

Engaging your staff in engagement activities

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Why should scientists get involved?

Excellent training activity in understanding how to communicate effectively

If it's not working - blank looks and people move on quickly

Also very rewarding

Can depend what your organisational culture is like and how much support there is for public engagement

Building your team

Find an entry point for staff - work out what they are comfortable with and run with that

Find your champions who will encourage/cajole/strongarm others into being involved

Not all of your science communicators need to be scientists - ICT manager on liquid nitrogen ice cream

People love hearing from scientists and often want to hear their personal stories - e.g. how did you end up doing this?

Seek out your rough diamonds - sometimes people will want to be involved who aren't your typical show off extrovert (umm hi?)

Number one tip: demonstrate interest in and respect for the work you are showcasing - this will help encourage scientists to be involved

Structuring your booth and co-developing content

Always go back to your science communication principles - make sure you can identify the two key messages for your booth and encourage your team to understand and use them

Be direct about your purpose and the audience - Perth Science Fest is not the place to advertise the water licensing portal

Allowing 'dummy' items to make it into the booth can actually help with training staff in science communication - groundwater levels logger (no one looked at it)

Watch for too much content, pitched at an inappropriate level - people sneaking stuff in - I

'accidentally' left some scientific posters in the office

Chanel - 'take one thing off' - try to remove content as the tendency is to cram things in

Allow staff to try things within the confines of the booth - but fail fast - allocation plans sitting next to an interactive river model at the Royal Show

Do a test run - trial your explosions in the courtyard outside the building, set up the booth during staff drinks - great insights and greater staff support (Friday afternoon!!)

Number one tip: put effort into finding something interactive - bore and dipper, sacrificial bore samples, odours and make your own perfume at Open Day

Supporting your staff

Define your hooks - know how to start a conversation or invite people to try something

Be physically present

Try to put enough people on that they can watch and learn from each other, especially if they aren't that confident

Number one tip: demonstrate what 'success' looks like - explain beforehand and reinforce on the day - helps to build confidence

Conclusion

Trust yourself - your experience is important

Demonstrate interest in and respect for the work you are showcasing - this will help encourage scientists to be involved

Be creative and find something that can be interactive - you might need to think laterally

Celebrate success with your team to reinforce positive communication behaviours and experiences