AN EVALUATION OF SCIENCE COMMUNICATION WORKSHOPS FOR FLORIDA EXTENSION AGENTS

Taylor Ruth, Joy Rumble, Lisa Lundy, Ricky Telg, & Angie Lindsey
Public Engagement Definition

• The intentional, meaningful interactions that provide opportunities for mutual learning between specialists and members of the public.
Needs Assessment

- Survey distributed in November 2016 to Florida Extension
- 114/348 agents completed the survey
- Majority were
  - White
  - Female 54.4% between the ages of 26 and 45
Previous Training Participation

- Giving a traditional oral presentation: 67.2%
- Participating in one-on-one conversations about your extension focus area: 55.7%
- Using social media to promote your extension focus area: 52.5%
- Giving a demonstration at a community event: 50.8%
- Leading small group discussions about your extension focus area: 45.9%
- Participating in one-on-one conversations about general scientific topics: 34.4%
- Using social media to promote general scientific topics: 29.5%
- Leading small group discussions about general scientific topics: 28.7%
- Writing a science blog: 9.8%

Activities include:
- Writing a science blog.
- Leading small group discussions about general scientific topics.
- Participating in one-on-one conversations about general scientific topics.
- Giving a demonstration at a community event.
- Using social media to promote your extension focus area.
- Giving a traditional oral presentation.
- Leading small group discussions about your extension focus area.
- Participating in one-on-one conversations about your extension focus area.

Categories of previous training participation.
Confidence in Public Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Somewhat Confident</th>
<th>Very Confident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing a science blog.</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using social media to promote general scientific topics.</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading small group discussions about general scientific topics.</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using social media to promote your extension focus area</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in one-on-one conversation about general scientific topics.</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading small group discussions about your extension focus area</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving a demonstration at a community event</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>63.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in one-on-one conversations about your extension focus area</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>70.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving a traditional oral presentation</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
<td>72.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Platform used for Engagement

- Science Café: 1.6%
- Instagram: 5.7%
- Personal Blog: 13.1%
- Twitter: 18.0%
- Television Interview: 23.8%
- Webinar: 27.0%
- YouTube (or equivalent): 35.2%
- Radio Interview: 50.0%
- Newspaper/Magazine Interview: 69.7%
- Facebook: 76.2%
- Interpersonal Communication: 80.3%
- Demonstration: 86.1%
- Guest Presentation: 86.1%
Likelihood to Participate in Training

- Majority reported likely to participate in training for media relations and crisis situations
- Likely to attend training for public engagement
- Most interested in social media training
- Not as interested in learning about delivering presentations and one-on-one conversations
District Workshops

UF/IFAS Extension Administrative Districts

Northwest
- District 1
- Pete Vergot

Northeast
- District 2
- Eric Simonne

Central
- District 3
- Tim Momol

South Central
- District 4
- Brenda Rogers

South
- District 5
- Anita Neal
District Workshops

Agenda:
9 a.m. – Session 1: Welcome and overview of the importance of storytelling
10:45 a.m. – Session 2: Communicating in disaster/crisis
Noon – Lunch
12:30 p.m. – Session 3: Working with media to tell your story
2:00 p.m. – Session 4: Using social media to tell your story
Wrap-up/Evaluation
Evaluation Results

• 172 Extension agents attended five workshops
• Retrospective pretest-posttest related to ability
  • 20 Likert-type questions
• Four Likert-type questions measured behavioral intent
I am able to...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Pre M(SD)</th>
<th>Post M(SD)</th>
<th>Difference Post-Pre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop a crisis communications plan.</td>
<td>2.36 (0.97)</td>
<td>3.83 (0.81)</td>
<td>1.47**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement good story telling techniques when communicating about science.</td>
<td>2.84 (0.89)</td>
<td>4.20 (0.58)</td>
<td>1.36**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize a story about science.</td>
<td>2.88 (0.86)</td>
<td>4.20 (0.59)</td>
<td>1.32**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a media relations strategy.</td>
<td>2.59 (0.95)</td>
<td>3.81 (0.76)</td>
<td>1.22**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write a press release for crisis communications.</td>
<td>2.46 (1.02)</td>
<td>3.66 (0.88)</td>
<td>1.21**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither disagree nor agree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

** Paired t-test was statistically significant (α < .01)
I am able to...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre M(SD)</th>
<th>Post M(SD)</th>
<th>Difference Post-Pre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work with a reporter.</td>
<td>2.97 (1.04)</td>
<td>4.09 (0.72)</td>
<td>1.12**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be interviewed by a reporter.</td>
<td>3.09 (1.05)</td>
<td>4.10 (0.72)</td>
<td>1.02**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use social media to promote my</td>
<td>3.16 (1.34)</td>
<td>4.06 (0.82)</td>
<td>0.90**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension focus area.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use social media to promote science.</td>
<td>3.08 (1.05)</td>
<td>3.98 (0.86)</td>
<td>0.89**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write a science blog.</td>
<td>2.68 (1.11)</td>
<td>3.54 (1.06)</td>
<td>0.85**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither disagree nor agree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

** Paired t-test was statistically significant (α < .01)
I plan to...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>M (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use social media to promote my Extension focus area.</td>
<td>4.31 (0.82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use story telling techniques in my job.</td>
<td>4.22 (0.70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reach out to the media to promote my Extension focus area.</td>
<td>4.10 (0.79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a crisis communication plan related to my job.</td>
<td>3.54 (0.99)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither disagree nor agree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree
Discussion

- Needs assessment was useful in guiding the development of the workshops
- Evaluations indicated success
- Follow-up interviews could help understand if the agents actually used the information
- This workshop development process could serve as a template for other states
QUESTIONS?

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