

# Project Outcome Library Stories

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## Buffalo & Erie County (NY) Public Library

Dan Caufield, Supervisor of Information Services & Outreach

- Focused on workforce development and computer training. Offsite programs for entrepreneurs and job seekers – various classroom settings. Paper surveys offered at end of program with option to use cell phone with the survey link. High survey response rate. Easy to understand for patrons and willingness to complete (better than previous methods used).
- Influencing grants - Project Outcome was emphasized as the evaluation method for an approved 2016-2019 adult literacy grant.
- Lessons learned during planning process:
  - Trying to get everyone on board; how to set up a survey and how results are tabulated (well accepted from staff once they saw the useful numbers)
- Lessons learned about distributing surveys to patrons:
  - Had icon on computer ready to go for technology classes – had to explain the Likert scale; Important to explain what the surveys are, why they're needed, and exactly how to fill them out
- Lessons learned about collecting & entering survey data:
  - Entering data at once is better way to get broader view
  - Make sure marking which paper surveys have already been entered (check mark)
  - Patrons are more inclined to respond to open-ended question on paper than online

## Bedford (TX) Public Library

Maria Redburn, Director

- Changing the conversation with decision makers to declining circulation numbers to positive impact on the community.
- To survey or not to survey – need to determine if it's an outcome-rich program or not. Not every program is worth measuring. Sometimes find out after the fact that an event or program isn't right for surveying – Example: Baby Buggy Parade (patrons don't plan on using "what they learned" again, etc.)
- Use surveys to:
  - Test pilot programs
  - Identify new programs based on feedback what patrons want
  - Improve existing programs
  - Evaluate if program is too resource intense or not (bang for buck)
- Positive results – how can we improve? Looking at open-ended comments. Encourages patrons to say what they want.
- Lessons learned during planning process:

- Telling patrons before program started that they'd be surveyed and why they want patron feedback (most effective ways to get feedback); Staff resistant with computer classes because they were using Likert survey for years and wanted to keep the same survey; had to communicate gains from using national initiative (Project Outcome)
- Lessons learned about distributing surveys to patrons:
  - Give time at end of program for them to fill out survey. Won't get responses once they leave the program. Paper was more effective, especially children's programs.
- Lessons learned about collecting & entering survey data:
  - Ability to add multiple programs & dates under one survey
- Used Education/Lifelong Learning Immediate Survey for the computer classes, because the patrons would understand the questions better than the Digital Learning Survey.

## **Santa Clara City (CA) Library**

Justin Wasterlain, Adult Services Library & Coordinator of Technology Education

- Adult programs have become a larger focus for the library over the past few years. Started using Project Outcome in September 2015. Reason = overhaul of technology education; no feedback and not great attendance in previous programs. Wanted to know how patrons were feeling about technology classes. Needed consistent evaluation model to determine program effectiveness. Use Project Outcome for new or under-performing programs.
- High response rate high and positive. Comments were most valuable part from development standpoint.
- Lessons learned during planning process:
  - Maximize response rate – wanted to find easiest way for them (digital or paper based on audience type and their comfort level)
- Lessons learned about distributing surveys to patrons:
  - Basic computer courses – results were better with paper surveys
- Lessons learned about collecting & entering survey data:
  - Classes are small, small number of responses; important for person presenting to enter the paper responses so they can connect with the audience and internalize the results; “Unrealistic” positive results – emphasize to patrons importance of “real” information and not only positive feedback

## Plano (TX) Public Library System

Brent Bloechle, Branch Manager

- The science kit program had been at the Haggard Library branch with over a 130 kits available for over a year with the materials available only by placing a hold. The kits can be checked out for a week and some of the kits had over 45 holds.
- The Davis Library branch began offering science kits in October 2015 with 30 kits on a first come basis. During Jan. and Feb. of 2015 we began inserting the Early Childhood Literacy Immediate Survey into the kits, to gage how the patrons were responding to them and what suggestions they might offer. The kits turnover about 3 times per month. We had a 17% return rate for the ECL surveys.
- One of the most surprising comments was that we should do children's programs. We wondered how anyone that came to our library didn't realize we did programs for children. During 2015 we present 436 Tween and Children's STEAM programs. This number excludes Storytime, teen and adult programs. This has resulted in us immediately inserting the Plano Public Library System program brochure into each kit before it is checked out. Approximately 90% of the brochures do not come back with the kits. This was an unforeseen marketing and program awareness opportunity for the library.
- We also had suggestions to do programs and expand upon what is available in the kits. This is something we will be exploring as part of our future program planning. We had expected to receive comments about the lack of availability since most of the time there are only a couple of kits available and sometimes there are none. So far no one has commented about this.
- Of course there was also the common request for more and we are currently in the process of putting together kits on a variety of math themes.

## Sno-Isle (WA) Libraries

Christa Werle, Public Services Project Manager

- Follow-Up Surveys were delivered via email by host libraries in April 2016 (2-3 weeks following the program).
- The library delivered high-level goals and process outline to lead librarians in preparation for using Follow-Up Surveys. Introduced "day of program" goals as specific actions to host librarians and provided:
  - Script to customers when asking for contact information
  - Sign-in sheet with explanation for customers (PDF)
  - Follow-up email script to host libraries with Project Outcome survey URL
- Share results with lead & host librarians

- We found that overall highest follow-up value was in Digital Learning with a strong correlation to testing delivery of our standardized curriculum and vetting external presenters.
  - The library was trying to vet external presenters for some Microsoft Office classes, while also seeing whether or not patrons were using the skills taught in the classes. The feedback received wasn't particularly positive about the instructors, which was very informative and helpful. The library knew that if you're not using the skills within two weeks, you're probably not going to use it again and wanted to capture that level of skills used two weeks after the classes, so Follow-Up Surveys were their ideal method. The results showed that only 44% were using what they learned 2 weeks later, so the library wants to work on improving getting patrons to use the skills they learned sooner.

## Orange County (FL) Library System

Paolo Melillo, Branch Manager

- The library was already doing surveys (mostly measuring outputs). Valued information captured by established surveys were net promoter score and marketing.
- Decided to run Project Outcome through designated Project Outcome coordinator. Send reminders to branch locations to run surveys. Recreated surveys as Google docs with 2 questions added (net promoter score and marketing info). Each location manager chooses which programs/surveys to measure (at least 3 per month). Managers send hard copy surveys downtown to be manually entered in the survey portal by Project Outcome coordinator
- The library decided to use the Education/Lifelong Learning survey to measure all of their adult programs so they could aggregate and analyze the data under a single survey topic
- Communicate results to staff and administration (use ready-made summary reports)
- Adaptations made to surveys; added:
  - Location
  - Would you recommend this to a friend? (net promoter)
  - How did you hear about today's program? (marketing)
  - For Early Childhood Literacy survey; added:
    - How old is your child?
    - Would you like to be informed of upcoming library announcements? If so, please enter your email address below!
- Analyzing results:
  - Planning to collect one year of data first (2016)
  - Send reports monthly to location managers for review

- Review results and address immediately noteworthy issues
- After year mark (2017), the library will have a large dataset to analyze. Will analyze trends and issues; report summary of data to location managers and administration

## Salt Lake County (UT) Library System

Carol Ormond, Office Manager

- Project Outcome was the library's first time measuring outcomes. Salt Lake County leaders are moving toward outcomes and want to see that data. The library also wanted to identify areas for program improvements and make better use of library resources. As a result, decided to measure Summer Reading.
- Goals for measuring outcomes:
  - Use results to direct 2016 Summer Reading resources
  - Demonstrate impact to county Human Services Department and other stakeholders
- Introduced Project Outcome at general management meeting. Planned for onboarding 18 branches, how to get good feedback, how to set up the surveys, and how to communicate importance of surveys to patrons
- Analyzing surveys:
  - Ceiling effect occurs, so look to open-ended responses for important insights
  - Be flexible in interpreting patrons' responses
  - Understand the score and purpose of surveys (won't give you everything)
- Key takeaways:
  - Importance of staff interaction in administering surveys
  - Paper surveys yielded more responses
  - Open-ended questions provide information for decision-making and planning
- Changes made as a result:
  - Ravenous Readers was introduced for the first time. Based on feedback, will bring back Ravenous Readers next year and add it for all ages
  - Continue to create and use reading records
  - Encourage more staff and patron interaction
  - Book prizes awarded as soon as reading record is completed
  - Goals for next year: participants will be motivated to read, have a goal to aspire to, and receive positive reinforcement from all staff

## Atlanta-Fulton (GA) Public Library

Oscar Gittemeier, Branch Manager

- Was designated by the state library to pilot test the Project Outcome Summer Reading Caregiver Survey
- Used both paper and digital surveys, but received the most responses from the paper surveys
- 79 responses from caregivers total, out of 289 kids participating in the program
- Presented results to Friends of the Library using the Data Dashboard graphs
- Used comments in reports to Library Board and community stakeholders
- Included survey comments in monthly branch report, which is sent to Board and the library foundation. One comment made it into the Library Foundation Newsletter, which goes out to the library donors.
- Used survey comments in thank you notes to business donors (of the Summer Reading prizes)
  - Also included with the survey comments, photos of kids that completed the Summer Reading program holding thank you signs. All photos required the parents/guardians to sign photo release forms, which named both the library and the local business, so that the images could be shared on social media
- Used Data Dashboard map to pull demographic data from the community economics tab and give to Friends of the Library, which they used when applying for a grant to purchase supplies for a kids STEAM Club. (The library received 3,000 of the grant.)
- The library presented their Project Outcome experience at the Young Adult Library Services Association symposium and received a prize of over \$1,000 as a result.

## Sacramento (CA) Public Library

Denise Davis, Deputy Director

- One of the original pilot libraries to beta test Project Outcome. To pilot test the Immediate Surveys, Sacramento chose three branches: Downtown Branch (main library, hosts large, single-day events for the community and for civic engagement), Rural branch (many native Spanish speakers, close to school, less tech-savvy, limited staff and open hours), and New Suburban branch (tech savvy, everything online/email/text, lots of kids and families).
  - The Immediate Surveys offered options that worked for all three locations, and the library can view results by individual branch or aggregated across the entire system.
  - Each branch chose the best measurement tools to use for their program, the method they want to use for administering the survey, and how they would manage the data entry.
- Sacramento also used Project Outcome to make programming decisions for their Knitting Club, which is a patron-led program supported by the library. Knitters work on their own projects, and also do projects for charity. The library wanted to know if this program was meeting library goals.
  - Surveyed in April 2016
  - Used the Civic/Community Engagement Survey (Immediate & Follow-Up)
  - 19 patrons surveyed, all completed both surveys, 100% response rate
  - Results showed that the patrons didn't intend to become more engaged, but follow-up proved that they were in fact becoming more involved with their community. The value of this program is increasing civic engagement, even if patrons don't think of it as being part of the program – it is happening.
  - The library took the open-ended comments and made program improvements, including:
    - Branch manager personally visits the knitters every 2 weeks
    - They reserve the library window display for the month of October for the knitters to display their knitted costume projects, and post pictures on social media
    - They have extended the knitters' meeting time by one hour each week, and they have the option of reserving the room for early hours to work on special projects
    - Coffee and water is now served
    - News blurbs about the Knitters Club is now included on the Friends Facebook page