Navigating the Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19)
March 17, 2020
Webinar powered by: Carl Bloom Associates
What to do about our fundraising event? Wait, what to do about everything?
King County Library System Foundation Response

- Scheduled for March 7
- Cancelled March 4
- 27th year of the Literary Lions Gala
- 20 Authors, 750 guests, 80 volunteers
- Estimated Revenue of $500k+
King County Library System Foundation Response

Decision Making

• 2 weeks prior
  • Factors: rising # of cases
  • Actions: alert library/board leadership and staff

• 10 days prior
  • Factors: rapid geographic spread of cases; lack of containment measures
  • Actions: KCLSF Executive Committee, Library leadership notified to be ready to cancel; board leader discussion
Decision Making

- 6 days prior
  - Factors: closing of corporate offices and work-from-home decisions; emerging research on infection and mortality rates
  - Actions: ED and Executive Committee call for decision
- 4 days prior—board makes decision to cancel
King County Library System Foundation Response

Notification Process for Cancellation

Venue, Vendors → Authors, Speakers, Gala Planning Committee → Guests and Volunteers → Follow up with Table Captains
Vendor Implications

Venue
- Did not fall under Force Majeure Clause
- Canceling within 72 hours of event
- Contractually obligated for 80% of food & bev minimum
- In negotiations with Hyatt to try and reduce this

Other Vendors
- Keynote Speaker, Photographer, Auctioneer and others have agreed to postpone to 2021 no extra fee
King County Library System Foundation Response

Transition to "Virtual Gala"

- Follow up send to all guests ask for online RTP gift
- Emphasized Challenge Match and additional incentive of signed Melinda book for gifts of $1,000+
- Link to ticket sales for Author Salons and Wine Magnums

Ongoing Fundraising for Spring – follow up to Gala

- Library Giving Day, Spring Newsletter, GiveBIG and Mid-Year Appeal will have refocused theme
Lessons Learned

- Timing is everything
- Being nimble and able to pivot
- Opportunity for growth
  - Relationship building with key donors
  - New donors stepping up – gifts in lieu
  - How do we build this experience into our plans/contracts for the future?
The Seattle Public Library Foundation Response

- Scheduled for 3/17, Canceled 3/4
- Process for Decision Making & Communications Plan
- Venue Implications
- Sponsor Implications
- Ongoing Fund Development Efforts
The Seattle Public Library Foundation Response

- Decision Making
  - Values
  - Health & Safety
  - Postpone vs. Cancel Debate
  - Long-Term Perception
  - Financial Impact
The Seattle Public Library Foundation Response

- Venue Implications
  - Force Majeure Clause
  - Initial Proposal from Hotel/AV

- Sponsor Implications
  - Requirement to Return Funds
  - Present Opportunities for Remaining Year
  - Make it Simple to Redirect
SPLF Communications Plan

Board of Directors
- President
- Donor Relations Committee
- Executive Committee

Event Team
- Event Chairs
- Event Committee
- Key Sponsors
- Speakers

Library Staff
- Leadership
- Marketing
- Communications

Table Captains
- Personal Calls
- Emails

Registered Guests
- Table Captain Email
- E-Blast to All Guests
- Outreach to Unsubscribed

Social/Web
- Social Media
- Website

Vendors
- Hotel/AV
- Printers
- Florists, etc.
The Seattle Public Library Foundation Response

- Ongoing Fund Development Efforts
  - Table Captain Cancelation Appeal
  - Foundation-Initiated Cancelation Appeal
  - Event Day Appeal (coming from speaker)
  - Follow-up Forward of Event Day Appeal
  - Peer-to-Peer Activation

- Direct Mail
  - Refocused message

- Supporting the Emergent Needs of the Library

- Strategic Use of Time/Resources While Virus Impacts Subside
• Key Learnings
  • Stay Calm
  • Create a Plan / Share Responsibilities
  • Overcommunicate (Personal/Email)
  • Donors Appreciate 1:1 Contact
  • Peer-to-Peer Activation
  • Step Back to Look at Your Messaging
  • Think Long-Term
Challenge:
We have our major gala in April and other donor events in the spring. Revenue of $800K+

Considerations:
- What are the City and Library directives
- Risk assessments
  - Our responsibility to guests, staff, volunteers
  - Financial implications
Approach:
Proactive planning with positivity and flexibility
- Risk Management
- Communications
Toronto Public Library
Response

Actions:

- Update Crisis Management and Business Continuity Plan
- Stay in step with the City/Library operational plans and messaging
- Evaluate risks and make decisions accordingly
- Communicate to key stakeholders at milestones driven by external or internal decisions: staff, Board, committees, suppliers, volunteers, etc
- Hold daily meetings to keep leadership connected
- Remain calm, pragmatic, strategic, transparent
- Remember: when the dust settles the business still has to be in good shape so keep essential business practices, meetings, projects, moving forward
Decisions so far:

- Postpone the fundraising gala to the fall: comm plan to all stakeholders before it is publicly announced.
- Do a financial analysis on postponing or cancelling all other events until July 1st. Includes impact to revenue and expenses.
- Include impact of longer term revenue now that these events won’t provide a pipeline.
- What other solutions can we introduce? I.e. are there digital solutions to help close the loss in storytelling/fundraising with the cancellation of events?
Beyond the event