Adult Programming for the Non-Programmer

Adult program checklist

1) Process
   a. Don’t be overwhelmed
   b. Start with your idea and clarify a few things –
      i. What type of program is it? Literacy, books & book clubs, healthy living, financial help, entertainment?
      ii. What age groups is it for? Could be different for all ages.
         1. Young/college-aged adults
         2. Middle age
         3. Senior Citizens
      iii. How much will it cost?
         1. Staff prep time
         2. Materials
         3. Marketing
      iv. Get to know your patrons
         1. What do they ask for? Survey needed?
         2. What subjects are being checked out?
      v. What is the expected Return On Investment?
      vi. What is your timeframe?
         1. How long do you have to plan?
         2. When can the program occur?
      vii. Who’s hosting the program?
         1. You or someone else?
         2. If it’s an outside speaker, do they need someone in there the whole time or just to introduce them at the beginning?
         3. Do they have a speaking fee, and how much is it?
         4. Can you temper that with something else?
      viii. What verbiage do you want to use?
         1. Casual & fun, or more proper and serious?
         2. Action verbs better than passive verbs
         3. Do you have a style guide for writing descriptions of programs?

2) Approval – run it by the right people

3) Marketing – while waiting for approval
   a. Graphics department –
      i. a flyer for a bulletin board?
      ii. A slide for an on-going slideshow?
      iii. A banner on the website?
      iv. Small flyers that can be tucked into books?
   b. If no graphics department, start looking at what you can do –
      i. Do you have the skills to create something in MS Office?
      ii. Is there a template already created for advertising adult programs?
      iii. Style guidelines?
   c. Decide when to start putting the advertising materials out –
      i. Too far out from the program, people will stop “seeing” them.
      ii. Too soon, and people might have made other plans
iii. I try to do 3-4 weeks. This catches people who may only come into the building every 3 weeks when their books are due, so they have time to plan, but too much longer and people forget about it.
d. Find out what options may be available for more direct marketing
   i. Direct email to patrons who recently attended a computer class?
   ii. Youth librarians announce adult programs at storytimes and after school programs?
   iii. Meetup.com
   iv. Attend another class in the community
   v. Post flyers outside the library (YMCA, Civic Center, etc)
   vi. Find out now, but wait for approval!
e. Book your needed space in your system.
   i. Shadow it until you have approval, but book the space now
   ii. Don’t forget set up and tear down time!
4) Yay, my program’s approved! Now what?
   a. Most of the hard work has been done – you know what you’re going to say to advertise, you know when it’s going to be and who will be hosting it, you know the value it will add to your library
   b. Make/obtain your Graphics materials
   c. Publish/make public the room booking so patrons know when it’s happening
   d. Collect any supplies needed
   e. Encourage the circ staff to talk the program up, especially if it’s something brand new (Craft Club when you’ve never have one before) or correlates to what they’re checking out (quilting books)
      i. Double-check your library’s policies on this one before doing – some libraries don’t want staff noticing patron’s check-outs like that, even when it’s connecting them to something that may interest them, so be sure it’s ok
   f. Look into materials to set up day of
5) Day of – how to have a successful program/ be a successful host
   a. Start setting up early, if possible, at the beginning of your room booking window.
   b. Check with front line staff, see how much interest has been expressed to them based on their conversations with patrons, and set up appropriately.
   c. Double-check any tech needed
   d. If it’s an outside speaker, double-check on the plan
      i. Preferred intro?
      ii. Timeline
      iii. Dos and don’ts
   e. Set up a display of related materials
      i. Check your shelves for anything that may have come in since you last checked
   f. Greet patrons as they enter, welcome them to the program, assist in handing out anything that needs to be handed out
   g. When ready to start, make your intro.
      i. We go with a 5-part speech
         1. “Welcome to the Library”
         2. “Thank you so much for being here today”
         3. “We have great materials to continue the learning of today’s topic”
4. “If you need to sign up for a library card, please visit the front desk before you leave today”
5. “Here’s what we’re doing today/the speaker we’re here to see”
h. If you’re staying the whole time, find an unobtrusive place near the door so you can help greet late arrivals and direct them to an open seat.
i. At the end, thank everyone for coming again, remind them of the materials you have for checkout, mention an upcoming program (if you can and it’s related), and gentle goodbye
   i. I usually go with “Our next <type of> program will be <date and time>, <details> so I hope to see all of you here again for that!”
6) So what are some successful programs you’ve done?
   a. Being located in Celebration, Disney is *huge* here – can you tap into a local interest?
   b. Healthy living is a close second
      i. Growing your own herbs
      ii. Self-massage
      iii. Natural cleaners & pest control
   c. Pure entertainment
      i. Doctor Who/fandom events
      ii. Paranormal Investigators
      iii. Super Saturday Cinema
      iv. Arts festivals
   d. Summer Reading – eh
      i. Passive parts are more successful – write a book review and drop it in the weekly drawing, complete a reading log and choose a prize, etc
      ii. Active programs aren’t as well attended