

Battle of the Bands

Use music to spread your anti-tobacco industry message to your community, and have a great time too!

AGE GROUP: high school and above

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: the more the better, with at least five organizers

TIME: 3 months

RESOURCES: paper, copier, and sound equipment

COST: approximately \$20 - \$40 for basic supplies and copies, and try to get sound equipment donated

Love music? Want to organize a tobacco control activity that is fun, entertaining, involves the community, and is a little bit rock 'n roll? Then Battle of the Bands is the perfect event for you! Keeping the cost down can be a challenge, but if you want to keep it low budget, you can get local bands involved and ask music stores to donate the equipment and prizes. Here are some suggestions to help you organize a kickin' Battle of the Bands.

Initial Planning (3 months out)

Logistics:

- Find a concert venue. Contact your school or local park where you can hold the event for free. Don't forget to find out about any permits or other registration you might need to use the venue.
- Contact a local music store to see if they will donate equipment (instruments, amps, microphones) the bands can use for a few hours. They might even donate prizes such as studio time (nice!), a guitar (nicer!) or a gift certificate for their store (nicest!). They may also know of a cool place you can have the event-this is a great resource!

Bands:

- Talk to some local bands that might want to perform. The more bands you have, the bigger your audience will likely be. The band members can call their friends and fans to come see them perform which can only increase the number of people who will hear your tobacco prevention message, too.
- If you don't know any local bands, put up flyers at local music stores or places where bands play. Most bands are always looking for exposure, so it may be easier than you think!
- Ask the bands to send a demo tape. Your group can listen to the demo tapes instead of having the bands audition in person. Think of it as a quieter, cleaner version of the audition.

Promotion:

- Create flyers and send them to all tobacco control advocates in your area. This is also a great time to round up some volunteers – ask them to help promote the event and help on site the day of the event.
- Hand out and put up flyers in local schools and high-traffic teen areas such as malls, movie theaters, and restaurants. Teens usually respond better to other teens handing out flyers or palm cards (1/2 or 1/4 sheets of paper) rather than posted flyers.
- Send an e-mail forward to your friends and ask them to forward it to their friends. It is a good way to reach people from all over the area quickly and effectively.
- A huge attraction would be free food and free gear (key chains, lanyards, shirts, glow sticks, etc.). Some local restaurants, bakeries, or grocery stores might be willing to donate food. If

not, you may want to charge a few dollars at the door to cover the cost of food, but free events are always much more attractive.

- If your group has a larger budget for the event, consider getting a famous band to perform or someone famous host the night (this doesn't have to be a megastar, think radio personalities or other local celebrities). Big names are always a draw.

Key messages:

- Make sure to give facts about the tobacco industry and the harmful effects of tobacco. A good time to do this is between band performances. If you can do this with audience participation (think game show, pictionary, or cheering), you are sure to reach them!
- Decorate the stage and background with outrageous tobacco industry quotes.
- Use your skills to find other creative ways to get your message out!
- Don't forget to promote your event to the media! See the media section for tips and template materials. Be sure to pitch the Battle of the Bands to entertainment reporters.