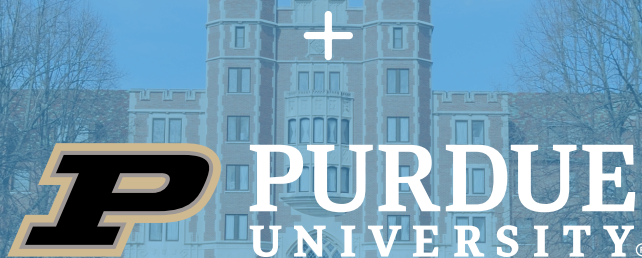


guidebook



How Purdue Welcomes 8,000 Students Without Losing the Human Touch

Note: this case study was created from a webinar we did with Purdue. [Watch here.](#)



CHALLENGE

- 8,000+ incoming students to engage
- Orientation is optional and students must pay a fee to attend, making strong participation harder to secure.
- Avoid overwhelming students with information while building real connection.

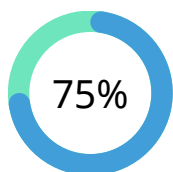


SOLUTION

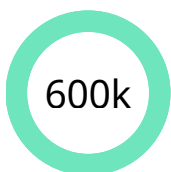
- Boiler Gold Rush (BGR): a 4-day, festival-like orientation.
- Students grouped into small teams led by 700+ trained leaders.
- App-first execution with Purdue Guide (powered by Guidebook)



RESULTS



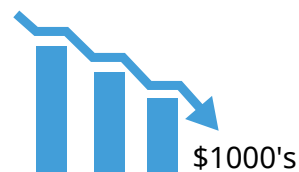
Participation
Rate



App
Sessions



Hours of App
Usage



Printing Cost
Savings



Purdue University's Boiler Gold Rush (BGR)
Boiler Gold Rush is big. Like, *festival-for-8,000-students* big.

Held the week before classes begin, BGR is a four-day, high-touch orientation experience led by a small army of over 700 student staff.

In addition, BGR isn't mandatory. Yet, roughly 75% of Purdue's incoming class participates.

So what makes it work?

According to Craig Johnson, Purdue's Director of Orientation Programs, it's all about balancing **structure and flexibility**.

So, to build confidence from the start, students are immediately paired with small teams led by trained orientation leaders.

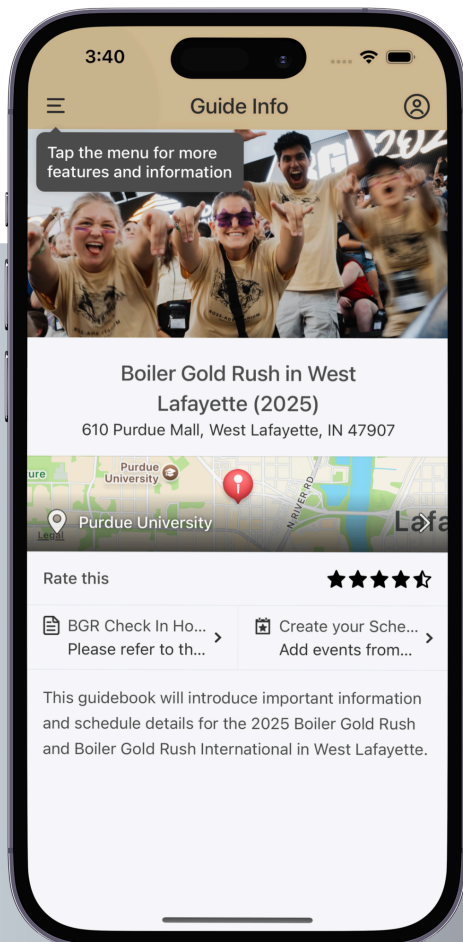
Each day includes highly structured touchpoints, and as the program progresses, students get more freedom to attend sessions that match their interests.

The whole experience balances **guidance and autonomy**, helping students feel both supported and empowered.

The Event Tech That Ties It All Together

With their branded, Guidebook-powered app, (Purdue Guide) the team ditched printed packets and delivered personalized, real-time content straight to students' phones.

This meant no more scrambling with printed papers or outdated schedules. Instead, students know where they should be, how to get there, and what to expect — all from the phone that's always in their hands.





Purdue's Orientation Success By the Numbers

By combining strong student leadership with digital-first execution, BGR delivers big results.

- **600,000+** app sessions logged in a single week
- **314** hours of total app usage (real engagement, not passive clicks)
- **8,000+** incoming students welcomed each year
- **75%+** participation rate, even though BGR is optional
- **Thousands** of pages and dollars saved by replacing printed materials with mobile access
- **50+** themed events offered per day
- **700+** student leaders supporting the experience

Real-World Tactics You Can Steal from Purdue

Turn orientation into a yield engine

BGR isn't just "welcome week." It's a high-impact touchpoint that builds affinity before day one.

Use tech to simplify, not overwhelm

Guidebook helped Purdue cut through complexity, reduce waste, and provide a clearer experience for students and staff alike.

Create affinity through teams and gamification

From team-based competition to small group bonding, Purdue keeps students engaged through shared identity and a little friendly rivalry.

Be intentional about app promotion

Whether it's displaying the app QR code on the stadium scoreboard or on a check-in sheet that students find on their bed, Purdue finds creative ways to encourage app downloads.

Guidebook has been tremendous because of the user experience...You know, we've had apps or mobile platforms that it just felt like the user experience wasn't kept in mind. And that's not something that I ever have a concern with, with Guidebook, because the end product is what we need it to be for students.

Craig Johnson, Director of Orientation Programs, Purdue University



About Purdue University

Founded in 1869, Purdue University is a top public research institution located in West Lafayette, Indiana.

With more than 50,000 students across undergraduate and graduate programs, Purdue is known for its strong engineering, science, and business disciplines, as well as a vibrant campus culture rooted in tradition.

The university consistently ranks among the nation's most innovative schools and is recognized for delivering world-class education at an accessible cost.

About Guidebook

Guidebook empowers organizations to create beautiful feature-rich, custom mobile applications – without any coding. Businesses, associations, and universities around the globe choose Guidebook to engage and inform audiences, whether in-person or virtually.

More than 100,000 organizations, including industry- leading brands such as Coca Cola, Amazon, YouTube, Google, and Samsung, and the world's top universities have selected Guidebook as their mobile application platform of choice.

Guidebook-powered apps have been downloaded more than 14 million times in over 75 countries. Based in San Francisco, Guidebook is a private, venture-backed, award- winning company with offices in the U.S., Europe, and Asia.

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