Planning & Running a Library Facility Referendum Campaign

Ideas & Lessons from the Cranbrook Public Library Board
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• 2000
  ▪ City makes new library facility a priority
Prologue

First Referendum

• 2001 – 2002
  ▪ Architect selected
  ▪ Gather community input
  ▪ Develop new library facility plan

• November 2002
  ▪ First referendum fails
    ▷ Slight majority in City
    ▷ Slight minority in RDEK Area C
    ▷ Majority required in both areas
  ▪ Major Issue: Cost
Prologue

Looking at Options

• 2003
  ▪ City strikes the New Library Facility Planning Committee
    ▶ Target: reduce cost of facility by 25%

• 2004
  ▪ Opportunity to purchase building
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Prologue

Looking at Options

- Architect and engineer conduct feasibility study
  - Building can be adapted for library use
- City enters into negotiations with owners
• January – April 2005
  ▪ Architect develops adaptive floor plan
  ▪ City finalizes negotiations
    ▶ Sale contingent upon referendum results
  ▪ Regional District of East Kootenay decides to hold referendum July 9
  ▪ City of Cranbrook decides to hold referendum November 19
  ▪ Library Board strikes referendum campaign committee

• May 2005
  ▪ Referendum campaign begins
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Beginnings

Identify Roles

• Strike a referendum committee
• Meet with the key stakeholders
  ▪ Library Board
  ▪ Chief Librarian
  ▪ Library staff
  ▪ City staff
  ▪ Regional district staff
• Determine who controls what information
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Beginnig  
Communi-cation

Lines of Communication

- City Council
- Regional District Board
- City Staff
- Regional District Staff
- Library Board
  - Amongst trustees
- Library Board
- Chiefs of the Library
- Library Staff
- Friends of the Library
- Public
  - Voters
- Media
  - Print, Radio, Television

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Beginnin

g
Establish
Roles

• Set day-to-day communication channels
• Establish roles
  ▪ Information
  ▪ Promotion
• Identify activities each stakeholder group must undertake
• Provide framework for information sharing
• Let all parties review material being released to public before it is released
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Beginnin
g

Communi-
cation

Library Board
• Amongst trustees

Library Staff

Friends of the Library

Chief Librarian

Media
• Print, Radio, Television

Public
• Voters

City Council

City Staff

Regional District Board

Regional District Staff

Lines of Communication
Key Points

• All communications between stakeholders must be:
  ▪ Clear
  ▪ Concise
  ▪ Open
  ▪ Ongoing

• Better to say things too often than not often enough

• Each stakeholder must respect the roles of other stakeholders
The Middle

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Middle
Planning the Campaign

• Determine the scope of the campaign
  ▪ Strike Referendum Campaign Committee
  ▪ Timeline
  ▪ Research
  ▪ Budget
  ▪ Key Message
  ▪ Message Delivery
  ▪ Evaluation

• Bring these components together to develop the work plan
A timeline helps keep things on track

Maximize lead-in time

- Start thinking about a referendum at the same time as planning for a new library

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6 + Months</th>
<th>6-4 Months</th>
<th>3-2 Months</th>
<th>6 Weeks – 1 Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>Develop</td>
<td>Stakeholder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message</td>
<td>Promotional material</td>
<td>working plan</td>
<td>meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logo</td>
<td>Preliminary stakeholder meetings</td>
<td>Review promotional material and print</td>
<td>The campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slogan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Library staff have access to a wealth of information – use them
• Look at other referendum campaigns
• Determine what information is already in the public domain
  ▪ Information from public planning sessions
  ▪ Anything published in local media regarding the new facility
• Get a sense of community sentiment
• Gauge the political climate
• Be aware of external forces – past, present, future – that may impact the campaign
• The budget is a major factor in determining the type of campaign
  ▪ Direct Costs: paid advertising, printing, billboards …
  ▪ Indirect Costs: staff time, in-house resources …
• There is no such thing as a no-cost campaign
• Determine source of the money
• Other stakeholders may incur costs based on their roles
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lower Cost</th>
<th>Higher Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer run</td>
<td>Hire campaign staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-house material development and printing</td>
<td>External material development and printing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News releases</td>
<td>Paid advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone calls</td>
<td>Open houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations at organization meetings</td>
<td>Internal funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soliciting donations</td>
<td>Directed mailing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass mailing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most campaigns have a mix of lower and higher cost items.

It is possible to run a successful campaign on a minimal budget.

$2,947
Middle
Pondering the Budget
• The campaign needs a clear, consistent message
  ▪ Be brief
  ▪ The message can be your slogan
    ➤ “Vote yes for your new library”
  ▪ Promotional material supports your message
    ➤ Answer: who, what, why, when, where and how
- All stakeholders need to know the message
- All stakeholders need to present the message consistently to the public
• The logo is another component of the message
  ▪ Create a graphic to be used on all promotional material
  ▪ Can be an image or an adaptation of the slogan
• Be genuinely positive and enthusiastic
• What you are promoting is the best option available
• Be a cheerleader
• Do not be impartial
• Do not just present the facts
• The majority of the work plan deals with message delivery

• Components
  ▪ Category
  ▪ Task
  ▪ Completed by
  ▪ Assigned to
  ▪ Overview
  ▪ Comments
• Put other stakeholders’ activities into the plan

• Ensure all stakeholders have a chance to review the plan

• The work plan is a living document

• Details change during the campaign

• Once the work plan is in place, the campaign can begin
### Middle Sample Work Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Key Issue</th>
<th>Needed by</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Overview</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>Public Information Meeting</td>
<td>November 3</td>
<td>Larry / Clouston</td>
<td>Organize open houses</td>
<td>Wayne available; Elmer ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>November 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 – 8 pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>Cash balance work sheet</td>
<td>October 19</td>
<td>Ursula</td>
<td>Set up budget, revenue and expenditures</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>Update brochures</td>
<td>October 18</td>
<td>Ursula</td>
<td>Must focus on new tax rate, polling stations</td>
<td>Ready for distribution by October 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Give to Wayne at City for review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail</td>
<td></td>
<td>November 8</td>
<td>Bill</td>
<td>Send to all households in Cranbrook</td>
<td>We can afford one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Must sort for post office and drop off 3 days prior to delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td></td>
<td>Week of October 23</td>
<td>Angus / Ursula</td>
<td>Interview for Community Focus</td>
<td>Contact Nadine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signs in City</td>
<td></td>
<td>November 1</td>
<td>Bill / Angus</td>
<td>Spreadsheet with name, number, comments</td>
<td>34 signs available at library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>/ Jayne</td>
<td></td>
<td>Installation completed by November 3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Develop phone lists; library members</td>
<td>October 19</td>
<td>Ursula</td>
<td>Spreadsheet with name, number, comments</td>
<td>Idea is to have a simple spread sheet of 20 – 30 names per volunteer- easy recording</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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• Telephone Campaign
  ▪ Contact all adult library members to encourage them to vote yes
  ▪ Comply with privacy laws

• Mass Mailing
  ▪ Simple poster encouraging people to vote yes
  ▪ Include voting dates and locations

• In-House Display
  ▪ Pictures, plans, brochures, Frequently Asked Question sheets, bookmarks, bumper stickers
  ▪ Have staff hand out information
• Signs & Billboards
  ▪ Get permission to put up roadside signs
  ▪ Place in strategic locations
  ▪ Involve library users

• Word-of-Mouth
  ▪ Library, especially circulation, staff can directly convey the message to library users
  ▪ Always be ready to answer questions
Media & the Public

- Involve Media
  - News releases
  - Tours
  - Regular updates

- Involve Public
  - Open houses
  - Information sessions
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• End all campaign activity the night before the referendum
• Ensure media has the board chair and chief librarian’s contact information for a post-referendum interview
• Prepare for both a positive and negative result
• Determine how you will keep track of the referendum results
• Wait
• Board chair and chief librarian should give interviews as requested
• Keep the message consistent
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Climax

RDEK

60%

Cranbrook

City

k’s

88%

Referendum

Results
Epilogue
• Take down signs
• Place a thank you notice in local newspapers
• Recognize referendum volunteers
• Thank the other stakeholders for their participation
Epilogue

Evaluation

• Meet with stakeholders
• Review the work plan and the campaign
• Answer these questions:
  ▪ What worked?
  ▪ What didn’t?
  ▪ What could have been done differently?
  ▪ What is the community’s reaction?
  ▪ What are the next steps?
• If the campaign was successful, have a celebration
• Use the momentum from the campaign to keep community interest engaged
  ▪ Provide local media updates
  ▪ Set up an in-house display
  ▪ Brief staff on the status of the new library facility

• Maintain the relationship with the other stakeholders
• Prepare for the new reality
  ▪ Finalize working plans
  ▪ Develop a strategic plan
  ▪ Make procedural changes necessary for operating in the new space
  ▪ Deal with anything else that comes up
The end of the referendum campaign is the beginning of another volume in the life of the library.
Epilogue

Next Steps

Never tire of hearing the question:

Are you excited about the new library?