



## Crowd Control

It is really important to have a crowd control strategy, particularly for movies where passes disappear within hours and you know are going to draw a huge audience and involve people who are more frustrated than usual about being turned away.

Here are some of the things that different schools in our network do to make sure that the event is a positive experience for both those who show up the night of the show and those who are helping to coordinate it...

- **Manage people's expectations right off the bat.** Have whoever is distributing the passes remind people that passes do not guarantee seating and it is recommended that they arrive early. They may want to be more specific and let the person picking up the pass know when people typically line up at your campus.
- **Be aware of how fast your passes get distributed.** This will give you some indication of the staffing you will need the night of the show and if you will need to take any additional measures for a particular show such as taping off where you want the line to go, extra signage, extra volunteers to manage the crowd, etc.
- **Connect with your Manager.** If you have concerns about night of show logistics as early as possible so that we can work together to come up with a solution that works for you =)
- **Plan on setting up earlier than usual the night of the show.** If your passes went quickly, people are likely to start lining up earlier than usual to be sure that they get in. These are your die-hard movie watchers and would be great recruits for your Film Committee, you may want to take the opportunity to see if they want to get involved.
- **Once the line starts forming, do periodic counts to see how many people are there.** A couple of things make this easier to accomplish:
  - Buying a hand counter (one of those little metal things that you push as you count).
  - Going through the line and numbering passes and only accepting them at the door in numbered order (the biggest complaint with this method is that often people want to save spaces for their friends, you can tell them they can do so if they have a pass for them and then number it sequentially and leave it with them, that way you will know exactly how many people will be able to get in).
  - Have students exchange their ticket for a numbered boarding pass (like Southwest Airlines does) or a numbered ticket

- Tape lines along the sidewalk where you want people to line up is also a good idea and can help with the line bunching up and people saving spaces for friends.
- **When You are Full, Send Them Home.** Upon determining that you have more people than seats available, have someone with good communication skills approach the area of the line that you think will be the cut off and announce that you think the venue will be full with all of the individuals in front of them. You may want to have a "Buffer Zone", a grouping of people that you tell you do not think they'll get in, but they are welcome to stay and see if they will. You will want to determine the size of your BZ on the size of your venue and if you have VIP's coming, how many seats you need for your committee, etc. You want to keep enough people to ensure you fill the venue, yet let the people who have no chance of getting in go home. Getting the turn aways to go before you start letting people in limits the amount of upset people before the movie.
- **Don't Let Them Go Home Empty Handed.** For those that have no chance of getting in, let them know as early as possible that you appreciate their coming and unfortunately they will not be able to get in tonight. You are sold out. Offer them some of the premiums for that show or a past show if you had some left over items. If you have another movie coming up, tell them about it. If you have something about how to get involved with your group, this is a great time to share it. You will want to have someone keep a count of how many people you turn away for the Post Event Report.
- **Explain to the Angry Mobs.** For those who are upset about not getting in, it is helpful to say the following: "This is a FREE movie screening; the passes, posters, and ads in the paper all explain that passes do not guarantee seating and to please arrive early. People started lining up for today's movie at \_\_\_\_\_." If asked why you give out more passes than seats available, you can explain that it usually takes 1-1/2 to 2 times the amount of passes to fill the venue. If pushed, you can make us (NET) the bad guy and explain that we require that you pass out 1-1/2 to 2 times the venue capacity in order to fill the venue, and that for most movies this formula works. If you know when the next NET movie will be tell them the title, date, and time and when passes will be made available.