Adult Programming for the Non-Programmer

Presented by
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Adult Programming for the Non-Programmer

This class is for those who handle adult programming who feel unsure about what to do.

Maybe you’re new to programming, maybe you’re looking for new ideas or ways to push good programs through to success, or maybe you’re just looking for a refresher.
Adult Programming for the Non-Programmer

In many libraries, with fewer staff and resources than before, libraries are more closely examining their programming.

Adult programming is sometimes cut – so how can you offer multiple programs and still be successful?
Disclaimer

• Each library is unique, so some of these may not work for you
• My library is a small community-type library, so results may vary in a large urban library
• We’ll have time at the end for attendees to share their successes with the group
What is considered to be “adult programming”?

• Any class, event, or activity that appeals to adults.

We usually think of active programs (classes, guest speakers) but don’t forget passive programs too (trivia contests, achievement/leader boards, voting)
Process

• Don’t be overwhelmed at the start
  – List out the things you’re (now) responsible for, and go from there.
    • All adult programming? Just <type of> classes for adults? Teens too?
  – Is there monthly programming already in place that kind of runs itself? (computer classes) Maybe you can focus on offering one new class a month while the programs in place continue.
Process

• Start with your idea and clarify a few things:
  – What type of program is it?
    • Literacy & book clubs, healthy living, financial help, entertainment?
  – What age group is it for?
    • Young adults, mid-life adults, Senior Citizens? Interest may vary greatly
    • Don’t underestimate cross-generational interest too
      – Craft clubs, fandoms
Process

• Start with your idea and clarify a few things:

  – How much will it cost? Include staff prep time as well as materials
    • Sometimes staff prep time would take too long or be too costly – can you use volunteers or teen ambassadors to help with anything?

  – What are the expectations of your leaders?
    • Increase in number of programs? Increase in attendance? Increase in visibility in the community? Certain number of types of programs?
Process

• Start to know your patrons:
  – What do they ask for? If they don’t ask, can you do a survey, be it formal or informal?
  – What do they check out? Pay attention to what’s circulating to get ideas for programs they might attend.
Process

• What is the expected Return On Investment?
  • Fancy business term just means “Will the program deliver tangible results you can report to a Board?”
  • Usually means attendance, but can be other metric
    • Number of <type of> programs offered
  • Librarians know that sometimes a successful program only has one attendee – but that one attendee’s life was changed. Get their story so you can share that with the Board
Process

• What is your timeframe?
  – How long do you have to plan?
  – When can the program occur?

• Who is hosting the program?
  – You? Someone else in the library?
  – Outside speaker? If so, do they need hosting from staff the whole time, or just beginning/end?

Speaking fee & how much? Negotiate that fee?

• Sometimes authors will waive their fee if they can sell their books after the presentation
Process

• What verbiage do you want to use?
  – What age groups are you appealing to? May make a difference in what words you use.
  – Casual & fun? Proper and serious? Do you have a system-wide style guide to follow?
    • Deciding on this now makes the next steps easier because you can copy and paste from here to flyers, website, etc
Process

• What verbiage do you want to use?
  – Some words to consider
    • “you” – used to be taboo, now it’s seen as speaking directly to the reader (which is appealing)
    • Active verbs – learn, create, enjoy, discover
  – Some things to avoid
    • Boring verbs – get, come, have
    • Asking then answering a question: “Have you always wanted to <thing>? Then this class is for you!”
    • Advertising food/snacks (unless it’s a cooking program)
• What verbiage do you want to use?
  – Think journalistically, not academically

  • I try to keep descriptions to two sentences if possible
    – “Learn massage techniques for minor aches and pains in the head, neck, legs, feet and more in this fun and relaxing hands-on class. Bringing a friend is encouraged but not required.”
    – “Microsoft Word is essential in today's job market. Learn to create a basic document: terminology, simple formatting, saving, printing, some shortcuts, and more using Microsoft Office 2010.”

  • You can always add more detail to a calendar, but most flyers will only hold a sentence or two.
Process

- Do you have an outline process?
  - If not, consider creating your own, to keep your brain organized
  - We use a standard outline form with all the questions we just covered on it, and it makes it easy for our Board to see what we’re doing
Sample Outline

Program Proposal Form

- Infant
- Toddler
- Preschool
- K-2
- 3-5
- Tween
- Teen
- Family
- Adult

Name of Program:  Wonderful World of the Neals

Staff Responsible/Involved: Disney book authors Julie and Mike Neal

Location: West Osceola Branch Library

Date(s): Time(s): November, date TBD

Expected Number of Participants: 20

Strategic Plan Goal: (Check one or more)
- Create Young Readers – Early Literacy
- Satisfy Curiosity – Lifelong Learning
- Stimulating the imagination – Reading, Viewing and Listening for Pleasure
- Understand how to Find, Evaluate, and Use information – Information Fluency
- Connect to the Online World – Public Internet Access

Description of Event for promotional or event calendar (2-3 sentences; Please note that this MAY BE CHANGED for grammar, spelling, content, space as needed by Graphics Dept.):

Explore the magic of Disney with two new books, The Complete Walt Disney World 2016 and The Complete Fun Finds and Hidden Mickey! Join authors Julie and Mike Neal as they share their most magical stories of writing these new books.

Graphics request details/Program publicity:

Three 11x8.5 flyers (landscape), slide for PP, one half of a poster (Seth Kubersky should be the other half)

Supplies Needed:

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<th>Item and Quantity</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<th>Source (Preferably URL where you found price)</th>
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Total:

Associated Passive Program(s): Once copies of the books are received, the ABM will develop a passive program based on what is published (e.g., maybe hide some Mickeys around the Library)

Literacy Connection (including book displays): Display of Disney books, both about Walt and the parks.
Approval

• Once all the details are worked out, share with the person/people who need to approve the program
  – It may be just your supervisor, it may be a Board
    • If you don’t know, clarify with your supervisor
  – Having the details already thought out will show you’ve planned carefully and can pull this program off
How to pitch

• I usually go with something like: “I want to do this program and here’s why. Benefits to the library include...benefits to the patron are...this is how much it will cost, so Return On Investment is this...”

• Your outline can do this for you too, which is why it’s good to create one
Marketing the program

• Keep rolling while waiting for approval!
• Start talking with Graphics about what you’d like for advertising materials
  – Flyer for a bulletin board? Slide for an on-going slideshow? Banner on the website? Small flyers or bookmarks to be tucked into books?
Marketing the program

• If you don’t have a Graphics department, start looking at what you can do in-house
  – Can you create something in MS Office or Photoshop? Does a template already exist?
    • Our library uses different colors on the borders of our flyers to help visually indicate what age group the program is for
  – Do you have another staff person or volunteer who is good at creating flyers/graphics for marketing?
Marketing the program

• Decide on when to put advertising materials out
  – Too far out from the program, patrons stop “seeing” them. Too soon, and patrons may have made other plans
  – I aim for 3-4 weeks. This catches those who only come into the building every 3 weeks when their books are due, and gives patrons time to plan for it.
Marketing the program

• Find out what options may be available for more direct marketing
  – Computer class sign-ins – are you allowed to use more recent sign-in sheets to directly email those patrons about new, upcoming computer classes?
  – Other programs – can your youth librarian announce during storytimes that you’re having a program that would interest those parents?
Marketing the program

• Traditional library marketing
  – Flyers, bulletin boards, library’s social media pages, library’s website, library’s blog, library’s photo share, etc

• Less traditional marketing
  – Meetup.com, visiting similar classes in the community to talk it up, posting flyers in the senior center/YMCA, having a table at a college fair day, etc

• Make sure you have approval first!
Waiting for Approval

• Book the needed space
  – Do you need a room? A big room or a small room? Plan now to make sure you’ll have the space needed.
  – Don’t forget to include set up and tear down time on your reservation.
After approval

• Yay, my program’s approved! Now what?
  – Most of the hard work has been done
    • You know what you’re going to say in your advertising, you know when it’s going to be and who will be hosting, and you know the value it adds to the library
  – Still some details to cover, but we’re into checklist territory now
After approval

• Make/obtain Graphics materials
• Publish/make public the room booking so patrons can see it online and on printed calendars
• Collect any supplies needed
• Look into materials to set up day-of
  – Usually you can grab items from the shelves, but if it’s a highly specialized program, you may need to place holds on items from other branches
After approval

• Encourage circ staff to talk the program up, especially if it’s something brand new or correlates to what the patron is checking out
  – Double-check your library’s policies on this before doing. Some libraries don’t want staff noticing patron check-outs like that, even when it’s connecting them to something that may interest them.
Day-of: having a successful program

• Start setting up at the beginning of your room booking window
  – Gives you the most time to double-check any tech needed, hunt down extra chairs and tables, etc

• Check with front line staff, see how much interest has been mentioned through conversations with patrons, and set up appropriately
  – It’s better to leave room to add more chairs than have a roomful of emptys
Day-of: having a successful program

• Double-check any needed tech
  – Is the projector working? Do you have the cords plugged in properly? Is the laser pointer visible?

• For an outside speaker, double-check on the plan
  – Timeline, dos and don’ts, preferred intro? Are you/staff remaining in the room the whole time?
Day-of: having a successful program

• Set up a display of related materials
  – We like to remind patrons that while they came today for the program, they can continue their learning at home with any of our resources
  – Include database information/handouts if appropriate
  – Check your shelves for anything that may have come in since you last looked
Day-of: having a successful program

• Greet patrons as they enter, welcome them to the program, assist in handing out anything that needs to be handed out
  – County Extension Services appreciates us giving their handouts at the door.
    • It’s how they count attendance, plus we-the-Library can go make more copies if needed while the speaker can start on time.
Day-of: having a successful program

• When ready to start, make your intro
  • We go with a 5-part speech
    • “Welcome to the Library”
    • “Thank you so much for being here today”
    • “We have great materials to continue the learning of today’s topic”
    • “If you need to sign up for a library card, please visit the front desk before you leave today”
    • “Here’s what we’re doing today/the speaker we’re here to see”
Day-of: having a successful program

• 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.

• Ensure the speaker stays on the timeline, help them see if there are questions from the audience, troubleshoot tech, etc
Day-of: having a successful program

- At the end, thank everyone again for attending, remind them of the materials you have for checkout, mention an upcoming program (if you can and it’s related), and gentle goodbye
  - 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!”
After the program

• After the program, always review
  – What went well? What didn’t? Did patrons ask for more or different views on the topic?
  – Did anything surprise you? Why?
  – Did you get another program idea out of it?
    • Same presenter, different topic? Other topics the patrons asked for afterwards?
After the program

- After the program, always review
  - Did anything unusual happen? Share with your supervisor, positive or negative
  - Could another branch in your system replicate the program? Always increases ROI if another branch can do it too, since staff time is mostly already done
After the program

• Thank the presenter, help them clean up their materials, and ensure they have everything.

• An additional follow up thank you email can be appropriate.
  – Especially for big speakers, but it’s nice for anyone
Some successful programs

So what are some successful programs you’ve done?
Some successful programs

• Being located in Celebration, Disney is *huge* here
  – Stephen Barrett, “the Hidden Mickey guy”
  – Terri Hardin, Disney sculptor and puppeteer
    • Captain EO story
  – Robert J. Sherman!

• Oddly, Universal Studios programs are not well attended at all
Some successful programs

• Healthy living is a close second
  – Growing your own herbs
    • County Extension Services may be able to help with this one
  – Self-massage
    • Local masseur? YouTube videos?
  – Natural cleaners & pest control
    • Local business owner (essential oils)
Some successful programs

• Pure entertainment
  – Doctor Who event
    • Fandoms bring all ages together
  – Paranormal Investigators
    • Seasonal, patrons were interested
  – Super Saturday Cinema
    • Star Wars: The Force Awakens
Some successful programs

• Summer Reading – eh
  – 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
  – Active programs are less attended – not sure why
Some successful programs

• Passive programs
  – Raffles – write a book review on the raffle ticket, drop it in the box, see if you win!
  – Design-A-Comic Cover – in conjunction with Fan Faire, all ages were encouraged to draw a comic book cover, which would be displayed in the branch
  – Trivia contests/voting – can be seasonal, local trivia, promoting an upcoming program
    • Holiday movies trivia
    • Doctor Who favorite episode of all time, winner shown at active program
Program ideas

• Attendee library successes
  – Please state type of program, why it was successful, and if you would recommend someone else doing it

• Borrow from other libraries
  – If your administration is focused on a type of program, don’t hesitate to research other libraries and how they did it
  – Research time on other libraries’ successes is nearly always shorter than trying to do it yourself from scratch
Final Thoughts

• Just keep planning
• Allow for “failure” – you can’t drag people to a program
• Keep and refer to your checklist/timeline so you stay on track!
• Record successes AND failures – Computer classes
Questions/Problems

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