Olathe Parks & Rec Olathe Active App

City of Olathe, Kansas

#Authentic Community Connections

Population: 135,000

Innovation

Criteria:

- Initiative fundamentally changed a process, product or service (fundamental)

OR

- Initiative builds upon existing knowledge to improve a product, process or service (incremental)

- The initiative substantially stretched the boundaries of ordinary governmental operations.

Describe Your Innovation

(When and how did this innovation get started? Do also detail how the program or policy innovative, how it has changed previous processes, products, or services, and how it has substantially stretched or improved the boundaries of ordinary governmental operations.)

Community members are busier than ever, which makes disseminating information more challenging than ever. For years, Olathe Parks & Rec has used traditional media such as print advertising in local publications, emails, activity guides and social media to reach its audience. The Olathe Active App was developed to serve as an additional opportunity to engage with community members on parks and recreational topics, but also provide health and wellness resources to encourage the community to stay active. Although this information could go on a website, the app allows Olathe Parks & Rec to feature additional content within the app that can be accessed without an Internet connection. Examples of this content include upcoming events with the ability to add to the user’s calendar, trail maps that detail the route and distance, recipe resources and challenges. Additionally, with the Olathe Active App, users can easily look up recreational programs and activities right on the soccer field, plan their next meal in the school pick-up line or find the closest bike trail and route. It is a direct and convenient one-stop shop for information about Olathe Parks & Rec.

Collaboration

Criteria:

- Initiative demonstrated engaging stakeholders both internal and external.

- Initiative demonstrated high performance teaming, breaking down internal silos.

- Strategic partnerships and or community networks were developed as a result of the initiative

In less than 200 words, what individuals or groups are considered the primary initiators of your program? How does the innovation engage stakeholders or demonstrate high performance teaming? What strategic partnerships and/or community networks, if any, were developed?

The primary initiators include Olathe Parks & Rec, the City of Olathe IT staff, the Johnson County Health Department, Olathe Health Systems and Feature Group USA. High-performance teaming was demonstrated...
through the partnership with the Johnson County Health Department, who helped develop the healthy recipes section and Olathe Health Systems, who opted to underwrite the Challenge section that would provide healthy challenges to the community. Through these partnerships, the project team is able to tap into additional resources and build ongoing relationships to further enhance the app.

If a private consultant was used please describe in detail their involvement, identify the consultant and/or firm and provide contact information. Maintain a 100 word maximum.

Feature Group USA  Fred Thal  1415 Elbridge Payne Road, Suite 170 Chesterfield, MO 63017  800-334-1284

The Olathe Parks & Rec project team reached out to Feature Group USA to discuss the possibility of developing an app similar to the one Feature Group did for the City of Chesterfield. Together, the project team and Feature Group USA came up with the design, functionality and features the app would need to be a viable tool for Olathe Parks & Rec. Feature Group USA was always open to looking in to adding specific features or enhancements and finding solutions.

Significance

Criteria:
- Initiative addresses an area of concern for the majority of local government organizations.
- Initiative can serve as a model and replicated in other jurisdictions.

Please describe the extent to which you believe your program or policy initiative is potentially replicable within other jurisdictions and why? To your knowledge, have any other jurisdictions or organizations established programs or implemented policies modeled specifically on this project? Please also provide verification of the replication.

Development of the Olathe Active App was inspired by an app developed by Feature Group USA for Chesterfield Parks & Rec. Other local governments could certainly use this technology and customize it based on their needs and the needs of their citizens. Olathe Parks & Rec chose to enhance the app with the addition of health and wellness features and a Challenges section. Please refer to Chesterfield Parks & Rec website and app as proof or contact Feature Group USA.

Effectiveness

Criteria:
- Initiative addresses a community or organization need.
- Initiative has achieved tangible results.
- Initiative improved the organizational culture or the traditional approach to problem solving.
- Initiative has received recognition for its achievements, i.e. independent evaluation, national recognition, local press, etc.

Please describe the most significant obstacle(s) encountered thus far by your program. How have they been dealt with? Which ones remain?

One obstacle encountered is limited resources to keep content fresh and updated. The marketing and communications team with Olathe Parks & Rec overcomes this by having weekly content meetings to discuss what
needs to be updated or added to all digital media. The back end of the app is web-based so changes can be made from almost anywhere at any time.

Another obstacle is working with third-party apps or vendors to enhance the app features. For example, the process to import recreational programs involves, downloading from another system, formatting and then uploading into the app. This also means when a program changes, it has to be changed manually in the app. To overcome this obstacle, the Olathe Parks & Rec project team is currently working with Feature Group USA and its activity registration partner, ACTIVENET, to connect its API to the app so programs are added and updated in the app in real time.

**What outcomes did this program or policy have? Could you share one or two objective measures that demonstrate these outcomes? Ultimately, how did you measure the change based on the intervention, and why do you believe in the credibility of this assessment?**

Since launching on July 2, 2018, the Olathe Active App has had 294 users on Android devices and 519 users on iOS devices. The average retention rate for mobile apps in 2017 was 20% after 90 days. We will use that as our benchmark. So far, our retention rate has been about 10% after a month. We currently use Google’s mobile app analytics platform, Firebase, to measure audience, usage, events and retention. Firebase is highly reputable and is tied directly to the Olathe Active App and delivers real-time data.

**Has the program received any press or other media coverage to date? If yes, please list the sources and briefly describe relevant coverage.**

No

**Presentation**

**Criteria:**
- Presentation will be delivered by a team.
- Presentation will be highly interactive and engaging.

**Example Social Media Post**

Facebook/Instagram Post

It's National Parks and Recreation Month and what better way to celebrate than to download the new Olathe Active App!

Now available on the Apple Store and Google Play store, the Olathe Active App features information on rec programs, parks and trails, and upcoming events. It even includes health and wellness resources provided by our friends at LiveWell Johnson County and Olathe Health.

Staying #OlatheActive has never been easier. Download today!
Please write an abstract or short description for your innovation that would make conference attendees say "Well, I need to attend this session!"

There's an app for almost everything. From staying up to date on the latest news and scores to booking flights and playing games, apps can play a key role in the lives of smartphone and tablet users. And now parks and recreation departments are entering the mobile world. Apps can provide quick access to the information and resources users want the most without sifting through a website.

Using Olathe Parks & Rec's roll out of its mobile app as an example, this session will briefly cover the following topics:

- Identifying the need for a mobile app for your organization or department
- Planning, designing and development
- Funding and corporate partnerships
- Testing
- Marketing and promotion
- Launch
- Measurement and analytics

How will you make the session creative and unique? How do you plan to be both entertaining and educational? Include a description of how your session will facilitate group activities and/or interaction. What will attendees be able to have as an actionable “takeaway” from the session?

A functioning mobile app is something conference goers can use and experience immediately. To engage the audience, the presentation would feature a unique Challenge just for the conference. Attendees could be asked to download the app and participate in the featured Challenge:

- Challenge: Download the app, then go to the Challenges section. Read the details. The details could be something simple like “Once you register for the challenge, stand up.”
- Overall the presentation would include a live demonstration of all the features. The actionable takeaway for participants will be clear visuals of app performance and first-hand experience of the benefits it gives.

Anything else you would like to add?

No.