Virtual Beer Tasting

Vernon Area Public Library

Adults

Virtual Beer Tasting

May 7, 2020

$51-100

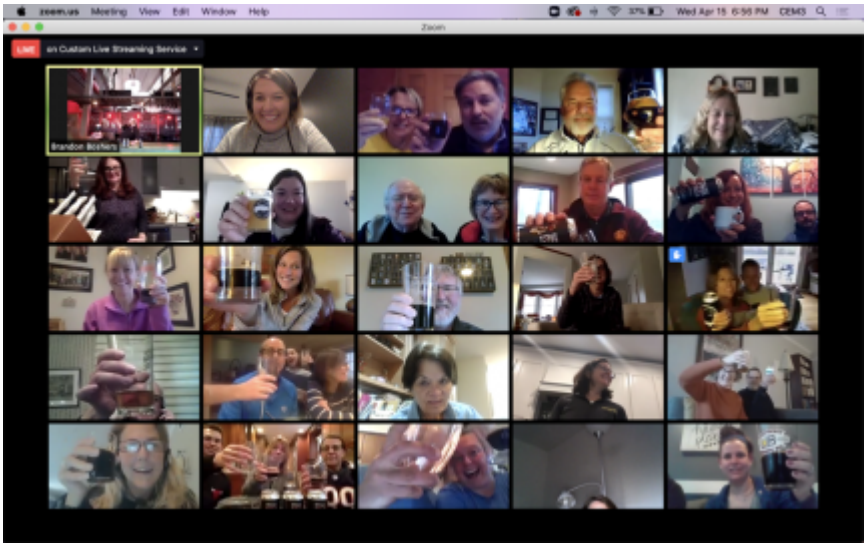
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Byline

Ashley Johnson, Business Outreach Librarian, Vernon Area Public Library, Lincolnshire, Ill.

My library planned an online guided tasting of four craft beers led by a local brewmaster. The library hosted the virtual presentation and the brewery provided the program content and the beer flight, which participants could choose to purchase in advance with curbside delivery.

The program provided support for a local business during the pandemic, patrons learned something new, and the experience created community and connection among participants, the brewery and the library. With participants' cameras turned on, the audience became a “virtual pub” as we toasted each pour together.

Image



Advanced Planning

Reaching out to members of your local chamber of commerce is a great place to start. Working with a partner that you already know makes communication and planning just a bit easier — that element of trust is important when it comes to programming. If an existing relationship isn’t a possibility, think about the people at the business that have the expertise and reach out to them directly or ask for an introduction from a general manager.

The program requires a teleconferencing platform such as Zoom and a presenter, in our case, a local brewmaster.

Marketing

We promoted on our full roster of digital channels: subscriber email, social media (primarily Facebook) and our online calendar. The brewery also advertised to their subscribers and followers.

Budgeting

Because this program had an optional add-on purchase from the brewery (a sample pack for $14) we chose to also offer our presenter a more modest honorarium ($75).

We know that the brewery sold out of their Library Samplers, and they made a nice bit of money for a small time commitment from a small pool of their staff.

Day-of-event Activity

We attempted to livestream through both Zoom and Facebook Live simultaneously. When the Zoom link failed, the brewmaster improvised by setting up his phone to stream to Facebook Live while the laptop covered the Zoom audience. I would not do that again.

Zoom was the better platform for this program. While Facebook Live is a bit easier, Zoom's gallery view allowed participants to actually see one another — it provided a critical community experience. People were chatting to each other in the chat feature, waving to one another, and lifting their glasses to toast at the presenters request. It was fun.

Program Execution

The program was a huge hit. We counted approximately 80 screens participating, and it was apparent that behind many of those screens was a couple or a whole family. Attendees asked for a repeat program.

The primary outcome was an hour of fun and community connection at a time when some relief from pandemic stress was desperately needed. In many ways, though, this program model achieves a lot of community good during a difficult time. The speaking fee provides modest direct income, putting public tax dollars back in the hands of the business that paid that tax. The program and related marketing also provides promotion for the business and an opportunity for the business to demonstrate expertise in their field. Program attendees learn something new and the optional program add-ons (e.g., the beer for the tasting) generates ancillary sales.

The result is an amount of good that is greater than the sum of its parts. Everyone benefits: the library, the business and the attendees!

Advice

This format would work for other "tastings" too — wine, tea, cheeses, anything you can do a "flight" of. I will say that a beer flight made for a particularly convivial event at a time when we all needed to blow off some steam. Tap your local business expertise!

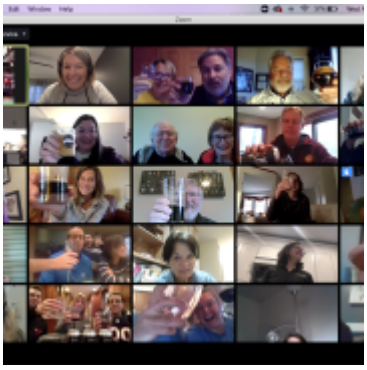
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Supporting Materials

Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images



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Adults (21 and up)+ | □□
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Science of Brewing: Tour and Tasting

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)
Apr 29, 2020
+ | □□
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Quaranzine (A Quarantine Zine)

Audiences:

Apr 30, 2020
Teens (13-16)+ | $$$
Image



To-Go Crafts

Audiences:

Teens (13-16)
Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational
May 6, 2020
Children (9 and under)+ | $
Image



Dear Friend: Quarantine Pen Pal Campaign

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)
Teens (13-16)
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Intergenerational