Where is the Hospitality in Your Library?

Salem-South Lyon District Library
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Presentation Overview

- Introduction
- Hospitality & Service
- Two Spaces of a Library
- Hospitality at Kresge Library
- Becoming Kresge Library Services
- 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 & 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 & 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!

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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"

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Cruise Ship Model

- Managing a huge number of people at every given time.
- Things within and beyond your control (weather, health concerns, civil unrest, natural disasters).
- Hospitality and flexibility are intertwined.

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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

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Hospitality can be modest and still be appreciated and useful

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 your users like the way you would want to be treated
- It is treating people well, even before you know who they are
- It is not simply luxury or excess

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Hospitality & 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

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Hospitality & 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...

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Hospitality & Self-Service

- Self-service has a great role in librarianship
- That is great when patrons 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

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Two Spaces of a Library

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

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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)

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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 (though we may not be able to keep all we want)
  - But it’s not the biggest priority with building projects.
  - In many ways – we focus heavily on the physical space.
  - Study space can be managed by anyone on a campus!

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

- 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)
- Formerly 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***

- 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.
- Without empathy, we cannot truly connect with our users.

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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** (former CEO of JC Penney)!

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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.

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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.

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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.

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- 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.

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Hospitality at Kresge Library
- Some have a modest or no cost associated with them.
- 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
- 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
- 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
- Helping visitors and patrons.
  - Squirrels at the Met (NYC)
  - Bottle from Salem, NC - ca. 1790-1805.
  - Snuffbox from Germany (Schrezheim manufactory), ca. 1761-1770. In Gallery 538 – closed the day I went.

Hospitality at Kresge Library
- Some things were tried and discontinued.
- Maybe they were not popular...or too popular to support.
  - “Do not get married to the results” – Bernard Seeman (many times).
- Do not start with artificial metrics for success.
- We really have to trust ourselves to know if it is working or not.
- In Summary...
  - Make all people feel welcome at your library.
  - Treat patrons the way that you would like to be treated (Golden Rule).
  - “Paint with your feet, not with your arm.”
  - Create the library you would want to use!
  - 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.

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Becoming Kresge Library Services

- So why did we change our name in 2014 to "Kresge Library Services?"
- Major construction project at Ross saw our space reduced from 27K square feet to 5K.
- Collection space reduced from 70K vol to 200.

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Shifting from library as place to library as service.

Creating an "ethereal library"

Entrepreneurial Thinking involves:
- New approach to a new (or old) problem
- New market opportunity
- Creative thinking
- Empathetic focus (Design Thinking)
- Willingness to fail

Entrepreneurial Libraries do not have an exit strategy!

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The NEW Kresge Library Services at the University of Michigan

"A completely re-thought Kresge Library Services, transitions from a collection of physical reference materials to a full suite of information resources and research services, guided by expert staff." – Ross Dividend, Fall 2016 (Ross Alumni Magazine)

The library did not close, but became virtually unrecognizable.

You do not always choose your path, but how you respond.

回暖 at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

At Kresge, the "Ethereal Library's" value proposition is:

- Live within the restrictions of virtually no collection space.
- Figure out new collaboration mechanisms to serve our community.
- Forget the dead, take care of the living!

If you are service-oriented, then you can survive these dramatic changes!

Focus on what we can do vs. what we have done.

Made decisions like not bringing back course reserves – do not have the space to manage it.

Still have evening reference via chat and email – all done remotely.

Embrace the change

- NOT a library problem of the 21st century.
- Changes in the last 50 years:
  - Copy cataloging
  - Local online catalogs & shared systems
  - Expanded access (TOC, more subject headings)
  - Shared catalogs (MelCat, etc.)
  - Discovery layers
  - Working papers management ➔ digital repositories
  - Coffee and food in the library
  - How many staff are checking in serials?
  - Change is the only constant!
Patron-Driven Services and the Power of Yes

- Patron-Driven Services is a somewhat new way of thinking.
- 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-Drive Acquisition is a very common theme among collection development librarians. 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.

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Patron-Driven Services and the Power of Yes

- Patron-Driven Services (PDS) is the same model:
  - 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
  - Seeking out the ‘high-class’ problem (vs. the ‘low-class’ one).

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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?

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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?

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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:
  - Has love (not like) for the service
  - Has been able to get some unique service or interaction with the organization
  - Has had an amazing experience that is worth sharing
  - Has been told “Yes...we can do that”!

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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!
Patron-Driven Services and the Power of Yes

- 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
- The Race to the Bottom!

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Graphics by Kelly Burr, University of Michigan

Closing Thoughts

- What does hospitality mean at Kresge?
  ~ It means serving the students, faculty and other staff the best we can
  ~ It means listening to their needs without considering what other libraries are doing
  ~ It means not being bogged down with what other departments or libraries are doing
  ~ It also means that we cannot take on everything – right now, that is finding students places to study.

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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!

Our world right now is fixated on Coronavirus (COVID-19). We do not know what is happening – but we have to be ready no matter what.

"I am Third" – Former dean at Ross School of Business

"Do we provide a 4 star service when a 3 star service will do?" – Former dean at Ross School of Business

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Closing Thoughts

MBA Exit Survey

*Note: On a scale from 1 (poor) to 7 (excellent) – 2017 scale to 5 (and adjusted) 2018 & 2019...don’t ask....

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 internships.
  - “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.”
  - We did poorly in the survey during construction – where did the library go???

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!

Closing Thoughts

- Sometimes it does not matter what your dashboard shows....

Thank You

Questions?

Slides:
http://tinyurl.com/cgs2020ssldl

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