



FREE STORE

POP-UP SHOP

PROMOTION PLAN

DATE

3 May 2019

PRESENTED

UTK Advertising 450/540

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
Brief History	3
Situational Analysis	4
Consumer Analysis	4
Client Overview	4
Competitor Analysis	4
Goodwill	4
Knoxville Habitat for Humanity ReStore	5
Knox Area Rescue Ministries (KARM)	5
Smokey's Closet	6
Ladies of Charity	6
Waste Analysis	6
Pop-Up Shop Analysis	7
Why Pop-Up Shops?	7
Creating a Successful Pop-Up Shop	8
Location Analysis	8
Budget and Assessment Overview	9
Volunteers	9
Move-Out and Drop Off	10
Budget	10
Assessment	12
Strategies and Tactics	12
Social Media	12
On-Campus Promotion	16
Street Team	16
Digital Boards	18
The Daily Beacon	19
Store	19
Conclusion	20

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Free Store is a pop-up shop at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville that began operating in 2018 as subset of UT Recycling. It offers a wide range of products including clothing, accessories, houseware items, and more. The Free Store does not have a permanent storefront but instead hosts pop-up events around campus. The primary donation location is within the university's recycling center. All items are free and come from donations. Based on primary and secondary research, there is little awareness of the Free Store on UT's Knoxville campus.

The goal of this plan is to increase student awareness of the Free Store to 50%, increase attendance by 20%, and to increase donation volumes by 10% in one year. As it stands, the Free Store has the lowest awareness among its competitors. Primary competitors include Goodwill, Knoxville Habitat for Humanity ReStore, Knox Area Rescue Ministries (KARM), Smokey's Closet, and Ladies of Charity. However, The Free Store does have an advantage over its competitors in that all of its items are free to student shoppers. The Free Store also has the mission of reducing waste by reuse and is not for profit.

We explored whether the pop-up shop model hindered the Free Store's popularity. But research shows that pop-up shops have grown in popularity by giving a more personal experience to customers. Another consideration was the use of social media by the Free Store. Since the Free Store is a part of UT Recycling, it does not have its own social media accounts. This has hindered widespread communication of Free Store events.

This plan takes a holistic approach to increase awareness of the Free Store. This includes using social media to share pop-up event details, in order to create greater awareness of both the event and donation opportunities. Plans also include proposals for on-campus advertising including newspaper ads, digital ads on campus, and street teams to direct potential customers to pop-up events.

While the Free Store is still looking for a more permanent home, this plan suggests communication tools that can obtain the aggressive goals whether it continues to operate as a pop-up or it moves to a more permanent location.

BRIEF HISTORY

The Free Store has been operating for 10 months as a series of pop-ups around the University of Tennessee's campus. This eco-friendly shop operates through the Office of Sustainability and is a subset of UT Recycling. The Free Store acts as a resource to provide students with the items they need without any judgement. Items donated by students and faculty are free to students in need.

As part of the recycling program, the Free Store strives to be a sustainable and environmentally conscious organization. The goal of UT recycling is to convert the university into a Zero Waste institution. This is to be done by diverting at least 90% of all waste from landfills through green practices including reducing, reusing, recycling, and composting.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

CONSUMER ANALYSIS

The Free Store's customer base is not like that of other thrift shops. Rather than catering to a broad audience of low-income individuals, the Free Store is open only to students at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. These students are diverse in both thought and background, with individuals from all walks of life attending the university.

Typically, customers of the Free Store range from 17-33 years old, with the majority concentrated between 18 and 22 years of age. The total range skews slightly up due to the university's older graduate student population. These students usually aren't aware of the Free Store and may only have a basic awareness of the university's recycling program.

These consumers are, however, environmentally conscious. They are willing to recycle, reuse, and reduce their waste in an effort to protect the environment. And though recycling education rates haven't always been high, they are on the rise. Over the past year, recycling education rates have risen among potential customers. With a strong marketing plan, the Free Store can capitalize on these trends to encourage sustainability on campus.

CLIENT OVERVIEW

The Free Store is an on-campus organization and a community-based resource. The store was created to provide students in need with free clothes, shoes, accessories, school supplies, kitchen amenities, and other commodities that can otherwise be difficult for them to obtain on their own. The UT Recycling department created this venture to give students the opportunity to donate their lightly-used, high-quality items to students in need. The Free Store's office is housed within the UT Recycling building, though there is no permanent storefront.

The goal of the Free Store is to raise more awareness for the initiative and build brand identity and recognition on campus. More specifically, this campaign sets the following goals for the Free Store:

- Increase awareness of the Free Store from 20% to 50% in one year.
- Increase attendance at Free Store by 20% in one year
- Increase volume of donations to the Free Store by 10%.

Currently, the Free Store only has access to Facebook, Instagram, and its website to establish a digital presence. The Free Store takes part in many events throughout the semester such as the Recycle-Mania tournament that gets campus housing involved in recycling by creating a reward system for those who recycle the most. The Free Store holds pop-up shops that usually occur at least twice per semester and are a great resource to help students in need. The Free Store also provides a convenient mechanism for helping students reuse items rather than sending them to the landfill. This provides a great opportunity for increasing awareness for the Free Store and helping it build brand identity on campus with students and faculty.

COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

GOODWILL

Goodwill is an American non profit 501c organization that provides training, employment, and other community-based programs to benefit people across the country. Goodwill has a Christian history, as the founder was Methodist. The organization's philosophy is, "a hand up, not a hand down." This reflects the larger mission to show that the items are



intended to spark positive change in individuals' lives, not simply handouts from the wealthy handed down to those less fortunate. Goodwill accepts donations for clothing, small appliances, furniture and more. The organization can often mend worn items so they can be sold in a better condition than they were donated in.

Goodwill is considered the most popular chain thrift store, especially in Knoxville. There are multiple locations in Knoxville, one of which is less than a mile away from campus. This appeals to college students in need because of the close proximity to campus.

The items in Goodwill are subjectively priced by store employees and none of the items are free. Since Goodwill is a corporate chain, it may not be seen as personable compared to other options. It is, however, seen as a company that is trying to help the community as a whole, rather than just the University of Tennessee.

THE KNOXVILLE HABITAT FOR HUMANITY RESTORE

The Knoxville Habitat for Humanity ReStore is another competitor to the Free Store. The ReStore is a non-profit home improvement store and donation center that is owned and operated by the Knoxville branch of Habitat for Humanity.

The ReStore offers new and gently used furniture, clothing, accessories, household items, building materials, cabinets, and appliances at a fraction of the retail price. All of the proceeds are used to help local families build strength, stability, and self-reliance by providing a way for people who are in need of affordable housing to become homeowners.



The ReStore has also been voted "favorite thrift store" in the Knoxville News Sentinel's "Best of Knoxville" roundup. The thrift store has only one set location in Knoxville and is open to the public Monday through Saturday. A large variety of items exists at the ReStore, but none are free.

KNOX AREA RESCUE MINISTRIES (KARM)

Knox Area Rescue Ministries, or KARM, is a Christian nonprofit organization that assists homeless and impoverished individuals in Knox County and East Tennessee. KARM provides a variety of services, including food, shelter, clothing, and hygiene. Beyond that, KARM seeks to show "Biblical hospitality" to impoverished individuals, with the goal of pairing rescue with relationships for true restoration.



KNOX AREA RESCUE MINISTRIES
Restoring Lives in Jesus' Name

KARM operates its primary relief mission at 418 North Broadway. This location provides meals, emergency, shelter, and an outdoor space for impoverished and homeless individuals. To fund relief efforts, KARM operates several thrift stores in the Knoxville Metropolitan Area. These thrift stores accept donations and sell furniture, children's items, household items, electronics, clothing, and appliances.

KARM is one of the most popular thrift store chains in East Tennessee. It boasts multiple locations for easy access, even to those who rely on public transportation, walking, and biking. KARM also has a wide variety of items for sale at its stores, though no free items are offered. However, free food and clothing are offered at KARM's relief building in downtown Knoxville. And while KARM has a broad

target demographic of individuals beyond those who need financial help, it does not cater specifically to college students.

SMOKEY'S CLOSET

Smokey's Closet is a collaboration between several UT organizations, including SGA, the Office of Sustainability, and the Office of Student Life. It provides resources and professional apparel to allow students to dress sharply and feel confident in any professional environment, whether it be an interview, internship, or job. Smokey's Closet is reserved for UT students, faculty, and staff. Operating as a pop-up shop, it can be found at various locations on UT's campus and benefits from being a part of the UT system. It is a great destination for those seeking professional clothing. However, because Smokey's Closet only offers professional clothes, it is not an option for those seeking casual apparel. So while it is more well-known amongst the UT community than the Free Store, its limited options and narrow purpose provide students with little reason to return.



LADIES OF CHARITY

Ladies of Charity (LOC) is a 501(3)(c) charity established in 1942. The organization provides comprehensive emergency assistance to more than 100 underserved, unemployed, and underemployed Knoxvilleians every day. Ladies of Charity has both an emergency pantry and thrift store. It also provides food, clothing, items for newborns, new housing/apartment startup kits, personal and hygiene care items, kerosene for heating, and financial assistance for medication, utilities, and rent.



While the Ladies of Charity Thrift Shop has many advantages, it is not without its drawbacks. First, the assistance program allows individuals to select no more than six items of clothing. The group promotes itself as emergency assistance, but no single person can only wear six items of clothing while they are potentially going through the worst time of their life. Furthermore, to be eligible to receive those six items of clothing, individuals must go through an

extensive clothing assistance application.

Another disadvantage of Ladies of Charity is that each family member or household resident must provide social security cards to receive any type of assistance. This puts a burden on those who may have lost their social security card, perhaps in a crisis such as a fire or flood, and have not received a new one from the government. In the case of an emergency where one may not have their social security card with them, they will be turned down for assistance from LOC.

WASTE ANALYSIS

Clothing producers have trended towards creating cheaply-made clothing in greater quantities. This concept, known as "fast fashion," has made it increasingly difficult to recycle textiles and articles of clothing due to the large amounts of synthetic fabrics and materials used. Synthetic fabrics like polyester and cotton blends pose a problem when it comes to recycling and repurposing because they are difficult to separate and process. Though separating synthetic fabrics is doable, it is far easier to recycle textiles and clothing made of one material.

Most Americans do not recognize textiles or clothing to be a recyclable material like paper, glass, or plastic. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the average American throws away nearly 81 pounds of clothing each year, with 85% of used textiles landing in the trash and eventually in landfills. However, as much as 95% of those used textiles could have been recycled and reused. According to research, “textile reuse leads to greater environmental benefits compared to recycling.”

Textile reuse means giving the textile or article of clothing to someone new, whether it is through a garage sale, thrift store, or charity. Most people view clothing donation as something that should benefit people in poverty, not something that should be resold for profit. Not only does clothing donation help those in need, it also prevents reusable items from going into landfills. Ideally, every second-hand item that is purchased saves one new item from being made. This saves energy and reduces the amount of harmful chemicals and toxins released into the environment.

POP-UP SHOP ANALYSIS

WHY POP-UP SHOPS

Pop-up shops have become a staple of modern shopping by giving the customer a different experience from ordinary internet shopping. As such, these shops have become a flourishing trend among many popular brands and boutiques in the retail industry. Pop-up shops were devised to create a unique experience among customers by giving the pop-up shop an exclusive feel. These shops also provide shoppers with a better way to understand innovative products that can sometimes be tricky to understand because the items are not usually sold in person.



Pop-up shops not only give the customer the opportunity to touch, feel, and try on these clothes, but also provide a moment to ask sales representatives about the items being purchased. The impressions gained from branded and retail pop-up shops leads to spikes on social media through activity including mentions, engagement, and check-ins.

Another benefit of pop-up shops is the opportunity for brands to cut through media clutter and noise. The absence of this “noise” gives the brand the chance to get straight to the consumer and assess their needs first. There is significant evidence that pop-up shops lead to increases in short-term sales. They also foster the growth of brand awareness and brand equity.

An important aspect of pop-up shops is the ability to share information about the brand and the product being sold. Educated employees help customers feel secure and assist them in making an informed purchase. This is an important goal for customers who often go online to compare the prices of products, a phenomenon termed “showrooming.”

Perhaps most important for the Free Store is that the cost of setting up a pop-up shop is approximately 80% less expensive than a traditional physical retail outlet. For a non-profit focused on reducing waste and conserving resources, pop-up shops represent an affordable, effective alternative to traditional storefronts.

CREATING A SUCCESSFUL POP-UP SHOP

Generating consumer engagement at pop-up shops is key to creating success. Knowing the shop's goal is essential to determining what type of pop-up shop the store will be. Organizers of excellent pop-up shops must know their target audience on a personal level, including lifestyles and demographics. This allows for personalization, a proven technique for encouraging brand loyalty. Incorporating unique technology and creative innovation will also boost engagement and success. Finally, pop-up shops must educate new customers, especially those who might be unaware of the brand or the pop-up shop model.

LOCATION ANALYSIS

The Free Store currently hosts pop-up shops at a variety of locations on campus. These include HSS Amphitheater, UKirk Campus Ministry, Residence Halls, and the Student Union. Donation options are more limited. Those wishing to donate to the Free Store must visit the permanent donation bin located at the 24/7 Public Recycling Drop-Off.



There are around 2,200 students who live in dorms surrounding Presidential Court. This includes North/South Carrick, Reese, and Morrill Hall. Most of these students walk in and out of the courtyard multiple times a day. This well-trafficked location is ideal for posting flyers advertising the Free Store. It is also a potential location for a move-in day pop-up shop, when students are checking to ensure

they have everything they need. On move-out day, this spot could serve as a temporary donation location to collect students' gently-used clothing, furniture, and appliances.

During the academic year, the Pedestrian Walkway is the most heavily trafficked spot on campus. On any given weekday, student organizations set up booths promoting philanthropic organizations, concerts, clubs, and other activities. With its location in the heart of campus and ample space, the Pedestrian Walkway is an excellent spot for a pop-up shop or promotional activities. And with easy access to the dorms, it provides a great opportunity for students to donate items while they shop.



Another opportunity exists in the Student Union. The Student Union is the hub of UT's campus. Students go there to meet friends, engage with student organizations, attend events, and dine. Students also frequently pass through the Student Union on their way to class. The Free Store pop-up shops typically operate during the middle of the day, a prime time for snagging students grabbing lunch or going to and from class. Operating the Free Store in the busiest center of campus could attract a lot of students. However, students passing through the Student Union tend to be in a hurry, perhaps hindering their ability to stop and shop for clothing.



BUDGET AND ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

This section begins with two “big ideas” that will improve Free Store operations. Both arise from observational research. First, during the pop-up event in April, we observed that many of the volunteers who were working at the Free Store seemed to lack knowledge about the event and were not always focused on answering student questions. Second, we observed that the single drop-off location is remote, small, and not marked with clear signage.

After reviewing the ways the volunteers and improved drop-off locations can improve the Free Store operations, we briefly present our promotional ideas which are fleshed out in more detail in later parts of this report. We summarize the budget and also provide a brief plan for how to assess whether or not objectives have been met.

VOLUNTEERS

To gain more volunteers for the Free Store, fraternities and sororities should be contacted. Volunteering at the Free Store offers these students the opportunity to gain service hours. Typically, each Greek life member is expected to earn at least 10 service hours per semester. This is a great way to get Greek life organizations involved and share the Free Store message with those who may need it.

Reaching out to the UT Rec Sports Outdoor Program offers another opportunity. This community offers many options for volunteering and its members are typically quite motivated. The International House is another option where the Free Store's mission aligns with the goals of members. The International house actively creates an atmosphere that is accepting to all of UT's students. This demonstrates their dedication to better understanding the student population and giving them opportunities they may not have access to on their own.

Another outstanding opportunity exists in the Sustainability Club. Recruiting volunteers from the Sustainability Club is a strategic choice. These students are typically well aware of sustainability initiatives on campus, including the Free Store. This allows them to be some of most knowledgeable potential volunteers and excellent advocates for increased awareness of sustainability among shoppers.

MOVE-OUT AND DROP OFF

Move-out day offers an enormous opportunity to collect donations for the Free Store. On move-out day, labeled bins could be placed in the lobbies of residence halls



around the UT campus. These will include signs with examples of what can and can't be donated.

Donatable items include bedding, clothing, non-perishable food, unused hygiene products, small kitchen appliances, laundry detergent, and rugs. These can be dropped off by students in the specific labeled bins. Currently, items at move-out are frequently given to Goodwill, Smokey's Pantry, and Laundry Love.

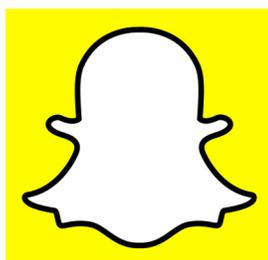
The current donation area could also be expanded. And improved signage could help students better understand what they can leave at this location to be reused by other students on campus.

BUDGET

- Snapchat Filter: \$5 per 20,000 square feet of space around the free store
- Instagram Budget: \$5 Daily: 450-1200 estimated reach
- Stickers: \$24 for 200
- T-shirts: Price varies, but about \$500 for 100 t-shirts
- Custom 10-foot by 10-foot tent: \$380
- Fashion show: Free
- Posters/recycled fliers (24 inches by 36 inches plain): \$90 at \$3/poster
<https://www.lib.utk.edu/agvet/files/Large-Format-Printer-Price-Chart-11.2016.pdf>
- Digital display ads: Free
<https://studentunion.utk.edu/digital-display-advertising/>
- Promoted Instagram posts: \$140 (\$14 a day for 10 days to reach 2800-7400)
- Pull-up poster (34-inch by 81-inch single-sided retractable sign): \$110
- Signage for drop off (48-inch by 36-inch single-sided aluminum sign with four holes in corners): \$135.83

TOTAL ESTIMATED COST = \$1,384.83

To fulfill the planned strategies, the total budget comes to an estimated total of \$1,384.83.



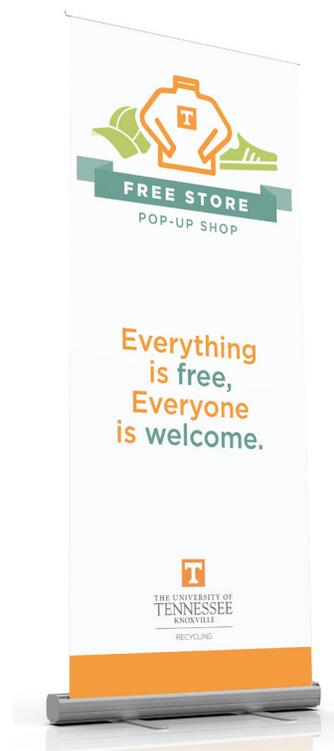
To start, a Snapchat geofilter will be created around the Free Store on the day that it is happening. Students use snapchat on a daily basis and the chance of them swiping through Snapchat filters while passing the Free Store is quite likely. An Instagram campaign to promote awareness will total \$5 dollars daily for a reach of 420-1200 individuals. This provides exposure to the Free Store both on-campus and around Knoxville. The total price for boosting posts on Instagram would be \$140, or \$14 a day for 10 days to reach a total of 2800-4700 Instagram users.

College students frequently use stickers to express themselves on their laptops, school supplies, and more. Stickers are an inexpensive way to create campus-wide conversation starters. The estimated cost is approximately \$24 for every 200 stickers. T-shirts are another great conversation starter and they are also a tool for helping to identify volunteers at Free-Store events. Pricing varies, but it's approximately \$5 per shirt at 101+ shirts, coming to a total of about \$500 for 100 shirts.



To better showcase specifically where the store is located, a tent with the Free Store label should be purchased. This type of personalized tent is estimated to cost \$380. The Pedestrian Walkway Fashion Show has no extra expenses and will cost nothing to the Free Store.

The pull-up poster (a single-sided retractable sign), is about 34 x 81" big and will be about \$110. To make donating easier for students, new donation signage should be ordered. A 48-inch by 36-inch single-sided aluminum sign with corner holes will cost \$135.83.



On-campus posters/recycled fliers are about 24 inches by 36 inches plain. Each poster costs about \$3, leading to a total cost of \$90 for 30 posters. Digital display ads in the Student Union, HSS, and other buildings would be free.

ASSESSMENT

An online survey was used to find that awareness of the Free Store among students at the University of Tennessee is currently 20%. To assess the effectiveness of this plan, a similar survey should be sent out three, six, nine, and 12 months after the promotion. This survey should measure change in overall awareness, with the goal to increase awareness from 20% of the student body to 50% in one year.

To assess attendance at Free Store events, customers at the Free Store that take items will be asked to fill out a quick survey asking which items they take. This allows for an inventory system of sorts, providing the opportunity to track what goes in and out. These surveys will be kept and counted after every event to examine change in attendance and to see if the goal of increasing attendance by 20% in one year is being met.

To assess volume of donations, items will be counted and sorted every time a donation bin is emptied. A record will be kept and assessed every 3 months. This will allow progress to be tracked in achieving the goal of increasing donation volume by 10% in one year.

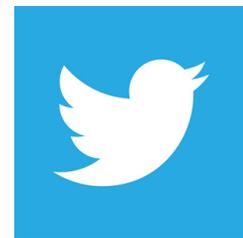
STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

Research revealed that while the message of “free” things is attractive to students, they were even more attracted to the opportunity to think about textile recycling as a way of reducing their impact on the environment. Messages should have a primarily ration-based appeal and should seek to inform and inspire students about the value of recycling and reusing through the Free Store.

SOCIAL MEDIA

By using social media throughout the year, the Free Store has an opportunity to create awareness and build excitement about upcoming events. By using social media both before and on the day of an event, the Free Store can boost student turnout.

Social media offers an effective, inexpensive way to communicate with the target audience. One way of using social media to create awareness is to boost social media posts. The Free Store should promote Facebook and Instagram posts. These posts should be focused on environmental impact, but they should also show times and dates of upcoming Free Store events. Posts with the dates and times for the events and pop-up shops should start being shared one week before the event.





Free Store UTK
20 hours ago

Stop by HHS Amphiteater Lawn from 11-3 to shop at UT's Free Store Pop-Up Shop! Clothing, bags, accessories, shoes, and more!



Like · Comment · Share

2



FreeStoreUTK
The University of Tennessee - Knoxville

FOLLOW



1204 likes

FreeStoreUTK

Stop by HHS Amphiteater Lawn from 11-3 to shop at UT's Free Store Pop-Up Shop! Clothing, bags, accessories, shoes, and more!

Tweets Tweets & replies Photos & videos



Stop by HHS Amphiteater Lawn from 11-3 to shop at UT's Free Store Pop-Up Shop! Clothing, bags, accessories, shoes, and more!



View more photos and videos

Social media should also be used throughout the school year to promote awareness of the Free Store's drop-off bins across campus. Posts can be focused on drop-off bin locations and what can and cannot be donated. These posts should be boosted around times when students tend to clean, such as the end of the semester. One post a month should be made encouraging students to clean and donate items that they no longer use or need.



Everyone is Welcome Everything is Free

Drop off your clothes
to help recycle and
donate to others.

Date: TBA
Time: TBA
Place: TBA



Another way for the Free Store to use social media is to collaborate with other popular accounts on campus. In order to increase awareness, the Free Store should partner with other clubs and organizations to get the word out. This partnership would allow for the posting of content from the Free Store on these other organizations' Instagram profiles and stories. The goal would be to have five shared posts a year to increase awareness throughout the campus community.

While the Free Store should be using social media throughout the year, it is suggested that the store use it more heavily on days of events. Paying to promote Facebook and Instagram posts on the days of events and slightly prior to is a way to draw interest to the events. Snapchat filters around event locations can also help to promote the event. These posts should include the time and location of the pop-up.

On days of pop-up shop events, the Free Store should create a live video through Instagram to show off the location and environment. This live stream can encourage students to visit the pop-up store. Additionally, going live on Instagram should be coordinated with the deployment of the street teams that are engaging with the target audience. Additional permanent posts on Instagram will show information on the Free Store so that students are connected after interacting with the street team. Once students interact with the street team, they will be prompted to follow the organization's social media accounts and will immediately see a Free Store post.

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ON-CAMPUS PROMOTION

A great promotion plan employs multiple tactics to communicate its message. Social media is an important part of that strategy, but the power of location-based advertising shouldn't be undervalued. Promoting The Free Store on the University of Tennessee campus is key to raising awareness among the target audience.

Street Team

Three steps should be taken to ensure maximum message impact. The first of these is assembling a "street team" that will act as advocates for The Free Store. Student volunteers will primarily comprise this team, but staff and faculty members are welcome to join if they wish. Street team members can be identified by wearing Free Store t-shirts.

Throughout the academic year, this team will be active at select times during or near major events such as Welcome Week, Earth Day, and Volapalooza. At these points, the street team will be deployed on the Pedestrian Walkway with a small table or booth, some signage, free stickers, and a drop-off bin for donations. Volunteers will be able to discuss The Free Store and its mission with participants. Additionally, both volunteers and signage will direct students to The Free Store's social media pages.



Street teams could also organize a “found at the free store” fashion show on the pedestrian walkway. Team members could model clothing and other free store items while other team members use music and audio to announce the event and draw attention to the free store as a place to reuse and recycle.

Free Store

Fashion Show

A night to show off the fits Free Store offers.

Sept 27th
6-8pm
HSS Lawn



Digital Boards and “Reused” Flyers

Throughout campus, digital message boards offer a dynamic, sustainable alternative to paper flyers. To increase awareness, these digital boards will be used to advertise The Free Store’s pop-up shop locations and times. For maximum impact, these advertisements should be displayed starting one week prior to the pop-up shop.



APRIL 17 @ 11AM-3PM
HSS LAWN

EVERYONE IS WELCOME, EVERYTHING IS FREE.

MAKE ORANGE GREEN

Clothing, shoes,
kitchen supplies,
school supplies
and more!

Donate your items at one
of our drop-off locations.

Recycling Center, Dorms,
Other centers to drop-off too.



In addition, at times the Free Store may wish to enhance its presence by using paper fliers in places that do not have digital boards. But rather than printing on “new paper” we recommend that these flyers be printed on the back of old flyers that are removed from popular campus locations.

FREE STORE POP-UP

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME.
EVERYTHING IS FREE.**



- Clothing
- Kitchenware
- Bags
- Shoes
- Accessories
- School supplies

Where: TBD

When: TBD



FREE STORE POP-UP SHOP



POP-UP SHOP

WHERE: TBD

WHEN: TBD

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME.
EVERYTHING IS FREE.**



The Daily Beacon

As the university’s official newspaper, The Daily Beacon is a time-tested medium for distributing campaign information. A press release should be drafted and sent to the The Daily Beacon, detailing The Free Store’s mission to reduce the environmental impacts of textile products. This press release could be sent any time of year, though an ideal time may be in the week prior to a Free Store pop-up shop.

STORE

The success of the Free Store and its pop-up shops largely depends on the variety and quality of the items provided by the store. The Free Store accepts almost all items, including lightly-used clothing, kitchenware, accessories, and small appliances. However, some donations are more suitable for reuse than others. Things like socks, CDs, swimwear, and undergarments are a few items that should not be offered at the Free Store pop-up shops. Eliminating unnecessary items and selecting higher quality and more desirable items will attract a larger number of shoppers in the long run.

In addition to increasing the selectivity in items, the Free Store should arrange pop-up shops in a more organized manner. Clothing should be separated by season, size, and category. Having specific and labeled sections for different types of clothing like shirts, pants, shoes, and dresses would make it easier for patrons to know where to go in order to find what they are looking for.



Finally, there should be signage placed around pop-up shops that is large enough to be visible to those walking by and those attending the pop-up shop. The signage should inform people that the event is a Free Store event, that everything is free, and that customers can take as much as they need. The Free Store may also consider adding some sort of rope “boundary” around the pop-up event to help define it better and to also provide more control over getting feedback from students as

they leave. Additionally, Free Store volunteers and workers should wear Free Store t-shirts that will distinguish them from shoppers, allowing for customers to quickly and easily find assistance.

CONCLUSION

The largest challenge that the Free Store faces is a lack of student awareness; people simply do not know what it is. Through both paid and unpaid social media posts, along with UT resources like digital boards and The Daily Beacon, student awareness of the Free Store can be dramatically increased. Because the desired target audience is already environmentally conscious, a targeted social media plan is the perfect place to reach this target and help the Free Store prosper without having to waste resources. Additionally, the creation of a knowledgeable street team that advocates for the Free Store’s mission can create a positive sentiment among the target audience while increasing awareness of the Free Store and its mission.

Another challenge that the Free Store faces is unity, which is essential for brand image. Visual unity can be created through a custom tent, cohesive signage, and distinctive t-shirts for volunteers. This allows those walking by to quickly grasp the purpose of the pop-up shop. Plus, having a team of volunteers that are knowledgeable and friendly is vital to creating an exceptional experience for customers. As for the contents of the The Free Store, being more selective with the items offered and improving product organization will create a better customer experience.

The goal is to have the Free Store in the forefront of students’ minds when they think of sustainability. Creating a unified brand image and promoting the Free Store through social media, school resources, and a knowledgeable street team will increase awareness, donation quantity and quality, and store traffic. Organization of the pop up shop with proper signage as well as a higher level of organization with the products at the shop will enhance the customer experience, ensuring that visitors will return and support the Free Store through donating and volunteering. With this plan in hand, the Free Store is poised to create a powerful impact on campus.