Take-Home Job Fair

Tyler Public Library

Take-Home Job Fair

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Byline

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It’s a job fair, but all in one bag! Take-Home Job Fair bags were kits created by our library with a variety of information focused on job-searching, skill-building, resume-writing, and overall career-building.

Patrons could pick up a bag in the library lobby. Contents included instructional information pertinent to job-searching, lists of local work resources, brochures from nearby temp agencies, coupons for use of the library’s computer lab, and discount coupons for the local Salvation Army store for interview clothing.

The bags also contained various goodies including notepads, coupons for coffee shops and restaurants, and pens (lots of pens).

Advanced Planning

In early 2020, we started to plan a traditional job fair for the spring. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our plans came to screeching halt. In June, our library reopened to the public with a limited capacity and no in-person programming.

We still wanted to help our community and knew that many had lost jobs during area shutdowns. How could we help connect these individuals with resources while still preserving social distancing? How could we replicate the benefits of a job fair without hosting a traditional job fair? The solution was to apply the popular kit template to the fair.

Three library staff members divided up the work of reaching out to potential donors for the bag contents. We also kept track of the status of the content using a spreadsheet, including which agency was contacted, which agency was confirmed as a donor, and if the materials donated had been picked up or delivered.

We tried to keep information in the bags generalized: what you need to wear to an interview, nearby resources, how to find a job, etc. We were hesitant to include any current postings from companies in the event the bags were not readily taken home by patrons. Yet we found that the bags were of high interest and went quickly, so this was a non-issue for us.

Marketing

We promoted the event with Facebook and Instagram posts, press releases and internal ads. However, the bags were more than enough advertisement for themselves!

Since the take-home bags were set up in our library’s front lobby, patrons saw the bags immediately upon entering the library and would inquire about their purpose and contents.

Budgeting

There was little cost to this program because most of the contents were donated by outside organizations and agencies. Some fliers and brochures were printed in house, which utilized library materials.

We bought 200 plastic 9-by-12-inch vendor bags in bulk from Amazon for less than $50.

If cost cuts need to be made in this area, one suggestion would be to seek out donations of bags or collect and repurpose used grocery bags.

Day-of-event Activity

We set out a table in our library lobby so patrons could grab the bags at their leisure.

Our library has implemented a patron capacity limit to help ensure social distancing and slow the spread of COVID. To track patrons going in and out, our library has a staff member or volunteer stationed in the library during open hours. This person was on hand to explain the take-home bag to patrons and help distribute the bags.

The only challenge was when a patron would take more than one bag despite the limit of one per person in place.

Program Execution

The distribution of the take-home bags went smoothly and all were gone before the week was over. There was a small snafu where a mix-up occurred and the bags allocated to Salvation Army were delivered to the wrong department of the Salvation Army building, emphasizing that even with effective communication with outside partners mistakes happen!

Patrons at the library enjoyed the take-home bags greatly, and we heard of at least one patron who attributed finding a better-paying job to the job fair bag.

Advice

Alongside the important information, swag makes the bag fun and attractive to the patron. Ask organizations for practical things like pens and information, but also ask for fun things. We received mouse pads, ponchos, magnetic bookmarks and more. Reach out to restaurants and ask for coupons. Patrons love freebies, and the restaurants loved the promotion.

Did you try this program at your library? Share your experience using this form.

Supporting Materials

Document
resume_sample.pdf
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Document
take-home_job_fair.pdf
Document
job_resources.pdf
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online_interviews.pdf
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Jun 4, 2020
Adults (21 and up)+ | □□
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Sep 8, 2020
Adults (21 and up)+ | $$$
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Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational
Young Adult (17 - 20)