$5

Remember that ticket sales are the biggest revenue producers. Guard your gate! WGI has staff at every entrance during World Championships to ensure no one is entering the building that hasn't paid.

Here are some things to consider:

- Utilize wristbands instead of hand-stamps for crowd control at your events.
 - Have the ticket sales staff put the wristbands on the spectators (*this will help keep people from trying to sneak into your event or use the wristband for two different people*)
 - Place 2 or more volunteers at your entrance/exit to the performance gym to check wristbands. Wristbands are easier for your entrance/exit staff to see. Time between participating groups is limited; with a wristband you will be able to get people in and out more efficiently.
- Try to get wristbands donated through either a local promotional company or party store they could give you generic wristbands with their company logo on them. In exchange for the donation, give them an ad in your regional program or free tickets to the event. Remember it never hurts to ask for the donation.

- If you cannot get them donated, you can find boxes of wristbands online anywhere from \$5-\$15 per box. You will want to have 5 different colors of available: 3 for spectators (Prelims/Finals/Combo) and 2 for groups (Prelims/Finals) non finalist wristbands can be the same color as the finalist wristbands.
- Arrange to have a set number of spectator wristbands available for sale at group check-in. This will allow directors/instructors the opportunity to pay for any additional parents, prop crew, or students as the group checks in.

Remember, WGI will provide each Event Partner with detailed information regarding the authorized number of staff passes each group is to receive in addition to performing members. Two of the staff passes must allow access to the audience side of the competition area. This authorized number includes the director, staff, crew, bus drivers, truck drivers, and anyone else travelling with the group.

Credit Card Sales

WGI does not require event partners to take credit cards at the gate; however credit card sales have become much more prevalent. With the use of smart phones, Tate HS was able to accept credit cards via PayPal Here. With their already established PayPal Account, they were sent a credit card swiper to plug into a smart phone. Tate HS charged an additional \$2 per swipe for all credit card transactions. This was both convenient for spectators as it was equivalent to a bank fee and covered the additional PayPal Here fees charged for all transactions. From an accounting standpoint, Pay Pal Here offers an option to email each transaction to the primary account which made reconciliation a simple process. Tate HS also used PayPal Here as an ATM for spectators, charging the \$2 per swipe for those transactions as well.

There are many smart phone/tablet apps with plug-in credit card swipers available on the market. One may already be included in your booster accounting program or available from your school. Credit card swipers can also be purchased online or from some office supply stores.

Concessions

Many Event Partners have said donations of their concession food and drinks are one way they save a lot.

Possibilities for Concession Donations:

- Ask your boosters if they have contacts with a local bottling company, food distributor or local grocery store. These people have the knowledge as to how you can get donations from large companies for your event.
- In the event that no one has a connection to one of those companies, contact those companies armed with information about who you are and what you do and ask for the donations.

- Ask your boosters for donations.
 - At one regional event, they have all the student's bring in a 12 pack of soda/water based on their last name. Like A-F bring in a diet something, F-M bring in a non-caffeinated something, and M-Z bring in the rest. They then use this throughout their fall and winter events.
 - Bake Sales also help concession sales. Cookies, brownies and cupcakes are very popular if a few members of the group bring in a dozen cookies it can create an all profit scenario.
- Check with local bakers and donut shops who may need to toss their overstock by the end of the day. Panera Bread is one company that may donate day old bread that they can no longer sell; check with your local Panera to see how they handle this.
- Keep in mind that your school may have the ability to purchase items in bulk from their distributors or may be able to put you in touch with their distributors who are willing to work with you.

Always be willing to exchange a donation for either an ad in the program and/or free tickets to the event.

Program

The program can be a great source of revenue for your event! Many Event Partners sell ads for their regional program. Make it a contest for the students in your organization! This will help drive them to go out there and get the greatest amount of ads.

One previous Event Partner packaged their program ads with their fall band show, winter guard show, and their spring benefit. For 1 price the company received 3 ads in 3 different programs for 3 different events. If your organization hosts a WGI Regional, a local circuit show, color guard or percussion event, fall marching band event, winter concerts or spring concerts, all of these could be packaged together for optimum revenue!

When preparing a letter to send out with your students in an attempt to garner ads for your program be sure to include the following:

- Event Name(s), date(s), time(s) and place(s)
- Cost of ad (business card sized, quarter page, half page, full page, third page)
- Approximately how many programs will be printed
- Who attends your event and where they are from
- If you are able to do something for them in return (i.e. free tickets to the event)
- Where to send the ad (email address)
- What format the ad needs to be in (i.e. jpg, gif, tif)
- Deadline date for the ad
- Who to make the checks payable to or if you accept credit cards
- Your school's tax ID number so they may write off the expense

The program can also be a good source of information for your spectators. WGI has information regarding who is attending your event, their director's names and show titles on file for each event that we would be happy to provide you. You can also print the schedule, spots to include scores and who progresses to finals, how the judging process works and information about WGI. Most of this is available on our website and we just ask that you note from where the info was obtained.

Several of our Event Partners have created forms to send to the performing groups to provide information for their program. You are going to sell more programs if mom and dad know the name of their child is in the program.

Other Event Partners have sent forms to the directors of the groups asking for the directors to let all their parents know that a "Good Luck" Ad could be purchased for their program. Since WGI does not allow Air Grams or any other announcements not included in our Announcer Handbook, this is the perfect way to reach out to everyone attending your event from out of town.

WGI has prepared a generic form for you to use in order to take ad reservations. Please feel free to use this and edit it to fit your program. *The word document of the form is available on the Event Partner's only website.*

Printing your program

- Check with your school resources regarding printing your program. The newspaper or yearbook staff may have the ability to print the program for free or for a very nominal charge.
- Check with your students as they may know someone who works for a local printer and may be able to donate the use of the machinery.
- If neither of these is an option, check out the local printers in your area. Get quotes and remember that you can always ask for a discount or donation in exchange for an ad in your program(s).

Expo – Vendor/Group tables

Each regional event usually has an expo with vendor tables and group tables either in their concession area or near the performance gym. WGI sets the maximum price you may charge vendors and participating groups for space; however it is up to the Event Partner and space available as to how many vendors they may have. WGI has prepared a form for you to use in order to accept vendor registrations. *The word document of the form is available on the Event Partner's only website. Please be sure to fill in all the correct info in the (parenthesis) before utilizing the form. The word document of the form is available on the Event Partner's website.*

If you are allowed to let in other food vendors (outside of your concessions), be sure ask for a percentage of their sales via the contract with the vendor. This is common practice in arena style venues.

Be sure to think outside of the box when soliciting for vendors. One Event Partner sold space to a massage therapist, auto detailer and popcorn vendor. The businesses that may be outside of the box may not take up as much space in your expo area.

Be sure to keep in communication with your vendors leading up to your event. They will need the following information from you:

- When, where and what time to set up/tear down
- Event times/when spectator entrance opens/closes
- Where to park
- Total amount of credentials/wristbands/parking passes (if necessary)

Practice Facilities

With the growing activity and the further restriction of school usage, it can be a challenge to find practice facilities to suit the group's needs. Some school districts still allow you to utilize their facilities for a nominal fee, usually the cost of custodial/security for the time. Check with your district when you are checking on availability for the regional event. Secure these facilities as soon as you possible.

Assign 1-2 volunteers to take the requests and process payments. WGI creates the practice form with your information and price then it is posted on your WGI Event Page.

The average rate for practice is \$65 per hour for rehearsal.

Other Rental Possibilities:

- Church facilities
- YMCAs
- Boys & Girls Clubs
- National Guard Armories
- Community Rec Centers

Cost of these other rental possibilities vary. If you have access to a top notch facility, world class groups will pay top dollar for usage of this kind of facility (ie small arenas, other high school facilities). Discuss these types of offers via the phone or if possible in person and make them aware of the additional cost.

If you have the available volunteers, try to station 1-2 volunteers at each practice facility. These volunteers will help guide the group where to go and ensure the group is following the rules and regulations of the facility.

50/50 Raffle

Several Event Partners have a 50/50 raffle at their event. This is a really easy one to do because the only thing you need is to invest in tickets which can be picked up at any party store or large box store. With a 50/50 raffle, you get 50% of the profit and the other 50% goes to the winner.

You could also try to get items donated and raffle those off. This takes a bit more effort prior to the event but could still be very profitable depending upon the items you are able to get donated.

Other Ideas

Flowers

Candy Grams – the Norwin HS Boosters provided this great idea!

- Make an assortment of candy bars, lollipops, etc. available
- Charge per bar or pack
- Provide brown bags and pens for patrons to identify the name of the performer and the group and to write a message
- We acquire the number of boxes of the performing groups (prelims and finals) from our school cafeteria and place the bags into each group's box
- Just prior to their performance, we will have a student volunteer go to the performance gym and present the director or staff member with that particular box after they perform

At percussion/winds events – Earplugs

Saving Ideas

Each Event Partner has set expenses to be expected when running a regional. Some of these expenses cannot be altered: WGI Admin Fee, Judge fees, Tabulator fees. But there are some expenses which can be curtailed in ways you may have never thought about.

Judge/Staff Meals

Most organizations ask their booster parents to make the meals for the judges. This saves the organization from purchasing additional food for them.

Judge/Staff Hotel

Below are some helpful hints to get your judge/staff rooms donated or discounted. Be sure to ask if any of your boosters know anyone who works in a hotel as they may be able to help you as well.

Research your area

Find a new hotel in the area that is looking to do business and get their name out there. These managers may strike you a deal by using their hotel as the "Official" hotel for the event. Let them know that via WGI you can send out flyers about their hotel prior to the regional. Give them a full page ad in your program and let them know how many groups are participating in your event. New hotels want to get their info out to as many local people as possible.

Get competing bids

Go to several hotels in the area with what you need and what you are willing to do for them as the "Official" hotel for the event. You will be surprised how many hotels will want you to choose them as the official hotel for your event. WGI receives several phone calls from many hotels wanting to get on individual hotel lists on the WGI website. These hotels want your business!

Combine Events

Package your events together (WGI Regional, a local circuit show, color guard or percussion event, fall marching band event, winter concerts or spring concerts) and find an Official Hotel for all of them. (If necessary, see if your choral department, dance department, athletics department has any need for hotel accommodations and combine them all.)

Be sure to go to a hotel manager prepared with information regarding who attends your event, where they are from, your regular attendance and program sales.

WGI goes to hotels to get exclusive contracts for our hosted events. By stating that we will only advertise their hotel and put only their hotel on the website we have been able to get up to 50% discounts on going rates for rooms. Sometimes being the headquarters or official hotel isn't enough to get a good deal.

If you are unable to get a sponsoring hotel, then go with a hotel list where you request a \$5 per room night rebate to your organization for adding these hotels to your list. It may help bring in a little extra.

You can also work with your local convention and visitor's bureau to help you with this one as they may have a better idea how you can market your event to the local hotels.

Publicity/Advertising

Assign a small team of volunteers to do the publicity for your event. Advertising will get the word out about your event and drive your ticket sales. Utilizing your local media is one of the greatest ways to get publicity. The Phoenix Event Partners were able to get newspapers to attend their event and even had a blip on the news regarding what they were doing. This helped build community awareness of the event and will help draw people into the activity.

First, make a list of local media outlets in your area along with who to contact regarding getting your event publicized. The local convention and visitor's bureau can often provide this information. (Media outlets include: newspapers, TV, radio, community calendars which may be found online.) Ask for the person in charge of events and advertising events. From there, find out what they need from you, how far in advance they need it from you and any other info to get your info out there.

Writing a Press Release

WGI provides a generic press release that can be customized to fit your event on the Event Partner Website, if you are interested in writing your own, here are a few points to keep in mind.

- Your press release should be used to distribute information. It is not a sales letter. Be accurate and brief. Don't waste words and avoid flowery adjectives. Tell your story in the most direct way possible.

- Get to the point in the very first paragraph. Be complete. Every press release must include answers to these six questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How Much? Select the most important of these and use it in your lead. Include the remaining points in order of their importance. Be sure to think ahead and rank the six questions in order of importance.
- Include as many names and local organizations as possible
- Be sure to use your organization's letterhead for your press releases so your organization can be easily identified. Always put the name, phone number, and email address of a contact person on the upper right corner of the press release. This will give the reporter someone to contact if there are any questions.
- Be sure to type your press release and use only one side of the paper, double space it and do your best to keep it to one page. If you must use two, be sure to put the word –MORE- at the bottom, center of the page. To conclude your press release, place a few number signs (###) in the center of the page after your last paragraph.
- Let the media know when you want your information released by putting either "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE," or if publication of the story must be delayed indicate in the upper left hand corner of the release the day you want it to run.
- Give the story to all media outlets on the same day.

Contacting the Media

- It never hurts to send out your press release. You never know what form of media may pick up on it. Every little bit of acknowledgement will help your event be a success.
- Send your press releases to the editor in charge of each section of the newspaper, especially the community calendar.
- Sometimes they may ask to set up a time for a photographer to come take pictures of a rehearsal to use with the story. If pictures are requested, WGI may be able to provide a limited amount of professional photos for your press release if given enough notice in advance.
- For the different editors and columnists you wish to contact, write a short individual email to each of these editors stressing which part of your event pertains to them, and attach the full press release to the email.
- Remember that weekly newspapers have deadlines far in advance of deadlines for a daily paper. Ask about deadlines when originally contacting your media outlets and make a schedule of where and when you need to send out your press release. Most likely this will be two weeks before the desired publication date.
- Be sure to write thank you letters to anyone who has published information on your event.

- Be sure to double check your facts! Never publish anything that isn't 100% accurate.
- A week before your event, keep in contact with the reporters and editors. Give them a call stating, again, when and where the event will take place. Putting together a list of possible story ideas. (ie: How many groups are competing, How far groups travel from, etc) is also good to attract TV and radio.

Radio and TV

Approach the station that makes sense for your event. Know which department to contact and what to provide them. Most areas still have a station that is mostly devoted to the immediate community. Many radio stations are run by a major conglomerate that is not local to your area any longer. Be sure to double check that the station you are considering is still local.

- Remember both radio and TV promotion/public service departments receive anywhere from 50-100 requests a day for support of events.
- With radio stations, you may want to donate a few free tickets they can use as giveaways. That will help get your event out there!
- For the news department, when you want on site coverage for the local news, one day before the event it is perfectly acceptable for information to be dropped off. DO NOT MAIL as chances are it will never make the news desk.
- When you are spreading the same word to other stations, let them know there is no "exclusive." If you are working exclusively with one station, let them know that as well.
- Don't expect automatic promotion or coverage, there is too much competition. It is up to you to make the initial contact and continue to follow through with them right up until the event.
- Many areas have a community driven station that posts the community calendar and shows some of the local high school activities. Check with these stations as well.

For any additional information on working with the media, please contact the marketing department at WGI.