



# CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

*Suggestions from Peter Millward, Group Manager, Education & Visitor Programs, Melbourne Museum, Australia*

Over the years I have put my mind fairly heavily to the questions involved with respect to Marketing of programs - particularly to teachers but of course more generally. My background is via schools education and a hands-on science centre before joining Melbourne Museum 4 years ago.

## **Marketing programs to the public:**

- ◆ I have always felt that the best time to tell people about what is coming up is as they leave from a successful visit - not an expensive option to have "Coming Soon" flyers available at your exit point
- ◆ The issue for public programs is always that there is such a wide variety of them that marketing individual activities is rarely economically possible. Even here at Melbourne Museum where we had 1 million visitors in our first year we rarely advertise individual activities, rather we make sure the public understand we are an active and dynamic place and ads have one or two examples
- ◆ We advertise Holiday Programs on the website as pdf files. Good value this because you get an absolute figure from the number of downloads which is more reliable than the number of page hits
- ◆ We have a What's On system on our website that people might be interested in exploring - we have three campuses in Museum Victoria and you can search What's On by date, event type, campus etc. In-house the system delivers a timebound set of activities for TODAY to computer terminals round the museum. Additionally we have What's On Today sheets at top and bottom of the escalators in the three floor public space areas of the museum. On weekends we hand out small A5 sized flyers with the days program. We always include some highlights of the upcoming month as well on these sheets and also the website address

## **Marketing to schools**

- ◆ All the usual flyers sent to schools and to subject coordinators
- ◆ Fax streams to subject heads and to schools are an economic way of getting to people
- ◆ Emails are increasingly being used but it presupposes ease of access for the teachers - here in Victoria every State school has a data line into it supplied by the State Government and every teacher has an individual account
- ◆ Teacher previews of new exhibitions are popular but don't always get the level of support you'd imagine
- ◆ Teacher PD sessions are working very well for us - most commonly 4.30pm to 6pm on weekdays with a glass of wine to finish the session.

- ◆ We are going to try Saturday mornings next year with the incentive being free entry for the teacher's family. They do their PD session then join the family for the remainder of their visit
- ◆ School Memberships schemes have been a feature of the smaller science centre/museum where I worked before moving to Melbourne. Analysis of school visits showed that nearly half the 30,000 school students visiting in a year came from about 50 of the 250 schools in the region. By targeting these schools with an offer of 30% discount on visit charges in return for an upfront payment of a Membership Fee of \$1 per student on their roll [min\$50, max \$250] is a good incentive. It also allows very targeted marketing as we get a list of the names of the teachers so send direct to them by name.
- ◆ We have a "free teacher entry" policy at all times. Any teacher in the State can turn up at the museum and by giving us a sheet of school letterhead paper with their name, position, teaching area and email address they get free individual entry at any time. We include teacher trainees in the same scheme which is very well received

### **Finally**

An idea for increasing the penetration of the adult education and tertiary education market - charge them the same entry price as you charge school kids. Here at Melbourne Museum normal adult entry is \$15, Concessions are \$11 [typically cultural institutions charge this for adult ed and tertiary]. School students are \$6. Just to give you an idea we had 120,000 education visitors in the last year of which a full 10% were adult and tertiary - two or three times the percentage of other cultural institutions in the State and elsewhere I suspect.

Well that should do for starters I imagine. I would enjoy getting copies and papers and reports from your seminar and will happily clarify anything I have put in this hastily prepared but reasonably well considered report. I am happy to enter into email discussion on any of these issues.

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