'Animated about voting'

Film making competition

'Animated about voting' film making competition

The film making competition was planned in partnership with local Media Company LRG. The aim was to raise awareness among young people about local democracy and the importance of voting through the use of creative arts and media.

The competition targeted people interested in politics but also film/ media/ drama and music students, encouraging them to come together to develop a short 2-3min video to highlight the importance of politics in our lives and to encourage people to vote.

The winner of the competition will work with the professional film director and producer to develop the final short video which will be used in future election campaigns.

Film making induction workshop
Tuesday 29 January 2013

6 Schools across Dacorum took part in the film making induction workshop including Astley Cooper, Berkhamsted, Cavendish , Hemel Hempstead, Longdean and Rudolf Steiner school (69 attendees).

The induction workshop was held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre and included presentations, short films and interactive workshops to teach the attendees new skills, film making techniques and to increase their awareness about local democracy. (Appendix 1: Agenda - Induction workshop: Pg8)

Career in Film and TV
David Wachs (LRG media) started the session with a presentation about his career in film and TV and showed the group a number of examples of his film and producing work.

How to make a film (video and Q&A)
The session continued with a short film which was produced by David with his son for a school project. The short film goes through the detail of the film making process, breaking it down into straight forward sections with the use of actors to demonstrate the points being made. (Appendix 2: Film making process hand-out: Pg9-11)

Communication task and feedback
The communication task was carried out in pairs. The group discussed different modes and mediums of communication and talked about what makes communication effective (Appendix 3: Communication task questions: Pg12). People then had the opportunity to feed back to the large group and an open discussion took place to help the group understand the importance of getting the message across to the audience.

Power of Viral
David continued with a session about the 'power of viral' and showed the group a variety of short films that have been successful online. This session demonstrated the importance of using comedy and other factors to ensure that an audience wants to watch and also enjoys the experience.

Local Democracy
Cllr Neil Harden Portfolio Holder for Residents and Regulatory Services presented to the group about his role as a Councillor and Portfolio holder.
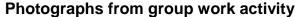
Democracy & voting
Jim Doyle, Group Manager for Democratic Services went on to run a session about Democracy. Looking at democracy in other parts of the world in contrast with what democracy looks like in Dacorum. The historical context of voting was also covered, including women and the vote and a statistical evidence base was shown to demonstrate the turnout at elections.

An outline was also given to demonstrate the areas that electoral service would like to see covered through the short films. (Appendix 4: How politics affects you hand-out: separate pdf attachment).

Voting Task

Attendees were broken into 5 groups, mixed with representatives from each school. The groups were asked to choose a leader to help facilitate the discussion and write on the flip chart. Each group worked independently through the questions and then fed back to the larger group at the end of the session. The groups discussed the benefits of voting and looked at some reasons why people may not use their vote, coming up with suggestions of how you could show people that it is important to use your vote. (Appendix 5: Flip chart notes from group work: Pg13-17)

Photographs from group work activity

Photographs from group work feedback

Brainstorming process & structuring the film
David Wachs moved through the brainstorming process with the group and reiterated the film making process. The large group was then broken up to work within their school groups. They discussed the message that they were trying to get across, the best media format and started allocating roles and responsibilities to each member of the team.

Photographs from small group work

Next steps

- Film clinic running at the XC through Youth Connexions every Wednesday evening to get some practical tips with using the equipment.

- Students that need extra equipment can borrow this from Youth Connexions for free.

- Competition closing date Wednesday 13 March 2013.

- Evaluation questionnaires will be completed by all participants.

- Screening and announcement of prize winners on Friday 15 March 2013 with MP Mike Penning and Mayor, Herbert Chapman.

- All short films will go on the Dacorum Borough Council website.

- Winning film will work with local professional, David Wachs to produce the final version of their film at a time that is appropriate for them. This will be used in future election campaigns.

Appendix 1

Film Making Workshop
Agenda – 29/01/13

09:30 - Arrival and refreshments

09:45 - Welcome

09:50 - David Wachs' career in film and TV (LRG Media)

10:05 - How to make a film (video and Q&A)

10:30 - Communication task & feedback (in pairs)

10:45 - Power of viral (video and Q&A)

10:55 - Break

11:05 - Cllr Neil Harden; Local Democracy Explained

11:15 - Voting in Dacorum

11:25 - How can we encourage people to vote? (Small group)

11:50 - Brainstorming Process

12:00 - Group work & feedback

12:30 - Finish

Appendix 2

THE FILMMAKING PROCESS
by
David Wachs
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1. **STEP 1: Brainstorming Process**
   - Focus on how to convert your understanding of the content and the best way to reach a core audience
   - How do you want your audience to respond and make decisions based on that

2. **STEP 2: Formats of filmmaking**
   - Make a commitment to a filmmaking genre
   - Study many examples similar to your idea, or just aspects

3. **STEP 3: Designation of roles** (Aim to decide by consensus. If that doesn't work, consensus decides Producer & Director and then they decide roles)

List of responsibilities

Producer – patient, oversees the management of whole project, designates roles, decides and watches budget/money, manages the timing of the filming and breaks. Finally, ensures delivery of final edited film is done on time. Shares final say with Director.

Producer's Assistant – humble, helps the producer. Keeps all receipts and can help with accounting. Takes on the extra stuff that the producer can't manage.

Director – strong visionary, generous, fair, holds the vision for the film and all creative decisions flow through her/him.

Scriptwriter – puts the director's vision for the film into words and scene descriptions.

Storyboard artist - draws a frame that captures what happens in each scene, sometimes giving an indication of the size of the frame, camera position, and actor's positions.

Set still photographer/videographer - good to have someone who captures the behind the scenes filming for publicity purposes.

Cinematographer - through camera design and operating, makes sure the vision of the director is fulfilled, oversees the lighting. Test the camera settings. Make pre-sets to save time.

Lighting and Camera Assistant – ok to be more than one person, helps the cinematographer achieve their goals.

Sound - with wireless mics or a microphone on a boom pole, they ensure the sound is perfect. Works closely with the cinematographer and do a lot of tests.

Production Assistant(s) – Helps and supports with tasks wherever needed, including making tea and making sure the general public waits for a shot to be completed.

Production Design/Set & Art design - can be more than one person - takes the director's vision and converts it into a well-dressed set, at all interior and exterior locations.

Costume/Props – more than one person, takes director's vision and confers with Production Designer on the look of the film.

Hair/Make-up – minimum needed is a neutral facial powder to keep shine off faces, brows and noses. There may be a need for more extreme make-up and hair tending/ design.

Script Supervisor – super organised person, works closely with the Director. They make sure that none of the script is missed out and keep track of the continuity in the shooting, prop placement, actor placement, what they say/ do and when. This ensures continuity for re-takes.   They take photos throughout the filming. This person is worth their weight in gold, the Director's Agony Aunt, must be a good listener.

Editing – this person must know about the whole editing process. It is a good idea to have them on set to weed out the bad from the good footage. They need strong storytelling skills, with the ability to weave together a narrative. They need to oversee picture, sound, music, titles, graphics, animation etc. Need to understand the encoding of the film
for uploading, streaming and viewing online.

Music Creation / Supervision - this person could have a great knowledge of music that can be used. It's important to use legally usable music. Creation of music is the best solution, as no rights clearance is necessary.

Sound Effects (this person may need to create all kinds of effects – dramatic or realistic. Key person for enhancing the film and bringing production value to the table)

Animation/Visual Effects (if necessary) - this person/ people need a unique and special skill. This could be 2D or 3D animation techniques.

4. **STEP 4: Development/Scripting/Storyboarding**

(Essential read: William Goldman, Robert Towne, Syd Field, Robert McKee)

In this phase, you put all the ideas for expressing and communicating your message into the hat, whether that is from an entertaining, educational, or social perspective. It could make one laugh, cry or be shocked. Experimentation is great, do mind maps, cut and paste or use Index Cards (stick the cards on a wall and move them around or add/ take ideas away, jot down great lines, concepts, approaches, etc). You choose the best medium to achieve this, and then the script is written. Download screenplay MS Word template. Numerous drafts may be required after comments from the creative team.

5. **STEP 5: Pre-Production/Planning/Scheduling/Budgeting/Casting**
The Producer decides the timescales based on the script. Locations are chosen (interior and exterior). Decisions on what equipment is needed must be done with the crew. Actors are chosen (with Director). Costume/ props and design are allocated to the appropriate team. A Budget is decided and laid out for financers to approve. On the set, manage people and timings, ensure everyone is fed and

watered and even if it feels like a disaster keep smiling. Director must cast and rehearse. Creative teams must put together everything they need based on the script. Sound person and camera must be aware if additional equipment is needed for each scene. Don't let music catch you out. If music is integral in the film itself, this needs to be well thought through.

6. **STEP 6: Production (filming)**

Get up early and make the most of the daylight. Do your filming and pray all your hard work falls into place. Expect to have a few issues, things will go wrong but trust that it will work out in the end. It's just a film, remember.

7. **STEP 8: Post-Production** (**editing/animation/sound/music)**

Yeah! You're in the can. No more stress! Wrong. This process is like digging for buried treasure in 40-degree weather. It's thankless, yet can be fun and rewarding. Organise your footage into easy to follow categories. Always label bins and clips well. Select usable clips as Footage selects – v1. Then rename the file and start editing ourfilm-v2, ourfilm-v3, and so on. Export lower resolution versions, for others to view and comment on online. Get a Vimeo account. If you can afford £35, get Vimeo Plus. Include the music creator/supervisor from the beginning of the editing process, as this will influence your cut. Additional Sound Design will make a huge difference. Have multiple screenings to test out what works and what doesn't. In some cases, you may have to re-think your whole approach. Re-edits are the norm. At some point, the director and the producer need to say – it's a wrap!

8. **STEP 9 (Optional): Screening/Wrap party**

Go on. Have a wrap party and screening and celebrate all your hard work and endeavours with your friends and close ones. Producer's last job – get the Popcorn.

THE END

Appendix 3

Communication Task

> ➤ Work in pairs with the person sitting next to you.

> ➤ 10 minutes to discuss the 3 questions below.

> ➤ Write your response below.

Questions
1) What makes a communication/message effective?

2) What is the best way to get a message through to people your age? (i.e comedy, talking straight and honest, imaginative, creative etc)

3) What mode of communication is preferred by people your age? (Phones, laptop, tablets etc)

4) Which medium of communication is preferred by people your age? (I.e. music videos, documentaries, TV shows, feature films, theatre, live performance etc)

Appendix 4 – See separate PDF attachment for 'How Politics affects you'

Appendix 5 – Flipchart notes from group work

Group One

1) Do you understand the benefits of voting?
> Thinks about the public
> Restrictions and benefits
> Expressing your opinions
> Work with other countries

2) Discuss and list some reasons why people do not use their vote.
> a) Lazy – other people to vote for them
>
> b) go with the flow
>
> c) they don't do much or make it worse
>
> d) only a few people out of 60 million – don't know exactly what everyone wants
>
> e) not a fan of democracy

3) For each reason that you have listed, think about ideas/ suggestions that would show people that it is important to vote.
> a) Online voting – make a book with pictures – adverts – voting in other
>
> places
>
> b) vote to their door
>
> c) teach people from a young age so they want to make a difference.
>
> d) find a way to prove that every body counts
>
> e) raise awareness as to what they can change.
>
> Make it easier to do things rather than complain

4) How can we encourage people to vote?
> - Promoted via : public personalities – comedians & musicians
> - social network & new media campaigns:- twitter, you tube, Facebook etc.
> - politicians with Charisma and Character
> - More dynamic campaigning
> - politicians more interactive with media
> - use other countries
> - You tube channel
> - Mortal Kombat – politician version
> - Politics pantomime

1) Do you understand the benefits of voting?
> Not voting makes you end up like North Korea
> Direct positive influence

2) Discuss and list some reasons why people do not use their vote.
> a) Lazy
>
> b) Don't understand
>
> c) No time
>
> d) Politicians not doing what they say they will
>
> e) don't want to get involved
>
> f) don't think 1 vote will make a difference

3) For each reason that you have listed, think about ideas/ suggestions that would show people that it is important to vote.
> a)
>
> b)
>
> c) Put voting on line
>
> d)
>
> e)
>
> f) Every vote counts !

4) How can we encourage people to vote?
> Celeb endorsements
> Social networking
> The internet
> More advertising – what councillors have achieved in the past
> Free stuff

Group Three

1) Do you understand the benefits of voting?
        Have your say
        Your voice is heard
        Fair system
        Can't complain if you don't vote
        People died for the right

2) Discuss and list some reasons why people do not use their vote.
        Feel it doesn't matter

        What's the point when your party doesn't win

3) For each reason that you have listed, think about ideas/ suggestions that would show people that it is important to vote.

        Other ways to vote - make it easier

        More info how to vote and who for

4) How can we encourage people to vote?

        Look at making voting easier and more accessible

        Advert during prime time TV shows

        -   About how to vote and what the parties stand for

        Highlight the suffragettes

        Make a film

Group Four

1) Do you understand the benefits of voting?
Change the way we live
Having full control
Our own views
Impact on society
Make changes for those who can't
Choose your leaders
Keep freedom
drawbacks

2) Discuss and list some reasons why people do not use their vote.
Fear

Lack of knowledge

Lack of research

Laziness

Might feel they can't make a difference

Take it for granted

Lack of interest

Lack of faith in government

Lack of responsibility

Parties can abuse fear and vote for what they don't want

3) For each reason that you have listed, think about ideas/ suggestions that would show people that it is important to vote.
Let voters know how their lives will be affected in the small things

4) How can we encourage people to vote?
Advertising
More exciting, creative and interactive
The means/method of voting – through technology
Explain their options and give knowledge regarding parties
More community involvement
Easier lives for troubles people and families
Celebrity endorsement
Social networking – trends
Advertising more through social media

Group Five

1) Do you understand the benefits of voting?
> Helps you put your own view across
> Influence institutions/groups you may want to see more involved in democracy

2) Discuss and list some reasons why people do not use their vote.
> a) self-involved – I don't care
>
> b) don't understand
>
> c) don't like any of the choices
>
> d) don't think it will affect them

3) For each reason that you have listed, think about ideas/ suggestions that would show people that it is important to vote.
> a)
>
> b) show how to vote / show why to vote – give understanding
>
> c)
>
> d) show how it will affect them

4) How can we encourage people to vote?
> Raise awareness – social networks, leaflets etc.