

Where is the Hospitality in Your Library?

MLA Academic Libraries 2012
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Ross School of Business (University of Michigan)

Presentation Overview

- Introduction (5 minutes)
- Hospitality Overview at Kresge (20 minutes)
- Building User Relationships in the library and beyond (10 minutes)
- Questions and Discussion (10 minutes)

The Big Question: Future of Academic Libraries

- Redefining the Academic Library: Managing the Migration to Digital Information Services (2011, Education Advisory Board)
- <http://www.theconferencecircuit.com/wp-content/uploads/Provosts-Report-on-Academic-Libraries2.pdf>
- “Writing Our Own Obituary” - by 2015:
 - ~ Patrons go elsewhere for information
 - ~ No need for traditional librarians
 - ~ Library will need to be a space for more than just books

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The Big Question: Future of Academic Libraries

- “Size Doesn’t Matter” – Collections
- The “Lonely Reference Librarian”
- Changing from “just-in-case” to “just-in-time” purchasing/collection development.
- “Repurposing the Warehouse”
- “Coming Out from Behind the Desk”
- **Library – Service = Storage**

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General Thoughts on Hospitality

- 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

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What is Hospitality at Disney?

- 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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What is Hospitality at Nordstrom?

- Nordstrom
- Employee Handbook is one card.
- “Our number one goal is to provide outstanding customer service.”
- Our only rule: “Use good judgment in all situations.”
- See Spector’s The Nordstrom Way to Customer Service Excellence, 2005.

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What is Hospitality Over HOF Weekend?

- 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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What is Hospitality in General?

- It is being available and visible
- It allows you to change what they expect from the library
- It is treating your users like customers (no matter what we call them)
- It is **not** simply luxury or excess

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Does Hospitality Work in the Library?

- Librarians are amazing at providing service.
- In many academic settings, the libraries are the element that people are most fond of in reviews and surveys.

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Self-Service Mentality

- With the advent of electronic resources and discovery layers – we have worked very hard to make the library mostly self-service.
- That is great when people know what they want.
- This is not so great when people don't know what they need.
- This is when we have a problem.

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Self-Service Mentality

- We have sought to remove the middle-man.
- This includes removing the reference desk and encouraging email contact with the library.
- While most want to work independently, they also want to easily get help when they need it.

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About Kresge Library

- Kresge Library: Independent Library at University of Michigan - Ross School of Business (3700 FTE)
- Staff of 20 FT people (8 librarians, 12 staff) with 4.5 FTE of temporary staff
- Open 108 service hours a week
- <http://tinyurl.com/KresgeLibrary>

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What does Hospitality Look like at Kresge?

- 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
- Hospitality and Empathy are KEY TERMS!
- I am more concerned about what our students and faculty need than what libraries are doing elsewhere

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What does Hospitality Look like at Kresge?

- 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

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What does Hospitality Look like at Kresge?

- 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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What does Hospitality Look like at Kresge?

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

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Embedded Librarians for MAP

- 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.

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The %^&%*^&% Fax Machine

- We traditionally had a fax machine (or two) at Kresge Library for students to use.
- When it no longer worked, it was not be replaced – but the need existed.
- We ended up doing the faxes – but we “blinked” and bought a new machine – that base been very popular.



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What does Hospitality Look like at Kresge?

- Some have relatively modest cost with a good return
 - ~ Strat 502 Support
 - ~ Supplies for Students

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Strat 502

- Core class for MBA students in their first term.
- Assignment to look at one industry and two companies.
- While we provide research tools – we are quick to encourage people to come in for specialized assistance.
- “Walk you down the aisle” vs. pointing.

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Needs 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

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What does Hospitality Look like at Kresge?

- Some have virtually no cost and a good return
 - ~ Supporting Recruiting
 - ~ Flexibility With Staff
 - ~ Clickers for Student Awards Ceremony
 - ~ Distribution of Club Material

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Supporting Recruiting

- Recruiters have interviews 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

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Flexibility With Staff

- **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.*
- Nothing can happen without that.
- Ties to Positive Organizational Scholarship
- **Important for Modeling Good Behavior!**

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Clickers for Student Awards Ceremony

- MBA students have a celebration at the end of their time at Ross
- They have all sorts of awards that are voted by the graduates
- By using clickers – they can easily and more enjoyably do this live
- Did take a bit of setup and work – but the return is great and it did not cost us anything

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Distribution of Club Material

- Kresge Library has longer service hours than almost any other entity on campus
- A club officer asked for help in distributing material to PT MBA students who are often only on campus at night and weekends
- We are going to allow them to give us these items and distribute them with requests (holds) at circulation
- No costs associated with this – but it is a service they can appreciate

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What did not work?

- 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.

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What did not work? Late Night Copying

- 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. Still “on the books”

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What did not work? Coat 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.

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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 are doing.
- It also means that we cannot take on everything (coat check & printing support).

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What does Hospitality Mean at Kresge?

- 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.

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Building User Relationships in the library and beyond

- **Hospitality & Service**
 - ~ Cannot have one without the other
 - ~ Make a person feel welcome at your library
 - ~ Treat them as you would like to be treated

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Building User Relationships in the library and beyond

- **Engage** - Be helpful but not overbearing.
- **Bring your “A” game** - Smile, make the person feel comfortable. Body language is very important when engaging .
- **Listen** to what a person is saying, or looking for. Wait until person is finished to provide assistance. To not interrupt is tough!

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Building User Relationships in the library and beyond

- **Communication is key!** The best resources and technologies are meaningless if the person/persons do not understand what we are explaining to them.
- **Service is part of hospitality**, and both are necessary if you are to excel in the profession.

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Building User Relationships in the library and beyond

- These concepts need to be promoted by the director and embraced by the staff. \
- This is essential if you want this to be successful.
- This is not some fad, but a ongoing everyday process, to make your library world class!
- Has to be embraced regardless of other factors (even ones beyond your control)

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Building User Relationships in the library and beyond

- Does not require any special equipment, funds, or technologies.
- What is required is commitment to the process, and an ongoing desire to not only sustain but improve on it.
- It is dynamic and changing philosophy and the rewards are extraordinary.

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Building User Relationships in the library and beyond

- Relationships can extend beyond their current status as a student.
- While Kresge offers some resources to alumni, our value is that we continue to provide assistance to alumni as needed.
- This becomes part of the word-of-mouth that brings students to Ross.

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Building User Relationships in the library and beyond

- Coming from a career in the private sector, I fully understand the importance of service and embraced it than as I do now.
- I had a sign posted in my office that said:
~ **"I exist because of my customers"**
- It is as appropriate now as it was then, and has proven to be an effective and rewarding philosophy.

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Thank You

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Questions?

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