Surf, Sand, & Sun: Gathering User Feedback through a Beach-Themed Event

UC San Diego

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INTRODUCTION

The UC San Diego Library offers de-stress events throughout the year to help students withstand long hours of study in the library and the rigor of an 11-week academic term.

Student attendees enjoy activities and snacks, while staff use the opportunities to gather targeted library feedback. One such event was the Spring Beach Party, themed to the campus' location on the Pacific Ocean.

13 beach-themed posters and comment cards invited student feedback. Cards also included related tips about library services.

EVENT DETAILS

- Two-hour, drop-in event in April 2018
- Free lemonade, iced tea, and beach-themed snacks
- Kinetic sand play sets, magnetic poetry, word searches, and coloring sheets
- Attendees turned in up to 13 completed comment cards for an equal number of raffle tickets for prize drawings

Spring Beach Party 2018
RAFFLE TICKET
004

PARTICIPATION

- At least 60 students stopped by during the 2-hour event, most staying 30-40 minutes
- At least 25 attendees completed at least some comment cards (219 cards submitted total)
- Later in the year, comment cards were transformed into posters for additional, immediate feedback; an estimated 100 users participated in this subsequent effort
- Feedback from the event and posters is combined with user feedback from other contexts - to confirm user issues/needs, show areas of greatest interest to users, or highlight areas on which to gather more feedback

13 posters like these illustrated event/feedback themes

Crowds — Spring Beach Party

Grub — Spring Beach Party

Tunes

Friends

Participants completed comment cards on each theme to enter prize drawings
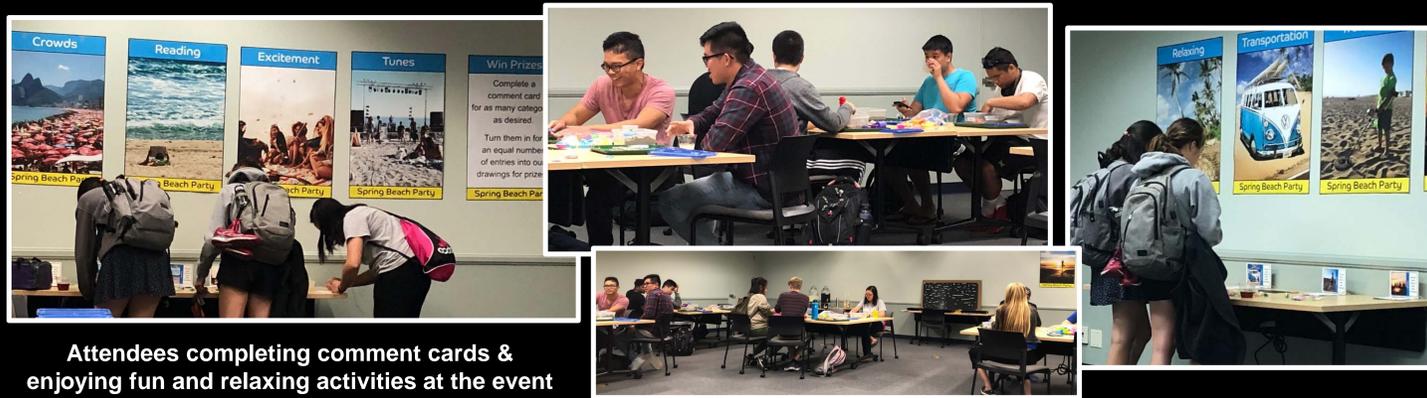
Attendees completing comment cards & enjoying fun and relaxing activities at the event

EVENT THEMES & TOPICS

Surfing *
Activities & time spent on library computers
Likelihood of borrowing laptops, if offered

Excitement
Library renovations & color preferences

Recharging *
Use of library charging options

Relaxing
Use of free time & managing stress
Napping in the library

Crowds
Finding open seats & outlets in the library

Companions
Value of therapy animal activities

Tunes
Music/noise/activity while studying
One's ideal study environment

Reading
Books to add to library collection
Use of course reserves and self-checkout machines

Transportation
Bringing skateboards into library
Finding parking near library

Bonfires
Evacuations/fire alarms in library
Sense of safety in library

Treasures
Library tips and treasures
Best book read recently

Grub *
Eating & drinking in library
Use of hydration stations

Friends
Group vs individual study
Improving group study rooms

* Garnered the most user feedback

POST-EVENT FEEDBACK

Poster versions of the comment cards allowed for additional feedback after the event

Beach-Themed Feedback: Grub
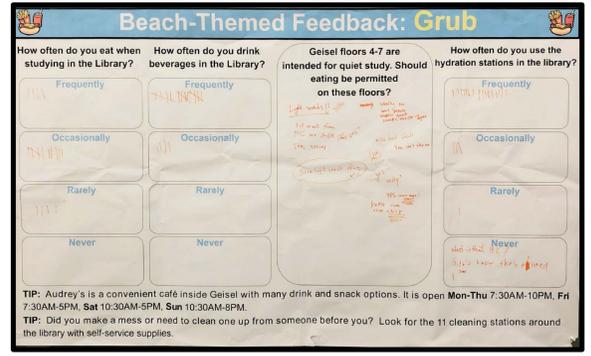
FEEDBACK RESULTS

Showed:

- Interest in a leisure reading collection
- Need for more study rooms (both larger & smaller) and improved reservation system
- Desire for technology in more study rooms
- Need for study room soundproofing
- Concern over safety issues in library
- Need to improve exterior lighting
- Frequent difficulty finding an open seat
- Desire for stress-relief activities in library
- Tips to share with others for library outreach
- Need to increase awareness of charging options
- Support for secure skateboard storage
- Preference for bright colors in collaborative areas
- Desire for more color in library design
- Types of books users want in the collection

ADVICE TO OTHERS

This low-cost, easy to implement approach garnered immediate and actionable feedback from users in a fun and unique way that students found compelling. It can easily be adapted to suit the themes, staffing, and budgets of a variety of other libraries.

Decide on several areas of simple feedback you might like from your users, then design themes and methods around them that will excite and engage them. We find students eager to share feedback when it can be provided simply, and when doing so could positively benefit them.