2019 FMN session - summer camps

1. Intro

2. Why should you care?
   a. Making connections with your community
   b. Growing your audience

3. The basics of summer camps
   a. Who’s your audience?
      i. Answer this question first
      ii. Take a look at your own audience. Who is visiting your museum? Do you notice that a certain subset is there more frequently than others? Are there groups of people that you would like to draw to your museum?
      1. Evaluation data is your best friend! Use surveys, gallery observations, focus groups, and more to collect data and make smart decisions about your programming. If you have admissions, you may already have a good data set in your point of sale system.
      iii. If you’re just starting out, consider making a day camp for kids ages 5-8.
         1. This age group is old enough to handle a few hours for a day camp. They’re also more likely to already be into firefighting and eager to learn more. Chances are that they are already a big part of your audience
   b. Content
      i. Teaching young children - creating content appropriate to their developmental level
      ii. Look at content standards established by your school district. These will help you understand what local students are expected to achieve, and where they are likely to be in terms of comprehension and developmental level
   c. Marketing
      i. Teachers
         1. Use your existing email lists of educators, if you have them
         2. Can approach people who work as community enrichment coordinators for your local school districts and individual schools
      ii. Family/mom groups
         1. MOPS
      iii. Membership communications
      iv. Website and social media
         1. This is how many people - especially families with young kids - will first interact with your museum
         2. Make sure your website is attractive and easy to navigate.
         3. Include a page for education and a calendar of upcoming events
4. If you can only spare the time for one social media platform, make it Facebook

v. Contact local newspapers, community groups, educational organizations
   1. Some have online calendars that you can simply fill in. Others may have a community or education reporter that you can contact directly.

d. Sign-ups
   i. Create as streamlined a process as possible - a “one stop shop” that includes information about the camp, the sign-up form, and a way to complete payment online. The fewer links someone has to click, the better
   ii. Include your policies on the camp sign-up form. This includes information about your refund policy, camp dates and times, and who to contact if they have questions.
   iii. Your form should include
      1. Contact information for adults (including authorized adults for pickup, if not the one signing the camper up)
      2. Information about the camper (name, age, school attending, relevant medical information such as allergies)
      3. What camp session are they attending? (if you have multiple sessions)
      4. A photo release section (important if you want to use photos in future marketing materials, including social media and your website)
      5. A release for emergency medical treatment
      6. How they learned about your camp

e. Communicating with families
   i. Send out a confirmation email as soon as they sign up
   ii. A reminder email 1-2 weeks before camp. Include info/reminders about:
      1. Camp times
      2. Parking
      3. Activities
      4. Any field trips or special guests/speakers

f. Lesson plans
   i. Write a lesson plan for each day of class. Include clear learning objectives
   ii. Your activities will support your learning objective.
   iii. Make activities as engaging as possible.
      1. Energetic young kids often learn better and have more fun while moving and participating in an activity (rather than passively learning).
   iv. Take home activities help reinforce the lesson. Campers are also bringing home information to their family and community.

g. Bringing in community partners
i. Partner with your local fire department. Can firefighters come in and speak to your campers? They can help reinforce programming about fire safety and firefighter duties. Don’t forget about station tours, too!

ii. Is there another museum or cultural organization in your area that can work with you?

iii. Think of other community partners outside of your local fire department. These could include arson dog teams, wildland firefighters, paramedics, medical professionals, and more.

h. Teaching - how to speak to kids, how to communicate concepts in an age-appropriate manner
   i. **Don’t talk down to kids.** They (and their parents/guardians) will pick up on your tone and intent. Kids are worthy of your respect as much as any adult.
   
   ii. Do make sure you’re using vocabulary and sentence structure that’s right for their age group.
   
   1. Ex., “fire triangle” vs. “fire tetrahedron” - what’s easier for a seven-year-old to understand?
   2. Break long sentences into shorter ones.
   3. Introduce a concept, then reinforce it with an activity. You can further reinforce it with follow-up questions or a take-home activity

   iii. Establish clear expectations (ex., raising hands)
   
   1. Make sure you follow through with expectations and consequences (ex., only calling on kids who are quietly, respectfully raising their hand - while gently reminding kids that you are only calling on people who are raising their hand).

   iv. Use positive language - tell kids what you want them to do, instead of what they shouldn’t do.
   
   1. Ex., “use your walking feet” instead of “don’t run”

i. After camp
   
   i. Send a survey to everyone who signed up.

4. Case study: The Denver Firefighters Museum - Junior Firefighters Summer Camp
   
   a. Basic structure of the camp
   
   i. Two camp sessions; one for kids ages 5-7, another for kids ages 8-12
   
   ii. Each camp is 5 days, 2-3 hours per session

   b. Lesson content
   
   i. Firefighting history, fire safety, and modern-day firefighting
   
   ii. Day 1: Firefighting history
   
   iii. Days 2-3: Fire safety
   
   iv. Day 4: Modern firefighting (gear, duties, PAT obstacle course)
   
   v. Day 5: Review and station visit

   c. Marketing
   
   i. Local newspapers (including online calendar forms), membership emails, social media, parent groups, and word of mouth.
d. Going forward: what will we keep? What will we change?
   i. Feedback from campers and parents helped us make decisions
   ii. Longer camp sessions
   iii. More take home activities