Where is the Hospitality in Your Library?

MAIUG 15
Mid-Atlantic Innovative Users Group 2013 Meeting
Wilmington, Delaware
Friday October 18, 2013

Corey Seeman
Kresge Business Administration Library
Ross School of Business (University of Michigan)

Presentation Overview

- Introduction
- Hospitality & Self-Service
- Two Spaces of a Library
- Hospitality at Kresge Library
- Patron-Driven Services and the Power of Yes
- Closing Thoughts

Introduction

- My Diverse Employment Background
  ~ Spent 3 weeks and 1 day working in the JC Penney Manager Training Program....
  ~ Worked at Special Libraries, Archives and Academic Libraries
  ~ Worked for a Library Software Company (Innovative)
  ~ Been in Technical Services and Systems
  ~ Moved to Collections and Administration
  ~ Always have been able to keep close with the patrons or end-users

Hospitality & Self-Service

- Hospitality, n. The virtue which induces us to feed and lodge certain persons who are not in need of food and lodging.
  ~ Ambrose Bierce, The Devil's Dictionary, 1911
- Hospitality is making your guests feel at home, even though you wish they were.
  ~ Unknown
- Share with God's people who are in need.
  ~ Practice hospitality.
  ~ Romans 12:13
Hospitality & Self-Service

- Disney Model
  ~ Excellent customer service
  ~ Excellent attention to detail
  ~ Things just run beautifully smooth
  ~ You really feel like they care about every person
  ~ You really feel that they care about YOU!

Hospitality & Self-Service

- Nordstrom Model
  ~ Employee Handbook is one card
  ~ “Our number one goal is to provide outstanding customer service”
  ~ Our only rule: “Use good judgment in all situations”

Hospitality & Self-Service

- Hall of Fame Hospitality Desk.
  ~ Over Hall of Fame Weekend, the “Hospitality Desk” manages all events
  ~ Used to be called Information Desk
  ~ Name was changed to the Hospitality Desk and Crew instill a culture of taking care of people
  ~ The goal is to make things right

Hospitality & Self-Service

- Hospitality can be modest and still be appreciated and useful

Hospitality & Self-Service

- In general, Hospitality is…
  ~ It is being available and visible
  ~ It allows you to change what your patrons can expect from the library
  ~ It is treating your users like customers (no matter what we call them)
  ~ It is treating people well, even before you know who they are
  ~ It is not simply luxury or excess

Hospitality & Self-Service

- Librarians & library staff are amazing at providing service
  ~ In many academic settings, the libraries are the element that people are most fond of in reviews and surveys
  ~ In communities, libraries are often considered one of the most commonly cited benefit of a city or town
  ~ In many ways, libraries are well suited to focus on hospitality
### Hospitality & Self-Service

• With the advent of electronic resources and discovery layers – we have worked very hard to make the library mostly self-service
• We have to be very careful – because we could be leading to...

---

### Comcast is pushing “self service” as their new and improved service model

http://blog.comcast.com/2012/03/improving-online-self-service.html

---

### Hospitality & Self-Service

• The Self-Service Airport… (ATL 7/11/12)

---

### Hospitality & Self-Service

• The Self-Service Hotel…

---

### Hospitality & Self-Service

• That is great when people **know what they want**
• This is not great when people don’t know what they need
• We have seen a change in services and removal of the reference desk (among others)
• This is when we have a problem…and an opportunity

---

### Hospitality & Self-Service

• So maybe what we need is…
Two Spaces of a Library

- How do they see us?
- Storage or Service?

Where is the Hospitality in Your Library?
Corey Seeman – MAIUG 15 – Wilmington, Delaware – October 18, 2013

Two Spaces of a Library

- There are two distinct spaces in a modern library:
  ~ The Physical Space
  ~ The Ethereal Space
- Both are critical for our work and for libraries everywhere
- Both are critical for considering outreach activities with our collections (esp. in business)

Where is the Hospitality in Your Library?
Corey Seeman – MAIUG 15 – Wilmington, Delaware – October 18, 2013

Two Spaces of a Library

- The Physical space of the library is used for quiet study and contemplation
- The Physical space of the library is used for managing printed collections…
  ~ Which ARE STILL RELEVANT and USEFUL!
  ~ ILL request from a Law Library in Virginia.

Where is the Hospitality in Your Library?
Corey Seeman – MAIUG 15 – Wilmington, Delaware – October 18, 2013

Two Spaces of a Library

- The Ethereal Space of the Library is where
  ~ We connect with users
  ~ We provide outreach
  ~ We showcase our value to communities
  ~ We make sense of “it all”
  ~ We become the “Shell Answer Man”
  ~ We SHINE

Where is the Hospitality in Your Library?
Corey Seeman – MAIUG 15 – Wilmington, Delaware – October 18, 2013
Two Spaces of a Library

- The Ethereal Space is **boundaryless**
  - ~ 12 Natural Laws of Building a Great Business
  - ~ #9 — Success Means You Get Better Problems (p.54)

Hospitality at Kresge Library

- Kresge Library: Independent Library at University of Michigan - Ross School of Business (3700 FTE)
- Staff of 20 FT people (8 librarians, 10 staff) with 4.5 FTE of temporary staff
- Open 108 service hours a week during the Fall and Winter terms***
  - [http://tinyurl.com/KresgeLibrary](http://tinyurl.com/KresgeLibrary)

Hospitality at Kresge Library

- Joined the library in 2005 and became the director in 2006
- **My goal as director has been to create the library I would want to use**
- I am more concerned about what our students and faculty need than what libraries are doing elsewhere (instead of keeping up with other ABLD libraries)

Hospitality at Kresge Library

- **Hospitality and Empathy** are KEY TERMS for me
- Empathy has to work both ways — in balance
  - More empathetic towards patrons — more work for staff
  - More empathetic towards staff — maybe less services for patrons

Hospitality at Kresge Library

- We are a very different academic library
- Very strong proponent of the **Nordstrom Way**
- Always encourage staff to take care of the problem as best we can and sort out details later
- We want to be the service champions at the Ross School
- Draw examples from everywhere, not just our type of library
  - **DON'T RON JOHNSON YOUR LIBRARY!**

Hospitality at Kresge Library

- It is a 100% service orientation for the library
- We are flexible to take care of the immediate needs of the school
- **A student’s perception of Kresge might be equally influenced by interaction with me, a reference librarian, a staff member or a student temp**
- Very important to share values — even with different roles at the Library
- To this end, all staff are listed in our annual report
Hospitality at Kresge Library

Maybe it looks like this

Sign outside Regents Park Apartments in Chicago

We want a concierge & repair service 24/7

Hospitality at Kresge Library

It never looks like this…

Though in libraries, we deal with cost containment targets more than increased revenue goals.

Hospitality at Kresge Library

• Is there a cost associated with being a hospitable library?
  ~ Some are possible because of our size and budget
  ~ Some have relatively modest cost with a good return
  ~ Some have virtually no cost and a good return

Hospitality at Kresge Library

• Some are possible because of our size and budget
  ~ Embedded Librarians for MAP
  ~ Fax machine at Kresge Library

Hospitality at Kresge Library

• Embedded Librarians for MAP & Action-Based Learning
  ~ This is not one of my ideas — but it grew as the school developed
  ~ Action-based Learning programs like MAP involve student groups working with corporate, governmental and nonprofit organizations
  ~ They often need very specialized research assistance
  ~ We assign librarians to each group to make it easier for the teams
  ~ We get a lot of “return business” after MAP is over

Hospitality at Kresge Library

• From the MBA surveys:
  ~ “Access to a dedicated librarian during MAP was AWESOME”
  ~ I had no idea until MAP how awesome the staff at Kresge is
Hospitality at Kresge Library

- We traditionally had a fax machine (or two) at Kresge Library for students to use.
- When it no longer worked, it was not replaced — but the need persisted.
- Health forms, job acceptances, travel information often still required faxes.

Hospitality at Kresge Library

- We ended up doing the faxes — but we “blinked” and bought a new machine — that base been very popular.
- Changes the impression that the students have of the library.

Hospitality at Kresge Library

- Some have relatively modest cost with a good return.
  ~ Supplies for Students
  ~ Course pack distribution
  ~ Support for Case Competitions

Hospitality at Kresge Library

- Need Supplies?
  - Similar to many hotels that provide toothbrushes, etc. to travelers who forget items.
  - We provide office supplies (name tents, envelopes, paper (for case interviews), pens, earplugs).
  - We used to charge (cost recovery) — but it was more work to track the money.

Hospitality at Kresge Library

- We got creative in obtaining the supplies.
  - Green Clean Day & eBay
  - Misprints from Marketing companies.

Hospitality at Kresge Library

- Kresge runs the Ross Course pack service.
  - By bringing all hands on deck — we do a much better job of getting students quickly through the pickup line.
Hospitality at Kresge Library

- Some have virtually no cost and a good return
  ~ Supporting Recruiting
  ~ Flexibility With Staff
  ~ Flexibility With Students
  ~ Our General Demeanor!

Hospitality at Kresge Library

- Recruiters conduct most interviews in group study rooms in our building
- They need all sorts of services:
  ~ Unlocking offices
  ~ Providing a calculator for students for case interview
  ~ Printing items
  ~ Power cord for a recruiter’s Blackberry or Cell Phone

Hospitality at Kresge Library

- Being hospitable and flexible with staff
- Corey’s theory
  ~ If I am flexible with you, please be flexible with our patrons
  ~ If I am not flexible with you, then you will not be expected to be flexible with our patrons
- Balancing Empathy between all staff and patrons
- Ties to Positive Organizational Scholarship
- Important for Modeling Good Behavior!

Hospitality at Kresge Library

- Being hospitable and flexible with students
- Space is very tight at Ross (as everywhere)
  ~ On numerous occasions, we will make our conference room available for student group meetings – even after hours
  ~ Many of our students need to meet on weekends and evenings
    ~ We meet when we can and ensure that library staff get flex time to compensate them for the odd schedule

Hospitality at Kresge Library

- The most important element of hospitality is our demeanor
  ~ We smile
  ~ We wear name tags when working in the public
  ~ To a person at Kresge, we reach out to patrons who look like they need help
  ~ This is fairly unique at Ross
  ~ So much has to do with the little things (Zombieland Rule #32 – Enjoy the Little Things)
Hospitality at Kresge Library

- Some things were tried and discontinued
- Maybe they were not popular...or too popular to support
- Being entrepreneurial means trying things out and seeing what is received well by the school
- “Do not get married to the results” – Bernard Seeman (many times)

Hospitality at Kresge Library

Sometimes we correct the problem – but it is still just not right!
We really have to trust ourselves to know if it is working or not.

Hospitality at Kresge Library

- Late Night Copying for Faculty
  ~ We had faculty who wanted a service that would be available into the evening for last minute copies – typically for class
  ~ Since we were open the latest of any unit, we took this on
  ~ Established guidelines that we could support, but we misread the market
  ~ Almost no request came in – it is still “on the books”

Hospitality at Kresge Library

- Kresge Library Coat/Bag Check
  ~ Students were hesitant to take jackets and book bags to the Interview waiting area
  ~ They left them in the library while they went on their interview and we noticed an increase in thefts
  ~ We created a coat check at the Circ Desk
  ~ It became too big a distraction and we ended up cancelling the program

Hospitality at Kresge Library

Failure is an absolutely important ritual in being entrepreneurial.
If you never want to fail – you will never try anything great!

Hospitality at Kresge Library

- In Summary....
  ~ Make all people feel welcome at your library
  ~ Treat patrons the way that you would like to be treated (Golden Rule)
  ~ “Point with your feet, not with your arm”
  ~ Create the library you would want to use!
### Hospitality at Kresge Library

- **In Summary….**
  - When times are hard and resources (space, budget and personnel) are tight…**being hospitable can be difficult**
  - We cannot always control how we are treated and what resources we are given…**but we can control how we respond**
  - Yep…it’s a cliché…but it works

### Patron-Driven Services and the Power of Yes

- **Patron-Driven Services is a new concept.**
- **So much of the library literature has been focused on figuring out how to get patrons to use our services**
- **Maybe…JUST MAYBE…we are providing the wrong service**
- **Are we offering what they want?**

### Patron-Driven Services and the Power of Yes

- **Patron-Drive Acquisition has been all the rage recently**
- **Why buy books that have a 50% chance of NEVER being used (Academic problem) – instead let the patrons decide**
- **Buy just in time resources vs. just in case**

### Patron-Driven Services and the Power of Yes

- **Patron-Driven Services is the same model**
  - **PDS means:**
    - Being more open to what our community needs
    - Listening to what they are asking for
    - Not fearing success (which brings more people to the library)
    - Being viewed as a facilitator, not an obstacle

### Patron-Driven Services and the Power of Yes

- **High-Class vs. Low-Class Problems**
- **This can really define what we want to look like to ourselves and the outside world**
- **What type of problems do we want to deal with?**

### Patron-Driven Services and the Power of Yes

- **Low-Class Problem questions:**
  - How do we get people to the Reference Desk?
  - How do we get people to check out books (that we select)?
  - How do we get people to use electronic resources that we select?
  - How do we get people into our classes & programs?
Patron-Driven Services and the Power of Yes

• High-Class Problem questions:
  ~ How do we build capacity to meet our patron needs?
  ~ How do we get expand the space to fit all the people into our library?
  ~ What services might we stop doing to meet the reference needs of our patrons (embedded librarianship)?
  ~ How do we embrace technology as our patrons use it?

Patron-Driven Services and the Power of Yes

• Problem with “YES” can be that we lose ownership of the transaction
  • HOWEVER, what we lose in ownership, we gain in creating an advocate
  • With YES, we can create “Boosters and Ambassadors” for the library and the organization

Patron-Driven Services and the Power of Yes

• Creating Boosters or Ambassadors
  ~ Even in a world where Kresge Library is (probably) losing significant space, the administrators see the service we provide as being key to the academic enterprise

Patron-Driven Services and the Power of Yes

• Managing Expectations
  • “No organization has become great or maintained greatness by managing expectations” – me (lots of times)
  • No organization has ever developed passionate users by managing expectations
  • This is the time when poor customer service is winning!
• Heed the lessons from Chase and Sanborn!
• An early market leader for home coffee, they instituted small changes to the product to reduce the cost
• The collective effect of these cuts was destroying the quality of the coffee
• Now, Charlie McCarthy would not touch it
• The Race to the Bottom!

Power of Yes at Kresge Library has enabled us to be the customer service champs at Ross
• Power of Yes has brought to us new projects and opportunities that we would not have gotten before
• People WANT to work with us – not have to

Closing Thoughts
• Factors beyond your control (especially space and budget) can easily thwart enthusiasm for providing service
• However, we can never be expected to do more than our budget and space allow – Focus on what you CAN DO!

Sometimes we have as much control as sports fans

• It means that no one will EVER get in trouble helping our community
• It means that the customer is always our first → “I am Third”
• It also means that we cannot do all things for all people
• “Do we provide a 4 star service when a 3 star service will do?” – Former dean at Ross School of Business
Where is the Hospitality in Your Library?
Corey Seeman – MAIUG 15 – Wilmington, Delaware – October 18, 2013

Closing Thoughts

• Exit Survey Responses from MBA Grads
  ~ “Another gem at Ross. Whenever I have asked Kresge for help (in person or remotely through Meebo), I have never been disappointed. They helped me greatly during my internship.
  ~ “Best thing about Ross hands down.”
  ~ “The librarians are amazingly responsive and supportive. I will miss them and their resources.”
  ~ “Kresge Library staff is awesome! They answer to the e-mails promptly even during the weekend and they are very helpful. The chat is also very useful.”
  ~ “Kresge library staff rocks! One of the best things about Ross.”

• Hospitality and the Power of Yes at Kresge

Where is the Hospitality in Your Library?
Corey Seeman – MAIUG 15 – Wilmington, Delaware – October 18, 2013

Closing Thoughts

• Be careful about Metrics & Dashboard indicators
  • Numbers are used (especially in politics) as props!
  • Numbers can mean so many different things
    ~ Batting average of .406 is amazing!
    ~ Winning percentage of .406 is not good – but maybe it is justified
    ~ Fielding percentage of .406 is really awful!

• Sometimes it does not matter what your dashboard shows . . .
Thank You

Thank You
Questions?

Corey Seeman
cseeman@umich.edu