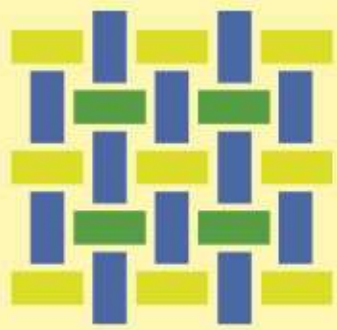


# Like Bees to Honey: Effective Practices for Attracting Participants

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](http://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 over \$30,000 in revenue
- Currently serve over 3800 students in FY17 with a revenue of over \$90,000
- 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:

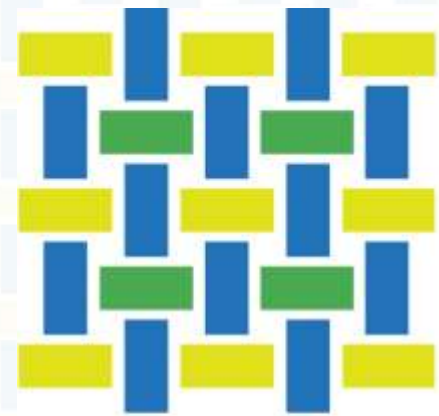
- Branding
- Customer service
- Marketing
- Recruiting instructors

# 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](http://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](http://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



la tarde  
la noche  
el elefante  
la  
el Presidente  
la  
el zapato  
los zapatos  
la mesa  
las mesas  
el la  
los las  
yola - yalea  
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 price
- Change time

**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/crosssell)

# 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 summer catalog (or your own if you have it) and make a theme for
  - Newsletter
  - Social media posts
  - Printed Flyers

**Examples:** Mother's Day (classes they can learn to make things for mom), 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