Entrepreneur Fair

Cherry Hill Public Library

Adults

Entrepreneur Fair

Sep 17, 2015

$501-1000

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Byline

Andy Woodworth, Ref. & Adult Services Supervisor, Cherry Hill (N.J.) Public Library

We designed the Entrepreneur Fair to help new and emerging business people find resources and services that would help them take their passions to the next logical step. From basic financial education from banks and supportive government agencies to local mentoring opportunities and networking, attendees could find help for the area of their business that needed the most attention. Alex Freund, a successful business executive and mentor, spoke about the importance of hiring the first employee for a business. The event was held July 30, 2015, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Advanced Planning

The program was planned by a three-member team comprised of staff from our reference department. One person contacted vendors and arranged for the speaker while the other two created educational materials for the night of the event. We accomplished this over a two-month period, with the last group commitment happening about three weeks before the event. As we had never done an event like this before, the challenge was figuring out what to do next while recruiting vendors for the fair.

Participating organizations included the Camden County Regional Chamber of Commerce, Latin American Economic Development Association (LAEDA), U.S. Small Business Administration, New Jersey Association of Women Business Owners, SCORE, PNC Bank, Republic Bank, New Jersey Small Business Development Center at Rutgers, Technology & Entrepreneur Talent Network, Camden County Improvement Authority and us, Cherry Hill Public Library.

Marketing

Vendors who had committed to attending our event publicized it on their mailing lists and social media accounts. In addition, the library's PR department sent out press information to local media outlets, and we shared it on the library's social media accounts.

Budgeting

We spent a portion of the budget on the speaker fee and publicity materials. We should have spent more on publicizing the event.

Day-of-event Activity

The library's facilities staff set up the tables and chairs, and the planning team put cards on the tables so the participating organizations would know which tables were theirs. The library also staffed a table offering information on library resources. In total, five or six staff members helped run the event.

Program Execution

People would enter the conference center and then approach different tables as they desired. We had about 60 people attend; based on feedback from the vendors, we were told this was an incredible first event. Attendance was sporadic but steady. Given the niche nature of the fair, the attendance was reasonable.

We did not have an attendee evaluation form, but we did solicit feedback from all the vendors as part of a "thank you" from the library. Most replied with very helpful critiques.

Advice

Plan (even further) ahead. Offer food, even if it's just coffee. We did not have a check-in table for attendees, but I would encourage others to have one; registration can and will help, especially if you offer nametags. And don't sweat the small stuff — but be sure to manage the relationships with the outside organizations as closely as possible since you may want to have them back again.

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

Supporting Materials

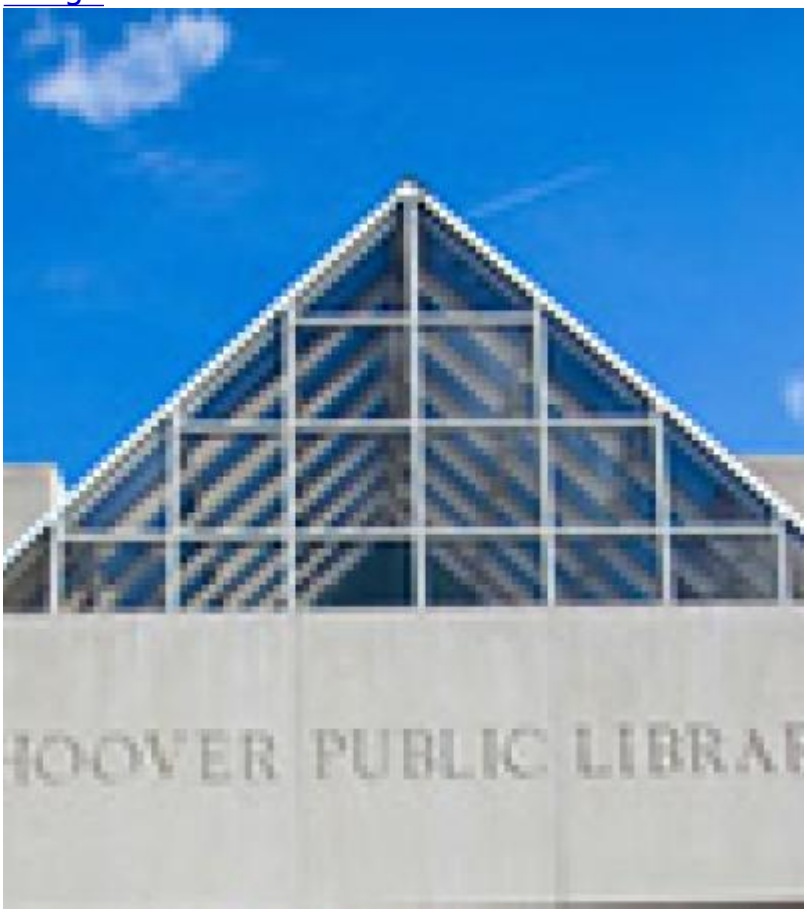
Document
entrepreneur_fair_flier.pdf
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Start a "Start Your Own Business" Program

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Business on a Budget: Programming for Entrepreneurs

Audiences:

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Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational
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Local Author Fair

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)
Tweens (10-12)
Teens (13-16)
Young Adult (17 - 20)
Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational