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Positive Results Case Study

Carmel Clay Parks: Improved culture equals increased media coverage

Problem

Carmel Clay Parks and Recreation (CCPR) is a joint department of the City of Carmel and Clay Township in Central Indiana. CCPR is set to open its new Monon Center in 2007. The 146,000-square-foot facility is built over the Monon Trail greenway and offers recreational space that includes a fitness center, gymnasium, indoor aquatics center, childcare, party rooms, conference room, concessions, café, public and family locker rooms, and a 10-acre outdoor aqua park on one side of the facility, and a computer lab, art studio, four classrooms, staff offices and banquet rooms with catering kitchen on the other side.

CCPR's Lindsay Dudeck explained that the concept of parks and recreation as a trend has grown past just cutting the grass, planting trees or having a Halloween event, to providing recreation, fitness and nature components to the community. "When our department looked at who we serve, we realized we were serving close to 100,000 people, but that half or more didn't know who we are or what we provide. That was a big problem, because we are in the process of building our \$55 million facility, and we have to have 100% cost recovery on this building. What we needed to do was to get the community excited about who CCPR is and what we are about to offer."

Solution

Some of the first steps were to get on the same page internally. CCPR worked with MillerWhite to create the Unlocking the Power of Your Pledge®. Through brainstorming with the key administrative staff CCPR determined its purpose, mission and goal. Then with the "laundry list" of all the goals condensed into one true goal statement, it came up with a pledge, "To provide enriching enjoyable escapes through recreation, fitness and nature." From this a tagline was developed: "Enjoy Your Escape." "Now we work to make sure the staff and all new hires always utilize the pledge and tag to communicate who CCPR is and what it is about," Dudeck said.

Results

"What we've seen most specifically is the increase in media coverage as we are being taken more seriously," Dudeck said. "The media outlets, newspaper, TV and radio have been knocking on my door a lot. We've had an increase in sales calls – people who want to be our vendor or partner with us. We've also seen an increase in visits on our web site. Since we developed a brand new web site with MillerWhite, our web traffic has increased 10-fold. We've partnered with local newspapers to get better coverage. There has been so much hype, too about the center – the phones are constantly ringing. So if everything goes right this building is going to be a huge success and maxed out from the beginning, so we're quite excited about that."