Effective Promotion Planning for Your Library

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Communications Strategy

These four communication facets support the institution’s overarching communication strategy.

1. Define the Goal
   - Increase foot traffic
   - Provide increased training
   - Develop greater awareness of library services and collection
   - Increase satisfaction of users
   - Enhance presence in community
   - Let people know!
   - Justify the library’s existence

2. Identify the Audience
   - Who is this plan for?
   - Embark on a user needs assessment:
     - Who uses the services and collections?
     - What are their interests, wants, goals, and purposes?
     - Identify through observation, surveys, interviews, benchmarking etc.
     - Use results to plan and design

3. Outline the ‘Story’
   ‘Story’: part of the communications strategy that demonstrates the library’s core values and relates them to the user group’s interests
   - What do I want my audience to remember from this?
   - What action do I want them to take?
   - Reflect the overall mission and goals of the library
   - “Branding”: use images, slogans, mottos and other social positioning to promote the library consistently
   - Make it easy for the user to identify what it is you intend to do

4. Select a Presenter
   - Recruit prominent individuals for programs/workshops
   - Well known alumni etc. increases the likelihood of interest
   - Ensure the presenter reflects some of the Library’s mission and goals

5. Communicate
   - Early and often
   - Remain consistent to your ‘Story’
   - Be concise and simple
   - Do not underestimate word of mouth
   - Use pictures where possible
   - Place signage in areas likely to attract your intended audience
   - Social media: use it! (appropriately)
   - Be sure to tailor to your specified audience
   - Include: date, time, location, parking, contact information, and any other special circumstance information (e.g. alternate formats)

6. Execute
   - Develop a ‘Promotion Protocol’ to ensure the transfer of tacit knowledge and maintain consistency
   - Create displays or facilitate program/service/workshop as intended
   - *Note: A ‘Promotion Protocol’ is a step by step guide which indicates the proper directions to take in promoting events within your institution. It normally includes information on social media policies, branding strategies and even specific file finding criteria.

7. Evaluate
   - Create an evaluative strategy to rate the success of the program / workshop prior to engaging in the process
   - Program evaluation may provide insight as to the success of the promotional strategy
   - Examples: number of users present; circulation statistics; user comments; surveys; vocal praise or criticism etc.
   - *Note: the evaluative strategy should be included in the ‘Promotion Protocol’

8. Follow up!
   - Publicize after the fact: let people know how it went through photographs, descriptions and even snippets of the evaluation
   - Will it be repeated? Will there be any changes? What can users expect next time?

References