

HOW TO PLAN AN OUTREACH INITIATIVE

- Once there is a clear understanding of how the problem impacts the target audience, clearly define the message that you want your outreach initiative to convey.
- Decide how many people within your target audience you want to reach.
- Decide what type of initiative it will be:
 - Informative (where you are simply exposing people to your message with a display, exhibit, performance, or resources)
 - Interactive (where you will engage people with inquiry via survey or conversation)
 - A combination of informative and interactive.
- Determine a general timeframe and location of when/where you would like to conduct your outreach initiative.
- Research events that are occurring during the determined timeframe and in the general location you are targeting. Useful information to find out about possible site locations:
 - Dates, times, and locations of events
 - Average expected attendance
 - Does the event patron profile fit with your target audience
 - The event organizer's contact information
 - The type and/or purpose of the event.
- Research relevant observances already occurring and 'piggyback' your event at these times and with existing messaging. For example, Kick Butts Day (March), Earth Month (April), World No Tobacco Day (May) or Great American Smokeout (November).
- Contact the event organizer and explain why your outreach initiative is a good fit for the upcoming event. Be prepared to explain how and why your initiative will benefit the event. If you are unable to establish a partnership with an already scheduled event, research locations and times where a high volume of your target audience frequents. Plan your initiative for those locations and times.
- Determine if there are any permit requirements/fees to conduct your outreach initiative at the event or location.
- Determine how many staff and/or volunteers you will need for your type of outreach initiative (informative or inquiry). Put together any necessary consent/waiver forms.
- Order all supplies, printables, props, giveaways/incentives needed for your initiative. Also make sure to have gear for inclement weather (many outdoor events will still be held in the rain).

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- To recruit volunteers, solicit college organizations or special interest groups (through phone calls, social media, Craigslist, etc.) that may be interested in supporting your initiative. If you include anyone younger than 18, make sure to get parental consent.
- Prior to the event, conduct trainings and give instructions to staff/volunteers regarding the proper way to conduct the initiative (how to convey the message, engage people, and conduct surveys). Rehearse any performances prior to event.
- Stay in contact with the event organizer and make sure to comply with their requirements and expectations.
- During the initiative, monitor the feedback and responses from the event, and make adjustments accordingly.
- Be sure to thank:
 - The participants for being engaged in your initiative. They will be more likely to remember your message and organization positively.
 - The event organizer for allowing you to conduct your initiative during their event. Stay in contact with the organizers. You may want to collaborate with them in the future; it's always easier to keep contacts than try to continuously find new ones.
 - Your staff and volunteers for making the outreach initiative successful.
- Summarize and disseminate the data and observations collected (target audience feedback, surveys conducted, resource items distributed). This helps to gauge how successful your initiative was, plan for future events, and keep the target audience and volunteers engaged in your cause.

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