

Austrian Reading Day 2016-2018

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Impulse

- The effects of reading difficulties are obvious in several areas of facultas business as an academic publisher and bookseller.
- Teachers at schools and professors at universities were very interested to support an initiative when we proposed the idea to them.
- Facultas' shareholders are students and immediately understood the idea and target.
- The decision to act was unanimously taken by CEO, Management & shareholders as a relevant strategic topic.
- Facultas dedicated a budget of 5.000€ for the first year.
- There was an extraordinary personal involvement on many levels of the company.

Concept

- facultas limited resources required a focused approach: one initiative with high visibility.
- Research clearly shows reading out loud to children is one of the key drivers in the development of reading abilities.
- Because reading out loud declines within families and can't be fixed by schools we decided to promote it with a national reading day.
- There are many very good reading initiatives in Austria but not on a national level to make the topic highly visible in the media.
- Stiftung Lesen in Germany shared their latest learnings from the nationwide reading day and in total was very supportive in every way.
- Discussions with a small group of potential stakeholders in Austria followed to decide about timing and the range of activities.
- No facultas branding was used to include cooperations.

Activation

- The “minimal viable product”-approach relied heavily on personal communication and networking.
- Driven by the small group of stakeholders that helped to form the concept the number of people reached for engagement grew nicely.
- Authors, bookseller & publisher (book/newspaper), schools and kindergartens and the Austrian bookseller and publisher association responded most positively.
- The former president of the Austrian UNESCO-Commision became the patron.
- A website was set up by facultas and served as a communication hub for the organization of the event. The website connects readers with organizations (and locations) interested in participating in the event. Supporters and organizations are pictured, quoted and listed here.
- From this phase on we started to talk to potential sponsors, which was more time consuming than other steps.
- The claim of the event was chosen:
Let’s celebrate fantasy: Austrian Reading Day Festival

Results

- Already in 2016 more than 100 events took place with 5.000 kids listening.
- All participants, kids and readers, were absolutely enthusiastic. Everybody continues to support our event.
- The closing ceremony with a press conference and a reading of best-selling author Thomas Brezina took place in a theatre.
- High visibility in the media was gained thanks to very prominent authors and active involvement of the press and Austrian radio.
- Word of mouth advertised the Reading day and activated more support.
- The initiative continued 2017 with bigger reach. For half a year a part-time employee was dedicated to the event by facultas.
- Since 2017 sponsors started to support the initiative.
- 2018: The number of reading events will continue to grow and the focus is on higher media coverage. A prominent panel discussion during the Vienna bookfair will prepare the Reading day with the media.

Next steps

- Integrate this single event in a wholistic concept of activities.
- Convince a core group of sponsors to setup a stable organization and
- Evaluate a private public partnership to finance the initiative.
Ensure a minimal public funding to continue and grow the initiative.
- A good incentivation for public-private partnerships would be to grant an public Euro for every private Euro invested for reading activities.
- Encourage as many parents (and organisations) as possible.

Thank you for your attention ... and to promote reading out loud!

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