February 12, 2015

Fellow Business Member:

Recently, the Members Advisory Board sent out a questionnaire via email to approximately 200 Ed! members asking for input and feedback.

We received 18 responses (17 from members and 1 board member). The questionnaire requested feedback regarding three programmatic areas:

- The new website
- The courtesy umbrella program
- Training and seminars

While the number of responses was small, it was overwhelmingly positive. Much of the feedback highlighted favorably on the new website and umbrella program. For instance, out of the 18 responses, 14 thought the umbrella program was a plus.

The general response to the suggested training and seminars was quite mixed. Out of the 18 responses, 6 members ranked the training options listed, 4 members had no specific response, while 8 had moderate to strong statements against spending any budget on training for members.

The attached document includes a summary of the feedback we received - a combination of quotes and summarized feedback.

Based on this questionnaire and other feedback we’ve received, here are a couple action items regarding the website and courtesy umbrella program. We will do more research prior to implementing any Ed! sponsored training this year.

WEBSITE

- Improve edmondsdowntown.org search rankings by:
  - Increasing the number of site’s that link back to Ed!'s site. **Have your own business website? By adding a link to edmondsdowntown.org on your own site - you increase the search rankings of both our sites.**
  - Implementing paid search marketing and keyword terms

UMBRELLAS

- Add additional umbrella stands to high traffic areas
- Work with the City to identify and add additional locations for trash cans within our boundaries
- Designate a “host” for each umbrella stand. The host will regularly monitor the stand, help redistribute umbrellas, and keep the stand free of trash.
If you have additional feedback or would like to get involved on one of our committees, please send an email to pam@edmondsdowntown.org.

Our next Members Advisory Board meeting is February 26, 2015 at 8am at the Edmonds Center for the Arts, Room 225. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend. Join us!

Sincerely,

Pam Stuller
Members Advisory Board President

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**January 2015**

**Member Input Questionnaire Summary**

**Ed! Website - Comments and Suggestions:**

- “I like the new website. It's something that visitors or new residents will find very helpful. It's intuitive, well organized and pleasing to the eye.”
- “Nice idea as long as it is not too expensive. Needs to be promoted and easy for customers to find or it is a waste.”
- “The site is very easy to navigate, also very easy to find the members. Colors are very pleasant and eye catching.”
- “For the money I pay, the best thing I am getting for that money is the web-site. I think is a great tool and I am happy it is there. I think the next step is to promote the web-site as no one I know, or any customer I ask, does not know of its existence. I feel it will get used more as time goes on.”
- Add a list of special events and activities on the Ed! Site (“if its already there –its hard to find”): RE: 4th of July, car event, waterfront festival, jazz, etc.
- “Have a small map of the downtown as one of the first images you see. I.e. when you visit somewhere you want to figure out - do you need a car? Can you park and walk?”
- Reduce the size of the local Temperature box, and below it have a link for activities
- A few people would like to reword their business descriptions...but don’t seem to know the steps to do so. (note: contact nicole@edmondsdowntown.org to request changes).
- Add “Back to the top” button on the website
- Some members would like the ability to expand business descriptions with additional photos
- Better organize the website to include specific subcategories for businesses (note: if you click on the dark gray bar with the down arrow and the words refine search, you’ll find the subcategories for each directory).
- Tweak the front page of the site so that it connects “Ed!” with “Edmonds”. The name “Ed” isn’t immediately connectable with the name “Edmonds”
Umbrella Program - Comments and Suggestions:

- “I love the umbrellas. I wasn't one of the businesses selected to receive a bin, so we inherit lots of stray umbrellas.”
- “Love the umbrellas - Nordstrom does that and it makes Ed look so upscale like that. Not too worried about the theft. Can't let it stop us from moving forward with a good idea.”
- Concern about the umbrella holders becoming trash cans when empty. Modify umbrella holders so they can’t be mistaken for garbage cans.
- “Great idea as long as we expect losses and plan for the cost of that.”
- Someone should be redistributing and replacing umbrellas on a regular basis
- Additional umbrella locations specific to how people enter and exit the downtown area (Ombu, The Papery, Epulo, etc.). OR one on every corner.
- Get an article in the paper or somehow deliver the message that the umbrellas are on loan while doing business in Edmonds and are there for all to enjoy and utilize.
- “If my money is going towards umbrellas I wish it would not. It is a cute idea, but in no way do I feel it has helped, or will ever help my business. Not one umbrella, by a customer, has come into my shop, as my customers are Washingtonians and bring there own umbrellas. This is a complete waist of funds in my opinion.” “Total failure”
- “I will prefer to spend the money on other form of advertising to entice people to come to Edmonds, isn’t that the whole idea?”

BID Education Program - Comments and Suggestions:

- Consider offering classes about: Sharing advice for affordable healthcare for business owners. “how to handle shoplifting” “Principles of merchandizing and staging strategies to engage shoppers. What to do. What not to do” “Inventory management” “Tips and ideas for working with Amazon”, and “Brick and mortar to web integration”
- Concern over BID budgets going toward growing foot traffic (customers/sales); NOT workshops (too much work for low turnout)
- “BID should not have an educational arm”
- “I think a Lynda.com membership that members got access to would be better. No live seminars or classes.”
- BID should not spend time and money on education. Instead, the focus should be driving traffic to the area and focusing on parking to handle the visitors/shoppers
- “In my experience trainings that are 'free' are a lot of work on the set up and coordination with low turn out or high 'flake out' rate.”
- “I don't think this is something the Ed should spend time and money on. There are plenty of places for us to get business education. I think the number one priority in downtown Edmonds should be parking including handicapped parking. Most destination towns have at least one parking garage with easy access to everything.”
- “I believe the function of BID should not be on education! We are all grown ups, and many of the topics above should be done PRIOR to opening your own business. Doesn't BID stand for "Business Improvement District", not "babysitting". More importantly, I fail to see any of the above topics will help improving our business district to make it more inviting for businesses & visitors to come "eat, drink, shop & stay in Edmonds".”
Education Questions – Ranked (1 = very interested and 6 = not interested at all) based on 6 responses:

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<td>Hiring, employee retention, etc.</td>
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General - Suggestions and Concerns

- Host an informational day/night to publicize the BID for Edmonds locals
- Concern about the lack of opt-out (exemptions, or modified/tiered membership) for those businesses that don’t have customers or storefronts
- I believe all the money should go towards marketing Edmonds and the businesses who are involved, period...Nothing else.
- Create a centralized Downtown kiosk for local updates (4th of July, outdoor movies, Taste of Edmonds, etc.)
- Concern about business owners over-utilizing limited sidewalk space. Making it difficult for older, less mobile foot traffic
- An “Ed!’s Update” box in the Beacon for local awareness.