Event Evaluation: Should It Stay or Should It Go
About This Session

IS NOT about how to organize an event.

IS about how to evaluate an event’s effectiveness.
Presented by

- Sara Wittenberg: Executive Director; Alberta Main Street
- Saira Siddiqui: Executive Director; Hillsboro Downtown Partnership
- Rebecca Quandt: Executive Director; McMinnville Downtown Association
Your Background

Who in the room feels...

- you have too many events to manage?
- you can’t explain why you do the events you do?
- it is hard to find sponsors, volunteers, partners to cover all the events you do?
Why Evaluate Your Events?

1. To assess whether or not the event achieved its intended goal or impact
2. To determine ways to improve/adapt an event if you plan to do it again
3. To determine when to discontinue an event
Why Evaluate Your Events?

- Because none of us have unlimited resources
- Can’t concisely explain the purpose:
  - Hard to get volunteers to contribute their time
  - Hard to get buy in from partners and sponsors giving you time and money
  - Is confusing to brand identity of your downtown.
- If you have too many events:
  - Burnout occurs with staff and volunteers. High turnover rate.
  - Can sometimes hinder business when closing streets.
SHOULD IT STAY?
If it ain't broke, don't fix break it.

Why Keep an Event?
- The event achieves its intended goal or impact
- The event furthers your mission and vision
## Remembering WHY We Coordinate Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Event</th>
<th>Primary Goal of Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising Events</td>
<td>generate revenue for your organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Building/ Special Events</td>
<td>generate traffic, activity and positive experiences in the downtown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail/Business Promotions</td>
<td>generate immediate sales of the goods and services offered downtown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image Building Events</td>
<td>accentuate the positives, dispel the negatives</td>
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Events Should Also Advance Your MISSION

**MISSION**: Alberta Main Street advances efforts to develop Alberta Street as a **vibrant, creative, equitable, and sustainable** commercial district serving residents and visitors to our community.

**COMMUNITY VISION**: By 2030....Alberta Main Street created a network of committed and invested community members (business, commercial property, and residential property owners) who worked together to:

- Create the most sustainable (social, economic, and environmental) business district in Portland, the nation, the world...
- Foster the development of Alberta Street as a world class arts/creative district, and
- Solidify the local, non-corporate small business base on the street.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROMOTION COMMITTEE</th>
<th>Strengthening the district’s reputation as vibrant creative community</th>
<th>Supporting existing and new small business and building owners.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creating a sustainable (social, economic, and environmental) business district.</td>
<td>Earth Day District Clean Up</td>
<td>Retail Happy Hour</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Earth Day Golden Garbage Awards</td>
<td>September Sidewalk Sale</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Trick or Treat Alberta Street</td>
<td>Holiday Retail Promotion</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holiday Living Tree Lighting &amp; Gnome for the Holidays</td>
<td>Winter Clearance Sale (New)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alberta Street Fair</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop District Marketing Collateral</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
AMS Events & PRIMARY Goal

APRIL
- Community Building
- Fundraising Event

AUGUST
- Fundraising Event
- Retail Promotion

SEPTEMBER
- Retail Promotion

OCTOBER
- Community Building

DECEMBER
- Retail Promotion
- Community Building
## Evaluation: Asking the Right People the Right Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business Owner Satisfaction</strong></td>
<td>Did you see an increase in foot traffic counts, sales, new customers, mailing list sign ups, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attendee Satisfaction</strong></td>
<td>What did attendees say about your event in surveys or on social media?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volunteer Satisfaction</strong></td>
<td>Did volunteers feel well utilized and appreciated?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sponsor Success</strong></td>
<td>Did sponsors feel like the attendees were relevant to their customers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Message Amplification</strong></td>
<td>How many people used your hashtag before, during and after the event?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revenue Generated</strong></td>
<td>How did this compare to your goal/last year's event?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Retail Promotion events should **generate immediate sales of goods and services**.
While you have a captive audience you can assess not only the overall event but ways to improve future events.
Q3
Would you recommend repeating this event in the future?
Answered: 17  Skipped: 0

94% Yes
6% No

Should it stay or should it go?
Holiday Event Attendee Survey

Retail Promotion events should **generate immediate sales of goods and services**

Community Building events should **generate traffic, activity and positive experiences**
Gnome for the Holidays

Collect Contact Information Whenever You Can!

Promotion Committee LOVES painting gnomes after hours with pizza and adult beverages.
Did any of these events bring you in to businesses you had not visited in the past?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get Lit: Event at The Station</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gnome for the Holidays</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sparkles and Sweets</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Holiday Event Attendee Survey

Don’t be afraid of open ended questions. They can make great testimonials!

Q5

Do you have any comments, suggestions or ideas for how to improve these events or new ideas you would like to share?

- My son and I had a fantastic time at Gnome for the Holidays. We completed the card visiting every business and finding every single gnome in just over two hours. We enjoyed discovering places we hadn’t been to before and chatting with the employees/business owners. Supporting small local business is something I talk about (and practice) frequently with my son, and this was a great way to drive that message home. Though he is quite disappointed he didn’t win a years supply of candy (assuming the drawing has taken place?), we’ll definitely participate (and try again) next year!

- Gnome for the holidays for perfect for entertaining the kids whilst we visited stores we’d never been to before. A great idea.

- Gnome for the Holidays was WAY too much fun. We spent a whole morning on Alberta members. We are excited to see it again next year!

Evaluation tool: fifteen question surveymonkey survey

Should it stay or should it go?
Alberta Street Fair Evaluation

Fundraising events should **generate revenue for your organization**

Should it stay or should it go?
# Alberta Street Fair Evaluation

## Internal Evaluation

Post Event Debrief with Alberta Street Fair coordinating team using simple PLUS/DELTA format.

In person & online.

### 2017 Alberta Street Fair Plus/Delta Debrief

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>+ PLUS</th>
<th>Δ DELTA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Stage</strong>&lt;br&gt;  - Line up was great - headline sponsorships good&lt;br&gt;  - Fans (Pacific Power) were good</td>
<td>- Shade&lt;br&gt;  - <strong>DO NOT USE INTERSTATE RENTALS GENERATOR</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RR Beer Garden - Sarah French</strong>&lt;br&gt;  - Astroturf &amp; mister were great&lt;br&gt;  - Game area was great&lt;br&gt;  - RR doing food was good</td>
<td>- Use Square for cash.&lt;br&gt;  - Tell car lot rentals the right time (6:30am) to vacate &amp; get a contact list. (Sara - look at contract)&lt;br&gt;  - Possibly add a non alcoholic option (kombucha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kids Parade</strong>&lt;br&gt;  - Drummers were good</td>
<td>- Alberta Street Fair Banner in FRONT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kids Corner - Allison Chown</strong>&lt;br&gt;  - Title sponsorship good</td>
<td>- No Artist &amp; Craftsman as a crafter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- More signage for the kids corner this year</td>
<td>- Need to have more room for Olive and Dingo to perform and give space for people to gather if we have other performers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Center Stage</strong>&lt;br&gt;  - Line up went well (Molten Glass was a hit)&lt;br&gt;  - Sound (tech) was good</td>
<td>- Figuring title and event banner placement&lt;br&gt;  - Rent generator for electricity or possibly American Legion&lt;br&gt;  - Look at possibility of location change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>East End Stage</strong>&lt;br&gt;  - Band line-up was well received&lt;br&gt;  - Sound tech paid by AMS</td>
<td>- Event &amp; other banner locations - better instructions&lt;br&gt;  - Better/more visible merchandise for band/side of stage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Make Event Evaluation Something You Do
Evaluation: When to Adapt an Event

**Mission:** To cultivate & promote our vibrant, historic Downtown.

**Brand Promise:** Making it easier, more enjoyable and more profitable to do business Downtown.

**Value Proposition:** HDP Improves the look, feel and accessibility of Downtown Hillsboro to get businesses - new and old - to work together to attract more customers to the district.
HDP’s Main Events

- Est... a long time ago
  (HDP inherited in 2015)
  Community Building

- Est. 1990s
  (HDP inherited in 2016)
  Community & Retail Event

- Est. 2007
  (HDP inherited by default)
  Retail Foot Traffic

- Est 2016
  Fundraising
Safe ‘N Sane to Harvest on Main

Safe ‘N Sane 2015: October 31st 3-6pm
- Street closure issues
- Not showing ROI for businesses for many years

Harvest on Main 2016: October 31st 5-9pm
- Increased spending in 2016, but still faced similar issues
Safe ‘N Sane to Harvest on Main

Harvest on Main 2017: October 28th 10am - 1pm

- Adapted to fulfill goals of increasing the harvest brand for Downtown, and bring more customers Downtown.
Holly Days & Tree Lighting 2016: November 26th 1-6pm

- Managed by HDP starting in 2016.
- Thanksgiving Weekend made it hard to get volunteers.
- Too many street closures
- Goal of the event was unclear
Holly Days & Tree Lighting

Holly Days & Tree Lighting 2017: December 2nd 1-6 pm

- 2017 Goals:
  - Increase sales for district during December’s shopping season
  - Encourage small business purchases for holiday gifts
  - Bring foot traffic and promotion DT through special event

- Adapted to align with our 2017 strategic goals of reaching to workers and residents over tourists.

- Tweaked existing retail promotion as well
Farm to Table Dinner

Farm to Table 2016 & 2017

- Same net income both years
- Lots of staff and volunteer resources
- Very successful for image building, but is it the right fundraiser for HDP?
Evaluation: When to Eliminate an Event

McMinnville Downtown Association
Evaluation: When to Eliminate an Event

Turkey Rama: Summer Festival since 1961
Retail Promotion events should generate immediate sales of goods and services.

**Event Goals**

- Bring more business to the street on a traditionally slower business day.
- Generate a buzz/reason to come to Alberta Street every week.
- Nurture relationships with existing customers and generate new customers.

Evaluation tool: five question surveymonkey survey.
Starting With the End In Mind

RETAIL HAPPY HOUR Promotion

BACKGROUND: In February, Alberta Main Street’s promotion committee invited retail business owners to help identify what existing events and promotions are working, what aren’t, and to generate new ideas to promote Alberta Street. One new idea that garnered unanimous enthusiasm was the concept of a Retail Happy Hour.

GOALS:
- Bring more business to the street on a traditionally slower business day.
- Generate a buzz/reason to come to Alberta Street every week.
- Nurture relationships with existing customers and generate new customers.

RETAIL HAPPY HOUR PROMOTION: Retail Happy Hour (RHH) would be a regular ongoing promotion-taking place on a day that is traditionally slower for retailers. Retailers at the meeting proposed Wednesdays from 3-6 PM. Participating Alberta businesses would agree to offer some type of “deal” every week on Wednesday’s. What the deal is at your shop is up to you and can change as often as you like or remain the same. Your deal for RHH should be something that works for you. Some ideas:

- X% off one rack/item/any purchase/specially marked merchandise etc.
- X% off any purchase with secret code word [engage your social media]
- Buy One Get One free or at a discount
- Sign up for our mailing list during RHH and get X deal
- Community discount – give a discount to people with a 97211 zip code on their driver’s license

The bottom-line it that it is YOUR STORE. YOUR DEAL!

PROMOTION:
Alberta Main Street will:
- provide small signage to identify participating businesses and promote RHH
- provide sample graphics and social media posts to participating businesses
- work with bars/restaurants to offer extended happy hour with proof of purchase during RHH

Participating Businesses would be asked to:
- promote RHH through social media/newsletters/takeaways
- help make connections with your bar and restaurant neighbors

DURATION: We aim to kick off the promotion in mid June. A promotion like RHH may take some time to catch on and generate the buzz and traffic we are hoping for. While the hope is that this would be an ongoing promotion, we are asking businesses to commit for 6 months at which time we will evaluate whether or not to continue.

EVALUATION: Because we would like to evaluate the promotion down the line, it would be helpful if you able to track one or more key indicators specific to RHH – these may be: foot traffic counts, sales numbers, new customers, mailing list sign ups, etc. Ideally it would be something you are already tracking so not to create more work for you.

WHAT’S NEXT? We need to get a sense from retailers if this promotion is of interest to you, if you have more questions or if you like the idea but have suggestions to make it even better. If you have more questions please contact Promotion Committee chair, Angie Heiney (Frock) angie@frockboutique.com. Please let us know either way by completing our simple online form: http://bit.ly/AlbertaRHH
Should it Go...Retail Happy Hour

Particularly when resources (time, money, volunteers) are limited.
Evaluation Tools & Resources

- Google Forms [https://docs.google.com/forms/] (free)
- Survey Monkey [surveymonkey.com] (free basic plan)
- Facebook Event & Group Polls (currently you have to use an app to create a poll on your Page [https://apps.facebook.com/my-polls/])
- Plus/Delta Evaluation (in person or on a shared doc)
- Project management or event software often includes an evaluation method
- Google Analytics/Newsletter Open & Click Rates
- Square Feedback?
Individual Events

Gear towards each demographic (ie. business surveys, attendee surveys, donor surveys).

Opportunity to test ideas for following year. Provide surveys post debrief.
Tools & Resources: Evaluation Surveys
Overall Strategy
Q&A / Other Best Practices

- What examples do you have of event evaluation in your towns?
- Questions?