



Working with Schools

Best Practice

Hundreds of thousands of dollars go into developing education resources and programs for schools each year. While a percentage are extremely successful and have high participation rates, others go straight to the school resource library or float around in cyberspace waiting to be discovered. Here, we will look at what organisations can do to ensure greater success for their school programs.

Active consultation

If you have a concept or project that you would like to implement in schools then the first port of call is the Education sector itself, to identify their needs in this space and adjust your project to meet this need. Contact Heads of Education, not only as a line of protocol, but also their department will identify the best person within the organisation to provide advice and direction.

Identify stakeholders

There may be a number of internal and external stakeholders required to support your program and resource development. Internally these could include marketing, media relations, HR (for work placement/experience opportunities), staff, operations and finance. Depending on your program, external stakeholders could include government or not for profit organisations, suppliers, the education sector (including Professional Teachers Associations), student groups and other industry leaders.

Strategic positioning

Answer the question – why schools? This is a really important part of why your organisation would like to work in this area. It must be linked to your core business and it must strategically meet a need for your organisation. The Education sector are more interested in long term programs that give them opportunity to gain traction within schools with clear outcomes documented over the short and long term. The Education sector has seen projects come and go as the long term

sustainability was not identified and the process of full engagement has not realised at the beginning.

Strategic partnerships

What are other organisations doing in this space? Time in schools is limited and there is a huge amount of duplication of materials trying to achieve the same outcome. How much time do you expect teachers to dedicate to your program or resource? Work smarter by either establishing strategic partnerships or by identifying a gap that your project could fill.



Break through the clutter

Many teachers complain that the curriculum is already cluttered and they don't have the time available to include any more materials. Teachers have a choice of the resources/stimulus they use to meet curriculum outcomes. Your program needs to be innovative, engaging, and meet the Australian National Curriculum.

Identifying champions

As with any target group for a business objective, recognition of success is important. Identifying champions within the Education sector could provide an opportunity to engage a greater number of schools, teachers or students. Many teachers don't have the time to trawl through material but if they can see a working model of your program or resources then there is greater chance of it being implemented. These champions, if you look after them, can also take the role of mentor and support for the 'new kids on the block'.

Program support

When designing an education program or resource be mindful of the support teachers require to embrace the program. Communications and professional development should be a part of early discussions to ensure your program is successful. Another consideration is to implement a pilot or small project to establish what works and what doesn't. This pilot program can also be used as a model of success to support communications, negotiations to review budget allocation and engage a small group in deeper discussion about your brand or business outcome.

Key measures of success

Identify your key measures of success and design your program and resources accordingly. For example, is your penetration into schools based on width or depth? Establishing these will guide your program and resource development, communication and marketing strategy and budget.

Budget allocation

Define a realistic and manageable budget to achieve your objectives. This comes back to key measures of success - width verses depth. Many organisations underestimate the costs of the

resource development (not so much the writing). With online, electronic whiteboards, bring your own devices and so forth you need to be fully aware of what is needed and how much you should budget for it.

Using this checklist can provide some guidance to creating a successful and engaging program for schools. When done well, it can save you in the long run.

Heather MacDonald, Director

Education Partnerships (Schools)

Education Partnerships (Schools) supports organisations to develop education programs and resources for schools that deliver mutually beneficial outcomes for the Education sector and business. Support includes strategic planning, program and resource development, stakeholder engagement and management, and communications to assist delivery and implementation.