

Evidence-Based Management

“TELLING OUR STORIES”

ADVOCACY PROJECT

Federation of Ontario Public Libraries

Background

The Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL) decided to run an advocacy contest called “Telling Our Stories” (TOS). The winners received cash awards that were presented at a gala awards function. Each library in the Province of Ontario was invited to participate in the promotion of the program.

Opportunity

FOPL, with project direction and oversight led by a volunteer members’ committee, required a solution to manage all aspects of the contest data collection, management and reporting.

Results

The Counting Opinions custom contest solution directly contributed to a successful and professionally run contest. This project demonstrated the ability of Counting Opinions to deliver a large-scale solution meeting and exceeding all of the criteria of the client, within a fixed budget and tight time constraints, involving thousands of public participants and hundreds of library systems.

Solution Details

Counting Opinions provided (within 3 months) a comprehensive management system that provided the following functionality:

- 1) A set of secure access codes for distribution to every Ontario Library and Library location.

Note: 234 Library systems and 836 Library locations participated. They represented over 93% of the Ontario population (12 million+).

- 2) A web-based portal for FOPL and participating Libraries to securely access:
 - news, promotional materials and support information including video clips, audio clips, photos, graphics
 - location details (used for managing access codes, contest entry form options and scatter map reports)

- custom links for promoting the contest from each library’s web site (used for tracking referral rates)
 - test form for testing the contest entry process used by the public
 - on-line forms for local input of contest entries received in paper form (hand-delivered, faxed, mailed-in)
 - on-line rating form-enabling Libraries to review and rate contest entries (over 2,400 captured)
 - real-time reports (overall province-wide summary results and data specific to each library and library location)
 - access to short-listed (69), winning and all local (specific to each library) contest entries for local advocacy purposes
- 3) On-line forms for capturing public contest entries, supporting the following functionality:
 - full Canadian English and French language support (user option)
 - real-time address verification (ensuring contestants live within the province)
 - real-time checking and removal of duplicate entries (only one entry per person allowed)
 - real-time word counts (limit of 500 words to be eligible for prizes)
 - real-time validation of provided email address and phone numbers (area-code & exchange)
 - real-time selection of Library system/location (to which the story is applicable)
 - real-time CAPTCHA code verification to prevent web-bot and automated form submissions
 - customizable Style-Sheets (simplifying integration of web form on any web site for a localized user interface).

Note: 782 contest entries collected over the 6-week period.

- 4) On-line forms for capturing public and public library staff votes, supporting the following functionality:
- full Canadian English and French language support (user option)
 - real-time postal-code verification (required to ensure voters live within the province)
 - real-time management of different voting specifications for the public and public library staff
 - real-time CAPTCHA code verification to prevent web-bot and automated form submissions.

Note: Over 15,000 public votes collected over 8 week period.

- 5) Secure On-line portal for final judging panel (5 people) for rating short-listed entries submitted by all finalists, supporting the following functionality:
- full Canadian English and French language support (user option)
 - random presentation of stories (to ensure no order bias)
 - suppression of personal details (to protect privacy and avoid potential for bias)
 - presentation of English only contest entries to English judges and French & English entries to bilingual judges.

Note:

- 1) 288 evaluations completed over 2 weeks
- 2) Winners were instantly determined without the judges ever having to meet, either in-person or by telephone.

- 6) On-line access for FOPL management, providing:
- real-time access to contest activity and library participation (enabling FOPL to initiate a number of mid-contest adjustments and actions)

- real-time reports of final judging activity
- secure access to personal details for all finalists
- functions for downloading story content and enabling select FOPL members to download contest entries for those running local advocacy contests
- real-time reports (charts and graphs) summarizing all aspects of the contest
- automated selection of short list finalists, based on combination of public votes and library ratings.

- 7) Incorporated Counting Opinions innovative mapping technology solution, to pinpoint the location of contest entries and associated judging input.
- 8) Continue to provide on-going, secure, web-based access for all FOPL member libraries to access their local stories, all finalist entries and the winning entries to be employed as desired for local advocacy purposes.

About Counting Opinions

Facing constant competitive challenges, libraries and library organizations need better tools to understand and manage customer needs and to compete more effectively for scarce resources. In business since 2004, Counting Opinions provides libraries and library organizations with a cost-effective, evidence-based management solutions' platform for the comprehensive management of their performance and customer satisfaction data. Solutions for custom surveys, contests, open-ended customer feedback, trends, benchmarking, outcomes and peer comparisons are also available.

For more information, www.countingopinions.com



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