



1 SMART PUBLICITY

Having generated some initial publicity to attract users to your library project, the following information will advise you on methods to maintain the level of publicity you have already achieved, as well as escalating your advertising to reach new potential users.

Ongoing Publicity

It is important to remember that publicising your toy library will need to be an ongoing activity. People often have short memories, and the information you will be advertising will tend to change over time. Additionally, continued publicity will be necessary in order to attract new users, as existing members will eventually move on as their child matures. Furthermore, in local organisations personnel will often change and information about your project can be easily lost or overlooked by those who don't have background knowledge of your project

Sustaining Interest

In order to stimulate awareness in your project it is a good idea to implement a rolling publicity programme which will constantly update the local community as to your toy library's services. The following list offers some publicity events which will help maintain interest:

- Annual / monthly advertisement in the local press.
- Open days / play events.
- Stalls at an annual festival.
- Display at an early years conference.
- Regular leafleting.

Starting a Newsletter

A useful way to keep the local community informed about your toy library and its latest activities is to produce a regular newsletter. Newsletters could be either paper-based or produced online, and can detail such information as your library's new services, any forthcoming fundraising events, and perhaps even the introduction of new toys. Distributing a publication to all users will also encourage participation and keep everyone equally involved in the project.

Top Tip



Always keep a record of your publicity successes! Try to collect all newspaper cuttings, photos and quotes in a file.

Recording such events can give encouragement to your staff and volunteers, inspire confidence in potential users, and help to build up a profile of your project which will assist with future funding applications.

Continuing to Use Local Media

Having used local media channels to advertise for volunteers and attract new users to your library, you can also make further use of local media when trying to sustain your project's publicity and profile. If planning a media campaign, research all media opportunities available in your local community, e.g. newspapers, radio stations, local news broadcasts, etc. Journalists will always be on the lookout for a good local story. The following list offers some good tips when trying to encourage media outlets to cover your toy library:

- Organise an engaging photo or visual "stunt" (possibly a celebrity visit?)
- Make it easy for reporters by providing all the information they need, e.g. tell the papers you have a "photocall" for them.
- Type out all press information clearly and study the local papers' styles - if they tend to write short and snappy articles, make sure the information you give them is in a similar style.
- Know what you want to get across, and make sure this is included in any potential press release.



Writing a Press Release

A press release is a great way to succinctly announce an important event and generate public interest effectively. A written statement given to the media, a press release is a standardised way of communicating with journalists. If written well it will tell them what the story is at a glance - making their job easier and making it more likely they will cover your issue. Some key components of any press release are:

- WHEN is the event taking place?
- WHERE will it happen?
- WHO will be attending?
- WHAT will be happening?
- HOW will it happen?
- How can a journalist CONTACT you?

Using Social Media

For non-profit organisations, social media is a great tool to spread the word about your project and even raise money. Using social media can pay dividends for your toy library if used properly. No matter what social media sites or tools you use - Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram - you must remember to engage your followers and friends. That means doing things like asking your followers for feedback and ideas, and involving them in the decision making process. This, in turn, means you must remain active on these sites, constantly keeping your social media presence up-to-date.

Planning for the Response

Implementing a rolling programme of publicity will hopefully lead to a number of responses and requests for further information. Always remember to include your toy library's contact details on all publicity material produced, whether this is a telephone number, address, or email address. It is obviously important to reply to all enquiries from these potential users, and to give them all the specific information they require. Perhaps allocate user communications to a volunteer or specific individual to ensure this job is always managed and completed in good time.

Checklist

- Planned a rolling publicity campaign to sustain interest?
- Thought about producing a regular newsletter?
- Considered advertising opportunities available through your local media?
- Researched how to write a press release?
- Devised a strategy to help you cope with the response?



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