

Like Bees to Honey: Effective Practices for Attracting Participants

Mary Beth Harding
Executive Director
Nashville Community Education

Who am I?

- Over 10 years experience in community education
- Program Coordinator, Sarratt Art Studios
- Director, Watkins Community Education
- Now ED at Nashville Community Education
- Led each group to over 30% increase in enrollment and revenue within two year periods



NASHVILLE
COMMUNITY
EDUCATION

Enriching the diverse
fabric of Nashville

nashville.gov/ce

Providing personal and professional enrichment for adults in the Nashville community

- Department of Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County
- Increase in over 1,000 students since August 2015
- And \$40,000 in revenue
- Currently serve over 3800 students in FY17 with a revenue of over \$100,000
- Over 380 classes, 3 locations, and 200 instructors
- Only 3 full-time staff and two part-time site coordinators

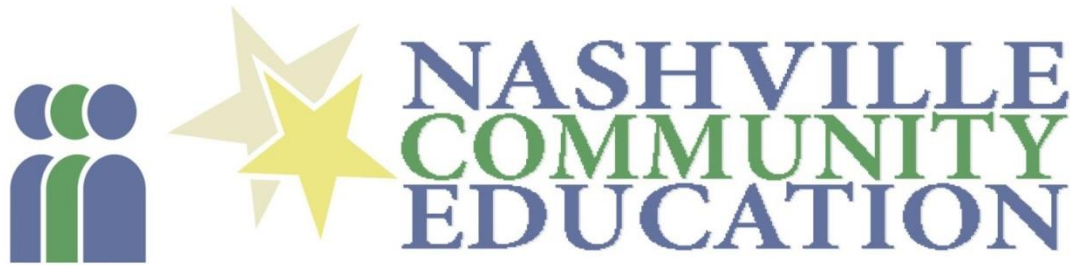
What has led to success?

Multi-faceted and holistic approaches to programming changes:

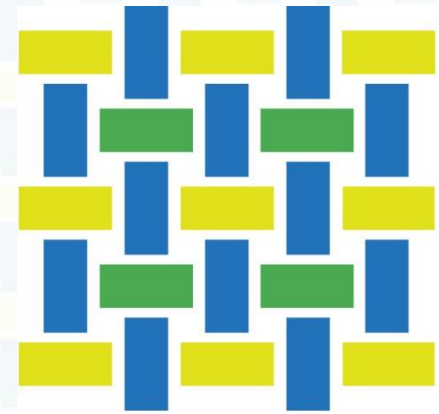
- Branding
- Customer service
- Marketing
- Recruiting instructors

Branding

- Update your “look”
- If possible, find a graphic designer
- Keep things clean and simple



Old logo



New Logo

NASHVILLE
COMMUNITY
EDUCATION

Two ads - the first is too busy

nashville community education



*Providing professional
and personal enrichment
to the Nashville community*

Hi, I'm **Gina Straughn**,
vegan caterer and
instructor at Nashville
Community Education.
I hope you will join
me this winter for my
**8 Laws of Health
and Vegetarian**
Cooking classes to
learn healthy recipes
and how to live a
healthy life.



*Registration begins January 5th. Classes begin January 20th
Browse the online catalog and register at nashville.gov/ce*

*For more information call us at 615-298-8050
or connect with us at [Facebook.com/NashvilleCEC](https://www.facebook.com/NashvilleCEC)*



Classes start May 30



Join us for affordable classes in
languages, cooking, art + more.

Summer registration is ongoing.
View schedule + register:

nashville.gov/ce • (615) 298-8050

Catalog Design

- Work on an easy to read layout
 - Bold titles
 - Description
 - Details
- Make it colorful if you can
- If more than 50 classes, use an index
 - By date
 - By location
 - By subject
- Most important: USE REAL PHOTOS





• off. R. -control
• Community Service
• Living TRNG Center AT Hall
Low participation from Members
BECAUSE OF SMALL LOCAL



el - la
los - las

la tarde
la noche

el elefante
la
el Presidente
la

el zapato W-
los zapatos el z
la mesa
las mesas

jota - jalea
sacinto
fox

Course Design

Focus on Titles

Succinct and to the point
No colons, nothing too cutesy

Descriptions

Short, but descriptive: Aim for 5-6 sentences that tell the student exactly what they'll be leaving class having learned.

Use consistent language

If you have branding language (session vs. semester, what your department is called, etc...) make sure everyone knows it, including instructors

Practice

- Pick at least one course you've offered that has consistently had low enrollment, but you feel like it's a great class
- Share this course title and description with your group
- As a group, come up with at least one change to the title or description
- Share

General Course Tips

- Try to have about 1/3 classes be new
- Avoid waitlists
 - Offer more sections of the class
- Try to keep cancellation rate under 30%
 - First see what your cancellation rate is and then see if a certain sector of classes is worse than others. Concentrate on improving those first.
- Mission driven vs. revenue/funding driven

What happens if a course just isn't making it?

Try a new course 3 times

- Change title and description
- Change time
- Change length/design

If it still isn't getting enough enrollments, it's time to cut it!

Same goes for instructors: 3 complaints (especially if you've given feedback)

Customer Service

- Even though you have built-in customers, the way you treat them is key to your program's success
- Each employee should be trained to
 - Use consistent language
 - Answer the most basic questions
 - Relay multiple course options (upsell/cross-sell)

Customer Service

- Make registering for your classes as easy as possible:
 - Online
 - Phone calls
 - In person
 - Take registration to them
- Make it fun: early bird events, open house, preview days, etc..

And the survey says...

- **Make sure you survey your students**
 - Do ask their opinion about class and DO use this to improve course
 - But DON'T miss the opportunity to ask them about other topics, how they found out about class*, or if they'd be interested in teaching
 - Once 4-5 people mention a certain topic, put energy into finding an instructor

*if no one ever mentions something you are spending a lot of time or \$ on, stop doing it and put more energy into the most popular methods

Recruiting Instructors

- Two Pronged Approach:
 - Open call - highly suggest a [course proposal form](#)
 - Narrowed search
 - Partnerships
 - Local businesses
 - Former students

Your students are instructors too!

Send emails to former students

- Set deadlines
- Have an online option
- Representation matters
 - Recruit instructors that reflect your audience

Instructors are customers too!

Your instructors are your best resource!

- Answer requests in a timely manner
- Be present
 - Make sure some form of staff is on-hand for support
- If your instructors trust you and believe in what you're doing they will be ambassadors to recruit students and other instructors

Instructor Practices

- Have an instructor handbook
- Staff meeting - prizes, activities
- Discounted or free classes
- Instructor survey

Practice

What are **three things** you can change this month to make instructors and students feel like they are an integral part of your program development?

Marketing

Make it fun and insightful!

- social media not just about advertising a class, advertise yourself too!
- photos, videos and articles

Use real photos!

Email marketing:

- create themes

We use [myEMMA Marketing](#)
[MailChimp](#) is also popular and has a free small option



Practice

- Take our fall catalog (or your own if you have it) and make a theme for
 - Newsletter
 - Social media posts
 - Printed FlyersExamples: the holiday season, Relax (yoga, cooking, art), etc..

Takeaways

- **Consistency is key!**
- **People like to see themselves as part of your team**
 - Use real photos
 - Post insightful social media
 - Interact via surveys
- **There is no one solution to bring participants to your programs - you have to create a positive culture through many actions**