BUILDING A LIBRARY OUTREACH PROGRAM THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

In its simplest form, community engagement is a process whereby an organization works with the groups and individuals it serves to transform a shared vision into actions that ultimately benefit them. This chapter presents a framework to assist library managers and administrators in reimagining their outreach efforts from a community engagement perspective where users actively shape their shared experiences with the library. Although there are resources that discuss how libraries can structure these initiatives through the ACRL Library Marketing and Outreach Interest Group, the Public Library Association, and publications such as Marketing Libraries Journal*, some of the literature surrounding community-based work is not as directly tied to outreach. By reading this chapter, libraries will find information related to defining their role within their communities, outlining strategies for collaboration, conducting needs assessment, gap analysis, asset mapping, and identifying a variety of outreach activities and their accompanying assessment strategies.*

Keywords: Community engagement; outreach; stakeholders; partnerships; library roles; communication

INTRODUCTION

According to Rogers and Robinson (2004), community engagement "encompasses a variety of approaches whereby public service bodies empower citizens to consider and express their views on how their particular needs are best met. These

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range from encouraging people to have a say on setting the priorities for community safety to sharing decision-making with them in relation to defined services" (p. 1). A word here about the definition of the word "community" which is used in this chapter in its broadest sense and refers to a library's collective sets of stakeholders across all groups and demographics and especially includes members from underrepresented populations who need to be at the forefront of these efforts. Stakeholders are defined as all of the people and groups that a particular library serves and considers its core user base.

Lee Samelson (2016) reminds us that community engagement is "a more active method of implementing change and engaging with stakeholders than the more static method of standard marketing techniques" (p. 1). While marketing is about promoting a specific service or product and is more unilateral in nature, engagement is about building lasting relationships. In an article by Hui-Yun Sung, Mark Hepworth, and Gillian Ragsdell the authors discuss several elements that are common across different engagement models, such as cultivating a sense of belonging, committing to partnerships and initiatives, and utilizing communication as a two-way dialogue between the library and its stakeholders (2013).

DEFINING THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARY IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Urban Libraries Council (ULC) report seeks to rally libraries into becoming leaders in community engagement by taking on various types of roles as outlined below. Although the focus here is on civic engagement, this approach can be extrapolated to any other type of engagement that makes sense for a library and across a variety of topics. We will telescope downward into what this model looks like by identifying potential roles for the library, developing a stakeholder engagement framework, and ending with specific activities that capitalize on how the library can address community needs through outreach efforts and activities. The first step involves the library looking inward and deciding what it has the capacity to do and what the desired role or roles would be. This can go one of two ways – the library decides it wants to embody all of these roles to a certain degree or that there are one or two roles in particular that resonate to be developed in greater depth. The roles described by the ULC are as follows (Urban Libraries Council, 2011):

(1) Educator: Raising awareness of specific topics of interest to the community
  - Maximizing access to information about opportunities and resources
  - Identifying emerging issues, establishing accessible and trusted conversation spaces, engaging appropriate people
(2) Conversation starter: Identifying challenging community issues, creating forums for sharing opinions, and developing action strategies
  - Creating systems and processes for regularly identifying issues that affect the community's well-being

- Understanding stakeholder interests, issues, and concerns, and building partnerships that foster productive dialogue
- Building capacity to facilitate discussions about these issues
- Channeling informal conversations into productive discussion, problem-solving, and action

(3) Community bridge: Bringing diverse people and organizations with different perspectives together
- Building bridges and creating partnerships with organizations that serve diverse groups
- Establishing programs that promote and foster equity, diversity, and inclusion

(4) Visionary: Leading efforts to develop a broad and inclusive community vision
- Convening community conversations to identify shared ideas, concerns, and long-term expectations
- Working with stakeholders to review and refine existing plans

(5) Center for democracy: This area examines all the ways in which the library can engage with its community from a governmental perspective
- Developing a strategy that defines programs and outcomes that will contribute to the community's civic health
- Working closely with local government to support its civic engagement and democratic governance efforts
- Establishing roles for civic leadership, such as a director of civic and community engagement, outreach librarian positions, or similar
- Empowering citizens to be community contributors by providing information, resources, and paths to engagement
- Being willing to take on the controversial issues that are important to the community
- Extending the library into the community to serve broad goals that reach beyond traditional roles

How then can a library decide which of these roles is most appropriate? To start, it is important to look at library values and mission. Are there certain roles that most closely and naturally align with these elements? If so, that is a good indicator of the path forward. One simple way to accomplish this is by having ongoing conversations with employees about how the library's vision is shaping its roles and vice versa. Administrators can continually bring up these elements during group meetings, as part of strategic planning, decision-making, and overall communication activities. Alternatively, employees can discuss different aspects of the library's vision and purposefully connect them to a desired future where roles act as mileposts for determining both goals and processes to achieve them. Another area of analysis would entail conducting an internal assessment of how library employees see themselves in these roles and to what degree the organization as a whole is supportive of them. If the majority of library employees do not feel adequately prepared to support a certain direction, conversations surrounding training and other broad-level activities are important in uncovering these issues.

On the other hand, if the question is one of interest or motivation, additional work around change management should occur in order to align the goals of library administration with those of employees. It is imperative that these areas work together in harmony and that administration is not pulling the organization in a direction that is either incongruent with its identity or which it does not have the ability to support. This does not mean that the library cannot stretch in a certain direction because it wants to explore new areas, especially as part of strategic planning or growing partnerships, but it is important to understand the dynamics at play and the types of conversations that need to occur. Much depends on the context in which the library operates and can encompass activities such as internal focus groups or surveys to target conversation around specific topics and change management work which can range from a specific initiative to a large-scale organizational realignment. The next section provides some specific approaches that blend determining a starting point for these discussions with establishing a future state and closing the distance between the two.

Needs Assessment, Asset Mapping, and Gap Analysis

How can the library determine what role stakeholders want or need the library to focus on? A needs assessment might be most appropriate here, followed by a gap analysis. A needs assessment is the "what" (what the organization or stakeholders need) that precedes the gap analysis, which is the "how" (how to close the gap between where the organization/stakeholders currently are and where they should be) (NC State, 2017). Needs assessment is defined as a "systematic set of procedures undertaken for the purpose of setting priorities and making decisions about program or organizational improvement and allocation of resources" (Witkin & Altschuld, 1995, p. 4). The article by Matthew Benge et al. charts an outline for how an organization can undertake a needs assessment project. The basics of the project entail establishing a purpose and goals, determining how the needs assessment will be conducted, gathering and analyzing the data, and communicating back to stakeholders (Benge, Harder, & Warner, 2019).

As an example, let's say that the overall goal of the needs assessment is to determine what types of technology resources might be useful for individuals within a specific geographical area – these could be adults, children, or a specific demographic. Sample objectives are:

- Understand existing technology usage within this particular population
- Analyze perceived assets and barriers to accessing and utilizing technology
- Determine necessary training and support to increase technology usage within this population

Data collection methods can include conducting focus groups or interviews or asking them to draw a specific space or service. Information on specific data-gathering methodologies is available further in this chapter. Once the data are synthesized, the library can identify cross-cutting themes to help inform priorities for action. The final steps are sharing draft action items with these individuals and seeking an additional round of feedback using similar methods before launching a pilot initiative where additional data provide direction for a more fully developed program.

Perhaps focusing on what is lacking rather than what is already available is not an ideal way to proceed. The Human Services Commission also recommends thinking about what a community already has through asset mapping. This technique, "(1) uncovers resources found in a community; (2) relies on the assets within a community at a specific time; and (3) seeks to build linkages among local people, institutions, and organizations" (Human Services Commission, 2013, p. 3). Asset mapping does not necessarily involve the creation of an actual map, but rather the development of a framework of connections among individuals/groups, resources, and infrastructure that create a holistic view of where the community is starting and what it has to work with. This approach allows for gaps to be identified more easily and works as an additive, rather than a reductive process, whereby needs translate into additional resources and support that can be added to round out the constellation of assets within a particular community. Asset mapping incorporates a similar set of steps as those for a needs assessment in terms of framing goals and capturing the assets in question by identifying existing expertise, fiscal allocations, infrastructure and tools, and/or physical resources.

Asset mapping can also pave the way for a gap analysis, which consists of measuring the current state or situation, identifying the desired state or situation, and determining what the organization needs to do in order to achieve that ideal state (Lucidchart, n.d.). In this case, embracing a new role for the library represents the future and depending on the role in question, the library is analyzing organizational culture and values, staffing, training, funding, infrastructure, and partnerships to ascertain how it will achieve that role. The Lucidchart blog (n.d.) discusses several different methods (SWOT, Fishbone, McKinsey 7S framework, Nadler-Tushman model, and PEST) that can be used to address these areas, and although they all vary to some degree or another in the type of analysis that can be undertaken, they also all share some commonalities. First, the analysis must take some inventory of its current state or assets as described above to help establish the starting point or benchmark by which future progress will be measured. Next, the ideal state is represented as the proverbial finish line with a desired outcome in mind – whether that is reflected in a new role, initiative, partnership, or strategic goal. The final aspect of the gap analysis would then entail being able to answer the following questions: Given the current levels of capacity, staffing, etc. which have been identified, how would the library move from one role to another and/or undertake a new role? What additional skills, resources, and partnerships would the library need in order to make that transition and how long would it take? Who would need to be involved both internally and externally? How would success be measured and what would happen if that desired state or role would not be achieved?

Participatory Design Approaches to Determine Needs, Assets, and Solutions

While these processes might feel prescriptive and focused on business-like methodologies, the *Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Guide* (2012) reminds us that, especially when it comes to collaborating with underserved communities, the work is about building trust by providing different opportunities to become involved. The act of gathering this type of data should lead to the strengthening of connections with communities through knowledge sharing that allows those constituents to have utmost influence in determining relevance and appropriateness of organizational involvement. The guide also urges us to look beyond surveys as a means of gathering crucial data in favor of more personalized modes or approaches. In essence, exchanging information, rather than simply collecting it, provides an incentive for engaging in conversations and partnerships, as well as cultivating a greater sense of mutual ownership in the outcome. So what are some alternative methods for gathering information in these more personalized modalities? One way is through participatory design which has many applications as described below. The focus of this type of design is to ensure users have an equal voice in the process of creation so that library employees are working alongside stakeholders to develop a plan that will ultimately help both sides fulfill their roles and define success. Participatory design also centers on social change that promotes democracy and challenges inequality for specific groups or populations and highlights an iterative cycle of input, action, and reflection where there is constant communication and interaction between all parties involved (Institute of Development Studies, n.d.).

Specific examples of participatory design include:

Ethnographic approaches: Ethnographic approaches cover everything from drawing to interviews, and observations. Nancy Fried Foster has used this method extensively with libraries. She describes techniques that are fairly involved and require a high level of interpretation and synthesis, often identifying emerging trends and patterns that assist in providing a targeted action or direction. These approaches are best used when direct data about user behavior are desired. They require an understanding of what is being studied via each method, as well as the ability to elicit themes out of what is being presented rather than impose a predisposed notion of the results ahead of time (Foster & Gibbons, 2007).

User experience approaches: Typically, the user experience approach is related to discussions surrounding virtual environments such as website design, but there are increasing applications for face-to-face interactions with users. The Nielsen group provides an overview of when to utilize what type of methodology such as directly engaging with users versus observing or collecting self-reported data versus obtaining them indirectly (Gibbons, 2018). One popular method is customer journey mapping which allows users to describe what they are experiencing and feeling during each step of a particular service or activity. Customer journey maps are a great way to get a first-hand view of users' experiences, which will help the library make improvements or test out a new offering. Creating a flowchart of each stop along the journey will help connect the action with the corresponding experience. Customer journey maps typically involve understanding users as a group across a specific timeline. Touchpoints are all of the things and people where users are interacting with a service, program, space, etc. Asking open-ended questions will help users fill in their own thoughts as they provide feedback.

Equity-centered design: While the other two methods work well if the library is seeking specific feedback regarding either an existing state (i.e., is this service being used and how it might change in the future?) or as a way to envision new possibilities, equity-centered design can help evaluate the overall process rather than the content itself. Equity-centered design is a derivative of design thinking – both of these approaches were developed at the Stanford D school, with equity-centered design created by David Clifford. This type of process emphasizes the first step, that of building empathy, by examining biases and power structures inherent in approaches to generating new ideas. Leading with empathy also consists of building awareness of and about the impact of the biases that are brought to design and making power dynamics explicit so they can be addressed, as well as understanding equity challenges for the community in question (Clifford, 2016).

OUTREACH AS A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Libraries are not just about drawing people in; they are also about spreading a message regarding the impact they have on their communities. Outreach and marketing are often discussed in the context of raising awareness about library services and resources, but what if they could become tools to engage the community in creating a shared narrative about the way in which the library enriches their lives and helps them achieve their goals, no matter what those are? The stories that emerge as a result of these experiences are a key element of how the library story is created and shared by the individuals who are not only situated in the same temporal space, but with those that came before and will come after. And it is these stories that truly allow library value to emerge far beyond any statistics that are collected.

Outreach and Engagement Defined

According to John Hamerlinck (2019) outreach is an effort by individuals in an organization or group to connect its ideas or practices to the efforts of other organizations, groups, specific audiences, or the general public. Unlike marketing, outreach does not inherently revolve around a product or strategies to increase market share or profit. Outreach often takes on an educational component (i.e., the dissemination of ideas), and it is increasingly common for organizations to conceive of their outreach strategy as a two-way street in which outreach is framed as engagement rather than solely dissemination or education. In this case, the role that the library has identified it wants to play within the community will help define what that relationship looks like. Thinking of outreach as an expression of engagement allows these two areas to coexist in order to create that aspirational state we discussed earlier in the chapter and to effectuate that change through specific actions.

Outreach Vision and Goals

Outreach begins with the library's vision and goals, then moves into specific actionable items that turn ideas into practice. That vision should connect to the institutional/community mission and outcomes so that there is a clear sense of purpose and direction, and should enable the library to answer questions such as how does outreach assist the library in fulfilling its mission and desired role(s) within the community? How can outreach support mutually beneficial knowledge sharing and exchange between the library and the community/institution? What is the library already doing to contribute to these actions and how can outreach fill any identified gaps? In terms of setting goals, these need to be specific so that they can be measured. A simple formula that can be followed is that of SMART goal setting which covers questions such as:

- Specific: What will be accomplished,
- Measurable: What data will be measured,
- Achievable: If the goal is achievable or what is needed to be successful and
- Timely: What the timeframe is for accomplishing this work (University of California, 2016).

For instance, if the library's role and mission is education, a sample goal might be to provide a series of instructional webinars on a certain topic. The library would specify that the webinar series be offered over the summer with data collected about attendance numbers, popularity of the content, and the learning objectives for each session. Objectives could include a short satisfaction survey postevent or something more complex that asks participants to demonstrate what they learned by turning in something they created during the webinar. The library would also decide if the webinar series should be repeated so that data are collected across several iterations in order to identify trends to inform future offerings.

Before delving too deeply into actual outreach activities and methods however, the library should think about the type and level of outreach it wants to conduct. Different types of outreach require different approaches and these categories can help frame how to approach this work even before identifying goals (Farrell & Mastel, 2016). The first category is focused outreach, which is linked to a library's specific program, service, or resource. Outreach in this context is specific and targeted and speaks to a concrete area, such as instruction for example, and creates messaging about the instruction program and how the community benefits from participation. Whole-person outreach focuses on individuals and how the library can assist a person in achieving their goals, whether personal or professional, and can be scaled as needed, for example, if undergraduate students are the main focus for this outreach, the library might highlight drop-in consultations or textbook reserves as a way to speak directly to this audience. It can also connect students to other campus resources such as wellness or mental health, if appropriate. Finally, just-for-fun outreach focuses on providing a welcoming experience and/or to define how the library seeks to build rapport with the community through events such as speaker series, game nights, showcases, and open houses that are designed to appeal to a wide variety of interests and perspectives.

In addition, outreach can introduce a new concept or idea to the community; it can reinforce an existing program or service, or enhance a more mature initiative or partnership. Each tier has different needs and levels of complexity. As an example, if a new idea or service is being introduced, it is more challenging to raise awareness as opposed to adding a new twist on an existing initiative that is already well-established. Perhaps initial interest is low or perhaps this is something the community has been looking forward to and is a highly anticipated release. Conversely, doing something seemingly simple like reducing hours for a 3D printing lab might be met with resistance if this change negatively impacts a certain population and must be mitigated and communicated appropriately.

Outreach Methods and Resources

Now that we are ready to discuss outreach activities in more detail, we can think of a cascading approach moving from a more expansive view of the desired role, its connection to institutional or community mission/vision, identifying goals for achieving that particular role, the activities that will be implemented to accomplish the goals, and the details surrounding each action. What is the scope, the content, the format, and the steps needed to carry out the planned work? Is this a multipart activity or a one-time initiative? Is this a large-scale undertaking or a smaller effort? Is this delivered in person, virtually, via printed materials or a combination? Depending on the type of activity, this can span a single instance or multiple days, weeks, or even months. Who are the internal and external staff working on this? Does it involve collaborating with other individuals or groups? Are they clear on their roles and who is doing what as part of this activity? What resources are needed? These needs can be everything from staff to materials, stipends, other sources of funding, and can also include resources such as software and other tools needed to carry out the work. Time is also a resource to consider that affects how the project is implemented and delivered. As the library decides how to best collect information about the activity, different levels of staffing and tools needed for the collection itself could differ from those necessary for synthesizing and interpreting the information.

There are several resources that are available to help a library identify specifically what activities to do at this point of the process. The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) provides resources such as the *Library Outreach Cookbook* (Sitter & Rogerson, 2020) which contains different activities, strategies, plans, and tips for instituting successful library outreach, including a community-focused outreach section. The ACRL Library Marketing and

Outreach interest group (n.d.) provides a forum for discussion regarding effective communication methods and outreach initiatives that academic and research libraries can utilize to disseminate information about their value, events, services, and resources and to engage the communities they serve. The *Marketing Libraries Journal* (2017) is an open-access, peer-reviewed scholarly journal that is devoted to advancing research in library marketing and its components (public relations, publicity, outreach, advocacy, and marketing communications). Topics of interest include analyzing stakeholder relationships to help raise awareness and loyalty for library services and resources, developing library visual identities for their services and resources, marketing logistics and outcomes, and reviewing particular tools or resources. Similarly, the *Journal of Library Outreach & Engagement* (n.d.) is a peer-reviewed, open-access interdisciplinary journal to advance library outreach and engagement. The journal provides a platform to disseminate original research that examines public and community engagement initiatives and stimulates a forum to discuss issues that inform, or emerge from, such projects and programs. Both of these journals cover all types of libraries. For a more specific focus on public and other libraries, the Public Library Association has a website dedicated to public library outreach and has created a free toolkit, Project Outcome (2018), which is designed to help public libraries understand and share the impact of essential library programs and services by providing simple surveys as well as measuring and analyzing outcomes.

OUTREACH ASSESSMENT: COLLECTING THE DATA

Assessment is the ultimate example of knowledge sharing that supports community outreach on two levels, more broadly, and within the activity itself. At the broader level, if the library were to have a goal of raising awareness of a specific issue as part of its conversation starter role, it could coordinate a series of discussion forums, a web page, and a marketing campaign that are created to accomplish that goal. Assessment methodologies are discussed in the next section, but the important point here is that there should be a benchmark set of data established by which current and future efforts can be measured to determine how well the library is accomplishing its role as conversation starter in this instance. In addition to the logistics of who is actually conducting the activity, the timeline, and steps needed to complete the work, the library will want to define success for that specific activity which can range from recording participation in the activity itself to measuring an increase in a particular service, developing a new partnership, or identifying an innovative direction that would otherwise not exist.

As with most assessment initiatives, it's likely that the library will be utilizing a combination of methods to capture the appropriate information depending on the goals of the outreach, organizational context, and overall priorities. Hornby, Vrbancic, and Whang (n.d.) offer various methods as part of the Outreach Assessment Toolkit. Additional information is found in the ACRL Libraries Transform Toolkit (2019) and the article by Farrell and Mastel (2016) who discuss various methods of capturing information across different types of activities.

(1) Capturing comments: Capturing a specific idea or suggestion via paper, whiteboard or other media. Great for a snapshot, quick perspective. Not a lot of room for detailed information or following up for clarification if something is ambiguous.
(2) Focus groups: Allow for in-depth discussion, great to use as a way to determine user perspectives on a specific issue. Recruitment bias can be a problem, time consuming, and people may not feel comfortable being honest in a group setting.
(3) Headcounts: Great as a quick, quantitative method, relatively easy to collect, indicator of how well something was attended. No real marker of engagement or of the usefulness of an event.
(4) Interviews: Can really help with gathering in-depth information and specific points of view, relatively simple to collect data. Can be time consuming, participation is an issue, individual information might be too piecemeal to get a more holistic sense of an issue. Hard to develop questions that are not leading or that fully represent what you want to know.
(5) Photographic diaries: Get information directly from users, and allows users to individually interact with the subject of the study in question. Time intensive, and can be difficult to quantify how data are presented, what part of the photo is the focus, etc. Could require additional training to ensure that users are capturing the desired information.
(6) Social media engagement: Great variety of information from different platforms, short turnaround, options for direct user feedback and perspective. Can be hard to compare information across platforms, data are inconsistent or missing, time consuming and hard to keep track of trends across time and limited only to participants who are comfortable in a virtual environment.
(7) Surveys: Fairly quick and easy to set up, quantitatively focused, get a high amount of feedback especially with multiple choice type questions. Survey design is difficult, people experience burnout and are difficult to recruit, data collected are typically superficial and do not allow for in-depth focus.
(8) Vox pops and real-time impressions: Quick sound bytes and commentary as an event is going on. Snapshot view of what is going on can be difficult to record and share back due to the multimedia requirements for this type of data capture method.
(9) Learning outcomes: If the activity is more learning-centered, the actual artifacts or responses about an exercise or activity are used to collect what was actually learned and not as much about the experience itself, although that can also be captured. In this case, seeing what participants created or wrote about and applying a rubric or survey is the most appropriate approach. Can be time consuming and requires effort to complete the assessment itself, collect the artifacts/information, and synthesize the themes which emerge.

OUTREACH ASSESSMENT: REPORTING THE DATA

How the final report is organized will depend on institutional context and the types of assessment that was applied. It is important however to keep in mind the following elements as a way to help organize the information in a way that frames how and to what extent the data collected supported outreach goals and activities and how they relate to the overall purpose of the program. The checklist is derived from Culture Hive's "Researching audiences at outdoor events and festivals" (2013) article:

(1) Describe your overall outreach goals and ensure they are clear to an outside audience
(2) Include information about the methodology used to collect the data as well as an explanation of terms or approaches that need further details, for example, not everyone knows what a vox pop is, so providing a brief explanation will be useful
(3) If sample responses or a specific cohort of individuals were included as participants, describe the sample size and how many responses were received or how many people participated to provide a sense of the scope of the activity
(4) Include information about the level and type of engagement based on the sample size and participant responses
(5) Outline key findings and how they relate back to the outreach goals identified for the project, as well as lessons learned where things did not go as expected
(6) Add sample quotes, charts, etc. or other accompanying data to help strengthen the narrative. The Duke Libraries data visualization Libguide has some great tips for developing effective visualizations (Zoss, 2019)
(7) Analyze to what extent the goals were met and what was learned from the project as a whole
(8) Finalize the reporting with an overall synthesis and discussion of the impact the initiative had as it relates to the broader context and outline possible next steps if applicable

REFLECTING ON THE EXPERIENCE

Internally, the library can conduct a reflection exercise to understand what was learned, what worked well, what did not work well, what should be changed for next time, and how the activity contributed to the intended goals. Even if everything went perfectly and according to plan, there is always something that can be improved or changed and it is important to think about outreach as an ongoing opportunity to engage in conversations about this work. One way to accomplish this is to host small group meetings or a library-wide session where all employees can participate, even if they were not all involved in a particular project so that there is consistent and continuous discussion and everyone is part of the outreach work of the library however indirectly. Another approach can be implemented at an individual level, where the information is either collected employee by employee or is coupled with conversations that occur within smaller groups. A journaling activity can really help wrap reflection into every aspect of the outreach project or initiative. This process comes from Journey Cloud (n.d.) which provides a series of questions to think about throughout the activity, and moves through three distinct phases which start with asking what questions does the library anticipate having about the outreach goals and/or activity and what does it hope to learn? What new ideas are being discovered and how is the activity going? What were the most surprising elements and what questions are still lingering?

Employees who are tasked with implementing the outreach can pause along the way and think about what's happening at each stage. We often think about what happened at the end of an initiative, but if it occurs over a longer timeline or there are multiple activities that make up a more complex initiative, it can be hard to remember what happened weeks or even months ago if the information is not collected along the way. In addition, the perspective that is present at the beginning looks very different than that at the end, and it makes a big difference to capture ideas as the outreach gets started and compare them with what happened during and after the outreach has ended. Journaling allows for insights that would not have otherwise materialized and provides an opportunity to make changes while the outreach is happening, as opposed to waiting until the end when it is too late to make adjustments that could have taken the project in an entirely different direction.

CONCLUSION

Community engagement examines how collaboration and relationship-building can bring libraries and their stakeholders closer together and ensure that all voices are included. Having a strong understanding of community needs provides focus for library vision and direction and opportunities for partnerships and growth. Community engagement gives a voice to those who might not otherwise be included in this work, and allows the library to imagine new ways to support the needs of its users while exploring new avenues of training and experiences for library employees and external stakeholders alike. Establishing how these interactions unfold requires a deliberate approach to defining roles and responsibilities, determining specific activities, and measuring success. One particular aspect of this work includes outreach efforts that highlight how libraries exchange ideas and experiences with their stakeholders that go beyond simple marketing of services or resources. Different types and levels of outreach blend together to support a holistic vision for how libraries can work alongside their stakeholders to share in the journey of discovery that defines community engagement.

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