

10,000 Steps Case Report 9

10,000 Steps Battle of the Shires — Bowen



Background:

The Bowen Physical Activity Taskforce chose to implement a 10,000 Steps community challenge to increase levels of physical activity in Bowen Shire. The challenge was designed to engage teams of five participants to each use a pedometer to measure their levels of daily physical activity for six weeks. Each participant then recorded their daily physical activity on the 10,000 Steps website and the steps were allocated to their team.

An innovative addition to this challenge was the competition between Bowen Shire and the Burdekin Shire to see who would win the title of Most Active Shire by calculating which Shire has the highest step average per person.

Bowen Shire taskforce members used a face to face visit and letter of invitation to approach local business to participate in the challenge. This proved very successful. Two sign on sessions were held in Bowen and one sign on session was held in Collinsville. In Bowen, the Learning Network Queensland centre and Bowen Shire Library were used and in Collinsville, the Collinsville Teleconnect Centre was used for the sign on sessions. We also had a sign on session at the local High school who had five teams participate.

The Challenge commenced on Sunday 8th October 2006 and finished on Saturday 18th November 2006.

Partners Involved:

Bowen Shire Council, Burdekin Shire Council, Tropical Population Health, Bowen Health Service District, Regional Health Service Collinsville, Schools, Healthier Bowen Shire Partnership Inc., Job Agencies, Banks, Business Sector, Service Groups, Sport and Recreation Queensland, and local businesses.

Objectives:

- To increase awareness and understanding of how active individuals need to be.
- To increase participation in physical activity.
- To increase levels of physical activity, including in the workplace setting.

Implementation Strategies:

- Conducted a 6 week 10,000 Steps community challenge.
- Distributed challenge packs to every team.
- Conducted sign on sessions for all teams.
- Promoted the challenge to the wider community.
- Conducted special come and try events.
- Distributed weekly newsletters to all online participants.
- Conducted a presentation of awards event in Bowen Shire.



Outcomes:

In total, 318 people from Bowen Shire participated in the Battle of the Shires challenge. Sixty-five teams from Bowen Shire and 59 teams from the Burdekin registered for the challenge. The majority of teams entered in the challenge were from workplaces including schools, hospitals, banks, DPI, accountants as well as community organisations and social teams including Collinsville Lions and Zonta Club of Bowen.

All Bowen teams were invited to a presentation and event walk at Muller's Lagoon on 30th November 2006 to celebrate the end of the challenge. Certificates were presented to the top ten teams and outstanding steppers awards. Team prizes were awarded for the Most Steps, Most Innovative, Most Active to Work, Most Pet Powered and Most Social. Two Sportspower vouchers and 10,000 Steps merchandise were prize draws for participants in the 10,000 Steps walk. Collinsville had planned to host an Aqua night at the pool after a short walk, however this was cancelled on the day due to a number of unforeseen circumstances.

Taskforce members hand delivered evaluation sheets to all teams in the challenge. In all, 112 surveys were returned. The 2006 10,000 Steps community challenge survey results show this project has achieved its overall goal to help people become more physically active:

- 85% reported becoming more confident in trying to increase their physical activity.
- 66% reported they were able to increase their physical activity levels at work.
- 68% now more active outside work hours.
- 78% now likely to continue being active without the challenge.
- 68% would participate in another challenge.

Lessons Learnt:

A number of improvements to the sign on sessions were suggested for future challenges:

1. Ensure all participants are removed from any previous teams and previous challenges (This has to be done by either the 10,000 Steps Project Office, previous workplace coordinators or previous team captains).
2. The sign on sheet includes all email addresses for participants (and perhaps date of birth). This will aid coordinators when setting up the challenge.
3. A sign on session could provide more information on how to wear pedometers, how to use the conversion sheets, a list of activities occurring during the challenge and instructions on how to log onto the 10,000 Steps website.

Lessons learnt in regards to the challenge were:

1. Teams of five worked well.
2. The Challenge with the neighbouring shire was a great attraction for teams.
3. Involvement/rivalry between the Mayors of each Shire assisted in media promotion of the challenge (all in-kind).
4. Electronic newsletters work well, however they need to be distributed to all participants.
5. 10,000 Steps log on process via website works well with addition of offline members.
6. We had one manual team who had difficulty getting steps collated for their team, hence they were often late with data collection.
7. Try to avoid the challenge starting during school holidays or at the immediate start of term.
8. A local sports store sold the pedometers and reduced the workload for health services and this worked well.
9. Business teams purchased pedometers for staff—and promoted the social aspect of the challenge.
10. Encouraging workplaces/employers to purchase or subsidise pedometers for staff worked well. For example, Queensland Health supplied pedometers to staff at a significantly reduced rate.
11. Cost of pedometers can be a barrier for low income earners.
12. Registration session in the computer section and school libraries worked well.

Future recommendations for a community challenge:

- We would recommend all teams whose members achieve the goal of 10,000 steps per participant during the challenge go into a separate prize draw. This would be in addition to an award for the team who does the most steps category. This gives a reward for teams who have achieved the recommended 10,000 steps per day.
- Need an innovative launch to promote the start of the challenge.
- Need a calendar of community events published before the start of the challenge, e.g., special walks, come and try events, open days.
- Have a registration session in the day and in the evening (to allow for a wider demographic of participants).
- Avoid school holiday clashes.

Total Project Costs:

- FTE .25 staff
- In kind administrative costs eg postage etc. through Bowen/Burdekin Shire Councils and Healthier Bowen Shire Partnership Inc.
- In kind support from council for printing costs
- Advertising in kind support from local radio and newspaper
- The following sponsors provided prizes valued at over \$300 for the challenge:
 - Bowen Fisherman Seafood
 - Woolworths
 - Summergarden Theatre
 - Denison Hotel
 - Kix Fitness
 - Fitness 1*-2-3
 - North Queensland Cruising Yacht Club
 - Bowen Sportspower

Timeframes:

- Challenge duration was 6 weeks from October to November 2006

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