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Where is the Hospitality in Your Library?

Farmington Community Library Staff Day
Friday June 8, 2012
Corey Seeman
Kresge Business Administration Library
Ross School of Business (University of Michigan)

Presentation Overview

- Introduction
- Hospitality Overview
- Hospitality at Kresge Library
- Patron-Driven Services and the Power of Yes
- Questions and Discussion

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Introduction

- And a brief lesson from Crime Club
- Doubleday marked certain titles “Crime Club”
- Crime Club was a radio program that ran from December 2, 1946 to October 15, 1947
- The host was the “Librarian” and he introduced each story.
- For more info, see:
<http://www.digitaldeliftp.com/digitaldelitoo/dd2jb-Crime-Club.html>

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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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The Big Question: Future of Academic Libraries

- Does this at all matter to a public library?
- All libraries are way more similar than we pretend
- We all have our high-demand patrons...and those that we wish used our services.
- There are lessons that are transferable to all library types.

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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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General Thoughts on Hospitality

- [Dalai Lama @DalaiLama](#)
- Warm-heartedness reinforces our self-confidence – giving us not a blind confidence, but a sense of confidence based on reason.
- - Dalai Lama's Twitter Feed – June 1, 2012
- See also
“http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/14/dalai-lama-arianna-huffington-interview_n_1510094.html”

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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.
- In communities, libraries are often considered one of the most commonly cited benefit of a city or town

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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.
- We have to be very careful – because we could be leading to...

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Self-Service Mentality

- The Self-Service Hotel...



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Self-Service Mentality

- 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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Self-Service Mentality

- So maybe what we need is...



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About Kresge Library

- Kresge Library: Independent Library at University of Michigan - Ross School of Business (3700 FTE)
- Staff of 21 FT people (8 librarians, 13 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://www.bus.umich.edu/KresgeLibrary/downloads/annualreports/KresgeAnn2011.pdf>

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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?

Maybe it looks like this

Sign outside Regents Park Apartments in Chicago

We want a concierge & repair service 24/7



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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.
- We get a lot of “return business” after MAP is over.

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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 persisted.
- Health forms, job acceptances, travel information often still required faxes.



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The %^&%*^&% Fax Machine

- 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



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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
 - ~ Doughnuts!

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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 travels 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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Needs Supplies?

- We got creative in obtaining the supplies.
- Green Clean Day & eBay



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Doughnuts

- Kresge Library runs on carbs. Two dozen doughnuts costs \$12 – we get them weekly during MAP.



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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
 - ~ Our General Disposition!

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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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Our General Disposition!

- The most important element of hospitality is our disposition.
- 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)

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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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Connecting Hospitality with Service

- 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
 - ~ Create the library you would want to use!
 - ~ “Point with your feet, not with your arm”

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Connecting Hospitality with Service

- These concepts need to be embraced up and down the organization.
- Has to be embraced regardless of other factors (even ones beyond your control).
- It has to be multi-directional. So hospitality needs to be practiced towards each other as well as the patrons.

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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?

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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.

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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.

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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?

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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

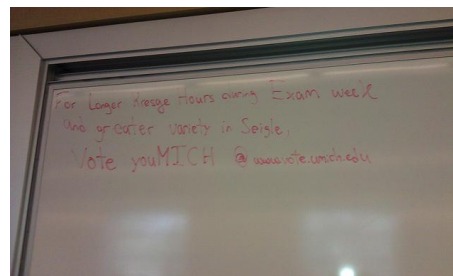
- High-Class Problem questions:
 - ~ How do we build capacity to meet our patron needs?
 - ~ How do we get expand the space to fit all the people into our library?
 - ~ What services might we stop doing to meet the reference needs of our patrons (embedded librarianship)?
 - ~ How do we embrace technology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

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Patron-Driven Services and the Power of Yes

- Whiteboard at Ross – March 22, 2012



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Patron-Driven Services and the Power of Yes

- Power of Yes
- Purchasing everything patrons want – this might not go over well with some staff.
- Discussion with a librarian once about the way it “used to be” with collection decisions by library staff.
- They felt authoritative when they said NO to requests.
- I suggested that we can be just as powerful with an answer of YES.

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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.

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Patron-Driven Services and the Power of Yes

- A Booster or Ambassador
 - ~ Has love (not like) for the organization.
 - ~ Has been able to get some unique service or interaction with the organization.
 - ~ Can put their name on the list of those who publically support 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.**
- **No organization has ever developed passionate users by managing expectations.**
- This is the time when poor customer service is winning! Let’s flip that around.

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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.
- However, the total effect was that they destroyed the overall quality of the coffee.
- Now, Charlie McCarthy would not touch it.



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Patron-Driven Services and the Power of Yes

- 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.

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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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What does Hospitality Mean at Kresge?

	2010	2011	2012
BBA Kresge	6.3	6.1	6.2
BBA Other Services	5.68	5.68	5.66
MBA Kresge	6.2	6.4	6.3
MBA Other Services	5.12	5.44	5.48

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What does Hospitality Mean at Kresge?

- **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.”

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- Hospitality and the Power of Yes at Kresge



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Two Final Thoughts

- Be careful about Metrics and dashboard indicators



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Two Final Thoughts

- Does creating a hospitable library that focuses on customers, provides services that are being requested and promotes the power of yes hurt?
- Lawrence of Arabia - http://youtu.be/BYNElueJj_w?t=34s

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Two Final Thoughts

- *[Lawrence has just extinguished a match between his thumb and forefinger. William Potter surreptitiously attempts the same]*
- William Potter: Ooh! It damn well 'urts!
- T.E. Lawrence: Certainly it hurts.
- Officer: What's the trick then?
- T.E. Lawrence: The trick, William Potter, is not minding that it hurts.
- <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0056172/quotes?qt=qt0294178>

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Questions?

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