**Background/Purpose:**

Waterloo is home to a vibrant arts, culture and heritage sector that boasts hundreds of independent media and visual artists, performers, and writers. Culture not only contributes to community wellbeing, but ignites collaboration and entrepreneurship ensuring a dynamic workforce and a diverse local economy. In 2013, Waterloo council voted unanimously to approve the City of Waterloo's 10 year culture plan. The recommendations are being implemented through coordinated efforts between the city's economic development department and community stakeholders.

One of the primary challenges the community identified around culture is a lack of awareness of local culture programming. At a basic level, there has been a lack of coordinated communication. Waterloo is home to local talent (both amateur and professional) and there are a lot of events going on, but people do not always know about them or how to find out about them. The challenges faced with connecting potential cultural consumers are a significant barrier to local cultural development. Making audience connections are critical to supporting artists and performers in their work. Raising awareness of community vibrancy also support talent retention and attraction efforts in other sectors.

**Purpose of project:**

As a means of addressing the challenge of lack of awareness of local culture programming, City of Waterloo staff have initiated The What’s Happening Waterloo advertising campaign. This year-long campaign is designed to support talent attraction and retention with five integrated components:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Item/ format | Timing | Distribution |
| brochure - print | 85% January & February  5% January to March  10% May to September | mail drop 30,000 homes in the spring program and activities guide  local business distribution  event and surrounding neighbourhood delivery |
| kiosk panel - print | May to August | uptown kiosk in Waterloo Public Square |
| social media weekly digest – digital | June to August | City of Waterloo Facebook & Twitter |
| eblast - electronic | Monthly | constant contact subscribers |
| program ads - print | July & August | back coverpage for event programs at the Jazz Festival & Buskers Carnival |

**Effectiveness / Meeting Objectives**

This campaign has been delivered for a cost of $5000. It has already proven to have increased brand recognition with a 5% increase in attendance at events, a 23% increase in eblast subscribers and a 16% engagement rate on social media.

**Challenges & Changes made**

One of the challenges in creating a year-long brochure is advancing the planning for events, festivals and programs to forecast dates up to 18 months in advance. Working with community based organizations to promote year round opportunities has proven to be mutually beneficial.

**Target Audience (demographics)**

* Post-secondary students/young professionals exploring the community
* young families, tech sector workers from larger centres enjoying small town feel with amenities
* older adults with a passion for music and art