WORKING WITH WHAT YOU HAVE

utilizing an event management framework

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INTRODUCTION

Hosting events is often incorporated into the work of public-service-oriented art librarians. However, with increasing strains on resources required for successful events, streamlining and collaborating are both necessary steps for sustainable initiatives.

Since 2020, outreach programming literature has focused on the impact of the pandemic on library events and the necessary shift to online programming.[1] (Many of which seem to be through social media platforms.[2]) Consistent with pre-pandemic literature, many of these articles focus on case study reports of successful events.[3]

While there are myriad event examples in the literature, Bastone (2020) observed that "many case studies of academic library outreach efforts focus on specific events or programs, but fail to explore how they contribute to a larger program."[4] The framework presented here is an effort to address this need for sustainable, flexible models.

BACKGROUND

Throughout summer and fall 2019, the Robert B. Haas Family Arts Library (Arts Library) Programming Team at Yale University led by Tess and Alex endeavored to create and refine a new, sustainable approach to events management with an emphasis on staff collaboration and efficiency. The process of establishing the resulting framework is discussed in great detail in an article recently published in 2021. (Use the QR code below.)

In spring 2020 Alex departed the Arts Library and joined the John M. Flaxman Library team at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (Flaxman Library). The framework and its tools were implemented in this different academic environment, with a smaller team for programming initiatives. Meanwhile, Tess helped a library committee use the framework for staff professional development events at Yale. The global pandemic also meant the framework had to be adapted for virtual events at both libraries.

Through these various use cases, Tess and Alex have continued to adjust and refine the framework and its corresponding tools created in 2019. Adaptability and flexibility was a goal of the initial framework, and it has proven to be successful in these new use cases. When building the framework there were other outcomes hoped for that could not be assessed for success until after a full cycle of event planning.

This poster briefly outlines the components of the framework, provides new use cases, shares our findings since the events discussed in the publication of our 2021 article, and provides recommendations.

FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES

Expected
• It is scalable and flexible
• Recurring events are easier (thanks to task lists, budget, and cool down notes)
• Documentation has improved institutional memory
• Collaborative events have improved communication
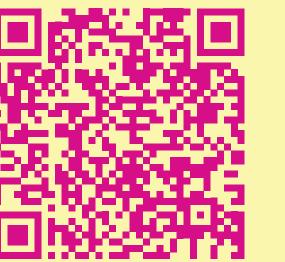• Promotional tasks are streamlined and outlets are not accidentally overlooked

Unexpected
• Using the data for reports / measuring return on investment
• Doing holistic reflection and non-metric assessment of programming
• New applications of the framework for more instructional programs like workshops

RECOMMENDATIONS

• Start planning early and identify your budget and potential event collaborators
• Filing consistently is key! (Especially for recurring events)
• Take time to reflect after each event and make notes
• Remain open to collaborators and feedback

REFERENCES +TEMPLATES

The framework is adaptable regardless of your library size or budget. We encourage you use the QR code or tinyurl to access the Google Folder with supplements to this poster: workbook and worksheet templates, the 2021 article covering the framework in more detail, and works referenced for this poster.

tinyurl.com/TCAOKARLIS22

Event Toolkit Components

The event planning framework consists of three key tools for every event: **filing system, workbook, and worksheet**. Each piece is scalable and adaptable to fit the specific needs of the organization and event scope. The authors have used this framework to host a range of events from single-recurring events to week-long event series involving multiple parties, as well as in-person and remote programs.

FILING SYSTEM

The filing system facilitates better organization, efficiency, and transparency between collaborators through consistent, required components. It is also the key to streamlining recurring events through documenting events effectively.

WORKBOOK

The Workbook is the foundation for all programming and events. Using a simple **Microsoft Excel spreadsheet or Google Sheet**, it consists of several sheets in the workbook:
• **cover page** - provides an event snapshot
• **budget** - proposals, order tracking, and total spent
• **outreach timeline** - routine promotion tasks
• **event prep checklist** - assign and track tasks
• **cool down** - post-event notes and checklist

WORKSHEET

The Worksheet is a **Microsoft Word document or Google Document** and pairs with the Workbook. It provides space for necessary text components of event promotion, including:
• event description
• text for social media
• email outreach drafts
• event planning notes

Adaptations

ROBUST TASK TRACKING

The workbook's event prep tab was adapted to include a more detailed and multifaceted task list, making coordinating multiple events with different days / times / event runners easier through frequent communication and clear assignments.

REPEAT PROMOTION

Specific promotion tasks for each event with different days / times / guests led to the adaption of the worksheet and workbook. The worksheet was altered to break drafts up by event rather than by platform / outlet. The workbook gained a promotion table with automated dates for each event.

INTERNAL OUTREACH

The worksheet was adapted to remove the public-facing promotional tasks from the outreach tab (since the audience for this committee is internal).

NO CHANGE NEEDED

The edit-a-thon is an example of an event that doesn't require adaptations to the framework since it is a small team from the same department managing a one-time session.

Case Studies

ART + FEMINISM WIKIPEDIA EDIT-A-THON

Format
Recurring virtual (2020) and hybrid (2021) event with synchronous and asynchronous workshop options with library co-runners.

Description
Most art information professionals are familiar with the Art+Feminism Wikipedia Edit-a-thon, but 2020 was the first time Alex helped host it at the Flaxman Library, applying this framework to that recurring event. That semester was virtual, and YouTube playlists were created for asynchronous training while gathering on Zoom. In 2021, Alex was able to use the results of the framework to expand the event, adding a synchronous workshop to the existing playlist training option during a hybrid session where folks joined in person and on Zoom.

FRAMEWORK STRENGTHS
The normalized documentation, toolkit, and thorough post-event notes from 2020 meant the 2021 event was significantly easier to host and expand.

READING WEEK

Format
In-Person (2019) and virtual (2020) series of multiple, synchronous events with different event runners from varying departments.

Description
In fall 2019, the Arts Library hosted a successful week-long Reading Week program using the events framework and toolkit. (See the 2021 article for more information.) The one-week series involved multiple event-runners hosting different events. During spring 2020, the pandemic impacted all areas of library work, including events. The toolkit was put to the test and adapted to facilitate a reimagined virtual program which expanded beyond the Arts Library to include colleagues hosting reading week events across Yale Library.

FRAMEWORK STRENGTHS
The toolkit made collaboration seamless for through shared action items and protocols for event descriptions, promotion schedules, and assessment in a central location.

LIBRARIANS, LIVE!

Format
Recurring, virtual Instagram livestream events with library co-runners.

Description
In June 2020, the Flaxman Library launched Librarians, Live!, a series that evolved to focus on interviews between librarians and artists (primarily SAIC faculty) about research and their creative practice. Two librarians collaborate to put on this recurring series, aiming for one interview a month during the fall and spring. During each event, one acts as the interviewer while the other is the monitor who records event statistics and responds to viewer comments. The interviewer is responsible for plugging information into the adapted workbook before the event, and whoever monitors adds information after.

FRAMEWORK STRENGTHS
The worksheet is instrumental for writing and tracking promotional texts, allowing the writer to make minor updates to existing descriptions rather than create new drafts.

COMMITTEE EVENTS

Format
Various synchronous professional development events put on by a cross-department library committee.

Description
At Yale Library, Tess pitchhed the events framework to the Research, Instruction, and Outreach committee (RIO) to help facilitate internal training events for librarians. The workflow was presented to the committee members and stakeholders, which led to creating a committee "events sub-group" to coordinate the effort. This group adapted and used the framework for RIO professional development events moving forward.

FRAMEWORK STRENGTHS
Collaborative event planning and documentation built into the tools creates collective memory for the committee. Assessment tracked through the cool down tab of the worksheet are helpful for committee reports.