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Page	Author	Title	Page
57	1
69	8
73	8
79	13
79	48
87	53
88	78
90	80
97	87
103	95
111	103
113	109
115	115
117	121
119	127
121	133
123	139
125	145
127	151
129	157
131	163
133	169
135	175
137	181
139	187
141	193
143	199
145	205
147	211
149	217
151	223
153	229
155	235
157	241
159	247
161	253
163	259
165	265
167	271
169	277
171	283
173	289
175	295
177	301
179	307
181	313
183	319
185	325
187	331
189	337
191	343
193	349
195	355
197	361
199	367
201	373
203	379
205	385
207	391
209	397
211	403
213	409
215	415
217	421
219	427
221	433
223	439
225	445
227	451
229	457
231	463
233	469
235	475
237	481
239	487
241	493
243	499
245	505
247	511
249	517
251	523
253	529
255	535
257	541
259	547
261	553
263	559
265	565
267	571
269	577
271	583
273	589
275	595
277	601
279	607
281	613
283	619
285	625
287	631
289	637
291	643
293	649
295	655
297	661
299	667
301	673
303	679
305	685
307	691
309	697
311	703
313	709
315	715
317	721
319	727
321	733
323	739
325	745
327	751
329	757
331	763
333	769
335	775
337	781
339	787
341	793
343	799
345	805
347	811
349	817
351	823
353	829
355	835
357	841
359	847
361	853
363	859
365	865
367	871
369	877
371	883
373	889
375	895
377	901
379	907
381	913
383	919
385	925
387	931
389	937
391	943
393	949
395	955
397	961
399	967
401	973
403	979
405	985
407	991
409	997

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Indiana Libraries, Volume 26 Number 4, 2007 & *Journal of the Library Administration and Management*, Volume 4, Number 2, 2007-2008

C O N T E N T S



INTRODUCTION

- 1 Acknowledgments
by Sara Laughlin
- 2 The Continuous Improvement Journey
by Ray Wilson & Sara Laughlin
- 6 Operational Definitions
by Ray Wilson & Sara Laughlin

CUSTOMER FOCUS

- 9 Getting Feedback by Surveying Residents: LaPorte County Public Library Conducts a Community Survey
by Judy Hamilton
- 17 Secret Shopping at the Monroe County Public Library
by Steven M. Backs with Tim Kinder
- 20 Community Assessment and Engagement in a College Library
by Elizabeth Chabot
- 23 Getting Better Every Day: High School Students Use Continuous Improvement Tools
by Lori Vandeventer
- 26 Library Web Site Assessment: From Focus Groups to Pareto Charts
by Donna J. Davidoff & Lisa A. Forrest

CONSTANCY OF PURPOSE

- 29 Mission Statement-Do We Have One?
by Jenny Draper
- 32 Constancy of Purpose, As Learned and Used in One Indiana Public Library
by Mary Hall
- 34 A Dynamic Community Destination
by Bill Bolte

STRATEGIC PLANNING

- 37 Process Analysis and Standardization: The Road to Strategic Planning Success
by David Keeber

PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

- 43 One Good Thing Leads to Another
by Diane Moore
- 45 Improving the Employee Software Training Process
by Billie Clements
- 49 The Application of Process Mastering Techniques to a Library Instruction Classroom
by Stephan J. Macaluso

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Indiana Libraries, Volume 26 Number 4, 2007 & *Journal of the Library Administration and Management*, Volume 4, Number 2, 2007-2008

C O N T E N T S



PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

- 57 Planning and Implementing Education and Training Event: Rapid Cycle Improvement
by Jean Currie & Nora Hardy
- 59 Preparing an Item for Circulation While Streamlining the Workflow Between the Acquisitions and Cataloging Offices
by Muriel Godbout
- 68 Trocaire College/Rachel R. Savarino Library: "Process New Items"
by Judith Schwartz, Mary Miller, Erna Tominich, & Janet Guda
- 70 Beyond Imagining Change: One Interlibrary Loan Department's Utilization of Continuous Assessment/Continuous Improvement
by Michelle Parry

SUSTAINING LIBRARY-WIDE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- 77 Sustaining Library-Wide Improvement
by Sally Stegner
- 80 The Best Known Way
by Mary Kempfer
- 85 Fits and Starts: SUNY Cobleskill's Continuous Improvement Journey
by April Davies & Nancy Van Deusen
- 88 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



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This issue would not exist without the authors who took time from their busy schedules to write an article, a task that seems easy until one sits down in front of a blank screen. We owe a huge debt of thanks to each of them, for writing and rewriting and responding to our many questions and requests for more information.

We are not aware of a similar joint publication of two state library associations. We thank our dear friend Jean Currie, South Central Regional Library Council, for suggesting that we contact Richard Naylor (William K. Sanford Town Library, Loudonville) and his *Journal of Library Administration & Management (JLAM)* editorial committee at the New York Library Association. Richard was enthusiastic about the idea and found a number of able editors in New York State to help with the final editing. Our “long-distance” thanks to them: Rebekkah Smith Aldrich and Josh Cohen (Mid-Hudson Library System) and Patricia Kaufman (Mahopac Public Library).

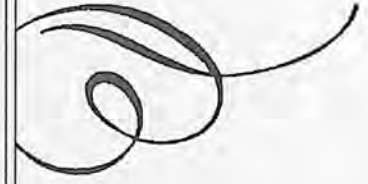
When we added this new twist to what was originally conceived as a special edition of *Indiana Libraries*, Crissy Gallion, the Indiana Library Federation’s talented publications designer, graciously consented to work with the New York Library Association to design a new cover. Finally, we thank Linda Kolb, Executive Director of the Indiana Library Federation, whose trust and friendship has endured many twists and turns over the last 25 years.

And, always, thanks and great big hugs to Cindy Wilson and Donna Rinckel, our favorite personal editors.

Sara Laughlin
Ray W. Wilson
September 2007

INTRODUCTION: THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT JOURNEY

by Ray Wilson & Sara Laughlin



In the late 1970's U.S. industry, especially the auto industry, awoke to find that it could not compete with the Japanese auto manufacturers. In the ensuing decades the auto industry and other U.S. industries cycled through learning, and unfortunately sometimes forgetting, how to satisfy their customers by concentrating on methods and philosophy espoused by W. Edwards Deming.

Over time, Deming's influence began to reach outside the manufacturing sector. His thinking influenced a generation of systemic thinkers including Peter Senge, Russell Ackoff, Bryan Joiner, William Scherkenbach, Donald Wheeler, Thomas Nolan, Stephen Covey, and Shoji Shiba. Today, his ideas underpin the Six Sigma program, lean manufacturing, and the Baldrige Awards for business, health care, and education.

In 2000, we noticed that libraries were being pushed from various directions to re-consider their role in society and re-examine the efficiency and effectiveness with which they operated. To understand these trends and the opportunities and challenges they presented for libraries, we invited a few libraries in Indiana to attend an eight-day series on continuous improvement, over eight months, to see whether—and how—the Deming philosophy could be applied to libraries. Initially four libraries took us up on our offer. Together with them, we developed a continuous improvement framework that made sense, at least in public libraries. Since that first series, we have held four others in Indiana, including teams from approximately 27 libraries and other organizations. We have also worked with several individual libraries in Indiana and elsewhere.

From 2003 through early 2007, we had the opportunity to work in New York on a project called Continuous Assessment/Continuous Improvement (CACI), funded by an LSTA grant to the South Central Library Resources Council. Over this time, we trained and coached teams from 72 New York libraries, among them 38 college/university libraries, 12 community college libraries, 13 public libraries, and 9 other consortia and

special libraries. At this point we can say with assurance that Deming's methods and philosophy, as we have interpreted them, work very well in libraries.

It still is not easy. Our training sessions always start with reference to what we have called the "five block diagram," a graphic representation of the system of activities that focus an organization on continuous improvement (Figure 1). Our experience (and Deming's writing) suggests that all five are important. We base our training on what has to happen in each of these areas, and the articles in this journal are grouped to generally correspond to them.

SEEING THE LIBRARY AS A SYSTEM

In the center block, we concentrate on seeing the library as a system. Every system has suppliers and inputs, and it transforms those inputs through its processes into outputs desired by customers. As unbelievable as it seems, what many organizations forget is that they are in business to surprise and delight their customers. In the first section, we include several articles describing how libraries gathered feedback and used it to make improvements. Judy Hamilton describes the community survey conducted by the LaPorte County (IN) Public Library. Steve Backs, Monroe County (IN) Public Library, conducted a "secret shopper" unobtrusive observation, in partnership with the Indiana Small Business Development Center. Liz Chabot engaged students at Ithaca College (NY) in identifying and prioritizing ideas for improving the library facility. A Force Field Analysis with students helped Lori Vandeventer and other teachers improve the career project in the senior English class at Eastern Greene Schools (IN). Finally, Donna Davidoff and Lisa Forrest describe how they used a Check Sheet and Pareto Chart to organize results of focus groups with students and faculty at Buffalo State College (NY).

DEVELOPING CONSTANCY OF PURPOSE

The top-left block is called Constancy of Purpose. Organizations and everyone associated with them must know why they are in business (Mission), where they are going (Vision), how they will make decisions and

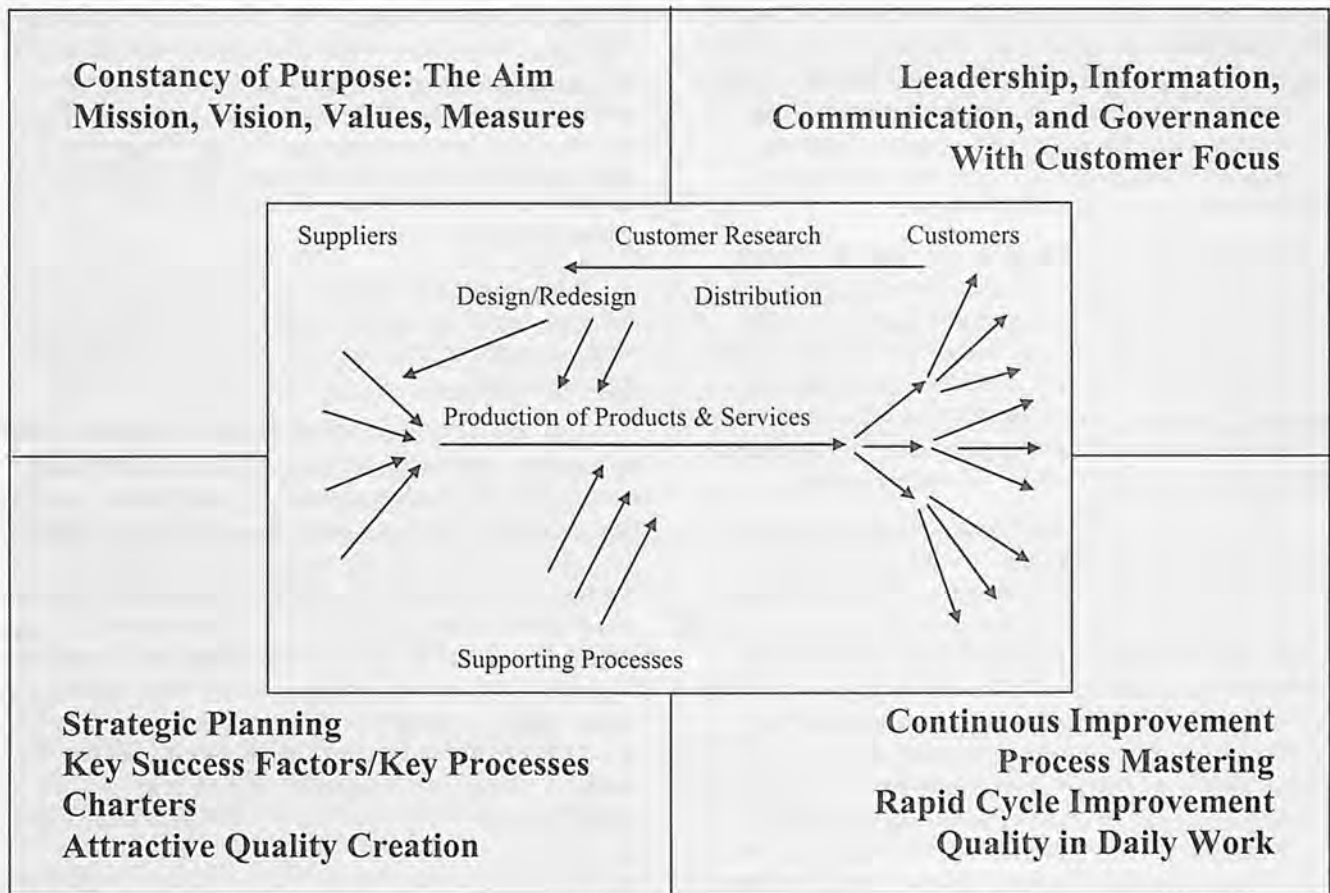


FIGURE 1 - Five Block Diagram

how they will treat each other (Values or Guiding Principles), and whether they are making any progress (Measures). We have had the pleasure of seeing libraries literally transformed by clarifying their Constancy of Purpose.

You will enjoy reading about some of these experiences in the three articles in this section. Jenny Draper describes how her library planning team developed an exciting Mission and Vision that helped rally support for the Wells County (IN) Public Library's building project. Mary Hall writes about the Values exercise that helped her unite the Bedford-North Lawrence County (IN) Public Library staff in preparation for a merger of two circulation departments. Bill Bolte, Jeffersonville Township (IN) Public Library, shares the ways he used the Library's Constancy of Purpose throughout a three-year building project.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

After a library has its Vision for its future, it must figure out how to get there. This is the time to visit the lower-left strategic planning block. A vital, thriving library has a strategic plan that focuses on a few Key Success Factors (or Goals), a handful of high-level areas of emphasis that must be accomplished if progress is to be made toward reaching the Vision. This block also

connects the Key Success Factors to the daily work in the library, by aligning Key Success Factors with the library's processes, to identify the important processes and assess their condition. This is a step usually not included in strategic planning. Without it, plans are often not connected to the daily work in the library. Without the connection, chances are slim that the plans will be accomplished.

David Keeber, Sedona (AZ) Public Library, writes about how his library aligned its strategic initiatives with key processes. Several other articles in the journal also give good examples of approaches to strategic planning and what can be accomplished using the continuous improvement approach.

STANDARDIZING AND IMPROVING PROCESSES

Almost always, strategic planning (especially when it aligns Key Success Factors with Key Processes) leads to the need to standardize, improve, and even invent processes, so that is the next step, shown in the lower right of the five block diagram. Here is the second place where the continuous improvement model differs from the traditional "long range planning" approach to creating the future. When the processes that are limiting success (i.e., those that are important and currently not in very good condition) are identi-

fied and improved by the people who work in them daily, wonderful things happen. By empowering those working in the process to improve and monitor it, the whole culture of a library is changed for the better. This section includes wonderful, practical success stories that illustrate what can happen when teams study and improve their own processes.

Diane Moore describes how the Vigo County Public Library discovered substantial savings as it studied its process for selecting gift books. As Billie Clements and her team at Mishawaka-Penn-Harris (IN) Public Library studied their process of training staff on computer software, they shifted gears when they began to focus on customer requests for computer assistance rather than their initial survey of staff priorities.

Steve Macaluso tells the story of improving the process for preparing the library instruction room at SUNY-New Paltz (NY). Muriel Godbout and her team describe how they reduced the time spent in preparing an item for circulation at Wells College (NY), and Judith Schwartz and Mary Miller tell their own story of improving the process of preparing new items for circulation at Trocaire College Library. At SUNY-Oswego, Michelle Parry writes about how she and her team improved the process of handling interlibrary loan requests. Finally, Nora Hardy describes how the South Central Regional Library Council team dramatically improved the process of holding a continuing education workshop

SUSTAINING LIBRARY IMPROVEMENT: LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNICATION

As mentioned above in relation to the auto industry, this positive improvement spiral does not continue unabated without the constant nurturing guidance of wise leaders. There are numerous examples of failures where leaders kicked off the improvement effort with great fanfare and watched it fizzle as they walked away. This kind of improvement is a journey, not an event. Leaders must practice what they preach, they must be relentless in their expectations, and they must figure out how to institutionalize the methodology and philosophy. This journal has several articles that illustrate some aspects of the leadership and communication block.

It would be wrong to assume that all 120 libraries with which we have worked over the last seven years have been transformed. But a fair number have. When you walk into a transformed library, it is apparent. We know you will get a sense of the change that is possible from reading the wonderful articles written by some of the people who have experienced it first hand.

In this issue, Mary Kempfer describes how she and other team members who participated in training coached others and spread process improvement

throughout the Michigan City (IN) Library. April Davies and Nancy Van Deusan describe how, over the course of a few years, they institutionalized continuous improvement at the SUNY Cobleskill Library (NY). Finally, Sally Stegner sums up the transformation that has occurred at the Lawrenceburg (IN) Public Library.

CONCLUSION

It has been our pleasure to be on the journey with the authors of the articles in this issue. Along the way, we have realized that we, and they, have made three paradigm shifts.

The first paradigm shift is in thinking of the library as a system, with suppliers and inputs, outputs and customers, and with hundreds of interrelated processes that cross departmental, unit, branch, and schedule boundaries. It seems that, regardless of which process a library team chooses, the tools of continuous improvement cause startling discoveries. Sometimes it is "legacy steps" that are unnecessary or duplicative. Sometimes it is a policy that has not been updated since 1979. Sometimes it is simply understanding for the first time what the person at the next workstation is doing—and maybe that they are a supplier or customer of your own work. It is often the connections and relationships that have been invisible in the past that are the key to unlocking opportunities for improvement. Perhaps the most powerful of these is the discovery of customers—who they are, what they value, how they can help with improvements.

The second paradigm shift is in the library team's belief that improvement is possible. When library teams begin to gather data and plot points on a chart, or to get feedback from customers, they see many ways to improve their own processes. Finally, they have tools and ideas for handling complaints they have heard for years, or eliminating delays, reducing errors, or increasing customer satisfaction. They can hardly wait to begin. They are impatient with the disciplined data-gathering that continuous improvement demands. Once they see the power of the data, though, they begin to understand that they can improve quickly and continue to improve. They find ways to share data with their suppliers, to move improvements upstream.

The third shift is in staff development. Libraries are sometimes hesitant to send a team of three or four staff members to four days of learning. They see it as a "cost" and equate it to the many other conferences and workshops they have attended over the years which had little value for or impact on the library. This learning is a different kind of staff development, designed to focus on real library work and teach teams real tools. It aims to build capacity in the library—capacity for working productively in a team, for standardizing and improving processes, and for communi-

cating productively with customers in order to create a library that surprises and delights.

We hope you will keep these three shifts in mind as you read the articles which follow.

The authors of these stories work in libraries very similar to yours. They had the same staff, time, management, budget, and customer constraints. We have consistently been amazed by their creativity and inventiveness in adapting the continuous improvement tools and theories to their own circumstances. They were thoughtful, persistent, supportive, careful, and reflective. They challenged us and kept us laughing, for both of which we are very grateful.

Perhaps you will see your own journey reflected in theirs. Perhaps their stories will encourage you to begin your own journey or to take the next step. If you have a story to tell, we would love to hear it and add it to our growing file of library improvement success stories.

ABOUT THE EDITORS

Sara Laughlin is President of Sara Laughlin & Associates, Inc., a consulting firm specializing in customer-driven, future-focused planning, evaluation, and process improvement. Sara is a native Hoosier. During her 30+ years in the library business, she has worked as a reference librarian, researcher, library school staff and faculty member, and trustee. For the past seven years, she has been pursuing continuous improvement in her teaching, consulting, facilitating, presenting, and every other chance she gets. In the midst of editing this issue, Sara accepted a one-year appointment as interim director of the Monroe County Public Library. She is presently engaged in updating the Constancy of Purpose, making a list of library processes, and characterizing teams to work on a few that need immediate attention.

Ray Wilson is President of Ray Wilson & Associates, a firm specializing in organizational development and operational improvement. Ray has worked in industry for 28 years in areas of engineering, laboratory management, distribution – warehousing, trucking, and pipelines – equipment service and supply, and risk management – safety, environment, transportation, and insurance. He has been a consultant in the field of continuous improvement to numerous business and service organizations for ten years. He is a registered professional engineer and co-author of three books – *Process Mastering: How to Establish and Document the Best Known Way to Do a Job* (with Paul Harsin), *The Library's Continuous Improvement Field Book: 29 Ready to Use Tools* (co-authored with Sara Laughlin and Denise Sisco Shockley), and *The Quality Library: A Guide to Staff-Driven Improvement, Better Efficiency, and Happier Customers* (with Sara Laughlin) (forthcom-

ing in early 2008). Ray gets his greatest joy when the people who do the work everyday are empowered and successful at improving their processes.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

by Ray Wilson & Sara Laughlin

As with any discipline, continuous improvement has its own specialized language. The operational definitions below will help readers understand some new concepts presented in the articles in this issue. Those with an asterisk (*) in front are continuous improvement tools which are described in more detail in *The Library's Continuous Improvement Field Book: 29 Ready-to-use Tools*, by Sara Laughlin, Denise Sisco Shockley, and Ray W. Wilson (Chicago: American Library Association, 2003). Many of the tools are standards in the quality improvement world, so the reader will also find additional information about them through an Internet search or in the quality literature.

In addition, some familiar words have very specific meanings in the continuous improvement context and those are defined below. For example, "system," which in the library world might refer to the software package that runs a library's circulation system and online catalog, or might refer to a consortium to which the library belongs, in the continuous improvement world has another meaning.

*Cause Analysis

A method to help evaluate which potential causes of an undesirable effect, a failure, or a problem are the best choices to evaluate for improvement.

*Cause and Effect Diagram

A visual brainstorming tool, often called a "fishbone diagram," used to explore all the potential causes that result in a single effect.

*Charter

A document written to clearly confer responsibility for accomplishing a task or project on another person or team.

*Check Sheet

A tool for recording the number of occurrences of an action or event. Generally a good data-gathering tool to use at the beginning of any problem-solving cycle.

*Consensogram

A survey used to measure a group's current knowledge or perception of an issue.

Constancy of Purpose Statement

A succinct statement, composed of the organization's Mission, Vision, Values, and key performance measures.

Continuum

A matrix describing states of progress toward a desired innovation.

Customer

An individual who receives an output from a system or a process. An external customer is one who receives the final output. An internal customer is a person inside the organization who receives an intermediate output during creation of the final output.

*Flowchart-Deployment

A visual representation of all the steps in a process, displayed in a manner that indicates who is responsible for the steps and in what order they are accomplished.

*Flowchart-Top-down

A visual representation of all the steps in a process, segregated into major steps and sub-steps, placed in the order in which they are accomplished.

*Force Field Diagram

A tool for brainstorming the forces that support progress toward a particular desired objective or state and those that restrain progress.

*Group Norms

Rules of operation agreed upon by a group that define how the group has decided to manage itself and its work.

*Histogram

A bar graph that shows the frequency and distribution of data.

Input

A supply or raw material that is transformed by the process or system. The input may be a tangible item like a book or an intangible supply like information.

Key Steps Worksheet

A chart detailing the key steps in a process, usually identified through Customer and Supplier Screens, which describes in some detail the actions and “tricks of the trade” needed to complete the step correctly and possible consequences of making an error during this step.

Multivoting

A method through which each individual in a group chooses a few possible options over others, thereby helping the group efficiently reach consensus about which option(s) to select.

Operational Definition

A description of what something is, within a particular context

Output

A product or service resulting from a process or system and delivered to an external or internal customer.

***Pareto Chart**

A bar graph representation of data arranged in order from most frequently occurring to least frequently occurring.

***Parking Lot**

A tool used to gather and retain ideas that may be outside the focus of a group’s (or individual’s) current work, but that might be needed in the future.

***Plus Delta**

A tool used to get feedback from individuals, at the end of a meeting or other session, about what went well and what could be improved.

Process

A series of inter-related tasks or steps that transform inputs into outputs. A group of inter-related processes makes up a system.

***Process Behavior Chart**

A visual tool for presenting data that shows average performance and variation of a process and the upper and lower statistical boundaries of its performance over time.

Process Master

The finished product of standardizing a process, including a Top-down Flowchart, Customer and Supplier Screens, Key Steps Worksheet, and Measures. All those who work in the process agree to follow this method until the process master is changed.

Process Mastering

A controlled method, used by a team to standardize and then improve a process.

Rapid Cycle Improvement

A method for quickly improving a process, during which a team decides what it is trying to change, how it will measure change, and what it will try (PLAN). The team tries a new method (DO) and records data using a Process Behavior Chart to determine if the change is statistically significant, then studies results (STUDY) and takes action to adopt the new method or try another (ACT). The cycle is repeated until the desired change is accomplished

***Run Chart**

A visual representation of data over time or in sequence.

Screen, Customer

A tool that helps a process mastering team identify the needs of external or internal customers and the process steps that meet those needs.

Screen, Supplier

A tool that helps a process mastering team identify what the process needs from inputs received from suppliers and which process steps are impacted by those inputs.

Step

A single task or action taken as part of a process. A process is made up of several inter-related steps.

Step, Key

A step that is critical to meeting the need of internal or external customers, one that depends on inputs from suppliers, one that is important to the organization’s needs, one where errors or difficulties often occur, one where a measurement is taken, or one where safety is an issue.

Supplier

An individual or organization or business that provides inputs for the system or process.

System

A series of inter-related processes, with suppliers and inputs, customers and outputs.

System Map

A visual tool that shows the Mission, Vision, Values, Suppliers, Inputs, Processes, Outputs, and Customers, and Feedback Loops that make up a system.

Task (see Step)

GETTING FEEDBACK BY SURVEYING RESIDENTS: LAPORTE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY CONDUCTS A COMMUNITY SURVEY

by Judy Hamilton



As part of its strategic planning process, the LaPorte County Public Library commissioned a community survey in 2006. The survey was designed to help the Library answer four questions:

1. Who is using and not using the library?
2. How satisfied are users with current library services?
3. What barriers keep people from using the library?
4. What services would community members prefer in the future?

METHODOLOGY

Preparation

The library hired Sara Laughlin & Associates, Inc., to undertake the survey. The Library Administrative Team (Extension Services Manager Fonda Owens, Automated Systems Manager Emily Morris, Main Library Services Manager Brent Stokesberry, Human Resources Manager Cindy Lane, and myself as Director) worked with the consultant to design the survey questions. The questions fell into four categories, designed to answer the four questions above—demographic information, current usage, satisfaction, and preferences for future services.

Meanwhile, the Library searched for a mailing list, which turned out not to be a simple project. The LaPorte County Public Library serves 17 of the 21 townships in LaPorte County.¹ After several phone calls to the County Assessor's Office and a couple of failed attempts to massage the list of property owners received in PDF format, Emily Morris, Automated Systems Manager, was able to export the data into a database, coded by township. From the database, the consultant extracted a random sample, excluding out-of-state addresses and businesses.

The consultant mailed 3,210 surveys with a postage-paid return envelope. Of the sample, 25 were returned with forwarding addresses and were resent. Ninety-nine surveys were returned undeliverable. When the 99 were removed, the total number of surveys delivered was 3,111.

Responses

Of these 3,111 surveys, respondents returned 482 usable responses, a response rate of 15.5 percent.

The consultants summarized the results and created cross-tabulations to compare results:

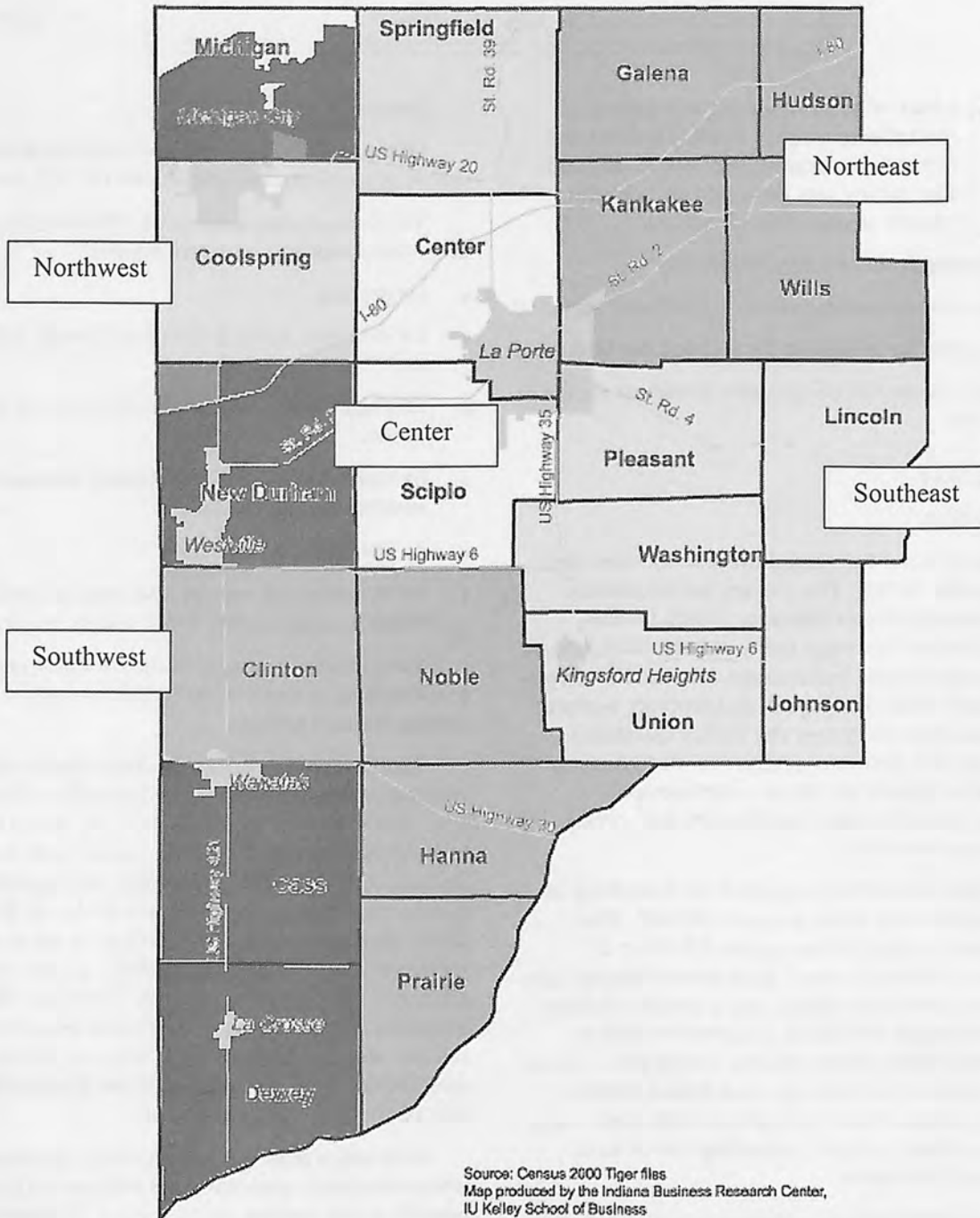
- by gender,
- for different age groups (0-19, 20-39, 40-59, 60-69, and 70 and up)
- for those with and without children under 18 at home,
- by township groups (northwest, northeast, Central, southwest, and southeast)
- by library card status, and
- by frequency of use (at least once a week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, and never)

They analyzed results using the Chi-square analysis to determine if there were significant differences among the sub-groups.

The percentage of results from those with and without children were similar enough to the percentages in the general population to be useful in predicting the opinions of the entire community to within five percent. For example, 28 percent of respondents to the survey reported having children under 18 living with them, compared with 28.7 percent of the population as reported in the 2000 U. S. Census. Among those with children, 74.1 percent reported that their children attended public school, 8.9 percent attended private school, and 3.7 percent were home-schooled. The remainder—13.3 percent—did not report what type of school their children attended.

Responses from townships were also representative when compared with the total number of property parcels in the mailing list and the total number of surveys mailed, so these results could also be applied to the library district as a whole. For statistical analysis, the consultants combined individual township results into five groups of townships by location within the county (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: LaPorte County Township Map



Results for gender, age, library card status, and frequency of use are limited to the survey group, since response ratios differed from the percentages of each group in the actual population. Nearly four of five respondents were female. Responses from the age 40 and higher groups were overrepresented compared to their percentage in the overall population. Library card holders are over-represented in survey responses—85.7 percent—compared with the actual percentage of the population that holds a library card—53.0 percent. Two-thirds of respondents (66.4 percent) had used the library at least once in the past year, while 3.7 percent had not and 29.9 percent did not respond to this question. No data on frequency of use of the library as a whole was available, so conclusions drawn from the survey represented only survey respondents.

The survey also included other demographic questions not used in cross-tabulations, including language spoken at home and news sources used.

Biases

Any research methodology has biases, and this survey was not exempt. Because the survey was mailed to property owners, it excluded residents who did not own property. Some areas of the Library's district are made up of apartments, mobile home parks, and retirement centers/nursing homes whose residents may be users of the Library. They were undoubtedly underrepresented, if not excluded, in the survey. The overwhelming majority of respondents were adults, so the opinions of those aged 19 and younger are not represented. The survey was in English. Recipients unable to read English well are undoubtedly underrepresented.

The overall planning methodology allowed the Library to compensate for some of these biases. In addition to the survey, the Library held six focus groups which were attended by a large number of knowledgeable individuals. Three focus groups were held in LaPorte and three more were held in branches in Rolling Prairie, Coolspring, and Union Mills. The consultant also conducted six interviews with community leaders. Included in the focus groups and interviews were the Superintendent of the LaPorte Community Schools, several youth agency leaders, and several parents of school-aged children. When the consultant realized that no one from the growing Spanish-speaking community had participated in either focus groups or interviews, she asked the Library to identify someone for an interview and completed a phone interview.

KEY FINDINGS

The survey report received by the Library contained a very detailed analysis of the survey responses. Findings reported here are some of the key observations.

Internet access

More than 70 percent of respondents reported having Internet access at home. Of those with access, nearly one-third had dial-up only. Most respondents who did not have Internet access at home used the Internet somewhere else. The most frequently mentioned location was friends/relatives—37.4 percent. The library ranked second, with 22.4 percent of those without home access reporting using the Internet at the library. Respondents in different age groups differed significantly in their levels of high-speed Internet access. Nine of ten in the two younger groups (20-39 and 40-59) had access of some kind; they were much more likely to have high-speed access via cable or broadband. Nearly one-third of those in the 60-69 age group and more than half of those in the 70 and over age group had no access.

Internet access varied significantly among the township groups. The northeast township group was most likely to have access, although nearly half had dial-up access; the southwest township group was least likely to have access.

Internet access also varied significantly among those who used the library more or less frequently. Those with dial-up access were more likely to use the library at least weekly. Those with high-speed access were more likely to use the library monthly or a few times a year. Those with no access were more likely not to have used the library in the last year.

Awareness

More than one in four respondents reported getting no information about the library at all. Among those who did, the newspaper was the most frequent source of information, followed by posters and flyers in the library and friends/colleagues. Radio was the least frequently mentioned source. Females were more likely than males to get information about the library. Card holders were more likely to find out about library services through friends/colleagues, newspaper, and the library's posters/flyer, newsletters, and web site. There were significant differences in where respondents from the four age groups get information about the library. Those aged 20-39 were less likely to get information from the newspaper and more likely to get it through school. Those aged 40-59 were less likely than younger respondents to get information through school, but more likely to get it from the newspaper. Those aged 60-69 were most likely to get information from the newspaper, but less likely to use radio, school, or the library web site. Those in the 70 and older age group read the paper and were the most likely of any group to listen to radio. They were least likely to get information at school or via the library web site.

Two-thirds of respondents did not use the library web site. Of those that did, the most frequent use was

to check the library catalog, followed by renewing and reserving items. Those with children at home were significantly more likely to use the web site. Card holders were more likely to use the library catalog on the web, check library hours, renew an item, and reserve an item; those without cards were more likely not to use the web site. Residents of the northeast townships were significantly more likely to use the library web site to find locations, but the percentage was very small for all township groups.

Only a handful of respondents indicated using the library's online resources. The database used most frequently was Ancestry Plus, but even that accounted for only 3.7 percent of responses.

Barriers to library use

Among the 145 respondents who had not visited the library in the last year, "Don't need to use the library" was the reason most often cited for not visiting. The next most frequently mentioned reasons were "Got information from the Internet" and "Didn't have time." These three categories accounted for 60 percent of responses. Males were significantly more likely to say they don't need to use the library than females. Those without library cards cited seven reasons significantly more often than those with cards: Don't need to use the library (36.2 percent), Use Internet (21.7 percent), No time (17.4 percent), Use another library (15.9 percent), Buy own materials (13 percent), Don't enjoy reading (4.3 percent), and Didn't offer services I needed (1.4 percent).

There were significant differences among township groups: Residents in the northwest and northeast townships reported using other libraries more frequently. Northwest and Center township residents were more likely to get information from the Internet. Those in northwest, Center, and southeast townships responded more frequently that they did not need to use a library.

Among those who had not used the Library in the last year, the 20-39 year old respondents were most likely to explain that they "Got information from the Internet."

Library use

Library card. Among respondents, 85.7 percent were card holders. Females and those with children under 18 were significantly more likely to have a library card. There were not significant differences in those holding library cards in different age groups, township groups, or among those visiting more or less frequently.

Frequency of visit. Just over 15 percent of respondents reported visiting the library at least once a week; 24.7 percent visit once or twice a month, and 26.6 percent visit a few times a year. The remaining third

never visit or didn't respond. Those with children under 18 were more likely to visit at least monthly. The oldest users—age 70 and up—were significantly more likely to use the library at least once a week, or never. The youngest were most likely to use the library once or twice a month. Users aged 60-69 were more likely to use the library a few times a year.

Purpose for using the library. Leisure/entertainment was cited by just over half of respondents as their reason for using the library; pursuing personal interests was selected by 32 percent. Relatively smaller numbers used the library for school assignments (but note that very few respondents were in the 0-19 age range), job-career interests, and cultural experiences. Females were more likely to use the library for school assignments/homework and for leisure/entertainment. Those with children were significantly more likely to use the library for school assignments/homework, job/career information, and leisure/entertainment. Those who visited the library once a week or more were more likely to be pursuing a personal interest and participating in cultural experiences. Respondents in the 40-59 age group were significantly more likely to use the library for job-related purposes and leisure/entertainment purposes. Not surprisingly, those 60-69 and 70 and older were significantly less likely to use the library for school assignments.

Types of use. Overall, 323 respondents checked 927 uses, an average of 2.9 uses per respondent. Checking out books was the most common use, accounting for 59.8 percent of all responses. Three other types of use accounted for more than 20 percent each—asking a question (23.9 percent), using a restroom (20.7 percent), and using a photocopier (20.1 percent). Least frequently used were notary service and tutoring (1 percent each) and pay phone (1.7 percent). Males were more likely to read the newspaper at the library. Those with children were more likely than those without to check out materials, use the restroom, use Internet, use pay phone, or attend a program. Northeast residents were much less likely to have checked out materials in the last year. Frequency of use had a significant impact on types of use. Those who used the library weekly, monthly, or a few times a year were more likely to check out materials. Weekly users were most likely to have read newspapers, asked questions, used the photocopy machine, read magazines, used the pay phone, or attended programs. Respondents in the 20-30 age group were significantly more likely to attend a program, while those in the 60-69 and 70 and older were less likely to use the Internet. Those 70 and older were significantly less likely to check out materials or use the restroom.

Location. The Main Library in LaPorte accounted for more than half of the use. Among the branches,

Coolspring was most frequently visited and Kingsford Heights least frequently visited. The 70 and older age group accounted for the largest percentage of users at the Fish Lake, Rolling Prairie, and Union Mills branches.

Satisfaction

Overall, 81.3 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with library services (Figure 2). Highest areas of satisfaction were:

- Library employees are courteous and polite (81.5 percent)
- Knowledgeable employees are available to assist me (80.5 percent)
- Library buildings are well maintained (80.5 percent)
- Interior of the library is functional (78.2 percent)
- Library's check-out period is adequate (74.5 percent)
- The fewest respondents were satisfied in six areas:
 - Library Web site contains valuable information (25.5 percent)
 - Library Web site is easy to navigate (25.9 percent)
 - Library audio book collection meets my needs (31.7 percent)

Library DVD collection meets my needs (37.1 percent)

Library public programs are interesting to me (38.4 percent)

Library computer is available when I need one (39.2 percent)

The largest percentage of "disagree" and "strongly disagree" responses were in two areas:

I am able to find a parking place when I visit the library (21.4 percent)

Library hours are convenient for me (10.4 percent)

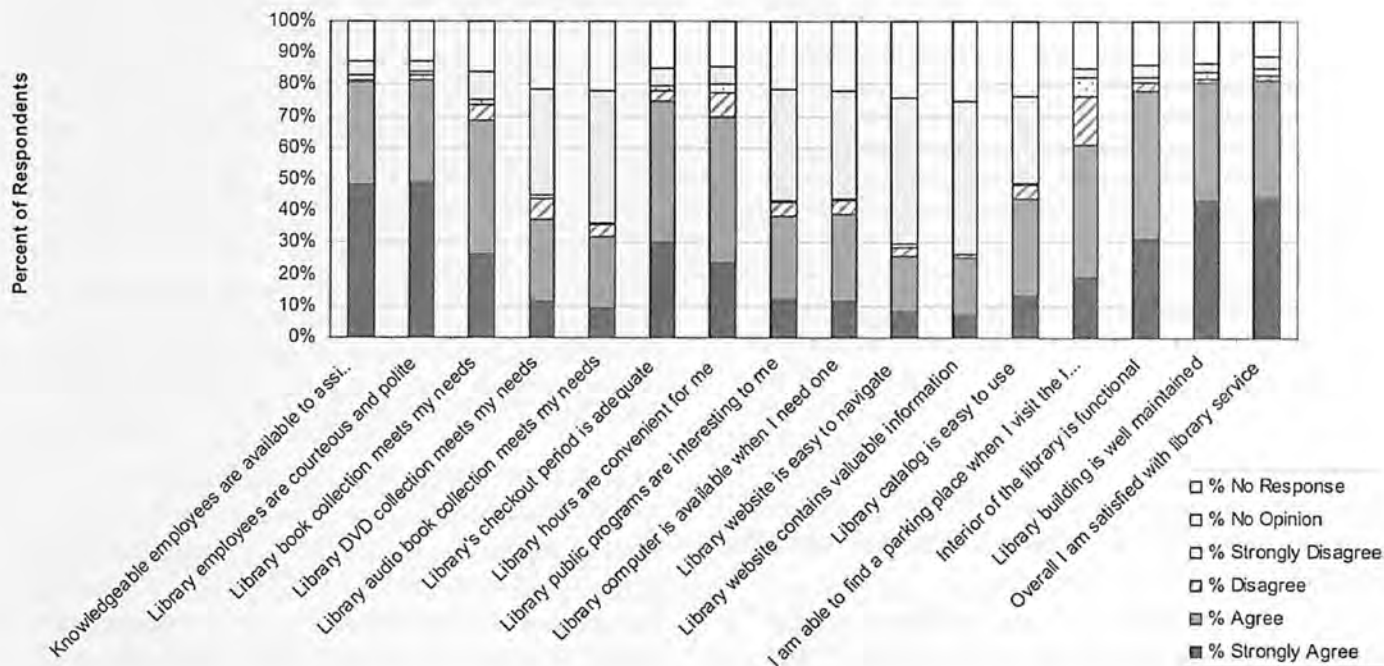
In the cross-tabulations, there were a number of significant differences in satisfaction in the two gender groups, those with children at home and without, the five township groups, between those with library cards and those without, and among age groups.

Females were significantly more positive than males about the collection meeting their needs and the circulation period being adequate.

Those with children at home were more likely to agree that DVDs met their needs, that library programs were interesting, that the web site was easy to navigate and contained valuable information, and that the catalog was easy to use.

Responses from the township groups showed differing levels of agreement with collection adequacy,

Figure 2: Opinions about Current Library Services



check-out period, library hours, parking, and functionality of facilities. Overall satisfaction was significantly higher in northwest, Center, and southwest and lower in northeast and southeast.

Those with library cards were significantly more positive about library employees, collection, hours, catalog, parking, and facilities. Among those with cards, 93.2 percent were satisfied, compared with 71 percent of those without.

The youngest age group—20-39—were significantly more positive about the content and ease of use of the library web site and they were in stronger agreement than other age groups that the catalog was easy to use. Those 60-69 were less positive and more likely to have no opinion about computer availability in the Library. They, and those aged 70 and older, were less likely to agree that the web site is easy to navigate. Respondents aged 70 and older showed significantly greater agreement that parking is available at the Library. The lowest level of agreement that parking is available was among the youngest age group.

Many respondents wrote comments at the end of the survey. Facilities received the most comments, including many compliments and a few suggestions regarding adding a drop-box, parking and noise issues, and overcrowding, especially at the Rolling Prairie branch. Hours received the second-largest number of comments; staff rated the third largest number of comments, while computers and technology ranked fourth and programs fifth. The comments were useful in understanding the areas where respondents were pleased with service and where they were frustrated.

Future Service Improvements

In the final section of the survey, respondents were asked to prioritize suggestions for improvement.

Hours. The first question asked respondents to choose up to five options for changing LaPorte location hours, including extending the hours in the AV department, closing the adult services department earlier, and adding Sunday hours, or for changing branch hours, including adding evening hours, adding weekend hours. The largest number—27.6 percent—agreed with adding Sunday hours at the LaPorte location. Those with library cards, those aged 20-39 and 40-59, those with children under 18, those in Center Township, and those who use the library one or twice a month or a few times a year were more supportive of adding Sunday hours in LaPorte. The 60-69 age group was significantly less positive about extending AV department hours. Township residents outside the Center area were more favorable to adding evening hours at branches.

Technology training programs. “Using a digital camera,” “Buying and selling on eBay,” and “Using

Microsoft Excel” were the top three choices for technology programs at the Library. Those with children were significantly more interested in technology training programs in Excel and Powerpoint. In seven of the nine topics suggested, there were significant differences among respondents in different age groups. In three areas, the interests of 20-39 and 40-59 year olds were comparable—Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Powerpoint, and eBay. The 40-59 age group was also interested in programs on Microsoft Word, digital camera, and scanner. The 60-69 year olds were more interested in genealogy than the others, and had modest levels of interest in learning to use a digital camera and eBay. The 70 and older age group was least interested, although there were not significant differences between them and other age groups in three topics drawing the least interest among all respondents—introduction to the library catalog, Wordperfect, and e-mail.

Technology to add. Respondents were given seven choices for additional technology. They chose self-check stations (21 percent), color photocopy machine (17.6 percent), color printer (15.6 percent), and wireless access (14.7 percent). Fewer respondents were interested in the Library adding Internet or catalog computers or a scanner. More than half—57.5 percent—selected no choices for technology additions. Those with children were significantly more interested in adding wireless access, self-check machines, and Internet computers. Card holders were more favorable toward self-check than non-card holders. In two of the seven choices, there were differences among age groups. Wireless access and self-check were selected by significantly more 20-30 and 40-59 year olds.

Web site enhancements. Among the eight recommendations for improving the Web site, “A way to ask questions and get answers online” received the highest number of responses—29.3 percent. “List of new materials” ranked second, with 24.6 percent. Two other responses received marginally more than 10 percent—“Download audio books” at 10.9 percent and “Download print books” at 10.7 percent. The remaining four suggestions received little support—additional databases, additional genealogy resources, RSS feeds, and podcasting. The 20-39 and 40-59 age groups were significantly more positive that the two older groups about five potential enhancements—downloading print and audio books, listing new materials, asking questions online, and podcasting.

SURVEY DATA INFORMS THE LIBRARY'S STRATEGIC PLAN

The survey provided valuable information for the Library's planning process. Members of the Planning Committee, which included representatives from the library's Board of Trustees, community members, key

Library staff, and the Director, reviewed the survey results, along with reports from the focus groups and community leader interviews and demographic and library performance reports. The survey information helped form the Library's Mission, Vision, and Key Success Factors. Many of the activities in the plan addressed weaknesses revealed by the survey or addressed priority future changes.

In an all-day retreat, the entire staff also reviewed the survey results, along with the other reports. In small groups, they read and had lively discussions of the reports, which helped them see the Library through the eyes of their customers and potential customers.

The Library's strategic plan identified five Key Success Factors:

1. Expand access to information through technology.
2. Increase awareness and use of Library resources and services.
3. Increase collaborative efforts.
4. Provide ongoing staff and board development.
5. Update facilities to meet changing needs.

In the six months since adoption of the plan, the Library has made great strides in each of these areas. *To expand access to information through technology:*

- Automation staff continued to work on the development of the website; the new design will be a complete departure from the existing web page design, featuring a new Library logo. It will be highly interactive to draw users into the site. Staff in all departments are gearing up to provide content. The initial version of the site will go public after the first of the year.
- Development of the online catalog continued. Since joining the staff in June, a new Technical Services Manager has worked to clear up various issues, which will result in a catalog that is easier for staff and patrons to use.
- E-mail reference is now available.
- The County Council approved the Library's Capital Projects plan, which awaits final approval from the Indiana Department of Local Government Finance.

The Library's has taken several actions *to increase awareness and use*, including:

- The Young Adult Committee has worked to develop a rapport and comfortable working relationship with the YA Advisory Board and a core group of La Porte High School students.
- The Marketing Team has developed promotional printed pieces, paid advertising, direct mail, signs,

public service announcements, and supported staff promotion to patrons, in order to focus on convenience factors (multiple library locations; reserve/renew online; online databases and website available 24/7; drop boxes always open; the book-mobile comes to you, etc.), as well as the specific resources being highlighted in 2007—large print materials and databases.

- All public service departments are actively managing their collections based upon customer use and feedback, weeding unused materials, and adding popular items. They use circulation system statistics to determine whether new additions to collections are actually used and adjust purchase decisions accordingly.

To increase collaboration with other groups in the community:

- Three professional staff are members of service clubs; two additional staff completed Leadership La Porte County in 2007 and two more staff will participate for 2008; all professional staff have increased their participation with such organizations as Chamber of Commerce, Convention & Tourism Bureau, Habitat for Humanity, Mayor's Committee on the Arts, Downtown La Porte Association, local churches, and schools.
- The Programming Committee and its sub-committees for children's, teens, and adult programs at all locations have worked to develop high quality programs, which have been well attended.
- The Marketing Team drafted a Community Involvement policy, partnership/sponsorship policy and a partnership form for Board consideration.
- Library staff collaborated with the Lubeznik Center for the Arts for a photo exhibit and "Young at Art" workshops, "Stroll Along the Avenues" a walking tour guide created in collaboration with the La Porte County Historical Society and Partners Engaged in Preservation; and with other libraries and literacy organizations in Northwest Indiana on a greatly-expanded version of One Book/One Community. Library staff also competed in the Literacy Council Spelling Bee – and WON! In addition to regular school visits and teen groups, staff have worked especially hard with Springfield Township Elementary and South Central Schools to partner on programs, communication, and early childhood literacy.

Staff and board development initiatives included:

- The Training Committee extensively reworked the performance review process and orientation procedures, as well as promoting continual

awareness of the need for internal staff communications.

- The Reference Department has provided monthly workshops for staff to develop their understanding and use of online databases. The Training Committee has provided staff training on excellent customer service and is planning a fall workshop on dealing with difficult patron behavior.

Initial steps in upgrading Library facilities included:

- Extension Services, with input from the bookmobile's local service provider and Maintenance and Grounds, prepared bid specifications for purchasing a new vehicle.
- The Director and the Extension Services Manager, with Board of Trustees advice and consent, have pursued property acquisition for a new branch library in Rolling Prairie. The process of selecting an architect will begin this fall.

CONCLUSION

The survey provided a vast treasure of very detailed information that the Library plans to use well beyond the planning process itself. It helped the Library's leadership and employees understand:

- The Library is highly regarded and is already doing a good job of satisfying the needs of regular users.
- Key assets are knowledgeable and friendly staff, clean and functional facilities, and up-to-date collections, especially those designed for leisure/entertainment and school homework support.
- Less-frequent and non-users are not as satisfied with current services, but understanding the barriers that keep them from using the Library and their priorities for new services offers the Library an opportunity to reach them.
- There are a few key barriers that keep people from using the Library. Several of them are within the Library's control, e.g., not knowing what the Library has.
- Many residents are not aware of the Library's technology and are not taking advantage of it.
- The Library's services are used differently by different groups. Use varies by age, gender, location, children at home, and library card holder status.
- Residents of the Library's district have clear priorities for future enhancements of hours, technology, and other services.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Judy R. Hamilton has been director of La Porte County Public Library since 1980. She has a B.A. in History from Millikin University (Decatur IL) and a Masters in Library Science from the University of Illinois. She is active in her community in the Chamber of Commerce, United Way, Rotary, Mayor's Committee on the Arts, and others.

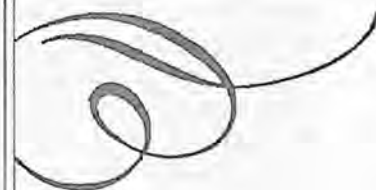
She received the Athena Award from the Chamber of Commerce in 1989 and was named Business Woman of the Year in 1985. La Porte County Public Library has received many awards, including Indiana Library Federation's "Library of the Year" in 2006.

FOOTNOTES

¹ The other townships are served by four other libraries – La Crosse Public Library, Michigan City Public Library, Wanatah Public Library, and Westville Public Library – and the Library did not want residents of these library districts to receive its survey.

SECRET SHOPPING AT THE MONROE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

by Steven M. Backs with Tim Kinder



INTRODUCTION

There are several ways to research an organization's customer service effectiveness. Encouraging patrons to communicate with the library via comment cards, web surveys, or focus groups are all methods that should be used to get feedback on customer satisfaction. However, while these types of customer input result in information about "customer satisfaction," the addition of a secret shopping program is a potentially valuable tool for evaluating the "customer experience" in an objective, unobtrusive way. In a secret shopper evaluation "shoppers" are sent into an establishment to carry out real transactions in return for some combination of cash, store credit, purchase discounts, or the goods or services purchased. Secret shoppers may be trained or coached with a list of questions to ask, items to purchase, or interactions to initiate. After completing their visit shoppers record their impressions, such as the time it takes to receive attention from an employee or receive a service, the responses given to questions, and other factors related to the experience they had during their shop. Secret shopping is known by several other names, including mystery shopping, experience evaluation, fulfillment assessment, anonymous audits or virtual shopping and it can also be done in person, via internet chat sessions or over the telephone.

Secret shopping allows an organization to measure specific customer service attributes such as the appearance of the physical surroundings, the approachability of staff members, adherence to displaying and merchandising principles, and customer perceptions of processes and systems (Hall, 2004). Additionally, secret shopping is an ideal way to gather regular, controlled measurements of customer service from the point of the intentions of the organization so that management and staff may recognize opportunities to make improvements ahead of time rather than after customer dissatisfaction becomes apparent through the customer comment system (Van Der Wiele, Hesselink, & Van Iwaarden, 2005).

CUSTOMER SERVICE – AN ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Getting unbiased and honest feedback about an organization's customer service responses is tremen-

dously valuable. Not only should such feedback provide a general sense of how satisfied (or not) the customers are, but it should also provide insight about organizational flaws that may be barriers to providing the best service possible, such as poorly positioned service points, confusing physical layouts, or overly complicated policies and procedures. Many of these factors affect customer experiences and perceptions and it is simply not fair to front-line staff to focus solely on their performance and their interactions with patrons. On the contrary, the goal of engaging patrons and seeking their impressions and feedback should also be to expose flaws that management can address in order to improve the service environment and put staff in the best possible position to provide high quality services.

Staff members must also be encouraged to cooperate in examining the customer service environment and to participate in the process of using patron input to create improved outcomes. When it comes to secret shopping this is especially important, because there is a likelihood that staff will resist the program unless they are fully aware of the goals and benefits that management hopes to attain. After all, staff have every right to suspect that secret shopping is "spying" and without a high level of trust and a commitment on the part of management to use the results to improve organizational performance rather than to penalize individuals, there is a real danger that staff will not buy into the potential gains of the program. Furthermore, it has been shown that secret shopping programs work best when staff members feel positive about them and when they are encouraged to participate as partners in creating improvements (Van Der Wiele et al., 2005).

SECRET SHOPPING AT MONROE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Secret shopping programs do occur in public libraries, although not at the same rate as in the retail world (Burkamp & Virbick, 2002). During the initial stages of researching this program, the authors found several library administrators in Indiana who were interested in the concept, but most reported that limited resources and lack of initial expertise had made it impossible to get anything off the ground.

For this project, the Monroe County Public Library (MCPL), was fortunate to partner with the South Central office of the Indiana Small Business Development Center (ISBDC) which specializes in developing secret shopping programs for local businesses (Martin Colman, 2005). This partnership allowed the Library to work with a group of experts to develop a program that tailored each secret shopping experience to the Library's needs. Moreover, since the professionals of ISBDC are experienced at consulting with a variety of retail businesses on customer service issues, the Library benefited greatly from having their guidance. We felt that, even though libraries may differ from retail stores in many ways, the core principles of customer service are the same for both kinds of organizations. People expect to be treated with respect, they want to find what they need easily, they expect staff members to be helpful and they would like their visit to be pleasant.

The Monroe County Public Library and ISBDC began developing the library's secret shopper program in November 2005. In our initial discussions, we defined the Library's aims for the program and outlined an agreement to create a program in four phases, starting with public service desks at the Main Library and the Ellettsville Branch, then continuing on to support units and Library administration. We also decided to include repeat "shops" during every phase.

Library managers were asked to collaborate by offering suggestions on the aspects of public service they were most interested in evaluating. The Library's main contribution in developing the shops was to consult on developing scenarios for each shop. Managers felt that shoppers would be less likely to be identified by Library staff if the questions they brought to the Library were somewhat typical for the given service points. Nevertheless, each shopper was encouraged to develop a scenario that he/she felt comfortable with and had a personal interest in pursuing so that the interactions could be true "reference interviews."

ISBDC maintains a corps of shoppers in Monroe County and was especially interested in finding shoppers who matched the demographics of the patron base of MCPL. The resulting group was a cross section of the local community, including patrons whose first language was not English, university students, disabled shoppers, elderly individuals, both experienced and new library users, and parents with children. ISBDC also oriented, trained, scheduled and personally debriefed the shoppers. Kinder spent time with each shopper to develop a shop scenario and to interview them about the shop experience.

ISBDC shopped the Main Library reference points (Adult Services, Indiana Room, Audiovisual Services, and Children's Service) and the Ellettsville Branch (Information Desk) during December 2005. Each point

was visited five times by shoppers who spent an average of 45 minutes at each location. Shoppers were instructed to record their impressions of the buildings, the layout, ease of navigation, the friendliness and approachability of staff, and the thoroughness of the reference interviews they encountered. Scoring was tabulated by ISBDC staff, and reports were generated for each point and for the library in general.

MCPL staff had reservations about the secret shopper program. One major concern was that individual shopping experiences might not provide input that was reliable or that could be generalized to overall public services. Staff commented that differences in work loads, time of day, complexity of questions, and other factors would make it impossible to create conclusions that would be meaningful or actionable. Additionally, staff members were concerned about being singled out by this project.

The planners responded to staff concerns by making the following decisions:

- To control for variations, multiple shopping experiences were scheduled for each service point with varying times and days.
- To prevent staff from being singled out, all references to names and descriptions in shop reports would remain confidential.

RESULTS

Once the reports were ready, Backs and Kinder met to discuss the results and possible recommendations for improvements. These results of this meeting and of the reports were then distilled into reports made by Backs to Library administration, managers, and the Library board of trustees.

Generally, the results of the initial shopping experiences showed that the Library's staff performed very well at the things managers expect from experienced reference personnel. They answered questions thoroughly and conveyed high levels of expertise, friendliness, and professionalism. Some shoppers commented that the service they received would make them want to return to the Library or that they were even surprised by how well they were treated at MCPL. Staff did not perform as well on matters of approachability. Some of the shoppers commented that staff seemed preoccupied (working on a computer) or that they were not initiating contact with patrons. In some cases, the shoppers reported that they had to initiate contact themselves, even though there were multiple people at a desk who seemed free to answer questions.

These results are not overly surprising; anyone who works in public libraries knows that staff usually multitask at our service points. Workloads often require that they bring materials, papers, book carts, etc., to

public desks. Additionally, computer screens can be barriers to approachability because they take attention away from the surrounding area. There are several possibly legitimate reasons why a staff member may be preoccupied at a service desk. In the follow-up meetings, managers and staff discussed these issues. They agreed that they could never eliminate all distractions and that they could not possibly reduce staff workloads to the point that they could be completely unencumbered while at public service points. Nevertheless, having the patron perceptions pointed out by the secret shoppers did cause Library managers and staff to examine and discuss their activities and procedures at the public desks. The advantage of having the results of the shopping experiences was in obtaining tangible evidence that people who do not wish to initiate contact with staff may in fact not get the valuable services that staff are able to provide.

With this new knowledge of patrons' perceptions MCPL managers now encourage staff to become more proactive in approaching customers and to be mindful of the workloads they bring to the reference desk. Staff in the Adult Services Department have had several robust departmental conversations about developing their sense of our surroundings, about being approachable, friendly and welcoming. In response to the program, staff members have made productive suggestions about the physical infrastructure, workplace communications, and scheduling that we believe will improve secret shopper results in the future.

The Library plans to continue the secret shopping program. Additional shopping will be conducted with Library administrative and support units, and we will continue to schedule follow-up shops with public desks. We are also committed to using the program as a way to create positive discussions about customer service with Library staff and to check our progress with specific issues that have been uncovered by the shoppers.

CONCLUSIONS

Gaining an accurate understanding of patrons' experiences is an extremely valuable aspect of any customer service environment. Secret shopping programs are useful for gauging insight into library operations from the perspective of those who closely mirror library patrons, thus providing critical information about the way the library's people, services, and processes are perceived and understood. Secret shopper programs also allow managers to target their research to specific attributes of the library such as cleanliness, layout, whether or not patrons are greeted, and of course, whether or not the questions they ask are answered to their satisfaction. And unlike patron comment forms, a secret shopper program allows the

library to create a deliberate and controlled stream of information about its public service performance that can be repeated regularly to spot potential problems before they appear as complaints.

While secret shopper programs provide useful input about library operations, such programs must be integrated into the overall customer service environment of the library. A secret shopper program allows the collection of data; however it is up to the entire library to contribute to using that information to identify infrastructural barriers and improvements to services. Additionally, any such program must be accompanied by reassurances to staff that the goals of the program are positive. Management must be committed to examining all aspects of customer service and to seeking solutions and improvements collaboratively with staff in an open and positive manner.

Public service performance is ultimately the responsibility of the entire library staff. A secret shopper program provides a way to examine services directly and objectively and to identify customer experience problems that would otherwise be unrecognized until a patron complains. A high quality customer service environment also requires a constant commitment on the part of management to create the conditions where staff can deliver the highest quality service. To that end, a secret shopper program has the potential to provide reliable information that the library can use to keep all staff members aware of patron expectations, perceptions, and experiences.

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COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT AND ENGAGEMENT IN A COLLEGE LIBRARY

by Lisabeth Chabot

While participating in the Continuous Assessment/Continuous Improvement (CACI) Workshop series, the Ithaca College Library decided to employ some of the CACI assessment techniques and practices to engage our users in assessment. We posed the question “We are planning for the future – what would be in your ideal library?” The question was posted on the library’s website and a large public comment board on the library’s main floor. Additionally, librarians staffed a survey table in the Campus Center. As users completed comment forms, the library staff posted all suggestions and comments on the comment board. After the initial comment solicitation phase, the library asked users to vote for the ideas/comments that they believed should receive first consideration. Press-apply colored dots were used for the voting process, creating a visually engaging *Consensogram* activity. (Figure 1)



Figure 1: Poster encouraging students to vote for ideas.

From the CACI workshops, I knew that *Rapid Cycle Improvement* was a powerful tool. After collating the votes, I developed a table-formatted document that displayed the results, additional specific comments related to individual items, and most importantly, the library’s action/response with a timeline for addressing each item. (Figure 2). The document was enlarged and displayed as wall-sized poster in a prominent place in the library.

USING COMMENTS TO MAKE INITIAL IMPROVEMENTS

Participant comments broadly fell into three categories: the library facility, library services, and library resources. (See Figure 2). The library was able to address several recommendations immediately. We automated patron notification of circulation matters, eliminating the use of paper notices. Although there was not the physical space to add a café, we were able to respond to a recommendation to provide vending machines. We revised our operating hours for the next semester, closing earlier on Friday evenings and opening earlier on Sunday mornings. To address the issue of noise, quiet floors were created and the smaller tables and individual carrels were moved to these floors. Larger group tables were deployed to the heavily trafficked main floors. The renovation of a residence hall provided the opportunity to recycle furniture that was going to be discarded. Seventy-five two-position chairs were refurbished and reupholstered, adding 20 percent more seating in the library. Library student workers were issued photo/name tags to facilitate their identification.

To address the library building’s aesthetic aspects, (mentioned by several users) the library collaborated with the Art and Art History departments. Initially, a colorful collection of large graphic prints was loaned to the library. When a plaster cast collection of Greek and Roman sculptures was to be returned to storage after a College gallery show, the library offered to permanently display several items.

The library worked with Information Technology Services (ITS) to have a standard set of software applications installed on all computers in the building. We also utilized user feedback to prompt ITS to provide authenticated user access to the wireless network on personal laptops. Additional laptop computers were purchased with end-of-year savings. While additional listening stations were not feasible, we did purchase additional headphone sets for concurrent use of the existing stations. ITS also provided surplus computers with limited functionality, which the library used to create library catalog-only stations on each floor of the building.

Figure 2: Ithaca College Library Patron Survey, Spring 2004

COMMENT CATEGORIES	# responses	Additional Specific Comments	Action/Timeline/Response
PHYSICAL FACILITY			
Café/Vending Machines	97	Coffee, Soda, Snacks	Install Vending Machines Fall 2004, Café will be included in Vision Plan
Quiet/ Quiet Space	60	More single study carrels, Restrict Cell Phone Use	Designate 5 th floor as quiet floor – Spring 2004 - Signage
More seating/comfortable furniture	34	Adjacent to windows	Capital Request 2004/05. 05/06
Group Study Space	32	Study Rooms, less open space	Capital Request 2004/05. 05/06
Building Aesthetic	5	Change Drab interior color scheme, More Plants, More Artwork	Work with Art Department to develop additional displays 2004/05
Quieter Closing Bell/Quieter Security System	2		Will review options
Better Temperature Control	2	Too Warm	Refer to Physical Plant Spring 2004
LIBRARY SERVICES			
List of Library multimedia items – online and print list	38		Fall 2004
Revise Weekend Operating Hours	27		Fall 2004
Eliminate Banner Page on Print Jobs	27		Print Management - ITS project
Circulate Journals	23		Some titles in high demand – use scanners
Change Machine	15		Switch to ID Express - ITS project
Library Student Worker Nametags	12		Fall 2004
Fax Machine	12		Use scanner and E-fax on Library PC's
Promote Collection	10	Linked to Calendar – e.g. Women's History Month resources	2004/05 – Library Web Group Project
Better Copy Machines	5		Color Copier Fall 2004
Increased checkout period for multimedia collection	5		Increased in 2003/04
More wireless access/functionality	3	Use of personal laptops, network access	Virtual Private Network – ITS project
Shorten/Revise Circulation Period	1	Music Scores	Create reference collection of scores Summer/Fall 2004
Automate Patron Notification	1	Reduce use of paper notices	Fall 2004
LIBRARY RESOURCES			
More Laptop Computers	41		8 additional laptops Fall 2004
More viewing stations	13	Viewing area with comfortable seating, Dual Listening, More Headphones	Additional Headphones 2004/05
More Books	4	Currency of book collection, Perception of collection inequality across curriculum	Collection Analysis Project 2004/05
More Movies on DVD	4		Collection Development 2004/05
Uniform software on all public computers	4		Fall 2004
More Music CDs	2	More Current titles	Collection Development 2004/05
More Library Catalog Only Workstations	1	PCs without MS Office	One PC on each floor for Fall 2004

CONTINUING IMPROVEMENTS

When a Senior Class representative met with me to solicit ideas for the Class Gift, I was able to suggest the renovation of an under-utilized space to create three collaborative study spaces, a high priority in the user assessment activity. The library created a visual mockup of the re-envisioned space and our project was selected by student vote for the class gift.

Building on the momentum from the initial assessment project, we created a library website feature called "Talk Back" where library staff provide rapid responses to user inquiries. In many instances these inquiries have helped us to identify opportunities to clarify and/or refine library policies. We indicate that any recommendations for major changes in policies are reviewed on an annual basis as we prepare for the new academic year. All queries and answers are archived for public access. Students in particular appreciate the opportunity to have their concerns addressed in a timely manner.

We have also used the library's website to host a "Community Dialogue" on challenging issues such as Cell Phone Use in the Library. We describe the problem, provide the library staff's perspective and ask users to submit their perspectives. User comments are

summarized and a consensus approach to the issue is suggested. The full remarks of all comments are also provided. Again, students appear to simply appreciate the opportunity to be heard, as do the library staff and student workers.

The library continues to utilize user feedback to establish goals and priorities and to enhance services, resources, and the library facility. I encourage librarians to engage their users in assessment and to use the data for strategic planning and advocacy of the library. I frequently tell colleagues that users do not generally ask for the moon and the stars. They often submit achievable requests for items such as improved signage. If they do ask for the moon and the stars, we have data for planning and goal setting. When the library is able to act on a request, we send the message that we are serious about planning for the future and building the ideal library.

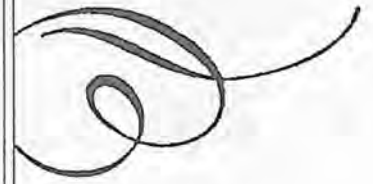
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lisabeth Chabot is the College Librarian at Ithaca College. She has worked as a cataloger, reference librarian, and library administrator over her 30-year professional career. She believes that a successful library is one that is used--both virtually and on-site. To that end, the Ithaca College Library is committed to

the development of 1) content that meets the diverse needs of its users 2) high-quality, personalized information services; 3) collaborative activities that enhance teaching and learning; opportunities for students and faculty to develop research skills; and 4) continuous improvement.

GETTING BETTER EVERY DAY: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS USE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT TOOLS

by Lori Vandeventer



"Getting Better Every Day: Continuous Improvement Tools for You to Use with Students and Colleagues"...this workshop title struck me as very enticing. As I had learned in my fifteen years of teaching, sometimes a class felt like it was Getting Worse Every Day, especially for seniors in April. During the summer of 2005, I looked forward to attending the AIME Survivor workshop in preparation for my transfer into the media specialist position for the following year. At the time, I was still in senior English teacher mode, and I was anxious to learn how to keep the students and myself focused and motivated.

The valuable tools I learned were easy and practical. I enjoyed the material so much that I decided to ask Sara Laughlin to present this information to my colleagues at Eastern Greene Schools. In February of 2006, Ms. Laughlin made the trek through beautiful south central Indiana and shared insights about finding root causes of problems, check sheets, cause and effect diagrams, cause analysis, Pareto charts, force field analysis, and multivoting.

Everyone working in an Indiana school knows what happens in February: It's cold, kids get cabin fever (as do adults), and Spring Break is a month away. Therefore, the timing of Laughlin's presentation was perfect to lift the teachers' enthusiasm with useful and convenient methods. At the time, my senior English classes were in the midst of a career I-Search project that should have proven practical and relatively easy after many analysis pieces of critiques and explications. However, the students were flat. The I-Search papers did not turn out as well as I expected, and I needed to find out why.

I seized the opportunity to use some of the data collection methods that I had learned from *Getting Better Every Day*. I decided to focus on two techniques: plus/delta charts and force field analysis. After I graded and returned the I-Search projects, we focused on the process and the grades of the projects during a debriefing session. I explained the plus/delta charts to the students. Basically, it is a T chart that includes the positive aspects of the project being listed on the left side (plus) and the changes that need to be made on

the right side (delta). The students respected that I was asking for their opinion. They felt valued and realized that I was treating them as thinkers with suggestions that truly mattered. I received very open and honest answers. The students were gracious with their compliments for the project and for the materials that I had prepared for them as assignment sheets, examples, and rubrics. They explained why the research and writings were meaningful and why they valued the information that they learned. They were just as honest with what needed to be improved. Their suggestions were valid, and I appreciated learning ways to improve my methods and my ancillary materials for this unit. (Figure 1 shows a sampling of the student answers.) We all learned a great deal from the plus/delta charts, and we actually completed others as the year moved forward, with each chart detailing more about improving ourselves as well as the content being studied.

After the plus/delta chart, I wanted to get the students to focus on the writing process and their ability to move through each step. My students were champions with prewriting, organizing, and drafting. However, they simply stopped and didn't move into revising and editing, so I wanted to know why. Stopping after step three of the writing process emerged as a problem during the I-Search, so I led my seniors through a force field analysis study. This method also utilizes a T chart, yet on the left, participants make a list of Moving Forces, while the right side lists the Restraining Forces. I wanted all of us to focus on these issues to encourage productivity, even when the dreaded senioritis tried to settle over our class.

Again, my students were honest and the chart allowed them to see what forces detained them and kept them from achieving more. (Figure 2 provides a sampling of the responses from this exercise.)

My students also enjoyed seeing all of the other classes' responses after I hung up all of the charts around my room. We left up the force field analysis charts for the rest of the year and referred to them when any of us slipped back into the procrastinate mode. I also made good on my dedication to the issues they requested such as more information about quoting

Figure 1: Plus/Delta Chart for the I-Search Project

+	Δ
Topic of personal interest	Interviews were hard because of time limits
Useful information	Hard to get valid responses from some people because we were "just" high school kids
Forced me to think of future seriously	My questions were repetitive.
2 weeks (plus weekends) to complete	Would like to have shadowed the professional, but ran out of time
Able to interview current professionals	Research sites repeated information
Project didn't sound boring	Computers were old and died on us
Other teachers helped, too	Procrastinated
How-to pages, rubric helpful	Needed more advanced warning for the interviews to set them up and have time for better interactions
Encouraged creativity with set-up	No checkpoint due dates, all due at the end
Writing more informal	The "My Decision" section needed a better example.
Helped us learn research techniques	The Work Keys program in the middle of the unit took away valuable time that we needed on computers (since they crashed).
Left room for comparing two similar careers	Provide a possible list of informants for interviewing
Learned not to procrastinate	Websites were hard to use...more instruction would help.
Helped me decide that career is not really what I want	Include more details on rubric
Examples were helpful	Five sources were too many because of the repetitive information.

Figure 2: Force Field Analysis for Getting Past Step Three of Writing Process

Moving Forces	Restraining Forces
Wanting to graduate	Time devoted to other classes
Get better grades on papers	Time devoted to my job/social life/extra curricular/sports
Fear of making Vandeventer angry/wanting to make her proud of me	Procrastinator/lazy
Take pride in work	Siblings too loud for me to concentrate
Learn now because no one holds hands next year(s)	Scared to grow up
Parents get angry when grades are bad	Being pushed out of my comfort zone
Maturing/growing up	I just don't care.
Making other teachers proud of me, too	Previous grades discourage me.
Moving on and getting away from home	Computers crash anyway.
Not taking this class again/graduating with classmates	Rely on Vandeventer too much
Relieve stress by getting finished	X Box and Play Station
Taking responsibility for my future	Didn't know what questions to ask to get past step three
Meet the goals I've set for myself	Not knowing how to do some of the quotes

sources and more discussion of which effective questions to ask. I am happy to report that my students demonstrated more successful and alert attitudes through March, April, and May. Learning and teaching are challenging tasks, but these techniques really did help us to become better at reaching our goals every day.

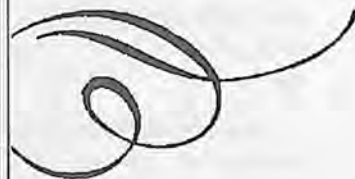
My transfer out of the senior English classroom occurred in June of 2006. I am now the media specialist at Eastern Greene, but I still use these techniques. New challenges meet me at every turn, especially as I plan for our opening day collection for the new high school building. I often refer to the plus/delta and force field analysis charts, as well as other data gathering tools as a visual representation of my tasks so that I can be more productive. It still feels enticing to be getting better every day!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lori Vandeventer is the library/media specialist at Eastern Greene Schools. She earned her B.S. in secondary English education at Indiana State University and her MLS at IU Bloomington. She spent 16 years as an English teacher before moving into the library/media center for the 2006-2007 school year. She is now in the middle of a building project, preparing her current space to become the middle school library while also directing the opening day collection for the new high school. Contact her at lvandeventer@egreene.k12.in.us

LIBRARY WEB SITE ASSESSMENT: FROM FOCUS GROUPS TO PARETO CHARTS

by Donna J. Davidoff and Lisa A. Forrest



As academic libraries strive to remain relevant in today's "Google-ized" world, it is critical that library services and collections are evaluated for continuous improvement. At E. H. Butler Library, Buffalo State College, these essential information resources are made available through the library Web site. Effective Web design is imperative to a successful library experience for patrons.

In November 2006, a library task force was given the charge of evaluating the Web site. Although staff members believed that the site could benefit from some minor improvements, patron satisfaction had never officially been assessed. Five focus groups were organized to elicit feedback from students, faculty, and staff. Each focus group had five to ten attendees, all of whom were asked the same set of open-ended questions including:

How would you describe your experience using our Web site?

How would you describe the links on the home page?

How would you describe the terminology on the Web site?

How can we make the site better?

Two members of the task force attended each focus group session to act as facilitator and note-taker. In addition to getting answers to specific questions, the facilitator also encouraged related feedback from the group.

Following the conclusion of the interviews, the task force coordinator organized the results of the focus group conversations into an overview grid containing the descriptive content of the discussions. While most certainly useful, this text-based grid of participant comments did not provide a clear visual analysis of the results of the study. To be able to initiate changes, the task force needed to examine the results in a consolidated, prioritized way.

Coincidentally, another group of staff members from Butler Library were attending workshops on

Continuous Assessment - Continuous Improvement (CACI) for libraries sponsored by the South Central Regional Library Council in New York State. The CACI team decided to put their new-found knowledge to work presenting the focus group results in a more concise, graphical form.

First, they studied the many pages of comments. Although study participants offered a wide range of specific suggestions, their comments could be grouped into several descriptive categories. The CACI team then created two check sheets: one with positive comments about Web site features and a second with ideas for improving the site. (see figures 1, 2).

The results of each check sheet were then placed into a Pareto chart, a type of bar graph that plots data in descending order. (See figures 3,4). The Pareto principle states that 80 percent of problems usually stem from 20 percent of the causes. In other words, when several factors affect a situation, only a few are responsible for most of the problem. A Pareto chart helps identify the factors on which to concentrate efforts for optimal improvement.

When the comments were placed in this format, it was easy to see the results of the study summarized, revealing a more manageable list of prioritized items. Although the focus groups were small in number, the participant's comments were surprisingly consistent. Task force members learned that aesthetics are important to patrons; suggestions included more photos, graphics, and color. Although the site was judged to be well-organized and easy to navigate, there were requests for fewer links and less wordiness. Now that these factors have been identified, the library Web editors have a better idea about where to concentrate their revision efforts. While Butler Library's Web site may not give Google a run for its money, it is hoped that the changes made will help to keep the library relevant and attract both new and experienced users.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Lisa A. Forrest is currently a Senior Assistant Librarian at Buffalo State College, State University of New York, and the founding member of the school's

Comment Categories	Number of Responses	Specific Comments
Aesthetics		
Easy to Navigate	////	Easier than UB, clear, good for finding books, well laid out
Well Organized	////	Simple, straight forward, not too flashy; clear
		Good balance between utility and aesthetics
		Big improvement from last version of Website
Wording / Text		
Helpful Titles	//	Useful, works good
Clear	//	
Resources		
Helpful Staff	//	Like the librarians
Useful Collection	////	Good book collection
		Always find the articles I need; find lots of education articles, variety of databases is good
Like the links	///	Like the blog, like the new links, like columns of links

Figure 1: Positive comments, organized into three areas (Graphics by Dennis Reed, Jr.)

Comment Categories	Number of Responses	Specific Comments
Aesthetics		
More graphics & photos	////	Photos that change
Color for background	///	Gray or orange, Darker color
Friendlier, more inviting	//	
Wording / Text		
Too many links	////	Consolidate links
Wordy	////	overwhelming
Less jargon	//	
Resources		
Add coffee shop menu	/	
Add campus-related info	///	Link to professors Web pages, ANGEL link
Need tutorials	//	Media tutorial, plagiarism tutorial
More information on blog	/	
Expand research category	///	
Descriptions of databases	///	What is Bengal? Don't know which ones to use
Computer help links	//	
More special features	//	Banned books, "Did you know" feature

Figure 2: Suggestions for improvement, organized into three areas (Graphics by Dennis Reed, Jr.)

Rooftop Poetry Club. Lisa's writing has been featured in a variety of local and national publications, including *American Libraries*, *eco-poetics*, *The Buffalo News*, *Word Wrights*, and on *WBFO*, Buffalo's local National Public Radio station.

Donna J. Davidoff is an Associate Librarian at Buffalo State College, State University of New York, where she is a reference and interlibrary loan librarian, as well as editor of the E. H. Butler Library Web site. Her work has been published in *Reference Services Review*, *Online*, and *Judaica Librarianship*.

Figure 3: Pareto Chart of Positive Comments

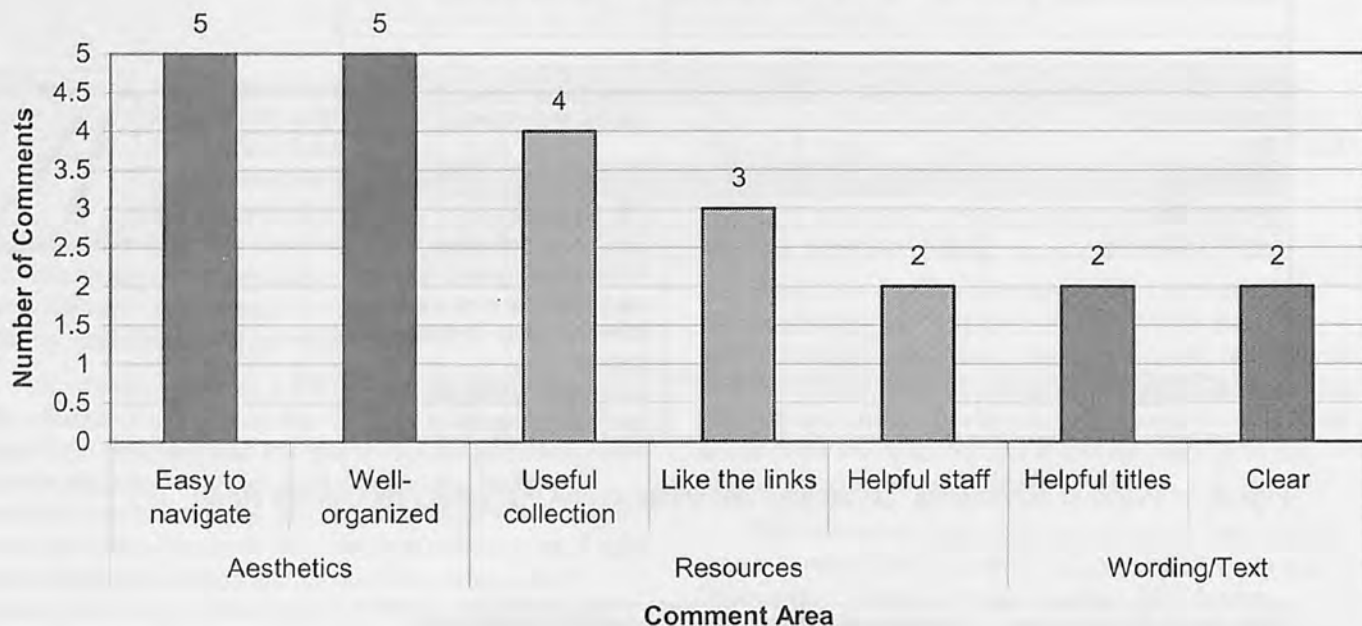
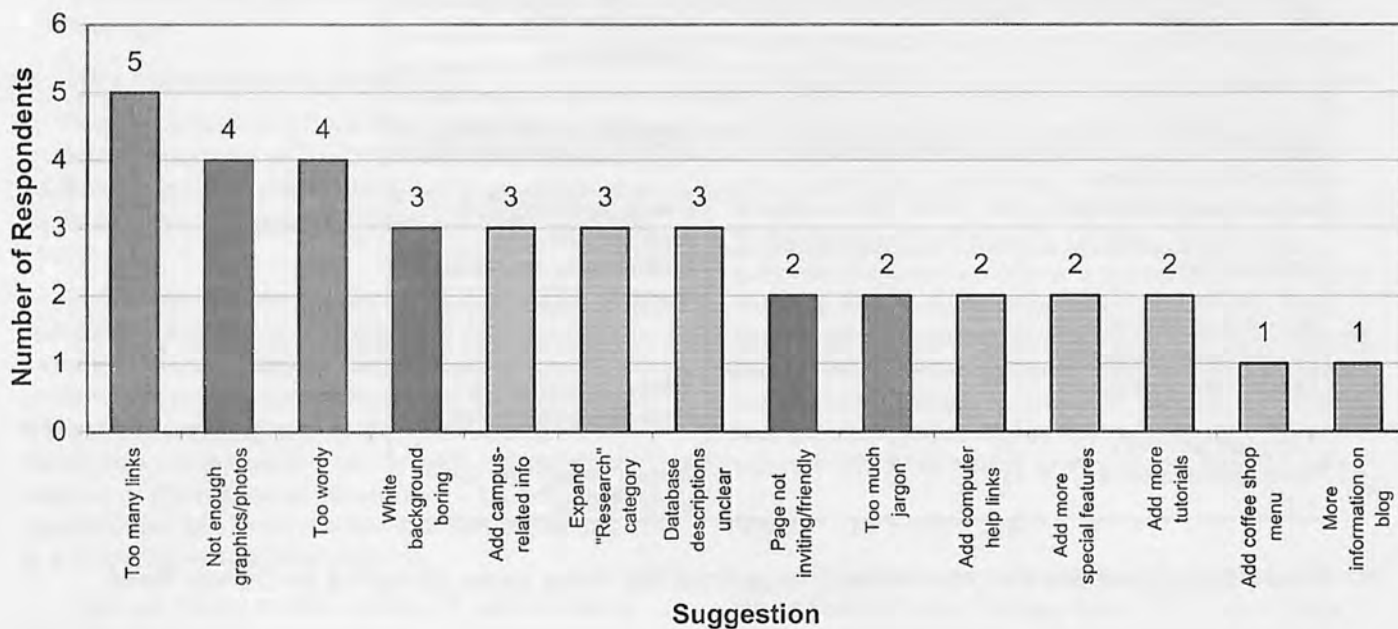
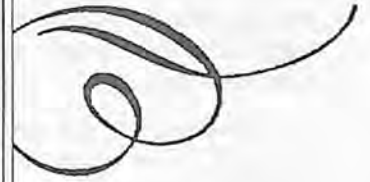


Figure 4: Pareto Chart of Suggestions for Improvement



MISSION STATEMENT--DO WE HAVE ONE?

by Jenny Draper



A

library's mission statement typically seems to be several paragraphs long and in a nutshell states that this public library does everything for everyone using your tax dollars. And the Kendallville Public Library was no exception.

I started as director of the Kendallville Library in January 1998. As I sorted through drawers and file folders, I did run across the mission statement. I read it quickly (as quickly as I could read two paragraphs full of run-on sentences); didn't digest any of it and just as quickly stuck it back in the folder where it had been residing for who knows how many years. No one on the staff or board ever referred to the mission statement and it was not visible anywhere in the library. In other words, even though the library had a mission statement, it was virtually meaningless and was simply a bunch of words on a piece of paper that most people didn't even know existed (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Kendallville Public Library Mission Statement (original)

The Kendallville Public Library is a tax supported service organization available to all people of the community and committed to acquiring, organizing, and providing access to information; serving as a source for self-education and personal enrichment; developing programs and services for people of all ages with a special emphasis on programs and services for children and others entering the world of reading; providing a center for recreational reading, listening, and viewing; furnishing supplementary resources for use by students, parents, and educators; making available facilities and resources for group interaction and community participation; and extending outreach services to special groups.

While formulating this statement, the Library is guided by professional standards. The Kendallville Public Library consciously supports and is supported by the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and Freedom to Read statements which affirm that free and convenient access to ideas, information, and the creative experience is of vital importance to every citizen today.

Library board members felt that the mission of the library should be part of all decisions made and used in the daily operation of the library. A facilitator was hired and the board planned an all-day retreat to work on the Constancy of Purpose Statement. The day was productive; participants produced a document and promptly filed it away, never to be seen again. Even though this mission statement was considerably shorter than the previous one, it still had no real meaning to anyone working at the library. It was not a part of the day-to-day operations and was not referred to when making decisions about library services (Figure 2).

In 2001, the Kendallville Library was invited to take part in a series of Continuous Improvement workshops. Three staff members participated and began to implement many of the things they learned. It became clear early in this process that we needed serious

Figure 2: Kendallville Public Library's Second Constancy of Purpose Statement

Mission Statement

The library is an educational, cultural, and social resource center that supports a community of learners. Equal access to services is provided to all in a safe, inviting environment, and the personal needs of individual patrons are met.

Vision statement

The library is committed to acquiring, organizing and providing current information materials, and services in a friendly inviting environment. This organization offers our community a place to access information and technology, meet, socialize and enjoy programs.

Value statement

The public library is the cultural heart of the community where people connect with one another, and where they receive quality access to their personal, informational, educational and recreational needs. A strong public library provides resources that enrich the lives of members of the community.

changes in the mission, vision, and values of this library. I was hard pressed to find a staff member who even knew there was a mission statement, let alone one who could tell me what the mission was. The answers ranged from, "I never heard of it" to "I think it is in a folder in the third drawer at the circulation desk." This was not acceptable.

The library board again hired a facilitator, but this time the retreat would include all staff as well as board members. The entire morning was spent drafting the library's values (Figure 3). Don't think this was easy with that many people in one room. When the draft document was finished, all participants were given a sticky note (using lots of colors makes this more fun). The sticky notes were to be used, without names, in a consensogram, to express agreement with the values as drafted. Each person was to rank their satisfaction using a range from 0 to 100 (in increments of 10) with 0 meaning total disagreement and 100 being complete agreement. Scores ranged from 75 to 100 with about half of the participants close to the 100 mark and the rest ranging from 75 to 90.

After lunch, the group tackled the mission statement. The first item of business was to determine just what a mission statement does and how it should be used by the organization. The library's mission statement is actually the library's promise to the community as to why the library exists and what the library is committed to providing for its customers. I was also convinced the mission should be short and easily remembered. With these things in mind we started brainstorming. At times it was truly a storm. The end result was as follows:

The Kendallville Public Library provides access to information.....for life.

It doesn't get much shorter than that. Using the sticky notes, we again did a consensogram to measure everyone's buy-in to the statement. This time the scores ranged from 70 percent to 100 percent agreement. The majority of participants were below the 100 percent level, with equal numbers at 70, 80, and 90 percent.

The next item we tackled was a vision statement. Even though we ran out of time before anyone felt we were completely finished, most participants were comfortable with the work we had produced (Figure 3).

The staff acknowledged that all of these documents were drafts and they wanted to "live" with them awhile before making a final decision. Copies of the Mission, Vision and Values were posted in the staff room, and staff was encouraged to continue to think about and discuss what had been accomplished. The consensogram charts were posted along with the draft documents. Staff members were allowed to move their

Figure 3: Kendallville Public Library's Current Constancy of Purpose

MISSION
To provide access to information...for life!
VALUES
Quality: We have a passion for excellence; anticipate and respond to community needs
Positive Attitude: We provide service with professional, enthusiastic, and helpful interactions.
Integrity: We are honest, reliable, and trustworthy.
VISION
Personnel: The library employees are cooperative, well trained, and work as a team. They are a happy group and enjoy what they do. There is an adequate number of staff members to fulfill all the necessary functions. The staff is professional in everything they do. The staff is motivated and continuously improving.
Environment: The library is a comfortable inviting, safe place for patrons to visit. Our special spaces accommodate the many needs of those in the community. Every time someone visits the library it's an eye-opening experience. The library extends beyond its walls through views and utilization of outdoor spaces.
Collection: Our collections are relevant, current, and easy to use. We are responsive to patron's requests.
Services: We provide services and programs within the library as well as through outreach programming and services. We have a reputation for excellent programs and services. Other libraries often emulate what we offer. We receive complements throughout the community. Integrated programs support our mission statement.
Technology: We use the latest appropriate technology to support our operations and accommodate the needs of our patrons. We provide adequate space and support.

sticky notes if at some time their degree of satisfaction changed. During the three weeks the documents were posted, the sticky notes continued to move up. At the end of the three weeks almost all of the notes were at 90 percent or higher. The staff just needed time to think about our mission, vision, and values our Constancy of Purpose. This extra time allowed everyone to be more comfortable with the Constancy of Purpose statement.

The library's Mission statement is now on our newsletter, letterhead, program flyers, brochures, and

any other document we prepare for the public. The Mission statement is used in making decisions by staff members and board members. In fact, I would bet every person working at the Kendallville Public Library can tell you what our mission statement is without looking in the third drawer of the circulation desk. Even more importantly, they understand the mission and strongly endorse providing access to information for this community.

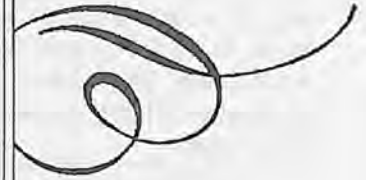
In June 2007, the Library moved into a new 42,000 square foot facility overlooking Bixler Lake and surrounded by park land. Employees come to work with smiles on their faces. The new facility incorporates several things that were in the Vision portion of the Constancy of Purpose statement.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jenny Draper has been director of the Kendallville Public Library since January 1998. She received her MLS from IUPUI in 1996 and has been a member of ILF since 1993. She is very passionate about providing the very best public library service in Indiana.

CONSTANCY OF PURPOSE, AS LEARNED AND USED IN ONE INDIANA PUBLIC LIBRARY

by Mary Hall



"I have no idea what they're talking about!" was my panicked thought upon first hearing about the concept of Constancy of Purpose during a Continuous Improvement session. When the discussion deepened and continued into an analysis of the role of Mission, Vision, and Values in organizations, I groaned to myself. I was familiar with the concepts of Mission and Vision statements, of course, but privately wondered how they could be practical. Learning these theories was fine, but what was their practical use, really? And why spend valuable time creating a vision that can never be attained? Isn't it all just easy fodder for a Dilbert cartoon?

That internal dialogue took place five years ago. Now these same concepts are not only integral to operations in our medium-size public library, but also in my personal and professional life. I am now a firm believer in the meaning and direction that are generated by a commitment to Constancy of Purpose. However, lest you too be groaning to yourself and beginning to turn this page, be reassured that this will be indeed be a practical (and brief) example of these concepts at work in one library. Indeed, a mountain-sized number of in-depth books and articles have already been published on this topic, and I will not attempt to add to it, nor rehash the discussion. (See *Further Reading*, below.)

Constancy of purpose was a concept coined by W. Edwards Deming, who helped revolutionize Japanese manufacturing by improving processes so that workers could create quality. The first of his Fourteen Points mandated the creation of constancy of purpose for long term quality. He insisted that leaders ask "What are we doing?" and "Why are we doing it?" He held leaders accountable for ensuring that employees understand the organization's Mission, Vision, and Values. This is accomplished by incorporating this Constancy of Purpose throughout the life of the organization. Mission provides a daily guide and tool. Vision, or Aim, is the shared, long-term picture of what the organization strives to become. Values are guiding principles that describe what the organization will not violate.

As always, the difficulty with noble concepts lies in implementing them *throughout* the organization with the help of a guiding coalition of staff members. Otherwise, the most effective ideas and ideals will remain only at the top management level. Meanwhile, the rest of the workers may be off working hard and doing their best, but headed in a totally different direction.

As part of our participation in the Continuous Improvement Project, we 'learned by doing,' gaining understanding about concepts by putting them actively to work in our own organization. To begin our work on Constancy of Purpose, we initiated a discussion among our Library staff about values. All staff members met in interdepartmental sessions to discuss and select three values to guide our actions. These values would serve to hold all staff accountable toward Library customers as well as to other staff. The top-ranked values were: being honest, courteous, and open-minded.

At the time of the Continuous Improvement wrap-up, our Library was preparing for a remodeling project that would create a dramatic shift in service delivery. Our Carnegie building's existing addition would soon be reconfigured to house a new Circulation area and computer lab. Current Checkout areas on both the Adult and Children's/Young Adult floors would be reconfigured into Reference areas to facilitate more confidential and personalized service. The single Circulation point would be adjacent to a newly configured, more accessible main entrance and would serve all visitors. (Readers familiar with Carnegie Library buildings will understand the constant reworking necessary to meet changing needs, as well as the community's loyalty to the building itself.)

To staff this new Circulation area, some staff positions from Adult Services, Children's/Young Adult Services, and our computer lab/switchboard were being combined to create a new department, Circulation Services. Everyone involved felt some trepidation about these upcoming dramatic changes. Not only were staff members working with 'new' people, they would be

working in very different ways, with more visibility and responsibility. In addition, the public would be required to use only the new entrance and would doubtless express their feelings about the change. Therefore, with the guidance of the Continuous Improvement leadership team, we decided to face all these changes proactively and involve all of the new team members in creating a positive approach. Over the next two months, this new Circulation team met with consultant Denise Shockley, who guided us in developing a shared vision for this service.

To begin to create a cohesive unit, we agreed on group norms, which included respect for all ideas and participation by every person. The new group discussed how customers and staff would interact in this space and how the area would look, feel, and function. The group brainstormed to create a list of descriptive words, such as comfortable, busy, cheerful, etc. These were sorted into categories such as 'atmosphere,' 'physical,' 'interactions,' and distributed for study. Each person then privately wrote a few sentences describing their personal vision of the future Circulation area and how it would function. We shared and discussed these personal visions as a group and from them found consensus in this shared vision for the newly-formed Circulation Services:

...A welcoming space that is comfortable for both the staff and the public. Patrons are confident in our pleasant and knowledgeable staff, who efficiently serve the public.

Each step of this process helped to create a team, and built energy and interest. Soon excitement began to replace anxiety.

The group also worked with the Values that had already been accepted by the staff as a whole. To make them more personal to the new Circulation Services, the group added explanatory sentences.

Honest: We feel trusted as individuals, and we are honest with our co-workers and the public.

Courteous: We treat co-workers and the public with kindness and respect.

Open-minded: We are accepting of people and receptive to new ideas and changes.

In order to increase the impact of Constancy of Purpose on our entire organization, the Library adopted a new Mission and Vision. While our Library already had a mission statement when we began the Continuous Improvement Project, it needed to be updated. With the leadership and guidance of Library Board members, these Mission and Vision Statements were developed.

Mission: The Bedford Public Library is committed to improving the quality of life for its customers by providing equal access to services, resources, and information.

Vision: The Bedford Public Library will be a highly valued resource that establishes and promotes long-term relationships with the community.

These statements, while brief and understandable, provide both short-term direction and wide-open possibilities for long-term development. They are not merely words on our website; they are used daily throughout our organization. Staff at any level can look to our Constancy of Purpose for guidance in making a decision. Programs and services are planned, developed, and evaluated against these tools. Decisions are made and relationships with individual customers are shaped by our Mission and Vision. They provide energy for action today, as well as a direction for the future.

This year, the Library is developing our first-ever branch location. Constancy of Purpose has helped bring this about, and it will help guide us throughout the process. As we prepare to serve our community in a new way, our Constancy of Purpose provides a foundation that will guide and support our plans over the long term.

FURTHER READING

As mentioned above, thousands of inspiring books discuss these concepts for organizational and personal development. These are just a few that I've found helpful.

Covey, Stephen R. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. New York: Fireside, 1990.

Loer, Jim, and Tony Schwartz. *The Power of Full Engagement: Managing Energy, Not Time, is the Key to Performance and Personal Renewal*. New York: Free P, 2003.

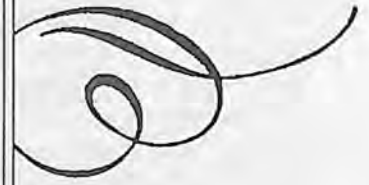
Scherkenbach, William W., and W. Edwards Deming. *The Deming Route to Quality and Productivity, Road Maps and Roadblocks*. Milwaukee: ASQC Quality P, 1986.

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A DYNAMIC COMMUNITY DESTINATION

by Bill Bolte



"The Jeffersonville Township Public Library shall provide exemplary library services."

What a concise and meaningful statement and one which would later become the adopted mission statement for the Jeffersonville Township Public Library.

Such succinctness was quite a contrast to what I had known throughout my years in management, as mission statements, along with related goals and objectives, were often quite lengthy in nature. In fact, a statement was more likely a paragraph. A mission statement might be the most complex paragraph imaginable, as were the multitude of goals and objectives which were supportive of the mission itself. [I believe vision statements were a more recent addition, especially when stated in the present tense.] All components of the planning process, however, required at least deep discussion by a number of people representative of the organization, management, and the people served. Planning process statements tended, or so they seemed to me, to incorporate into one sentence every idea and concept proposed by the planning group, so as to recognize everyone's contribution to the thought process.

Not the case as taught by Sara Laughlin & Associates in the method of continuous improvement. Verbosity, "no;" brevity, "yes."

Continuous improvement is a new method and system which may soon take the lead over what we traditionally called strategic planning or long range planning. Actually, it is likely all of the above, but much more. As Laughlin stated in 2001, the model for continuous improvement existed in the business and industrial community, but apparently not so in the public library world. She, along with partners at the time, Ray Wilson and Denise Shockley, set out to change that.

As one of the participating libraries in the second group of libraries accepted for the Continuous Improvement for Libraries training series, called "Getting Better Every Day," in 2002, two other staff members and I decided to be involved in this learning experience.

One member was Kathy Rosga, manager of the Clarksville Branch Library; the second was Laura Bjornson, an assistant librarian in Youth Services.

Each of the eight sessions we attended over most of the year did make us realize that we not only could get better every day, but that getting better could make our library exemplary, and exemplary was exactly what our library staff determined our library services should be in the mission statement for the Jeffersonville Township Public Library.

As the workshop trainers introduced continuous improvement tools in an enjoyable way (such as the ball toss process) and involved us in methods of ranking options and in decision making, the intent was to see not only what we do, but how we could improve in a sequenced and consistent manner. Another discovery was that we should have fun while doing it!

A whole new mind set and vocabulary would replace the familiar terms associated with long range planning. Instead, the long range planning process became a system map, and our task to define a Constancy of Purpose and identify suppliers and inputs, customers and outputs. New terms such as values, key success factors, key processes, and feedback loops replaced the old terminology of goals, objectives, and activities.

From the moment we committed to continuous improvement, the term "Constancy of Purpose" replaced our all too stylistic term "long range plan." Thinking in terms of Constancy of Purpose, more importance would now be given to determining who is the supplier and who is the customer, as well as what are the inputs and what are the outputs. From this point forward emphasis would be placed on providing leadership to a group for team-based consensus, rather than authoritarian decisions resulting from experiences and personal preferences.

The common excuse of time constraints and "I have too much work already which doesn't get done as it is" gave way to feeling good about the outcome of each meeting and understanding that continuous improve-

ment can be done in small steps; it doesn't have to be a big leap to make an improvement. Once a person assumes the role as leader and begins to involve others, the framework is constructed for staff to be involved in cooperative decisions; thereby vesting each participant as a team member. Personally, I had to overcome my ingrained nature of assertiveness and being a task-oriented person who finds the democratic process too slow and challenging.

Since my participation in the monthly workshops and follow-up staff meetings, what has become most important to me is thinking differently as we seek to conceptualize and to look for process refinement, even if we do not do everything according to the rule and we don't remember all of the methods in achieving group consensus. When working in groups I have had to think as a diplomat and to analyze not just what is said and the manner in which someone says it, but to consider how what I say is perceived before saying it. I have to consciously be receptive as to how other people interact and how ideas are expressed in a group situation, whereas before, I had always worked better with a task I could do myself rather than a task which required group consensus.

Determined to make personal behavioral changes, to learn the tools and processes required, and to improve the way my library operated and presented itself to the public, I forged ahead to implement continuous improvement for the Jeffersonville Township Public Library. To increase the awareness level of the staff and to present an opportunity for all staff to understand the library's service philosophy, the library's Staff Institute Day was set on February 16, 2004, and the theme we chose was "Getting Better Every Day." No surprise! The theme was the same title given to the continuous improvement workshop series which Bjornson, Rosga, and I attended.

Denise Shockley, an associate with Sara Laughlin & Associates, had the assignment of introducing the continuous improvement concept to the entire staff so that all staff could be aware of what some of their co-workers had been involved in. Although materials pertinent to our workshop assignments had been distributed at other times for reaction and comment, the Staff Institute Day was the first time everyone could react together on the final Constancy of Purpose draft proposal adopted by the library board two months earlier.

I felt good that day when the Constancy of Purpose was reviewed and, particularly, that every statement was simple, but effective. Using a present tense rather than a future tense in the Mission and the Vision statements is a way of affirming success. The new way is to be presumptuous (or confident?): "the library is," not "the library will be."

Composing a concise Vision statement was even more important to me in the continuous improvement system framework than the Mission statement itself, because the Vision statement our library adopted became the cornerstone of our direction for the design and aesthetics of a building project.

The Vision statement formally adopted by the library board in December 2003 was:

"The Jeffersonville Township Public Library is a dynamic community destination."

Both the Vision statement and the Mission statement are to-the-point, concise, and memorable. Call me at 2 a.m. and I'll tell you without hesitation, "The library is a dynamic community destination" and "We shall provide exemplary public service."

Perhaps there is a little bit of luck in everything we do when we are satisfied with the results. I can't imagine having any better Vision or Mission statement that says exactly what the library staff and board actually feel than the statements which we have adopted, and that is why we are in the library business. Knowing that the library board believes this to be true gives me the assurance that the library community also holds this belief as well. From the very beginning when this Vision statement was coined by the staff committee in 2003, whenever a program presentation was made to a club or group, this phrase served as the basis for discussion and we discovered that it raised the community's level of expectation.

Because the building project encompassed renovation of an existing structure, as well as building a second floor over the original library building, the public was able to see the progress of the construction. Newspaper articles always referenced the special dynamics of the building: interior and exterior water features, extensive landscaping, a rooftop terrace, and meeting spaces.

The dynamics of any project are the result of many creative people and funding capabilities. Descriptive words used by the media and the public were always positive. They showed that people were not only pleased, but impressed. I wonder if we would have been as successful with the renovation and expansion had we not set out to make the library a dynamic destination for Jeffersonville Township?

Now that we have survived the three years since we first moved out of our library building into temporary quarters in January 2004, and moved back into our new facility in January 2007, I recognize that our first effort at continuous improvement made a significant contribution to a successful opening. Library employees have exhibited the Values we included in our Constancy of Purpose: the values of *accessible, knowledgeable, respectful, responsive, and welcoming*.

Recognizing those Values which are important to us, staff are empowered to insure four Key Success Factors that support our Mission. Although equal among the four, the one Key Success Factor that I feel stands out the most is:

We develop positive long-term relationships with customers.

Having said that, we must not forget that we are indeed in a feedback loop in our Constancy of Purpose system map, and the purpose is continuous improvement. We must go around and around, always aware that our Values do not change, they just get refined; our Key Success Factors remain (in old terms—our goals). Regardless of how any part of our process changes, we will continue to:

- provide diversified collections and popular programming,
- deliver library services through cutting edge technology and facilities,
- support a competent and friendly staff; and
- develop positive long-term relationship with our customers.

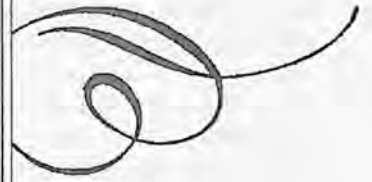
If we keep doing all of the above successfully, then, we shall always be a *dynamic community destination*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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PROCESS ANALYSIS AND STANDARDIZATION: THE ROAD TO STRATEGIC PLANNING SUCCESS

by David Keeber



Many are the libraries that possess a strategic plan. Sandra Nelson, creator of the Public Library Association's "For Results" methodology is fond of stating that having a strategic plan does not mean that you will have the funds and staff time to implement it. In order to ensure that a plan does not become "shelfware," all aspects of the library's regular work must be examined to find efficiencies and effective processes that allow the staff to gain the time needed to implement new services. It is difficult and unglamorous work that makes the difference between hoped-for change and real progress.

Yet, the rewards are not insignificant as staff begin to realize that problems that they have previously considered "just the way it is" now have solutions. Staff buy-in is always critical to the success of any effort, but when they realize that they are able to find efficiencies, reduce their stress, and allow themselves the time to be creative as they implement new services, the likelihood of success for any strategic plan is much more assured.

Sedona Public Library recently completed a comprehensive project that not only produced a new strategic plan but also taught staff the skills necessary to find the time for its implementation. Working with Sara Laughlin & Associates, Inc., we engaged in a Library Effectiveness Study designed to address both strategic planning and aligning our regular processes with that plan. The effort took six months of planning, six more months to complete and included work by teams composed of staff, volunteers and Board of Trustees members. The result satisfied the Sedona City Council¹ with whom the Library had a contractual obligation for a "staffing study," and has pushed the Library much further forward on the path of its strategic plan than any other previously employed approach.

The following overview of the "Effectiveness Study Report" describes the work undertaken during the past year. The first direct immediate result of the process analysis work was task standardization and improvement in the Library's meeting room and program booking work.

THREE-PRONGED APPROACH TO EFFECTIVENESS

The work was accomplished via a three-pronged approach:

- **Strategic Planning.** A review of the previous year's Space and Expansion Study was conducted to extract patron desires for services, obtained during focus groups held with a cross section of the community.
- **Library Effectiveness Study.** The Library undertook a study to determine what staff and volunteers currently do and how much time all tasks take². Staff members identified all current tasks, and a survey of staff and volunteers during regular work hours showed how much time was dedicated to each of those tasks.
- **Task Standardization and Improvement.** Two library teams learned new methods to improve tasks³. This is being accomplished through ongoing task standardization, a newly-learned approach that has become part of the regular culture of improvement at the Library.

The Library formed two inter-locking teams:

- The Strategic Planning Committee of the Board of Trustees provided the broad vision of what the Library would do through the development of Strategic Initiatives and oversaw the work of the
- Effectiveness Study Planning Team, composed of the Director, the Head Librarian, a full-time and one part-time staff person, two volunteers, and two members of the Board of Trustees. The Director and the Head Librarian developed the Goals for those Strategic Initiatives. The Planning Team developed the Objectives and Activities.

The two teams worked back and forth reviewing each other's work, suggesting changes and improvements, and in the end, developed a practical Strategic Plan that is expected to serve the Library during the next three to four years.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The first part of the three-pronged project was the development of a new Strategic Plan. During 2005–

2006, the Library engaged the services of Providence Associates of Cottonwood, Arizona, a professional consulting firm offering planning services to libraries nationwide. The consultants held focus group interviews with adult, youth, and Hispanic customers and non-customers in the Sedona community to determine what services they would like to see the Library provide. The outcomes of these focus groups provided the information needed to begin our strategic planning work. They provided demographics on the communities Sedona Public Library serves, an in-depth set of recommendations for how the Library can best make use of existing space, and anticipated changes to the physical plant for the next 20 years.

Based on customer and non-customer input, demographic projections, and their own knowledge of the Library and community, the Library's Strategic Planning Committee determined broad Strategic Initiatives, clarified and updated the Mission Statement, defined new Goals and Objectives, and adopted specific activities with definable responsibilities and timelines.

It is expected that the Strategic Plan will be updated on a yearly basis. As we accomplish Activities, new Activities will be defined to ensure that progress continues toward the Goals and Objectives. This process of annual review and updating is in keeping with the Library's *culture of improvement*.

LIBRARY EFFECTIVENESS STUDY

The second part of the project was to clarify the tasks currently done and how much time is spent doing them. The contract with the City of Sedona stated that the Library would engage in a staffing study during 2006–2007, and implement the results of that study during 2007–2008. In the early part of the first year of the contract, Director David Keeber and Head Librarian Norma Fowler determined the best way to conduct such a study, what was meant by the term, and what would be most beneficial for the Library if such a large project were undertaken. Meetings with Eric Levitt, City Manager, and Ramon Gomez, City Council Liaison to the Library, ensured that the City and the Library were in agreement with the project's intended outcomes and the intent of the City/Library contract.

The Library chose a "self-survey" approach based on the *Staffing for Results* method, with the staff and volunteers recording what they did, rather than observers recording the data (Mayo 2002). Through a competitive bid process, the Library engaged the services of Sara Laughlin & Associates, Inc., professional library consultants with expertise in surveys and task improvement.

After each staff member submitted a list of their tasks, Laughlin spent a day and a half at the Library

working with the staff to design the survey process and interviewing staff to ensure clarity on the development of the task lists. The language used to describe the tasks was standardized, resulting in a comprehensive list of 230 different tasks being done throughout the year to provide library services to Library customers.

The list of 230 tasks was further refined to 75 broader task groups to make the actual survey work "do-able." Survey instruments were developed in both paper and electronic form, and tested during a "dry run" to ensure understandability and effective output. After minor revision, staff members recorded data on their own activities for two weeks on alternate days, thereby ensuring all shifts and days were examined (Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday of one week and Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday of the next). Completed survey forms were sent to the consultants for data compilation and a report on the outcomes.

In general, the report on the survey resulted in a number of interesting findings, including:

- Staff and volunteers spend approximately 80 percent of their time on about one-third of the tasks defined. These tasks include basic customer services such as circulation and reference, facility and collection maintenance, and time spent in meetings, communication, and planning.
- Staff provides approximately 55 percent and the volunteers provide approximately 45 percent of total time worked during a typical week.

Figure 1 is a Pareto Chart showing total time spent on each of the top 39 tasks during the survey week, by staff and volunteers.

The Effectiveness Study Planning Team concluded that, to become more efficient, reduce errors, and find additional time to provide the new services outlined in the Strategic Plan, the bulk of any such improvement efforts must be focused on this top third of tasks. Staff and volunteers needed to be able to fully understand what they do as they engage in those tasks and then find ways to improve how they do them. Lastly, a *culture of improvement* needed to be developed to make sure that these efforts would be sustained. Ongoing efforts and continually applied new skills and methods needed to be employed to ensure effective work and the best use of the public's money.

TASK STANDARDIZATION AND IMPROVEMENT

The third part of the project was to improve the ways in which staff and volunteers worked, with the anticipated outcomes being increased accuracy, raised customer satisfaction, reduced time spent on correcting mistakes, and time to implement the new Goals and Objectives in the Strategic Plan.

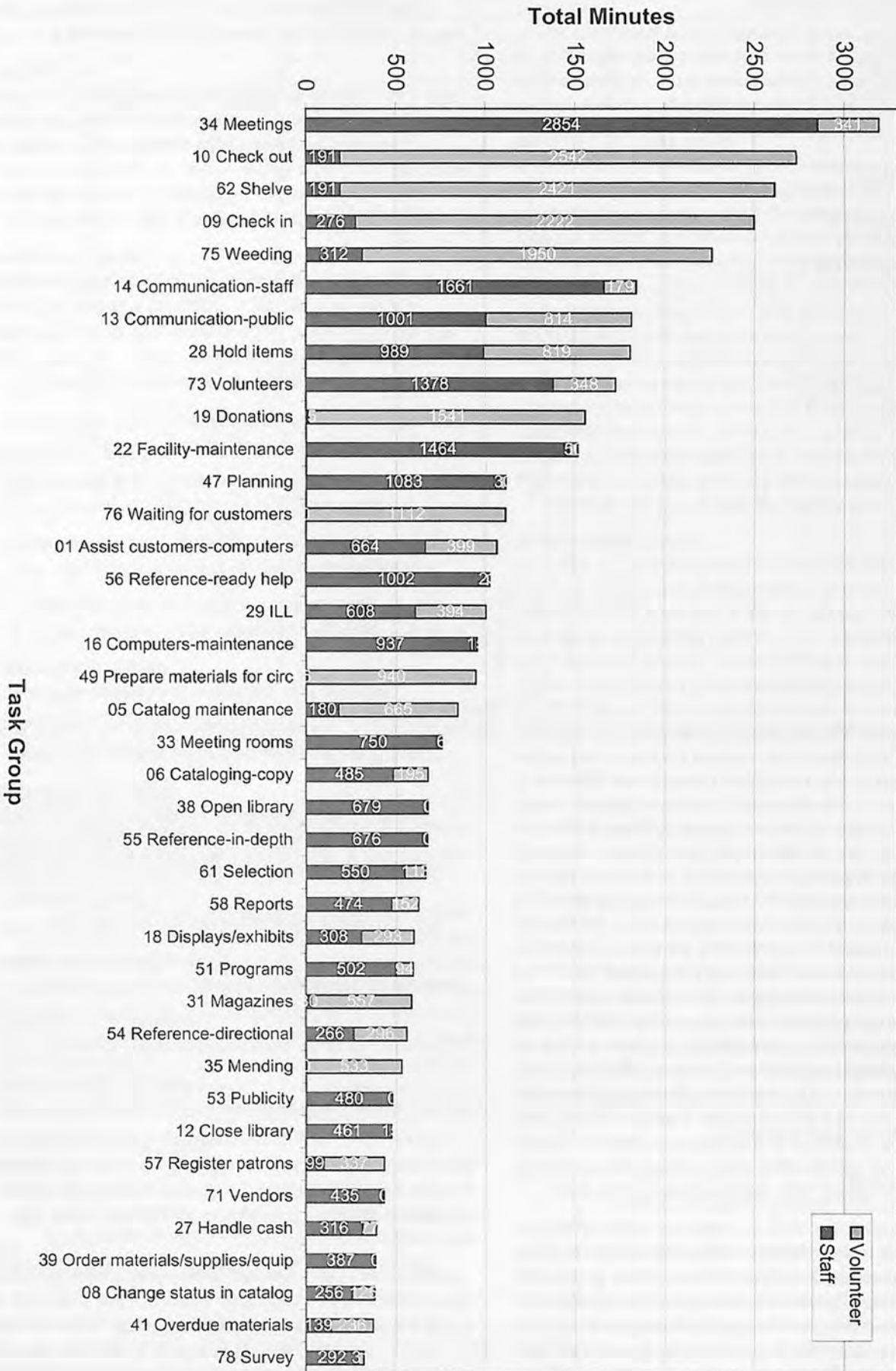


Figure 1: Sedona Public Library: Staff and Volunteer Minutes/Week in Top 39 Task Groups

To do this, staff needed to identify tasks in need of improvement and learn new skills to make those improvements. Sara Laughlin returned to Sedona for two days and led exercises with staff and volunteers to determine which tasks were priority tasks for improvement.

The participants first completed a matrix designed to assess the importance of each task group to each Strategic Initiative in the Library's new plan. They used the following rating system:

5 = Task group is critically important to achieving this Strategic Initiative

3 = Task group somewhat important to achieving this Strategic Initiative

1 = Task group marginally important to achieving this Strategic Initiative

0 = Task group has no impact on achieving this Strategic Initiative

Figure 2 shows the Strategic Initiatives and the tasks, listed in order of importance. The participants' average importance rating is shown in the column second from the right.

Next, they assessed the condition of each task group, using the following rating scale:

5 = This task group surprises and delights customers or staff.

4 = This process runs smoothly, with no complaints from customers or staff.

3 = This process results in occasional errors or complaints from customers or staff.

2 = This process results in regular errors or complaints from customers or staff.

1 = This process results in very frequent errors or complaints from customers or staff.

They sorted the results, in order to find those task groups that were most important to the Strategic Initiatives and in the most need of improvement. The right-hand column in Figure 2 shows the current condition ratings of the tasks most important to the Strategic Initiatives.

By the end of the day, the participants had narrowed their focus to a handful of tasks, and easily reached consensus on two—"Book a Meeting Room at the Library" and "Check Out, Check In, and Holds" (which the team quickly realized was probably three interrelated task groups, too large to manage as a first exercise).

The following day, two teams were trained in the work of *task standardization*, giving them tools to

"unpack" a task, understand the steps needed to complete the task as currently done, and identify steps that are essential to satisfying external and internal customers, steps that depend on suppliers, etc. The two teams began work on the two chosen task groups, both of which have high customer impact and currently had high rates of error.

One team examined the task "Booking a Meeting Room at the Library." This high profile task was previously plagued with errors that required staff to waste time fixing mistakes and granting free use to appease disgruntled paying customers of the meeting rooms. The Library provides more than 400 programs per year, as well as rental of its facilities to community members, local organizations and businesses.⁴ Before the task analysis, bookings and rentals were managed out of the business office, but the constant interruptions of inquiries negatively impacted that office's main work of paying the bills. Numerous efforts through the years to improve the situation had not produced the desired results, leading to frustrated staff and unhappy customers. But, through the task analysis, staff developed a full understanding of the myriad steps involved in these tasks, as well as a comprehensive set of procedures and forms that were then transferred out of the business office to a contract worker. By doing this, we have provided a much more consistent approach to the work, reduced the errors and stress in the business office, and improved customer satisfaction with "Booking a Meeting Room." Time gained in the business office was redirected towards active management of the Library's new Web site, a job for which the business office manager has long lobbied. Success in improving this task has inspired staff to examine other tasks to attain similar results.

Among the list of task groups developed during the Effectiveness Study that had the potential for improvement, the next tasks slated for analysis and task standardization were the "Check In," "Check Out," and "Handle Holds" tasks. A second team is examining these tasks that are done all day, every day. If errors can be reduced there, staff reasons, then the time previously invested in fixing mistakes can be used for other improvements outlined in our Strategic Plan, to say nothing of the added benefit of improved customer satisfaction. Using data obtained during the survey portion of our Effectiveness Study, we will set targets for time gained from our improvements. These tangible outcomes should provide staff with a real sense that they are not being asked to do more and more within the same 40 hour week.

By improving these two areas, the Library has the opportunity to keep our customers happier and instill in them the confidence that we are effectively using the funds entrusted to the Library for the provision of services.

The Library's larger goal is to build the capacity of the initial team members so they can lead future teams in addressing other areas needing improvement. By growing a *culture of improvement*, the Library's effectiveness will improve over the long term. We believe these improvement techniques will help reduce staff time spent correcting errors and "making things right" with our customers, allowing additional time to implement the Plan.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Library management believed that an Effectiveness Study would comply with the City requirements and ensure the best results for the Library and its customers. Understanding that the City wished to make certain that the public funding it provides to the Library is being used in the most effective manner, the project as outlined above was deemed to give the best results. By determining what services the public wanted from their Library (Strategic Planning), examining what staff are doing currently (Library Effectiveness Study), and finding ways to both improve what the Library currently does and to provide the new services requested (Task Standardization and Improvement), managers are

confident that the Library has fulfilled both its contractual obligation and its responsibility to the public for ensuring the most effective provision of service possible.

The challenge of any Strategic Plan, once written, is its implementation. Success can sometimes be translated into increases in the library's budget, but initially that Plan must show progress with the funds and staff already in hand. Finding the staff time is often extremely challenging and seldom does the Director get staff buy-in simply by exhorting them to do more on top of existing work loads. By investing effort in process analysis and task standardization, time can be gained within existing staff hours. The resulting improvements gleaned from this work have provided the necessary time to implement more and more portions of the Library's Strategic Plan, while improving staff morale and customer satisfaction. Those results, by any measure can be seen as success.

In the original project plan, the Library hoped to discover a large set of tasks to drop outright thereby saving time in the short term. What staff learned was that there were only one or two things that they could

Figure 2: Task Groups Sorted by Importance and Showing Current Condition

Task Group Number	Task Group	Strategic Initiatives							Importance of Task Group to All Strategic Initiatives	Current Condition of Task Group
		1. Center for community activities	2. Up-to-date technology resources and delivery systems	3. Reach out to the Spanish-speaking community	4. Learning support services and programs for youth	5. Literacy and information resource center	6. Positive working environment for staff and volunteers	7. Efficiency, effectiveness, and fiscal prudence		
47	Planning	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	33	4
30	Library instruction	5	5	5	5	5	5	0	30	5
13	Communication-public	3	3	3	5	5	5	5	29	4
16	Computers-maintenance	3	5	3	5	5	5	0	26	2
74	Web site	5	5	5	5	5	1	0	26	2
73	Volunteers	5	5	1	5	5	5	0	26	4
70	Tours	5	5	5	5	5	0	0	25	5
51	Programs	5	5	5	5	3	0	0	23	5
15	Computers-installation	1	5	1	5	5	5	0	22	3
34	Meetings	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	21	4
59	Resolve problems	0	5	5	5	1	5	0	21	4
61	Selection	0	5	5	5	5	1	0	21	5
33	Meeting rooms	5	5	3	3	3	0	0	19	3
53	Publicity	5	3	3	3	3	1	1	19	3
2	Assist customers-find materials	3	3	3	5	5	0	0	19	5
39	Order materials/supplies/equipment	1	0	5	5	5	3	0	19	5
14	Communication-staff	3	3	1	3	3	5	0	18	3
68	Staff-training	0	3	3	3	3	5	1	18	3
42	Partnerships	5	1	3	3	1	0	5	18	5
75	Weeding	1	0	3	5	5	3	0	17	3
1	Assist customers-computers	3	5	3	3	3	0	0	17	4

immediately drop. The consultant recommended to stop removing the names of deceased patrons from the database (if they stopped using their library cards, the normal purging of inactive customers from our database every three years would accomplish this task) and to cease rewinding returned VHS tapes. The time saved from these tasks is estimated at only an hour per month, combined.

Staff discovered instead which task groups were most and least important to accomplishing the Strategic Plan and could compare this list with the time currently allocated to each task group. Further, they realized that there were many places that could benefit from small "tweaks" to improve the tasks, or shifting how they did the work, thereby making it more efficient and effective.

Through *task standardization*, the new set of skills learned during this project, Library managers and staff are determined to concentrate on the few, most important task groups needing improvement, and, through improvement, find the time required to implement the Strategic Plan. Staff is now aware of ways to engage in the work of solving many of the problems that have plagued them and customers. What once was seen as "just the way it is" as they struggled to deal with errors, a constantly rushed pace, and high levels of stress as a result, are now seen as solvable challenges. Staff is eager and ready to go beyond the initial two teams engaged in task standardization and begin to focus on other task groups that have proven to be stumbling blocks through the years. In this way, not only will the Library have fulfilled its obligation to the City of Sedona and its citizens to be as effective as possible, it will be capable of solving challenges on its own.

The larger challenge of this project is that it needs to be ongoing. While some may have hoped to find ways to maintain or reduce current staff levels, it must be recognized that the current work of providing library services is not being *reduced*, but will be *improved*. Further, the new Strategic Plan, driven by customer requests for additional services, will require time, attention, and staff. Lastly, ongoing efforts to achieve higher levels of effectiveness through task standardization and improvement will also require staff time. The results of this project, therefore, indicate that the Library will gain *effectiveness* versus a reduction or containment of staffing levels.

Library use statistics show healthy and sustained levels of growth. The range of services is also broadening. Some examples: larger numbers of Latino community members who are seeking ways to integrate into this culture and recognize that the Library is an excellent tool to assist in accomplishing that goal and expected higher levels of use by well-educated "baby boomers," who seek a healthy, active lifestyle.

The Effectiveness Study has presented a number of valuable findings. First, the Library staff has learned what Library services our customers want and need. Second, they have learned how the Library currently serves those customers. Third, they have learned how to improve what they do when they serve customers. And fourth, they have learned that the solutions to problems that seemed unsolvable previously are within their grasp. The Sedona Public Library is effective and has found ways to grow in its effectiveness through the creation of a *culture of improvement* that ensures the best use of the public funds entrusted to it.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Keeber, MLS, has been the Director of the Sedona Public Library, which serves the residents of Sedona and the Village of Oak Creek, Arizona, since 1993.

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ONE GOOD THING LEADS TO ANOTHER

by Diane Moore



We must admit the thought of three intense days of "Continuous Improvement Training" didn't do anything to gladden our hearts. When our small group was assigned to look at our procedures for the process "Select Books," we all uttered words like "You've got to be kidding," "Oh brother," "Surely, you jest," and "It will just be re-inventing the wheel."

Once we got together and really started working on the task at hand, we realized we had some real issues to discuss, think about, and that we could perhaps even offer new ways to do old things, even though "we had never done them that way before."

Our group consisted of the reference librarian in charge of collection development, the outreach librarian who dealt primarily with day care centers, homebound patrons, and senior citizen centers, an acquisitions technician who did ordering and a cataloging technician who also was responsible for database management and took care of adds and withdrawals. We asked a branch manager to join our group, so we had additional input.

Our first shocking realization was how many different ways we add items to our collection. The one area we felt would be the simplest to define was the most complex. We realized that we have several

different processes—"Select New Books," "Select Replacement Books," and "Select Gift Books." We set as our boundary "Drop Off Gift Books." These are books which we have not solicited or have received through grants or special funding. We emphasized that there are no controls on the volume, timing, or condition or selection of what comes to us.

We then proceeded with the Continuous Improvement Plan steps outlined in the Process. They helped us as we worked through the Key Steps. The Parking Lot concept was a real hit and is being used throughout our system for all sorts of problems and concerns.

The step we felt was the least helpful and added to our confusion and frustration were the "A Charts."

Our final product "Flowchart of Selection of Gifts for our Collection," was tested on three fairly new employees and they felt the procedures for these items were clear and easy to understand.

Many staff had no idea of the quantity of books that are donated. In the discussion, many thought it might be a waste of time to deal with sorting the good from the bad and felt we probably didn't benefit enough to make a difference in our collection. However, our small group already knew from their jobs that gifts were an important part of our collection.

Figure 1: Gift Books Received August 15-September 2 (15 days)

<i>Category</i>	<i>Number</i>
Rack books (fiction paperbacks)	584
Fiction	205
Non-fiction	170
Large print	2
Reference	1
<i>Sub-total items added to collection</i>	962
Items trashed	12
Items donated to the Friends for booksales	2428
<i>Total gift books</i>	3,402

We decided to keep track of the number of drop off gift books the Library received from Aug. 15-Sept. 2 (15 working days). (See Figure 1).

This equals at least 10 booktruck loads. (A booktruck load is considered a day's work for our catalogers.) Even though our processors must do more work than normal as there is none of the pre-processing that books we order have, e.g.: jacketing, property stamping, etc., we estimated that the retail value of the gift books added to our collection during three-week period would be approximately \$11,021 which would translate into \$7,442, if we took into account our discounted price from vendors. These were amazing figures for us to digest when broken down to work hours and to dollar amounts. Also, amazing was the fact that we did three studies all for 15 working days and how closely the figures came to being the same.

Our immediate attention was drawn to the rack books. Over 75 percent of the rack gift books were romances. We looked at our current standing orders for romance rack books and found that we received approximately 167 books at a cost of \$500 a month, or \$6,000 over the course of a year. We immediately cancelled our rack romance standing orders and switched that \$6,000 to rack standing orders in other categories of Christian fiction, mystery, science fiction, true crime, and other popular genres. This was the first concrete change for our process.

We also learned from the other areas of "Select a book" Processes.

But more than WHAT WE LEARNED, WAS HOW WE LEARNED!

We learned by communicating together as staff from different areas, as we each brought a different perspective to the group. We learned by listening to each other. We learned by gathering and evaluating data. We learned by trying something different. We learned by letting go of some things.

Two years later, as we reflect, we see we are receiving more and more gifts from our grateful patrons. We have recently discontinued all rack book standing orders, and we order only if we need particular items. We have added an area for "Bestseller Express" books and are expanding our leased collections to meet our patrons' needs for new titles.

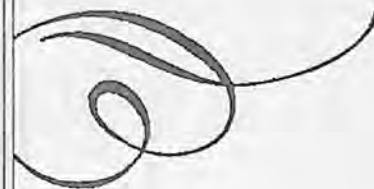
These were all started because we began to see new ways to do the services we offer. The people on the "Select a Book" team continue to work together in acquiring our collection. We each feel ownership of this process, and we have a convinced staff that "drop off gift books" are an asset we cannot overlook.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Diane Moore came to work at the Vigo County Public Library as a co-op student from Indiana State University. What started as a 10-hour-a-week job in technical services turned into a full time position as a cataloging technician over the past 28 years. She is a past chair of the Support Staff Division of ILF and has presented programs at ILF, MFLA, and PLA.

IMPROVING THE EMPLOYEE SOFTWARE TRAINING PROCESS

by Billie Clements



The goal of the Employee Software Training Process Team at the Mishawaka-Penn-Harris Public Library was initially to improve the process of training staff on new software. Team members were chosen from each of our three locations: Jennifer Ludwig from our downtown (Main) location, Babet Mc Bain from our Bittersweet Branch Library, and me, from the Harris Branch Library. The purpose of our charter was to create a standardized process for training staff to use software and complete at least one rapid cycle improvement of the process. We had no knowledge of the software skill levels of the staff as our process began.

As we began to flow chart the process, it became apparent to the team that there was no distinct process for training staff on new software. A number of sessions with many “parking lot” ideas resulted in our team forming the question: what is the knowledge level of our staff of various software programs? We decided to collect data with a simple survey labeled as the Employee Software Questionnaire. The staff had to rate their comfort level of a particular software on a scale of 1-5. The team members reviewed and compiled the findings from our three buildings and transferred the data to an Excel spreadsheet. From the spreadsheet we created an Average Proficiency Rating Sheet that has categories at the top and then employee responses listed below. From these results, we determined how proficient our facility was as a single entity per software. That average was used to generate the percentage of proficiency chart (Figure 1).

The free form answers the staff gave in response to what software they thought would be helpful or they wanted to learn were also calculated into a Demand Spreadsheet. We produced two charts with the demand information. One was a bar chart in the form of a Pareto Chart (see Figure 2). From the consultants, we learned that when we add percentages from most to least, the results by the time we reach 80 percent is what the staff actually wants and needs to learn. These are the items we should tackle first and foremost.

After reviewing the information, we realized this survey did not completely tell us what we needed to

know. For example, many staff members wanted to learn how to use Publisher, but it was not actually needed for their particular job. There was a high staff interest in learning new software. The team needed to know what software knowledge was most needed to provide better customer service. The awareness of this need resulted in the process team reframing our initial question. Our reframed question was: how can our library improve the process of training employees in computer software skills to give better customer service?

The team now had a need for another but different set of data. A Reference Desk Check Sheet was created with various categories of possible patron needed assistance (Figure 3). The team requested that the staff assisting patrons with computers tally the types of assistance provided. We gathered data at all public computer service desks for a week. This became a cooperative effort of all staff dealing with patrons and computer customer service. Our staff was most supportive and helpful as data was recorded from the various service desks.

When this compiled data was displayed on a chart, we could immediately see what questions were being asked frequently. We could also see with which software the patrons most needed assistance. The Check Sheet let the process team recognize the areas of frequent need for assistance by the patrons. Most of the questions were for help with Microsoft Word, general internet assistance, or computer troubleshooting (Figure 4).

We realized our collected data could be information that another team could use to develop a process for orienting new staff. The Employee Software Questionnaire was referred to that team for possible incorporation and amending to use as part of the orientation process.

Our team made recommendations that each building would have at least two trainers. Each person would have expert level knowledge of at least one software program. Cross training would be necessary between buildings at this point depending on the software and availability. Eventually we envision a stationary training

Figure 1: Current Employee Proficiency

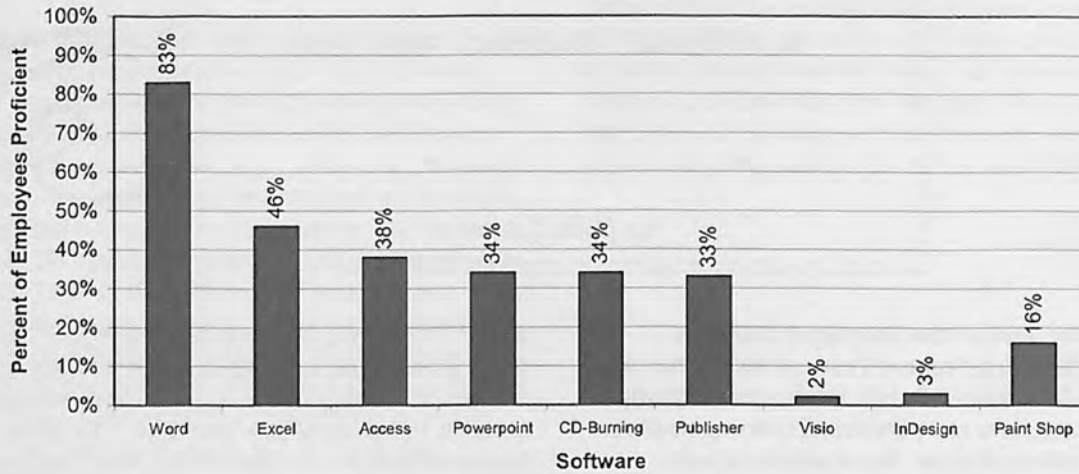
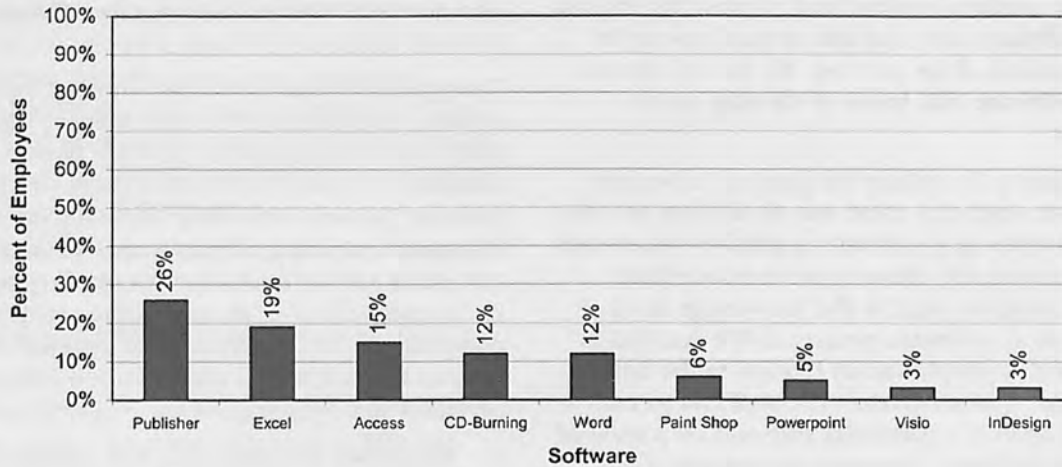


Figure 2: Employee Training Demand



team in each building so a trainer would not need to travel to train staff. Our other vision is to have an expert team, not trainers, who are able to assist staff with minor problems and questions. The team recognizes these are long range goals with a number of processes that may need to be addressed as our library continues improvement.

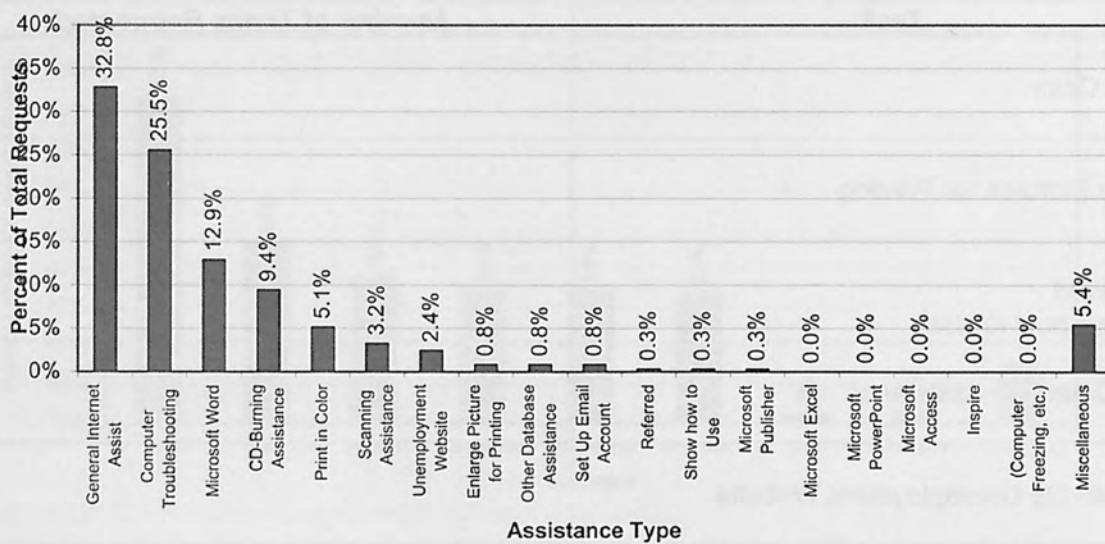
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Billie Clements is a reference/young adult librarian. She also maintains the local history section for the Harris Branch of the Mishawaka-Penn-Harris Public Library in Indiana. She coordinates YA and some adult programs. Away from the library, she enjoys gardening, reading mysteries, travel, nature, and researching history and genealogy.

Figure 3: Reference Desk Check Sheet

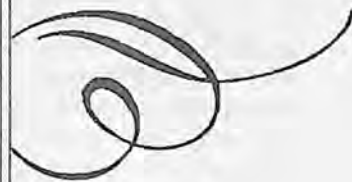
<i>Task</i>	<i>Number of Times Requested</i>
Print in Color	
Enlarge Pictures for Printing	
Inspire Referred Shown how to Use	
Other Database Assistance	
Help with the Unemployment Website	
Internet Assistance in General	
Setting up an Email account	
Scanning Assistance	
Questions Pertaining to Microsoft Word (make note of those items most commonly asked for)	
Questions Pertaining to Microsoft Excel (make note of those items most commonly asked for)	
Questions Pertaining to PowerPoint (make note of those items most commonly asked for)	
Questions Pertaining to Microsoft Access (make note of those items most commonly asked for)	
Questions Pertaining to Microsoft Publisher (make note of those items most commonly asked for)	
CD-Burning Assistance	
Computer Troubleshooting (computer freezing, canceling print job, etc.)	
Miscellaneous (make note of those items most commonly asked for)	

Figure 4: Customer Technology Assistance Requests



THE APPLICATION OF PROCESS MASTERING TECHNIQUES TO A LIBRARY INSTRUCTION CLASSROOM

by Stephan J. Macaluso



When librarians at Sojourner Truth Library (STL) at the State University of New York at New Paltz began a process master for STL's electronic classroom in the fall of 2006, the potential for success was on their side. Members of the library's administration had attended a series of process mastering and continuous improvement workshops during the 2003-04 academic year. At that time, faculty and staff were introduced to process mastering techniques and tools; they developed departmental and library-wide Constancy of Purpose statements, assessment plans, and process mastering documents. Second, the library's relatively flat organizational structure and team-based culture lent itself to planning assessment initiatives. Third, the library had a long history of data collection (for example, through surveys, focus groups, and advisory boards, and through its suggestion box) and the use of those data for library planning and improvement.

During the 2006-07 academic year, the author attended a series of similar workshops on behalf of STL. These workshops were facilitated by Sara Laughlin and Ray Wilson. One of the goals of the workshop series was to develop a process master on an issue of lingering concern. The author worked with seven librarians to create a process master for STL's classroom, called STL18. The librarians were inclined to assess and improve STL18 because it was a primary tool in our information literacy program and because the space presented some unique challenges.

THE ELECTRONIC CLASSROOM: STL18

Instituted in 1998, STL18 is STL's electronic classroom, serving nearly five thousand students each year. Led by teaching librarians, groups ranging from first-year orientees through the graduate level meet in STL18 to receive hands-on information literacy instruction. Class sessions are scheduled by course instructors; sessions range from 45 minutes to about three hours. STL18 is a key part of STL's information literacy endeavor. At the time of the process master's creation, eight librarians taught in STL18 on a regular basis. It

was also the primary space in which to host in-services and vendor demonstrations.

At the time of the process improvement, its equipment included nineteen student PC workstations, an instructor PC workstation, a document camera, a projector and sound system, a VCR, Internet access, and classroom control software.

Several factors contributed to the need to improve the STL18 space. First, there were several weeks during each semester (usually in September and February) where library instruction classes were held in rapid succession on the same day. Moreover, librarians would often need to rush off to another assignment immediately after their classes. This often resulted in librarian-instructors leaving materials behind and being unable to erase the STL18's whiteboards. Second, librarians would often have to bring in additional chairs from adjoining rooms to accommodate larger classes. During high-traffic times, these chairs were often left in the room, to be cleared away at a later time. Over the years, additional furniture and other equipment found their way into the space but were never removed. Space and clutter were obvious issues in STL18.

STL18's décor was maintained by library staff, and so it was more appealing than other campus classrooms or computer lab spaces. However, liberal food and drink policies and unchecked printing resulted in additional litter. There were few obvious places in STL18 to deposit waste materials or recyclables. Librarians often noted that while no-cost printing and refreshments might motivate some students, a cleaner, better-defined workspace would greatly enhance the library instruction experience.

Librarians were fortunate that STL18 had very stable technology, administered by an internal computer support department. The space was secured and available by reservation only, in this way saving it from some of the issues that might befall a more heavily-used, public computing lab. PCs and projectors were maintained regularly. While the technology in STL18

was well managed, librarians depended upon its stability and predictability. Questions often emerged about how to operate specific technologies or how to address service interruptions.

With these issues and questions in mind, the author assembled a team of seven teaching librarians (henceforth, the team) who used the STL18 space frequently. Process mastering meetings began in October 2006. The author, who acted as team sponsor and leader, led the team through an overview of the process mastering technique. Some of the notes from the process mastering workshops he attended were modified for the team meeting, in order to provide a quick overview of the process ahead, and to connect team members' earlier process mastering efforts e.g., listing internal and external customers, and defining systems and processes, to the work at hand. While previous efforts concentrated on big-picture issues, like program assessment, STL18's improvement was a more manageable initiative, and so issues regarding systems, processes, and tasks would become more concrete to team members in this context. See Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1: Quick review of process mastering principles

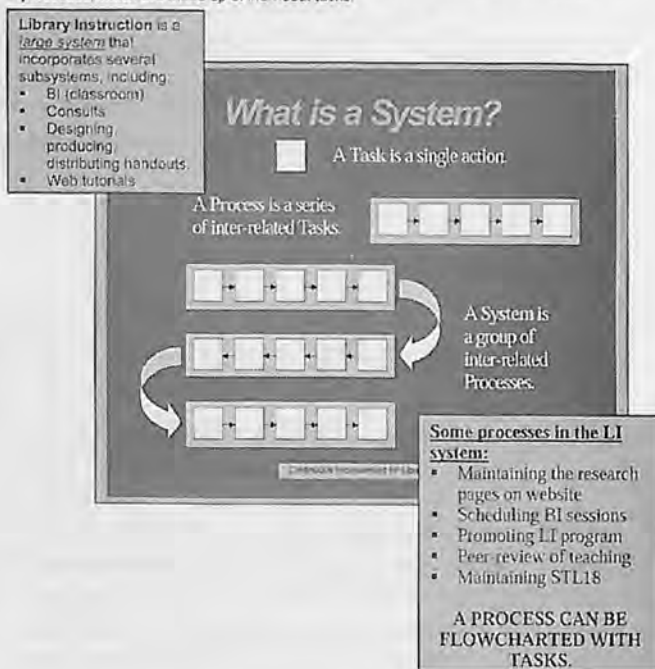
Process Mastering is "recording the best-known way" to do something

1. We brainstorm what it takes to get something done.
2. We flowchart the process into tasks.
3. We identify the most important, or KEY tasks.
4. We note who our customers and suppliers are—who we're doing the tasks for, and what we need to do them. We also note what our suppliers and customers need from us.
5. We document the "best-known way," then test the process to make sure we've got all the steps right.
6. We work on improving this streamlined process.

Process Mastering is about *reducing variation*.

1. We're not talking about teaching, or liaison work. These are individual endeavors.
2. When it comes to STL18, we want to have as little variation as possible, e.g.:
 - The remotes work, and you know where they are.
 - The desktop doesn't change much.
 - The trash is taken out and the space is clean; no one has moved the furniture.

Figure 2: Quick explanation of library instruction as a system, made up of a number of processes, which are made up of individual tasks.



At the initial meeting, a Consensogram exercise (Laughlin, Shockley & Wilson, 37) was employed to help focus the team's attention to STL18 as a workspace. When asked "How well maintained do you think STL18 is?" and "How conducive to successful teaching do you think it is?" team members used sticky notes on a whiteboard to respond on a scale from zero to one hundred. Both questions received responses between eighty and ninety. This demonstrated that, while librarians' were generally pleased with the space, there was room for improvement.

It should be noted here that having the project team meet in the STL18 space offered a unique opportunity to brainstorm potential improvements. Librarians were able to sit in the space and discuss how well they used it, and what barriers they encountered with it.

QUICK OVERVIEW:

The team employed a number of exercises to discover root causes and issues relating to the STL18 space. One was a Cause and Effect Diagram ("fishbone" diagram), shown in Figure 3. The diagram enabled librarians to see which potential issues fell under their control and which were larger, more involved issues that would involve other departments.

The team leader helped the team create a charter, from which future meetings and the process master would ensue. See Figure 4.

TEAM NORMS

In the workshop series, Laughlin and Wilson recommended setting up team norms, in order to

promote conducive, inclusive meetings. Team members were familiar with this technique from earlier initiatives, but rather than forego this formality, team norms (which included a commitment to honesty, affirmation, and communication) were modified to include statements about library instruction. Members agreed to concentrate on STL18 as a learning environment, rather than on teaching outcomes. Team members also agreed that the process master would not mandate a change in their class content or teaching methods. By employing these norms, team members were better able to focus on improving the physical space.

FLOWCHART AND KEY STEPS

An essential step in creating a process master is to develop a detailed but understandable flowchart to illustrate the best-known way to complete a process. Team members were asked to flowchart the steps a librarian would employ to prepare STL18 for a class session. Workshop instructions suggested two things in particular: that a process flowchart should have a clearly-defined beginning and end; and that there should be a maximum of 10 major steps, with a reasonable number of sub-steps. Wilson and Harsin (p. 73) posit that if there are many more than ten major steps, then the process should be contracted or divided into multiple processes. In this case, the "Set Up STL18" process began when a librarian entered the space before class, and ended upon leaving afterwards. As per the norms described above, team members elected not to include the teaching itself in the flowchart, to better concentrate on maintenance issues.

The flowchart resulted in 25 steps, and many questions surfaced during the exercise. Some steps were pedestrian but considered important (e.g., write on the whiteboards, refill staplers). There were a number of "check" steps, e.g., "check the printer," "check the PCs", "check for garbage." There was debate over when someone should erase and clean the whiteboards (before class, and thus early in the flowchart, or after?)

Unlike its originally-intended use, the flowchart was used, not as a prescribed set of directions, but as an exercise to uncover the challenges of setting up and maintaining STL18, especially during peak times of the year. Several team members expressed surprise over how many steps this endeavor required.

The team next examined which flowchart tasks it felt were essential "key steps" to success. Some of the key steps chosen were:

- Turn on the equipment.
- Fill the printer with paper.
- Arrange guides, books, etc.
- Collect the books that were handed out.
- Note which PCs aren't working; report the issue.
- Erase the boards.
- Remove personal belongings.
- Clean off the demonstration table.

Figure 3: Cause-and-effect Diagram

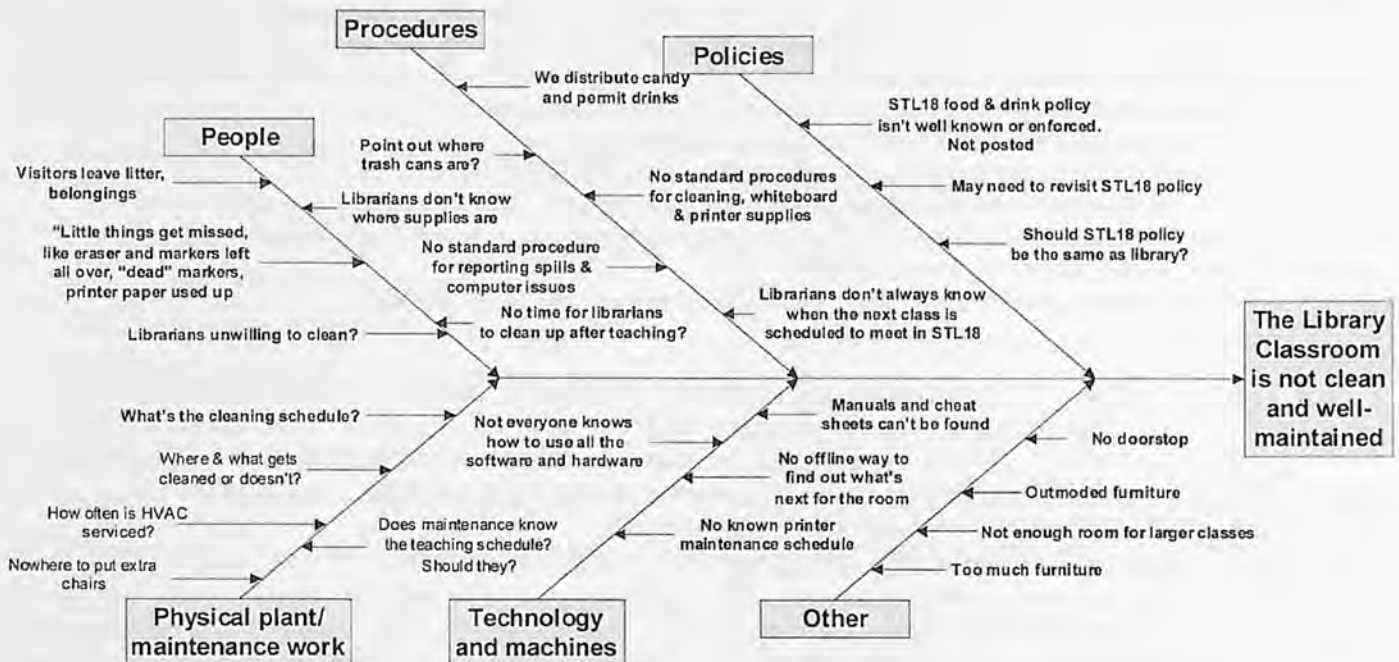


Figure 4: Charter

DATE: October 19, 2006

CHARTER: Improving the Teaching & Working Environment in STL18

CHARTER NUMBER: F2006.1

TO: Susan Kraat, Colleen Lougen, Morgan Gwenwald, Valerie Mittenberg,
Rus Springer, Megan Coder

FROM: Stephan J. Macaluso, Team Sponsor

PURPOSE OF THIS CHARTER (Your Charge):

To develop a standardized process by which teaching librarians and other STL18 group leaders can maintain and improve its environmental quality.

PRODUCT/EXPECTED RESULTS:

- An easy-to-follow Process Master document that describes a maintenance procedure for STL18; including a top-down flowchart, A-Charts (for external and internal customers and for suppliers), a Key Steps worksheet, and Measures
 1. Flowchart should clearly outline steps that a nonlibrarian may follow
 2. Other documentation should include plans for short-term improvement of the space e.g., changes or upgrades in furniture, equipment, security etc.
- A Process Behavior Chart showing measures before and after rapid cycle improvement
- A presentation describing the new process, that will be made to IAT librarians and to the Library Council

AUTHORITIES:

- Divide the process into sub-processes if necessary
- Involve additional people, e.g., IMS or Computer Support members or others, if desired
- Spend up to 2 hours/week on the Process Master document
- Meet in STL18 and other STL spaces whenever available
- Look to other organizations, search the literature, and undertake other research as needed

LIMITATIONS AND BOUNDARIES:

- Take into account that we will use the process and measures to create a rapid cycle improvement. Ultimately, the best time to implement the process and measure progress is during a time when the room is used heavily.
- Take into account current practices followed by individual librarians
- Be sure to define measures that indicate how STL18 environment would be improved
- Be sure the measures are as unobtrusive and easy to document as possible.
 1. If possible, collect measures regarding how often PC, IMS or cleaning are called
 2. Try to ascertain what, if any, regular maintenance schedules (PC upgrades, carpet shampoo, etc.) exist for STL18
- Test the process master on a non-IAT member to ensure its understandability

REPORTING:

- Hold at least two (2) team meetings before the end of October 2006
- Submit progress reports to SJM after each meeting
- Create the Process Master and supporting documents by November 10, 2006. Submit to SJM.
- Decide on a time to pilot a rapid-cycle improvement. A pilot should take place this semester; a rapid cycle improvement may take place next semester
- Help is available! Contact SJM if there are questions about the process!

“Tricks of the trade” were recorded for these and other key steps. Among these were instructions that, though simple, were not known to all team members, e.g., how to set the room’s thermostat and where the document camera instructions were kept. Many tips and tricks were discussed at subsequent meetings. Some were later incorporated into process improvements or new staff training materials.

BRAINSTORMING AND PARKING LOT

By employing the Cause-and-Effect Diagram, other brainstorming exercises, and ongoing e-mail dialogue, team members assembled a lengthy list of areas for improvement for the STL18 space, along with a list of questions regarding the space. Upon examination, some of these issues and questions were given priority as short-term, measurable areas for improvement. These included:

- Should we have a recycling station in STL18?
- Where should we place the markers and erasers when finished? Where is the supply of markers, erasers, staples for STL18?
- Who stocks the printer with paper and toner? Who orders supplies?
- Where are the directions for using the classroom control software?
- I don’t know how to use the document camera.

These brainstorming exercises helped the team realize that it should be expanded to include the department secretary and a representative of STL’s computer support team.

Other items were placed in a Parking Lot—a list of issues to be addressed outside the process master. Some of these were immediately recognized as expensive, long-term issues or questions that were relevant in more general terms. Some parking lot items included:

- Would we like an updated, modular instructor station?
- We need more computers.
- We need better displays for the handouts.
- We need to clean off the back-of-the-room table.
- Can we get a better doorstop for the STL18 door?
- How often is the HVAC serviced? How often are the desks and the carpet cleaned?
- Can we get newer/more modular furniture?
- Can we have a copier placed closer to STL18?

In time, the team made an effort to address parking lot issues (more on this later). A reexamination of longer-term issues in May 2007 led to the purchase of

updated furniture, additional computer workstations, and redecoration.

Subsequent process mastering exercises, e.g., a Customer Screen, helped solidify priorities by challenging the team to explore what aspects of STL18’s maintenance were most important to its primary clientele (i.e., students). The short list included (but was not limited to) predictable technology; a clean and motivating learning environment; and librarian-instructors who were prepared, friendly, and knowledgeable. It became clear that specific setup actions, like booting up the technology, having a working high-quality projector, and distributing relevant handouts and exercises were very important steps in the process.

GATHERING DATA

In order to examine these issues, the team devised a form that librarian-instructors would complete when they arrived at STL18 for a class. Librarians were asked to record how long (in minutes) it took them to prepare the room for their session and to record any issue that they found. The form itself was designed to address the issues most frequently-cited at team meetings, i.e., materials, supplies and technology.

Data were collected over a two-week period in January and February 2007. In doing so, librarians recognized several pertinent issues: First, that there were peak and valley times for library instruction. While an initial data collection might be possible, subsequent ones might not yield as much data due to decreased numbers of classes. Second, there was general agreement that, while providing the date and time of the class could lead to the discovery of who filled out the form (or who led the class immediately before it), this dimension would not be explored for process improvement. See Figure 5.

Responses to the question “How much time did it take to set up the classroom?” were recorded on a process behavior chart.¹ On average, it took 5.6 minutes for a librarian-instructor to get STL18 ready to teach. While eight responses indicated that it required 2 minutes or less to set up, it took some people 10, 15 or even 30 minutes. (On one occasion, it took 30 minutes to clean up the room.)

Issues-related comments were recorded on a spreadsheet for examination. In the initial data collection, there were a total of 27 comments about supplies. Of those, 11 had to do with the printer (adding paper, replacing the toner cartridge). Several librarians reported having to return to the reference office to get more paper for their classes. Seven comments revealed the need to add, remove, or straighten the chairs. In comparison, there were nine comments related to technology issues. This reinforced the idea that, while technology and Internet access were a necessary part of

FIGURE 5: Librarian Data Collection Form

TODAY'S DATE _____

HOW MUCH TIME did it take to set up the classroom? _____ minutes

SUPPLIES*

(CIRCLE ONE OR MORE) I had to move/locate/dispose of/service

Paper low/out of paper in printer Remote(s) Erasers Whiteboard

Toner low/out of toner Trash on floor/desks Chairs Markers

Books/handouts left from earlier class

List any other issues with supplies

TECHNOLOGY ISSUES**

(CIRCLE ONE OR MORE) I had the following hardware/software issues

PC/projector not working Remote(s) not working Printer

Internet was slow/sites not working Plugins(.pdf, flash, etc.)

Classroom control software Document camera

List any other technology issues

REPORTED ISSUES

CIRCLE ONE OR MORE

PC/Projector Network Spills/trash HVAC

Other _____

*For work orders or cleanup of spills, call Rosemary: x.3719, **for pc/network issues, call Gary (3704) or Anna (3709)

teaching in STL18, technology was one of the more stable factors in the room. Two comments during round one had to do with the remote control. Three issues of general slowness of the network, databases or PCs were reported. In sum, the team discovered the following

- Technology worked very effectively in STL18, with little down time.
- The most common technology issue was with the projector remote.
- There were numerous supply issues (paper and markers).
- There were clutter issues (chairs).

MAKING IMPROVEMENTS

In response to these data, team members elected to make a number of changes to the workspace and, to a smaller degree, to their behavior in STL18. Librarians agreed to ask students to push in their chairs and throw away their trash (an unreported but persistent theme among team members), to install a recycling bin near the printer, and to load a supply cabinet with paper, markers and other supplies. A link to the library's online calendar was placed on the instructor workstation PC desktop, so that librarians could better determine when the room would be used next and the size of the class.

At the suggestion of one team member, simplified instructions were mounted to the document camera and other technologies. The effects of this endeavor were not measured, but subsequent conversations at STL suggest a renewed enthusiasm for incorporating these tools into library instruction.

A fortuitous discovery was made during this improvement time. Between data collections, the room's PC projector was serviced by a technician from another campus office. Upon reporting issues with the projector's remote control, the technician provided several tips (in a sense, key steps) for maintaining it. The technician also agreed to change the remote's batteries on a regular basis. In this way, the effort of servicing the projector remote was moved to a supplier's process, where it could be handled better.

To determine whether the above changes had an impact upon setup time and the quality of librarian comments, another two-week data collection cycle took place in March 2007.³ While the number of data points is smaller than in the first round of data collection, the quantitative results suggest a decrease in average setup time, from 5.6 minutes to 4.2 minutes, with less variability.

The comments from the second data collection suggest substantial improvement. There were six

supply-related issues reported, two of which concerned paper and printers. Only one comment regarded chairs. There were also just three technology issues reported (all about network speed.)

While there were just seven librarian comments in round two, their quality suggests that an improvement had taken place (e.g. "room in perfect shape"). Other comments suggest that librarians were willing to contribute to a growing pool of key steps (e.g., "click the mouse to avoid the PC going into hibernation"). Two comments opined a need to improve the classroom control software.

In sum, it took less time to set up the teaching space, and there were fewer reported issues, especially in the area of supplies. Fueled by these positive results, the process team continued to meet during spring 2007 in order to continue its improvement work.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The process team plans to address several of the issues that surfaced in its meetings and were relegated to the Parking Lot. At the time of this writing, librarians have volunteered to redecorate the space. The library intends to purchase modular seating, upgrade the instructor's workstation, and install additional computers. The process mastering experience has contributed to these endeavors because it has refocused STL's collective lens on making STL18 more functional and inspiring.

The true intent of a process master is to develop a worker-centered, worker-developed strategy for doing a job effectively and efficiently. It replaces and improves upon a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) document (Wilson, 76). In that regard, this document is not a true process master, as it does not describe exactly how a librarian-instructor should prepare and strike the space. Such a document may not materialize as many individual tasks are either situational or are performed at the discretion of the librarian. But it continues to be a living document whose principles may be applied to other library issues. One such application of process mastering techniques bears mention here: This author has incorporated several exercises from the workshops, including the Cause-and-Effect diagram and Norms into subsequent meetings and instruction sessions.

LIMITATIONS AND CHANGES WE MIGHT HAVE MADE

A word should be said regarding how the process of *creating* a process master could have been improved. For one thing, only the author attended the 2006 process mastering series; his was one of a small handful of libraries to send a single participant, as many more libraries sent their entire process teams. As a result, the

author acted not only as project sponsor and team leader, but as a coach and project mastering tutor for the team. Some team members were hesitant to participate in exercises that had intimidated them in past process mastering initiatives (e.g., the Customer Screens). A few were unable to attend all of the meetings due to other commitments. While motivation and momentum remained high during the project, it might have been much greater with increased workshop participation.

In hindsight, the author should have considered involving the library director in a greater capacity, such as that of project sponsor. This might have yielded two benefits in particular: because she had attended a similar workshop series, the team might have called upon her expertise; and her involvement would have added greater authority to the improvement initiative. Had this been a more time-consuming, costly improvement endeavor, the author would not have hesitated in having the director sign the process charter.

As mentioned earlier, STL18 is busiest during certain weeks of the fall and spring semesters. Therefore, it would not be practical to collect data to measure small changes on an ongoing basis: the room use dictates data collection. Future improvements may have to be deployed more rapidly during those peak times, or may have to be measured differently, in order to gauge success.

CONCLUSION

Process mastering provides an excellent pathway for libraries to focus their energies toward the improvement of customer service. Individual process mastering exercises promote a systemic viewpoint and provide a means to discover a problem's root causes; they suggest a step-by-step program for making improvements and measuring one's success.

As a result of using these techniques, participating STL librarians focused their attention on STL18, brainstorming and suggesting areas for improvement. Due in part to the development of the STL18 process master, librarians feel empowered and encouraged to suggest changes in seating, software, and other dimensions of the space; they are aware of their stakeholders as well as their suppliers in the processes that make up STL18 and, in a larger sense, the library instruction program. They are more aware of how they work, individually and symbiotically, with other librarians and patrons to provide quality service in STL18.

While there was only one data collection subsequent to making changes in STL18, the results suggest that small changes can positively impact one's job—a key tenet in process mastering. By developing their own data collection form, the participants learned that one can collect data regarding certain aspects of one's

teaching (specifically, one's interaction with the instructional space) that are less-often considered, but just as important, as collecting data about student learning.

NOTES

ⁱN=24, average=5.6 minutes; standard deviation=3.8; upper process limit =17; lower process limit = 0

ⁱⁱN=17; average=4.2 minutes; standard deviation= 2.1; upper process limit=6.2; lower process limit =1.1

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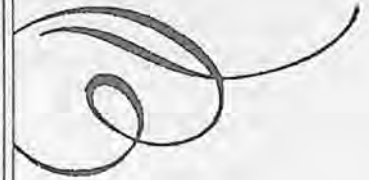
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stephan J. Macaluso, MM, MLS, coordinates library services for distance learners at Sojourner Truth Library at the State University of New York at New Paltz. He is the library's liaison to the music, nursing, and educational administration programs. Stephan's assessment activities at STL have included process mastering, survey construction, strategic planning, and LIBQUAL+. He is currently considering a process master for weeding the STL collection.

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING AN EDUCATION AND TRAINING EVENT: RAPID CYCLE IMPROVEMENT

by Jean Currie and Nora Hardy



The South Central Regional Library Council (SCRLC) not only was the lead agent for the statewide series of workshops on **Continuous Assessment, Continuous Improvement (CACI)**, sponsored on behalf of NY3Rs and supported in part with LSTA funds,¹ but was also an active participant in using the techniques and tools for rapid cycle improvement of some of our own programs.

SCRLC provides services to libraries and library systems in a large area in south central New York State. Our programs and services include resource sharing, education and training, information technologies, and consulting. Because we have a very flat, small organization, our team consisted of all of the Council staff.

Our first CACI effort was to improve the process for creating the annual individual member "report cards" in which we show what each member gave the Council in terms of money, resource sharing, and volunteer hours, and what the Council gave each member in services and money. This product shows the benefits for and return on the membership dues from our 75 members. We followed the various steps of the continuous improvement five block system starting with reviewing and strengthening the Council Mission statement:

The South Central Regional Library Council leads, advocates for, and challenges libraries, promoting collaboration in a changing information environment.

Based on this clarified mission, the SCRLC team conducted an in-depth review of the "Create the annual member report card" process and discovered many opportunities to save time, minimize unnecessary steps, and improve the final product.

Flushed with our success and our excitement in greatly improving the efficiency of our data gathering and production of the report card, we decided to tackle the processes involved in planning and implementing a specific event in our extensive education and training program. Annually we hold about 40 program activities and we thought that we had the processes for managing these pretty well organized.

Using many of the tools and techniques we had learned, we discovered that we could still make major improvements to our event planning and implementation.

Each staff member was responsible for certain steps in the process including selecting a topic, finding funding (sometimes by securing a grant), handling logistics (such as facilities and food), promoting the workshop, registering participants, handling money, hosting presenters, completing post-session activities, and evaluating the workshop. When the team (again the whole staff) flowcharted the entire process, all of us better understood all of the components. In the light of the new shared understanding, a number of improvements were possible. MS Word and MS Excel were being used, but we had not taken full advantage of opportunities to eliminate errors and duplication. We standardized the registration confirmation system and instituted last-minute e-mails for registrants to remind them of their commitment and to notify them of directions and final details. We clarified the paper trail for payments and improved the physical handling of registrations and payments. A policy was developed for participant cancellations and a flowchart for workshop cancellations now outlines the steps for staff to take when a workshop is cancelled due to an emergency (usually due to severe weather).

Some of the tools we used were; a System Map, Brainstorming, Flowchart, (required many discussions and many sticky notes!), and Parking Lot.

This major review and documentation made all the processes run more smoothly. More registrations can now be handled by fewer staff with fewer errors, resulting in more compliments from both participants and from presenters. The SCRLC team still has some ideas in the Parking Lot for future action, such as online registration and a process master for developing grant proposals. The work of reviewing, analyzing, and implementing is ongoing, but each cycle moves our operations closer to the Mission, Vision, and Values we set for ourselves in the System Map, all of which lead to surprising and delighting our customers.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jean Currie is Executive Director and Nora Hardy is Assistant Director at the South Central Regional Library Council, based in Ithaca, NY. Currie has been at the Council for 23 years and Hardy for seven years. The Council has had a high quality education and training program since the 1970's, in which both authors have had significant input.

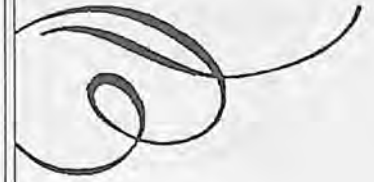
FOOTNOTES

¹ Supported in part by the Federal Library Services and Technology Act funds, awarded to The New York State Library by the Federal Institute of Museum and Library Services.



PREPARING AN ITEM FOR CIRCULATION WHILE STREAMLINING THE WORKFLOW BETWEEN THE ACQUISITIONS AND CATALOGING OFFICES

by Muriel Godbout



ABSTRACT

Recognizing the need for more efficiency in the workflow between the point of receipt of a library item and the point of shelving that item, the Wells College staff began an assessment project. Also included in this assessment were the training and introduction of a new staff member to operations in the Acquisitions Office. To facilitate better communication and increase productivity, the staff members assessed the workflow between the Acquisitions Office and the Cataloging Office. The first steps were to create a Charter, signed and approved by Head Librarian Jeri Vargo; a glossary of terms designed to eliminate possible confusion; and finally a Parking Lot where ideas for future projects could be placed. As a result of this project, the process is more efficient. The time between the first step and the final step in the process decreased, and communication between offices improved.

INTRODUCTION

Wells College is a small liberal arts college located in the village of Aurora in the Finger Lakes region of central New York. It is situated on more than 300 scenic acres overlooking Cayuga Lake. Wells offers a rigorous academic environment with 17 majors and 39 minors, in addition to individualized programs. Formerly a women's college, Wells became coeducational in 2005.

In the fall of 2006 the Library staff, in response to a campus-wide assessment initiative, participated in the New York 3Rs Continuous Assessment and Continuous Improvement statewide series of workshops for libraries. The process improvement project team was composed of three librarians—Frankie Anderson (reference/information literacy/interlibrary loan), Muriel Godbout (serials/systems), and Elsie Torres (access/circulation). Their charge was to identify a process in the Library that needed improvement. The acquisitions manager was new to the position, and the workflow between acquisitions and cataloging needed streamlining. The process to be assessed began with the receipt of materials in the acquisitions office and ended with moving the ready-to-be-shelved materials from the cataloging office to the circulation desk. Once the

process was identified, the cataloging librarian, Julie Kabelac, and the acquisitions manager, Kim Nolan, became an integral part of the process improvement project team.

They began by creating a top-down flowchart, which indicated each progressive step of the workflow as it existed. As they proceeded, they realized that some of the steps in acquisitions varied depending on the particular item, e.g., books, videos, and books that are part of a volume set. At this point, they identified the variant steps by distinguishing them in the flowchart with a diamond rather than rectangular shape. These variant steps were points where decisions had to be made and therefore, points where possible mistakes could result. The objective was to identify, eliminate, or change, if possible, the variant steps.

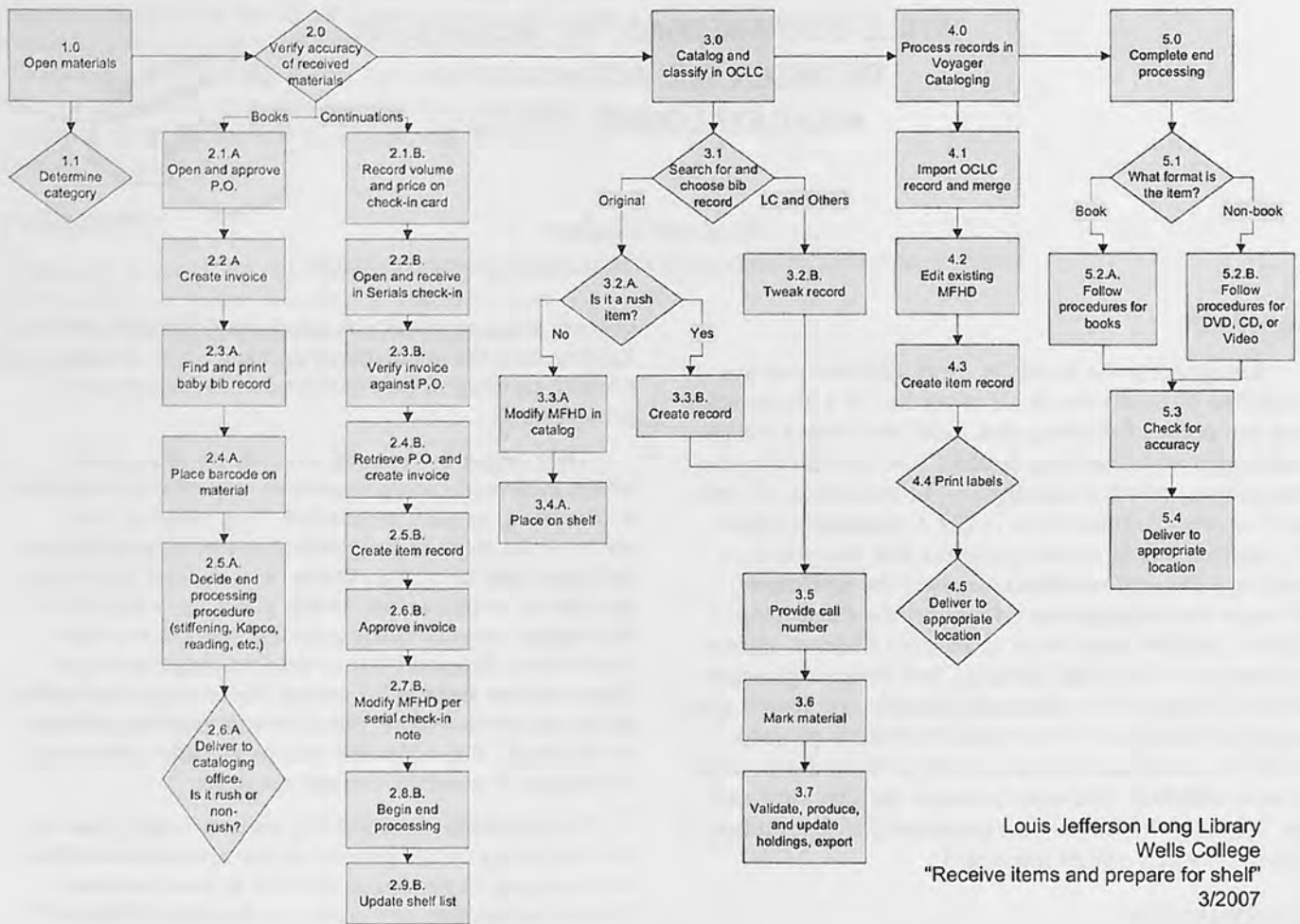
The flowchart enabled the team to realize that in the beginning of the process in the acquisitions office, one category in particular needed to be eliminated. Books that are part of a series are handled differently and these steps are complicated; therefore, it needed to be assessed separately. The team referred to these books as "continuations." Continuations were placed in the Parking Lot for future assessment (Figure 2).¹

As these steps were eliminated, the team realized it needed to add another variant step to the flowchart. This step, which involved additional processing, covered such items as paperback books that needed "stiffening."

METHODOLOGY

In order to avoid an unstructured approach that might contribute to the team's inability to measure success, the team decided to use the tools provided by the Continuous Assessment/Continuous Improvement for Libraries workshop. Some of the tools have been mentioned previously such as the Flowchart, but other tools used were Customer and Supplier Screens, Key Steps Worksheet, and Deployment Flowchart. The team employed measurement tools, including the Process Behavior Chart (Run Chart), Cause & Effect Diagram (Fishbone), Cause Analysis Worksheet, and Pareto Chart. They also used data from system-generated reports.

Figure 1: Flowchart



Louis Jefferson Long Library
 Wells College
 "Receive items and prepare for shelf"
 3/2007

Figure 2: Parking Lot

- Payment process for invoices
- Gifts
- Mystery orders
- How to deal with new continuations
- Problems with continuations (title change, multiple bibs vs. one bib)
- Continuation swaps when new volume, edition, year arrives (current to Ref, rest to stacks)
- Process for returning unordered materials
- Setting Voyager client preferences and settings to SysAdmin
- Receipt of and filing of OCLC card packs
- Keeping of statistics
- Purchase order set-up for copy 2+, replacements, volume 2+ of a multi-volume set

The Customer and Supplier Screens were used to identify steps important to the internal and external customers, as well as suppliers, of the process. By completing the Screen for internal customers, the team found that many points under Flowchart Step 2.0 (for acquisitions) and Flowchart Step 3.2B "Tweak bibliographic record," (for cataloging) were tied together.

The key points in the Screen for external customers indicated that the step "Create item records" was consistent with Flowchart Steps 4.1-4.3 (Figure 5).

The last Screen was for the suppliers, which the team determined to be the U. S. Postal Service, UPS, vendors, Voyager ILS, bookstore, gifts, Government Printing Office, IT Department, and publishers. The step at which supplies were most critical was Flowchart Step 4.0, "Process records in Voyager Cataloging." As team members finished the Key Steps Worksheet, they took notes on steps that they might be able to improve later. They asked a novice to try out the Flowchart and Key Steps Worksheet (see Figure 6).

Figure 3: Internal Customer Screen

Internal Customer Screen: Acquisitions									
W. J. Long Library/Wells College									
Process: Receive items and prepare for shelving									
Internal Customers:									
Library staff									
Library student workers									
How strongly does the Step affect the Internal Customer Need?									
5 = Critical to meeting the internal customer need									
2 = Some impact on meeting the internal customer need									
0 = No impact on meeting the internal customer need									
Process Steps Most Important to Meeting the Needs	Internal Customer Needs								TOTAL
	Materials received in timely manner	Acquisition payment cards up to date	Condition evaluated accurately	Accurate data (cost, P.O., etc.	Cataloging shelflists to update	Physical material that matches paperwork	Material modified per MFHD check-in note	Continuation tem records created in Voyager	
Verify accuracy of received materials (2.0)	5	0	5	0	0	2	0	0	12
Open materials (1.0)	5	0	2	0	0	5	0	0	12
Find existing paperwork in office (2.0)	0	0	0	5	0	5	0	0	10
Gather supplies (Done throughout process)	0	2	0	5	0	0	5	5	17
Complete end processing (5.0)	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	5
Open and approve P.O. (2.1.A)	0	5	0	5	0	0	0	2	12
Verify invoice against P.O. (2.3.B)	0	5	0	5	0	0	0	2	12

Figure 4: Internal Customer Screen

Internal Customer Screen: Cataloging										
W. J. Long Library/Wells College										
Process: Receive items and prepare for shelving										
Internal Customers:										
Library staff										
Library student workers										
How strongly does the Step affect the Internal Customer Need?										
5 = Critical to meeting the internal customer need										
2 = Some impact on meeting the internal customer need										
0 = No impact on meeting the internal customer need										
Process Steps Most Important to Meeting the Needs	Internal Customer Needs									TOTAL
	Materials to work with	Baby bib	Instructions and notes from acquisitions	Print and online records to work with	Manuals (local and other)	Condition evaluation when extracting data	Produce shelf list	Accurate exporting of OCLC bibs	Proper merge	
Provide call number (3.5)	0	0	5	5	5	0	0	0	0	15
Import OCLC record and merge (4.1)	2	0	0	5	5	5	5	0	0	22
Export OCLC bibs (3.7)	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	5	0	10
Create item record (4.3?)	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
Import OCLC record and merge (4.1)	0	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	5	15
Edit existing MFHB (4.2)	0	2	5	5	2	0	0	0	2	16
Create item record (2.5.B and 4.3)	0	0	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	10
Follow-up on instructions and notes (Throughout process)	0	0	5	0	0	0	2	0	0	7
Check for accuracy (5.3)	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	2	7

To see how well the process was performing, the team decided to measure elapsed time in two phases. System-generated data was already available for two of the three measurements in the process. For the third measurement, Flowchart Step 5.0, "Complete end processing," the team would have to gather data manually, knowing that it would require a much more detailed examination. They had to settle for the

available data to get an idea about the process' performance. They created a Process Behavior Chart of the total time from Flowchart Step 1.0 to Step 4.1 and from Flowchart Step 4.3 to 5.4. Based on system-generated reports covering a distinct time frame, they were able to calculate an average processing time of 18.6 days. (Figure 7)

Figure 5: External Customer Screen

<u>External Customer Screen</u>									
W. J. Long Library/Wells College									
Process: Receive Items and Prepare for Shelving									
External Customers:									
Faculty									
Students									
Staff									
Area residents									
Alumnae									
Researchers									
Other libraries									
How strongly does the Step affect the External Customer Need?									
5 = Critical to meeting the external customer need									
2 = Some impact on meeting the external customer need									
0 = No impact on meeting the external customer need									
					External Customer Needs				
					Items ready to circulate				
					Notification as requested				
					System indexing/findability online in OPAC				
					Online accessibility of material				
					TOTAL				
Process Steps Most Important to Meeting the Needs									
Create item record (4.3)					5	0	5	5	15
Complete end processing (5.0)					5	0	0	5	10

By using a Cause-and-Effect (Fishbone) Diagram and a Cause Analysis Worksheet, the team was able to explore the most significant possible causes of processing delays and identified them as interruptions, lack of documentation, scheduling staff and student workers, and lack of communication (Figures 8 and 9).

With this information in hand, they made some changes that reduced the average time to 5.33 days (Figure 10). The changes were simple. The team developed a new schedule of stiffening twice a week rather than once every two weeks. This change eliminated a bottleneck. They also scheduled two hours per day for cataloging. The team decided that it was not necessary to wait until the book truck was full before cataloging. Two simple changes made a significant difference that would not have been easily noticed had it not been for the assessment of the process.

CONCLUSION

The changes were implemented immediately, and the results were favorable to the end goal—there was a measurable productivity improvement. In addition to improved communication between offices, the process and methods for this exercise improved communication with the whole staff. Two added lessons were learned. Even though only certain members of the staff were directly involved in the process, it was essential to include *all* staff. Also, allowing for flexibility due to daily interruptions in the process was crucial.

Placing the Continuations in the Parking Lot identified them as separate future projects.

The entire process was documented. These measures will serve as a baseline for future assessment.

Figure 6: Key Steps Worksheet

Process: Receipt of materials to ready to shelve or access
 Team name: subset of library staff

Date: 11/06
 Date to be rechecked: 1/17/07

Key Step #	Key Step Name	Best Known Way	Tricks of the Trade	Consequences of doing it wrong
1.0	Open materials	Manually. Check playability of media materials and condition of print materials before continuing with receiving.	-All included materials remain together. -Keep label/packing slip/etc. to identify source if no paperwork is included.	-Can't identify source. -Sits on the Problem shelf. -Could damage material if overzealous in opening. -Damaged material is received and processed leading to possibility of not being able to return material.
2.1.A	Open and approve PO	In Voyager Acquisitions, pull up PO by number. Highlight line item and click Details. Place appropriate figures and details into Quick Line Item field. Approve PO.	-Record PO#, price, fund, requester information in same location (highlight line item – Details) when item is ordered.	-Inaccurate information can result in material not being ledgered correctly or delivered to proper requester. -Inaccurate PO# can delay process by forcing operator to search for correct PO.
2.3 A	Find and print baby bib record	While PO is open, highlight appropriate line item and click MARC. Cataloging must be open for this to work. Toggle to Cataloging and record is viewable – print it.	-Transfer any relevant notes from Acq line item detail to baby bib (hold for x, notify x, place in x collection, 14-day, rush for x, Reserve x, replacing copy at x call number, requester name, etc.). -Sometimes it may not be a baby bib, it may be the bib already in database, particularly for replacement copies, multi-volume sets that don't arrive in one installment, additional copies. If this is the case, attach with the existing sl and existing material to new material with a rubber band. -If a multi-volume set, just provide 1 baby bib. Cataloger will decide on one bib or multiple bibs route.	-Material not placed in previously discussed location. -Material not delivered to intended person/area after end processing. -If incorrect baby bib or full bib is sent with material, problems with merge procedure later and time spent investigating.
2.4 A	Place barcode on material	Do not barcode RBR or Archives materials. Books and Videos: barcode placed on front cover or case, upper left. DVDs: barcode placed inside on right side of case, bottom under the disc.	-Do not barcode material that needs Kapco-ing. -Do not place barcode flush with top of book as it could be destroyed. -Generally one barcode per item. If for example a two-volume video set and in	-Inconsistency for staff and student desk workers in knowing where to look for barcode. -Minimally question if material went through process up to the point of delivery to Cataloging, especially if no

Figure 9: Cause Analysis Worksheet							
Potential Cause	Frequency		Severity		Detectability		Score (F*S*D)
	Few 1	Many 10	Low 1	High 10	Hard 1	Easy 10	
Lack of documentation		7		8		8	448
Scheduling		7		7		9	441
Acquisitions paperwork		2		9		9	162
Lack of staff/student training		3		7		5	105
Variation in workflow		10		2		9	180
Variation in work load		4		3		9	108
Lack of communication		4		10		10	400
Interruptions		9		9		9	512

*These categories are extracted from the Methods and Persons categories on the Cause and Effect Diagram; the team felt unable to measure Personality, Stress, Attitude/Morale.

Last, the team was able to use continuous improvement tools in another way. They incorporated a Flowchart, Customer and Supplier Screens, and a Key Steps Worksheet into their library assessment undertaken as part of the campus-wide Strategic Plan, and are pleased with the results.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Muriel K. Godbout is the Associate Library Director at Louis Jefferson Long Library at Wells College. mgodbout@wells.edu.

This article is the result of many hours of continuous assessment by the library staff at Wells College. The hard work was done by Frankie Anderson, Julie Kabelac, Kim Nolan, Elsie Torres and Muriel Godbout.

FOOTNOTES

¹ The Parking Lot is a list of issues and ideas that are important but must be addressed at a later date. Often created on a piece of chart paper visible to the whole group, it allows the group to stick to its agenda without wasting time on tangential issues, while still capturing good ideas and topics to be addressed later.

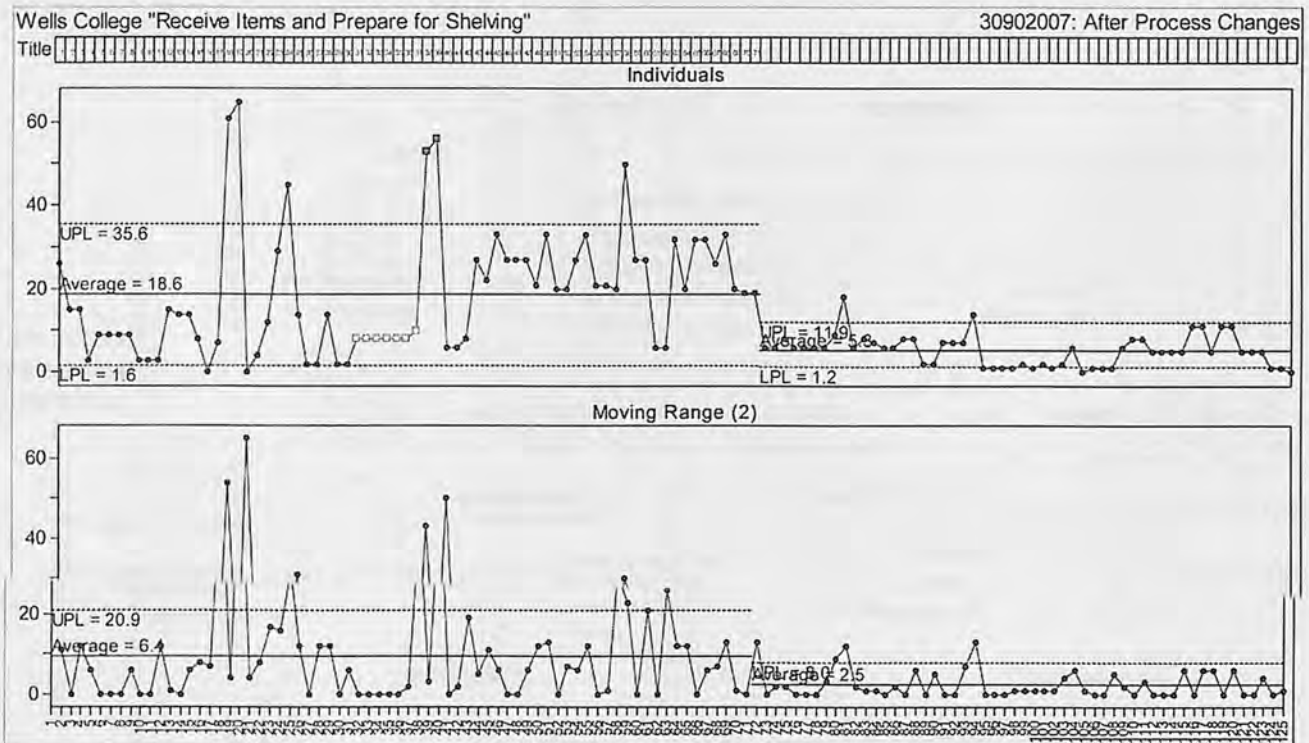


Figure 10: Process behavior chart showing improvement after process changes. Notes the dramatically decrease in the average number of days, from 25.6 to 5.3. The bottom chart also shows a decrease in the amount of variation, from 6.4 to 2.5.

DEFINITIONS

Continuations – [will revisit as a separate process]

Books – books, DVDs, Videos, CDs, etc.; anything leaving the Acquisitions Office for the Cataloging Office and end processing before heading to final shelving location

Baby bib – same as a brief bib; record created by in Acquisitions for PO using ISBN, author, title (not all even apply to all baby bibs) that is later merged with full imported OCLC record

Paperback/soft-cover – as in book

Spine label/call number label – the call number label placed on the spines of materials (excluding Archives and RBR materials)

End Processing – the physical processing of material done in Technical Services area: Bookplate, Wells stamp, Ref sticker, call number label and protector, etc.

MFHD – the mfhd is the holding record in cataloging. It indicates what we hold in our collection and where it is located.

Stiffening – the process of stiffening a soft-cover book.

TOOLS, EQUIPMENT, SUPPLIES (STEP 9)

Linen strips (stiffening)

Stiffening boards

Scissors (in Mailroom, Technical Services, Acquisitions and Cataloging offices)

Box cutter

Statistics sheet for stiffening

Pens, black (particularly in Technical Services)

Sharpened pencils with erasers

Vendacard (stiffening)

Sharpened blade on paper cutter

Clean sink

Clear counter areas to work on (particularly in Technical Services)

Soap for cleaning glue brush

Paper towels

Special glue brush

TROCAIRE COLLEGE/
RACHEL R. SAVARINO LIBRARY:
"PROCESS NEW ITEMS"

*by Judith Schwartz, Mary Miller,
Erna Tominich, & Jane Guda*

"Process new items" was our team's first Continuous Assessment, Continuous Improvement (CACI) project. We intended to improve this process for faster, easier, and more successful training of new staff members.

STANDARDIZING AND IMPROVING OUR PROCESS

We thoroughly assessed the process by means of the various techniques learned in our workshop sessions and standardized it by:

- Creating a Flowchart of the process.
- Completing A-chart Screens to identify key steps to meet needs of external and internal customers and to identify needs from suppliers.
- Detailing instructions in a Key Steps Worksheet, including visuals showing exact placement of stamps, barcodes and labels, and in some cases, additional mapping of sub-processes.
- Deciding a process measure—time elapsed from receipt of materials to shelving on the new materials shelf—and a method for recording this data.

We explored possible causes of slow processing with a Cause-and-Effect (Fishbone) Diagram. We found this to be one of the most effective tools used. The gathered data was displayed in two formats—a Histogram and a Process Behavior Chart.

After we analyzed and recorded the current situation, we decided on steps to streamline the process. The team tried improvements suggested and recorded in the Parking Lot list generated earlier during flow-charting. We eliminated some steps, including stamping, embossing, book jacketing, and creating an acquisitions list, which our new library catalog can do automatically. We refined other steps, such as standardizing font sizes and placement of labels and stamps and barcoding on the outside front cover. We created "dummies" or sample items to show correct placement of bar codes and labels at a glance.

Our processing slip for each item became an abbreviated checklist of instructions. This form also served as our data collection agent by using it to record dates work on the item began and ended.

Discussions and presentations at interim CACI meetings and the regular reports of the entire group by email helped us to sharpen our observation skills. Understanding and contemplation of others' problems and their solutions sometimes offered a way to handle our own issues or simplify our decision-making. We learned to focus only on critical elements. We also heard about tools which others had found effective.

OUTCOMES

Although we knew that our processes improved, working with specific data gave us a visible measure of our success. Our Process Behavior Chart (see Figure 1) provided positive and easily understood feedback to the team and administrators, and can be used for monitoring future progress. Average processing time decreased from 20.4 days to 9.0 days, a 56 percent reduction. The expected variation in processing time was also reduced from 43.5 to 14.4 days.

Our next challenge is to eliminate the need for inspection points. The time spent inspecting versus the consequences of mistakes must be considered and balanced. Our goal is to make it impossible to do the process incorrectly, even without inspections.

LESSONS LEARNED:

As we reflected on our participation in CACI, we realized we had learned a number of valuable lessons:

- Include all possible staff members on the team—Understanding and thinking about processes helped staff take ownership of the process, apply themselves to improvement and feel part of the achievements. Being involved in the process was a priority that got their attention and enlisted their interest and aid.

- Parking Lot lists were among the most useful tools we encountered in our CACI training. This technique helped elicit ideas and suggestions for all library processes.
- Try it all. Some procedures such as A-charts and the Fishbone Cause-and-Effect Diagram, which at first consideration, were thought not to “fit” with our process, became useful tools when actually tried. They also brought up more Parking Lot items, enhancing morale and providing ideas for new improvements.
- Priorities need to be set and clear.
- Use of guidelines must be appropriate for individual staff members. An emphasis on pictures and examples rather than detailed written instructions pleases younger staff members. Eliminate wording as much as possible and make available quick reference tools for instruction and training.
- Training still needs to be complete no matter how few hours an individual staff member works per week.
- Exceptions need separate process masters.
- Equipment condition and working environment are vitally important to morale.
- First achieve consistency of inputs, reduce variability in the process, and then improve the process. If these steps are not done in order, transitions are less smoothly accomplished.
- Recording and presenting data is extremely helpful for clarifying issues and reporting accomplishments to the team and others.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Judy Schwartz is the Library Director at Trocaire College in Buffalo, NY. Among her priorities are improving library processes, and using data for visual presentations to College administration, accreditation teams, and others.

Mary Miller, Erna Tominich, and Janet Guda, Librarians at Trocaire College, are united in their interest in standardizing and recording processes for staff training purposes, improving library communications, and reducing variation in procedures used by all librarians.

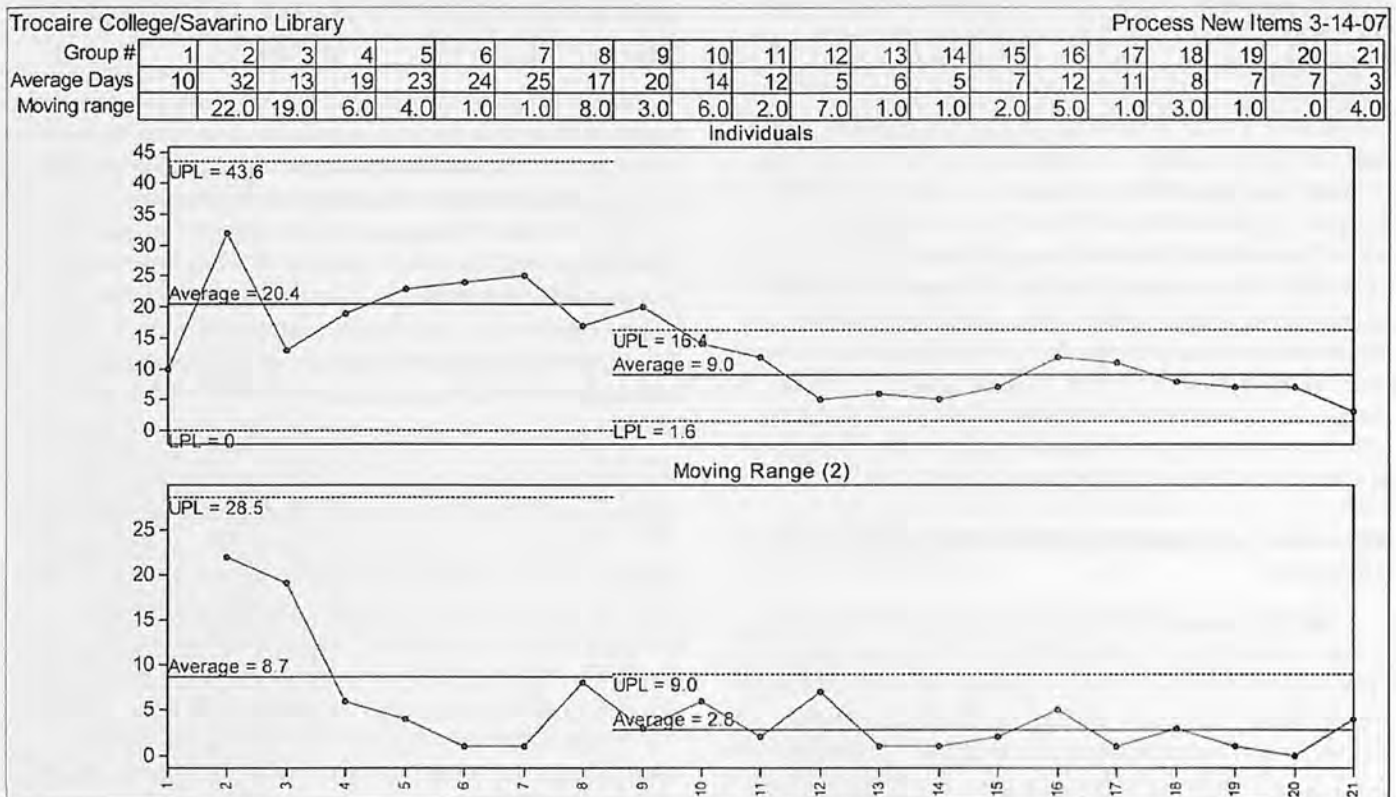
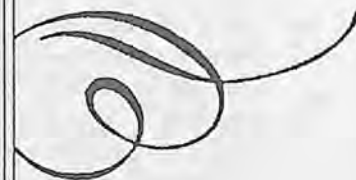


Figure 1: Process behavior chart showing reduction in average days for processing new items as result of rapid cycle improvement. Notice that the average days (top chart) and the average variation (bottom chart) are both reduced.

BEYOND IMAGINING CHANGE: ONE INTERLIBRARY LOAN DEPARTMENT'S UTILIZATION OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT/CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

by Michelle Parry



In 2003, the State University of New York (SUNY) Oswego Penfield Library interlibrary loan department joined a new pilot project, the Information Delivery Service (IDS). The brainchild of Ed Rivenburg, Library Director at SUNY Geneseo, IDS set standards for the initial thirteen member libraries' timely delivery and receipt of materials for patrons. (IDS now has private libraries as well as SUNYs and as of fall 2007 we expect to have 20 members.) While the concept of rapid interlibrary delivery isn't new for libraries in Ohio (OhioLink has been in place for a number of years and one of its stated goals was rapid delivery), it was for academic libraries in New York. As the head of Interlibrary Loan it has been my job to guide our department through the process of meeting the standards and goals of the IDS project. Fortunately for me, within a year of the start of the IDS project, I also had the opportunity to participate in a series of Continuous Assessment Continuous Improvement workshops, sponsored by the NY3Rs (this association includes academic, special, hospital and public libraries as well as other library systems). The coming together of these two events made it possible to implement facets of Continuous Assessment Continuous Improvement (CACI) in my department and to see, firsthand, the positive impact of the concepts within CACI and process mastering in an environment where change is seemingly our first, not middle, name!

REDUCING REDUNDANCY IN INTERLIBRARY LOAN RECORDS

The first instance of applying concepts from CACI occurred when we examined why we were doing established processes and the time involved with steps within those processes. ILLiad, an interlibrary loan software, was implemented at our library in January 2001. This was done very capably by my predecessor. Understandably, there was concern at that time regarding this new unproven software – specifically, how well it would perform. Consequently an insurance policy of sorts was built into the interlibrary loan borrowing check-in/out process. We created a separate record of the transaction in our library's circulation software, i.e.,

we would duplicate the information contained within ILLiad to a fair extent in our Aleph (integrated library management) software. That way each of our patrons' filled interlibrary loan requests also showed up in their regular circulation record as well.

There were, unfortunately, a few problems. The title of the material didn't show up since it wasn't actually owned by us. It took enough time to enter the basic circulation information regarding this interlibrary loan material – we didn't want to also spend time creating temporary records, which would later need to be deleted, for titles we didn't own. Consequently, an overdue notice to the patron from our circulation software would simply say *interlibrary loan item* rather than indicating the title of the material.

Renewing an interlibrary loan request is fairly automated within ILLiad. Aleph, however, isn't a part of ILLiad, so we had to remember to also change due dates in Aleph if a renewal request was approved by the lending library. We remembered to do it... most of the time. However, on those busy days when interruptions are the rule rather than the exception, or when we had a new batch of ILL student workers who were just learning the ropes, or it was just late in the day, mistakes could and did occur.

Finally, when patrons called or stopped by with a question, circulation staff had the unenviable task of informing them, after initial looking, that they couldn't help – the patron would have to go talk to the interlibrary loan staff. Understandably, patrons were less than pleased by the time they got to us regarding their interlibrary loan questions. And even those of us in ILL couldn't always provide a quick, reliable response since we had to check the systems against each other. We had the Aleph electronic record, the ILLiad electronic record, in some cases also the OCLC electronic record, and paper printout on barcoded cards in a filing box.

To be fair, the genesis for the procedure had genuine concern and logic on its side when initially implemented. It was a safety precaution regarding a relatively unknown software's reliability. The problem, of course, was that a year later when I took over, we

continued the duplicate work because it was “how it is done.” And two years later in 2003, my all-new staff (my two new clerks had extensive library knowledge, but not interlibrary loan knowledge) and I were continuing to perform a process without knowing what its component purpose was, and if that particular need still existed regarding the steps included within it. After attending several of the CACI workshops, it seemed reasonable to me to examine what we were doing in interlibrary loan, why we were doing it, and if we were doing it the best way possible. In a phrase, to look at process mastering.

Examining, questioning, studying, and mapping out our processes and procedures turned out to be a very good thing. It truly helps to understand the how’s and why’s of a process. Close examination and measurement can be very enlightening. Once we identified the steps in the existing process, we collected data to measure the impact of this particular process for us. With the collection of numerical data, we were then able to compare the time spent against the “benefit” of this particular procedure nested within the process master of borrowing check-in/out of interlibrary loan materials.

In checking in and out borrowed interlibrary loans, i.e., for each of the books we were able to borrow from other libraries for our patrons, we were creating additional data entry in Aleph. Of course, this also meant duplication (with some important data omitted) of the check-in and check-out procedures already occurring in ILLiad. Doing a simple time study of a sampling of loans over several days regarding the steps netted important data. We discovered it took an average of six additional minutes to complete the steps involved in the duplication portion of the process. Why so much? Because the check-in/out process involved much more than just data entry in Aleph. In addition to the time spent in Aleph, we were also generating paper cards. These contained the loan title information as well as patron name and due dates from ILLiad, printed out so we could use them as a reference point when someone called regarding the generic interlibrary loan entry in Aleph and also as an old-fashioned due-date box. These cards with barcodes had to have the detailed title and patron information printed from ILLiad stapled on them; then the cards had to be filed alphabetically by patron name in a card box. Since we also used the barcodes over again when the material came back, we needed to remove and discard the stapled, printed information so the barcode cards could then be reused. Another required, periodic process was to create additional barcode cards as the need arose. All of this grew more and more burdensome as our interlibrary loan activity increased, and we realized as we examined and measured what we were doing, it included all kinds of room for human error

that was almost inevitable given the number of extra steps it entailed.

REPURPOSING TIME

From July 1, 2004, through May 20, 2005, we had 2,649 net filled loans. We estimated we saved six minutes per loan when we eliminated some steps. Here’s how the potential time savings then broke down:

2,649 multiplied by (an average of) 6 minutes =
15,849 minutes

15,849 minutes divided by 60 minutes = 264.9
hours

264.9 hours divided by 8 hours (normal work day)
= 33.1 days gained

We gained approximately 33 work days over a 10-month period. This is assuming, of course, that our interlibrary loan activity remained static. In actuality, ours has continued to increase.

We then examined in a less formal manner what those extra hours spent on the duplicate “insurance” entry in Aleph gained us:

- Negative PR. Patrons received overdue letters generated in Aleph with no title of the material, just the statement that “your interlibrary loan material” is overdue. Particularly for patrons with multiple interlibrary loans, this was of no help and a real source of annoyance.
- Mistakes made pulling wrong cards. For example, when staff was in a hurry or interrupted and pulled correct patron name card, but one with the wrong title info...or similar title, wrong patron name, etc., it led to confusion – an entry in Aleph indicating an item was returned (or not) that was contradicted by the paper cards manually filed in the card box meant time spent checking to see which was correct. This also meant going to ILLiad to see what that record indicated. And at certain points it was hard to know which system to trust since an initial error, if not noticed, would then be perpetuated in our ILLiad record.

My staff and I agreed that the initial data was so compelling it wasn’t worth continuing the procedure to facilitate separate time studies of the spawned phone calls, patron visits, etc. It became a very simple decision, endorsed by my staff, to dump the duplicate entry procedure from the process master. Based on the quantitative data regarding the interlibrary loan borrowing check-in/out process, it was clear that the time gained could be spent on jobs that currently were not able to be done regularly. With the average of 33 work days picked up within a ten-month period, we could now send out the overdue notices from ILLiad on a

regular basis. By eliminating the annoying generic overdue notices generated from Aleph for books that weren't actually owned by us we picked up additional time we had previously spent on phone calls and patron visits regarding the generic overdue notices.

This is not an example of an unreasonable procedure; there was a reasonable concern which caused its implementation. However, it is a perfect example of a process maintained without questioning (hence the continuous in *Continuous Assessment, Continuous Improvement*) whether the need for certain steps within it still existed. And while this procedure could have been eliminated without data, using "gut feeling" or "just because I don't think it's necessary" as rationale, having data to back up the decision made it painless and obvious not only to those of us immediately involved, but also to the rest of the library players. My library director was able to see solid data supporting the rationale for ditching an outdated procedure within a larger process. She was also delighted that we were able to immediately improve our performance in other areas as a result. Those areas were:

- Getting our overdue notices out from ILLiad in a timely manner. The ILLiad software has an overdue notice feature, which *does* indicate the title of the material since that is imported directly from OCLC into ILLiad when the request is worked. Using the existing features in the interlibrary loan software, we then saved even more time since the prompt, informative overdue notices have resulted in less confusion and more of our interlibrary loan materials being returned in a timely manner by our patrons
- Less time spent on the phone by staff trying to track patrons down, or on the phone or e-mailing lending libraries to explain why material hasn't been returned yet
- More time to work on filling our borrowing and lending requests promptly. Additionally, the requests we fill for the public, school and prison libraries within our library system (through the separate interlibrary loan software they use) are now able to be worked in a regular and timely manner. The time we gained enabled us to provide much better service to our regional library neighbors and the inherently broader community they include. I consider this to be a huge benefit for both practical and philosophical reasons
- More time to brainstorm, try and implement other ways to be more efficient without sacrificing quality and accuracy.

Lest it seems facetious, I cannot stress enough the importance of the last bulleted entry. In *Process Mastering* Wilson and Harsin stress the importance of worker-manager teams:

We have never encountered a situation where workers weren't eager to study and help improve work processes. ... Employees should be allowed to feel that they share ownership of the process masters. If they see that they have some input on their jobs, they will be much more likely to follow the standards. This is a result of intrinsic motivation. If the team members see no reason to standardize a step, it will be difficult to get them to follow the standard (75-76).

I can only echo that sentiment. Involving the people who do the job in the trenches every day is the key to effecting rapid cycle change. It takes advantage of the skills and knowledge capable people bring to the job as well as the results they observe from performing the processes. Finally, it is overt and important recognition and utilization of those skills and abilities. Their participation (if it isn't real, don't bother – that is an insult to your staff) makes my job as a middle manager easier in every possible way. I do not have to try, or pretend, to know how to do everything, nor do I end up spending valuable time selling my staff on changes we make, when they are involved in the process of assessing what we do and determining how to do it better.

Since that has been the practice in our department, even our ever-changing student workers are involved in helping implement rapid cycle change. While student workers and staff do processes based on the best practice process master, i.e., we train people to do tasks in the same way, my clerks have passed on the concept of team input to our student workers by encouraging them to also watch for and suggest ways to "do it better." The people involved then review the process together and if the suggestion is better, i.e., more efficient without sacrificing quality of the end product, we implement and document the change. Everyone is notified of the "new" step(s) or way of doing a particular process. The process master is documented by being changed in our manual. This has led, among many rapid cycle changes, to improvements in our scanning process.

MAKING MORE IMPROVEMENTS

Indeed, this mentality of working effectively and involving staff in decision-making even affects purchases we make. Our copier/scanner was selected because it has an auto-feature that eliminates the dark gray borders that frequently occur when copying or scanning around the edges of a book or journal, and because the capability to name and transfer scanned files to our electronic delivery software (we use Odyssey and Ariel) is vastly superior. This means we do not have to spend additional time cropping pages before sending them out, and we eliminated the time we used to spend on a confusing process to name and

move files to Odyssey and Ariel. This allows us to take additional time to scan carefully, reducing the chances of cutting off print, etc., which, in turn, reduces the number of times we have to rescan and resend to a library borrowing from us.

USING DATA TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS

My staff has come to understand that the world of interlibrary loan, indeed, much of the library and academic world, is increasingly being held accountable by data assessment. We have learned to view data as the tool it is meant to be – a yardstick that measures where we are, which then enables us to focus on problem areas that are preventing us from getting to where we want to be. And although it is an ongoing process, it is incredibly satisfying to see documented improvement. It gives us the encouragement we need to continually assess and improve the work that we do on a daily basis.

An example of this is contained within the data collection, and availability to this data, by the IDS group members. (Go to <http://illiad.lib.geneseo.edu/ids/index.asp> to see information regarding IDS project. Viewing data is restricted to participating members; however, the overview, goals, standards, handouts, and much more is available to anyone accessing the site.) Obviously all of us cared about doing a good job and our gut feeling was that we were doing it as well as it could possibly be done given our particular circumstances. However, Ed Rivenburg was convinced that unemotional data was needed to illuminate where we could improve when delivering interlibrary loan materials to each other. Consequently, his systems administrator wrote a program that enabled data collection from both sides of the transactions of the IDS libraries – the borrowing and lending sides – and put that data together in chart form so we could actually see where we were burning up lots of time. Those were the obvious processes to examine to see why they took so long. Areas of the overall process that were well performed were opportunities to pat ourselves on the back... and to know that we didn't, at least initially, need to spend time examining those.

Penfield Library's data regarding loans requested by SUNY Oswego from SUNY Geneseo between January and December 2004 illustrated that, as borrowers, we at Penfield Library were wasting large blocks of time. The average turnaround time that year was 5.5 hours. For example, our patrons' requests placed late in the evening or the wee hours of the morning, or in some instances when we were not immediately available to work some requests because of other work demands, languished for hours before they were processed.

I had initially been somewhat hesitant to implement OCLC's Direct Request, an automated processing

capability that has to be "switched on." I felt a human should work the request, not an automated system, since it (potentially) involved decision making. Bottom line, I had an emotional investment in doing the job the way it had traditionally been done. The data helped me to reexamine my initial decision as well as my motives. If I truly cared about getting the materials as quickly and accurately as possible for my patron, didn't I owe it to them to more carefully consider and weigh the pluses and minuses of utilizing this potentially time-saving feature? I did. The data helped me dump the gut feeling that the existing process master was fine.

Once I really started investigating Direct Request, I discovered that I could impose constraints that would push particular requests into a queue for a human to process. I could also restrict the system so that it could only look at particular custom holdings (specific library codes selected and grouped as desired by the library staff creating them) based on, among a variety of options, the publication age. Consequently materials recently published could be set up so that Direct Request only funneled those through my IDS and NewBks custom holdings. Specifying those limited custom holdings in Direct Request meant the system would do just what my staff and I would do – only select possible lenders from the IDS group and from libraries that had indicated in their policy directory, or via interlibrary loan listservs, that they were willing to loan new books. Other requests falling outside of the "newly published" situation get channeled through a different set of custom holdings. I discovered I would still have the criteria control that was exercised when humans processed all of the requests. The downside? Direct Request can't yet recognize when our patrons have selected an electronic book record from WorldCat. To be frank, in the past my staff and I have missed that fact as well in a few instances. We are human, after all. However, those quickly come back to us to be corrected. Penfield's instruction librarians also continue to work with patrons in our library instruction classes to educate them as to what is in the record at which they are looking. In the meantime, it is my understanding that OCLC is aware of and working to resolve that issue. Ultimately, the vast majority of Direct Requests are done just as we humans would do them. And the average time our patrons' borrowing request now sits before being processed?

Figure 1 shows the data on monthly average hours to process SUNY Oswego Penfield Library loan requests to SUNY Geneseo between February 2004 and June 2007.¹ Notice that the mean (average) number of hours is 3.7. We knew the process had changed when we saw that, beginning in June 2006, there were seven points below the mean (average) line. (In Figure 1, the seven consecutive points below the average line are indicated by the points with white centers.)

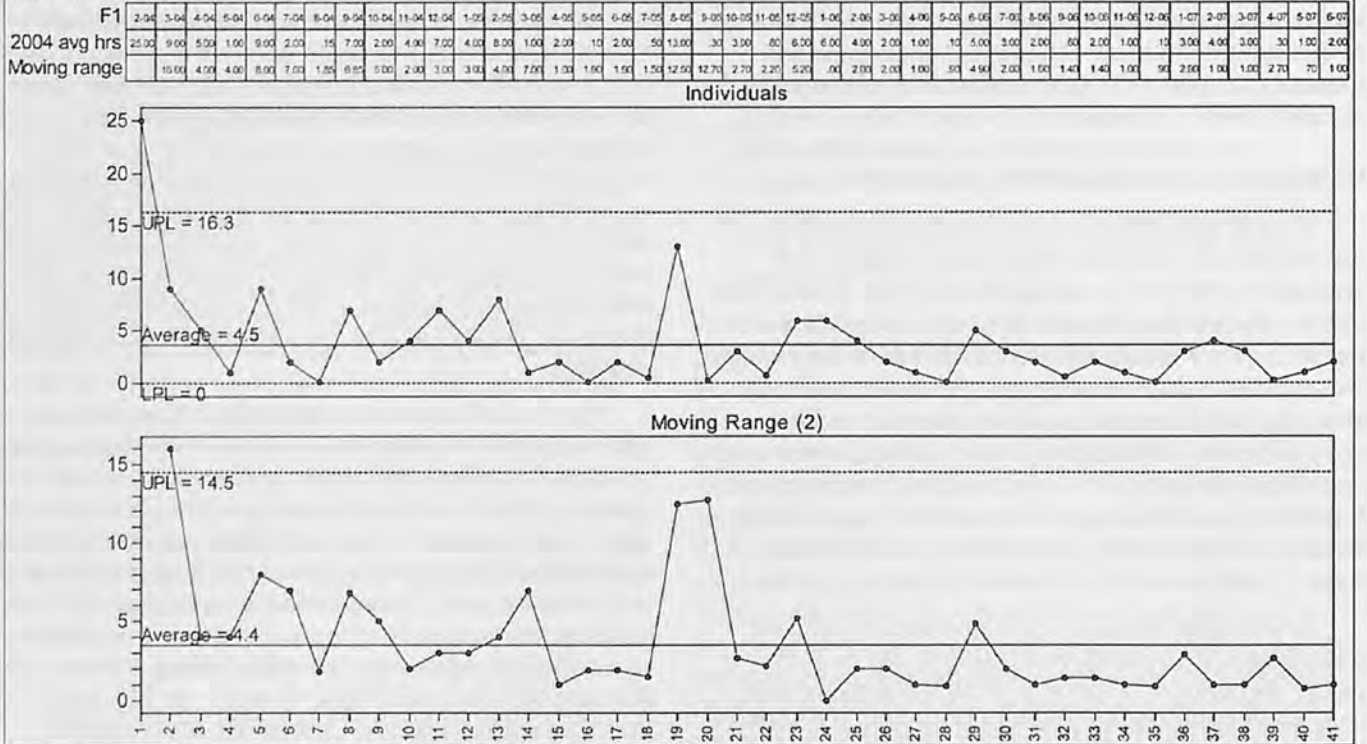


Figure 1: Process behavior chart showing signs of improvement. Note the seven points in a row below the average line near the right side of the top chart, a reliable indicator of a process change.

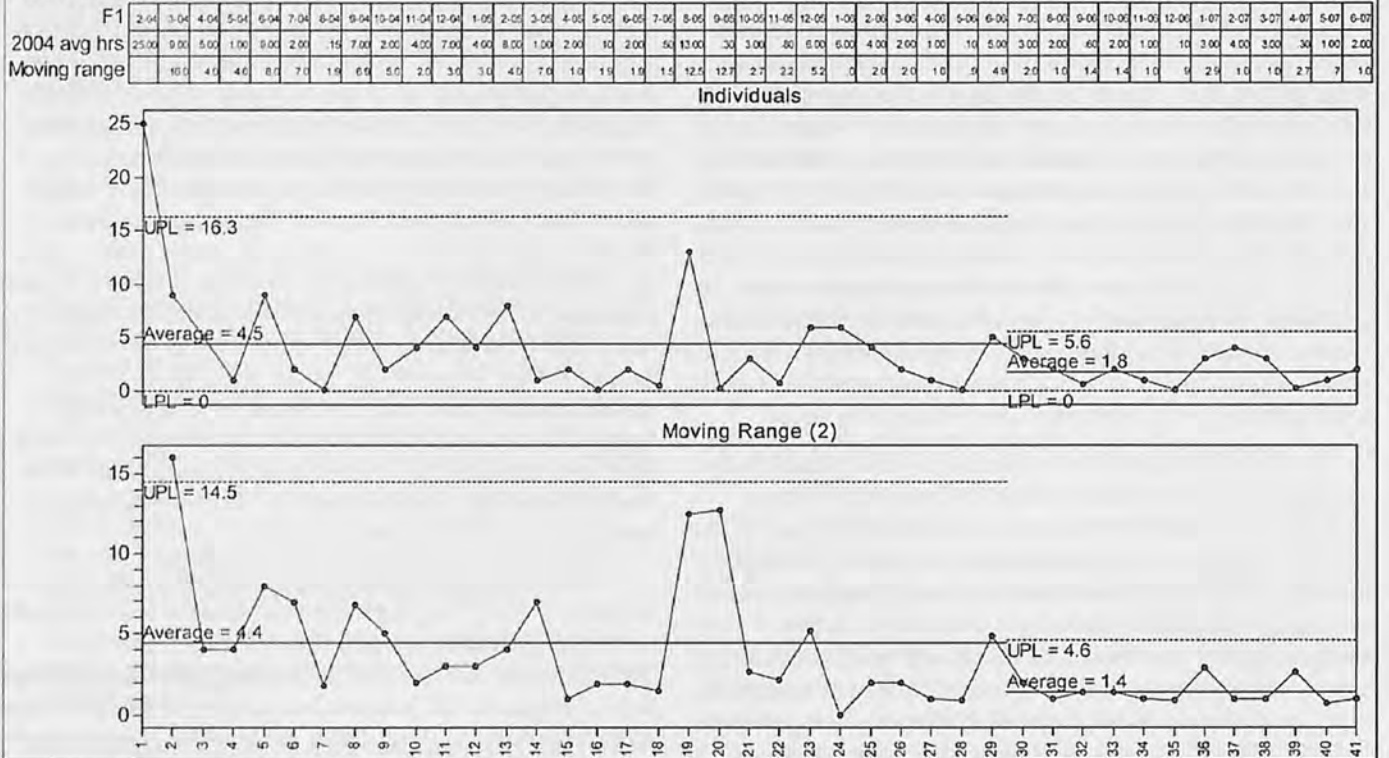


Figure 2: Process behavior chart showing new average and limits figured after rapid cycle improvement. The average number of hours to respond to an ILL request has dropped from 4.5 to 1.8; the average variation has also been reduced from 4.4 to 1.4.

When we recalculated the average in June 2007, we had gone from an average of just under 3.7 hours of lag time regarding our (SUNY Oswego's) initial processing of the loan requests (February 2004-June 2006) to an average of 1.8 hours between June 2006-June 2007. (Figure 2 shows the data, now with a new average computed.) The variation (shown in the Moving Range chart at the bottom of the charts, was also dramatically reduced, showing that our system is more predictable.

The changes in our processes mean that our patrons get faster delivery of materials, and I get to work on the really interesting requests rather than the more routine but equally important titles that my patrons have requested. And my staff and I have more time to spend on the problem and unique title requests that a system cannot or should not process...as well as on brainstorming on other ways to improve our service without sacrificing quality. All of this has also enabled us to keep up with our growing interlibrary loan activity.

We also have the ability to look at data regarding individual, rather than averaged transactions, so we know when we've got an anomaly and when we may have a process master issue. Since this data is collected only on and between the IDS libraries transactions, we also use the OCLC ILL data available on a monthly basis to examine what's going on with our dealings with libraries outside of this group. (See the "dashboard" for the system in Figure 3).

You may have noticed in the charts that the delivery period by the courier system eats up the largest chunk of time on loans. Our regional OCLC provider, Nylink, has been able to use the data collected through the IDS project in discussions with the courier service. The data has documented that the vendor has not delivered within the time frames promised in the contract they signed. Being able to go to the vendor with hard (quantitative) data rather than anecdotal incidents has given Nylink leverage points that cannot be ignored and would not otherwise exist. The data doesn't have an agenda, nor is it emotional, biased, or contrived. Independent, blind delivery tests have also been done to corroborate what the data in the collection system indicated. The vendor has responded and has, as a result of the data, worked to identify their problem locations and processes. They are now working on specific problem areas because the data collection enabled measurement of their performance as well that of the IDS participants. Consequently, even the area that is "outside of our control" has, in effect, fallen marginally under Nylink's control since the data cannot be ignored by the vendor. (*A good example of "working upstream," giving feedback to a supplier so it can improve its own processes.*)

CONCLUSION

Process mastering has enabled those of us in Penfield Library's interlibrary loan department to do just that – master the work we do on a daily basis. It has helped us maximize our skills and knowledge since it requires close examination of what is done, how it is done, and why it is done. It has helped us overcome the feeling that data was just a report card on whether or not we were "good" workers and, instead, enabled us to simply view it as an indicator of where we needed to focus our attention. Inclusion of staff in this process enables both my staff and me, as middle manager, to perform better. Staff know why they're doing what they're doing, and they know they will be involved in the innovative process of continually working to improve our performance and service to our patrons. There is pride of ownership on both our parts.

However, upper management plays a critical role in this as well. We would not have been successful if my library director had simply told us to get the job done without supporting us with the means to accomplish that task. Although she did not attend the CACI training, she supported the attendance of as many librarians as wished to attend (four of us went and we currently represent three different areas of the library). In my sphere, she has been supportive of material and staffing needs for interlibrary loan, but requires accountability. My staff and I now joke that change is the only constant in our world, but we have become more comfortable with that fact and that challenge. We have learned to view data as a tool rather than a threat, again in large part because our library director has also viewed it in this manner, supporting us in ways that have facilitated continuous assessment and continuous improvement.

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Wilson, R.W. & Harsin, P. 1998. *Process Mastering: How to Establish and Document the Best Known Way to do a Job*. New York: Quality Resources.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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FOOTNOTES

¹ Using the monthly average allowed us to combine all the individual requests for an entire month to get a better picture of average activity.

Figure 3: IDS dashboard offers a number of options for viewing data.

Analysis of IDS Request Process

Step 1:

Choose your search criteria

Request Type:	Loan	Exclude		
Beginning Date	01/01/2006	January	1	2006
End Date	01/01/2007	January	1	2007
Borrowing Library	Geneseo			
Lending Library	Oswego			

Step 2:

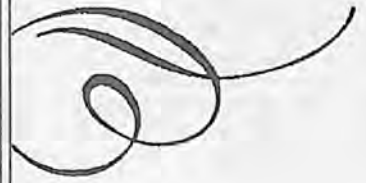
Select the appropriate chart image...

Use the flowchart to navigate through an analysis of the IDS request process which you chose in Step 1. Click on a chart image to search and retrieve particular information from that chart. [Click here for help](#) in understanding what information will be retrieved from each chart.

```
graph TD; A[Average Transaction Times] --> B[Transaction Analysis]; A --> C[Transaction Reports]; A --> D[Tracking History]; A --> E[Notes Field]; B <--> C; C <--> D; D <--> E; E <--> B;
```

SUSTAINING LIBRARY-WIDE IMPROVEMENT

by Sally Stegner



In the spring of 2002 three members of the library's management team, along with the Director, agreed to commit a day per month for eight months to learning the methodology of Continuous Improvement. The impetus stemmed from a desire to develop a unified organization delivering improved customer service and efficiency. The catalyst was declining circulation, program attendance, and, with the exception of computer and Internet access, overall library use. During the first session it became clear that to attain the level of improvement desired, the commitment would need to be far greater than eight months and would require the development of a shared vision with full participation and commitment from all levels of staff and the Board.

Following each of the eight monthly workshops the four of us met to work on the "homework assignment" from class. A fifth manager, who was unable to attend the classes, met with us and learned the philosophy and the tools as we worked our way through applying what we had learned. Incorporating someone who had not been to the classes helped our long term effort to sustain improvement because it forced us to the "Can you teach it?" level of knowledge.

It also served our efforts well to have the manager of every department participating in our Continuous Improvement Initiative (CII). For two years, monthly meetings were held specifically to work on progressing through the CII continuum (See figure 1). Attaining level 4 of the Constancy of Purpose Continuum was a pressing goal for the team. Continuums are tools used to benchmark progress through self-assessment. Each of the five levels comprising the continuum represents significant progress along the route to complete attainment of the highest level of progress. A continuum is also a useful tool in targeting "next steps" for improvement.

With the Mission, Vision, and Values (MVV) so critical to the CII concept, and with the MVV being the prerogative of the Board, the real work could not begin without Board buy-in. Six of seven board members participated in a day long retreat to develop the

MVV. The fact that three board members had attended an ILF pre-conference on CII meant that they were familiar with the background, goals, and premises of the initiative.

Knowing that the board had given a day of their personal time impressed upon staff that the organization was serious about the initiative and that it was not something that would be fleetingly popular and then pass.

Incorporating other staff members began immediately following each monthly class through the introduction of some of the simpler CII tools. Our first library-wide exercise, identifying and ranking time wasters, was met with wary participation. In the CII way, we were careful to continually emphasize that assigning blame was not the point, but rather identifying processes for improvement was the goal. The importance of measurement, "How do we know?" was repeatedly emphasized as well.

One of the first teams formed was in the Circulation Department. Its charge was to devise a fair and efficient means of sharing the shelving duties so that materials were shelved promptly with the work load evenly distributed among those on duty. The team developed explicit written guidelines for the order of loading the shelving cart and for rotating the shelving duties. Having these changes generated and endorsed by the staff, rather than the department head, created buy-in and helped to circumvent the natural resistance to change.

Additional teams were chartered to review, flow-chart, and revise the technical services processes with the goal being to reduce the length of time between unpacking of newly arrived materials to shelf readiness. Tech Services processes readily lent themselves to measurement, and, after rapid cycle improvements and fine tuning, the team members were able to reveal at staff meetings that the interim between arrival and availability to patrons had been dramatically reduced. Even more effective in achieving staff buy-in were patron comments regarding the increased number of new materials available and patron satisfaction that

Figure 1: Constancy of Purpose Continuum

ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal understanding of mission, vision, values and priority needs of the library by board and director. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning to work on mission, vision, values in response to external requirements The library director and board are involved. A few key staff know about beginning efforts to develop mission, vision, and values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written mission, vision, and values in place: Used by upper management levels in the library Evidence of implementation in some departments Many staff know mission, vision, and values. Reviewed annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written mission, vision, and values in place: Used in every department. Most staff aware. Reviewed at least quarterly. Some community awareness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All efforts by individuals and departments are aligned with mission, vision, and values. Everyone understands how his/ her role contributes to reaching library vision. Permeates daily operations, with formal monthly review. Community is aware and supportive.

books they “hadn’t even seen at Kroger’s yet” were available at their library. Collected data continues to be a source of information for identifying processes for improvement in tech services and for measuring effectiveness of changes. Using this data we were recently pleased to confirm that the average item with holds takes only 1.1 days from unpacking to the holds shelf, a dramatic improvement for a small department whose members also assist with reference, genealogy, and circulation desk duties.

Each department had developed its own Mission, Vision, and Values and soon more teams formed within departments. Previously reluctant staff members began to realize results of the initiative and ceased to resist changes in processes. An important milestone was the realization among staff members that an individual could not simply change a step in a process without team review and consensus and without data. “How will we know it’s the better way?” and “Can everyone live with it?” have become routine questions.

From the beginning of our CII journey, time seemed to be our biggest obstacle. Initially it seemed overwhelming to consider taking the time to attend a meeting (someone also had to make the agenda and write the minutes), to write up the processes, to record and compare data, in addition to all of the daily tasks involved with “getting the wash out.” Over the first two years however, we were able to confirm that the time involved had been well spent—ultimately saving time and omitting wasteful steps with more effective results. Surveys of library customers also indicated increasingly greater levels of satisfaction among users.

After the first three years, the special CII meetings among the managers were abandoned. A turning point had been reached when CII became, not extra work but a part of the way we do the work. The premises and tools were being used throughout the various teams and departments.

With low staff turnover we were able to introduce new staff members to the tools and concepts and to incorporate them into teams fairly easily. Five years through the CII journey, however, an expanded library, increased circulation and library use, along with natural staff turnover through retirements and life changes, have resulted in a sudden influx of new staff members totally unfamiliar with CII.

Simultaneously training a number of new staff members in CII when there is so much for them to learn about the duties and responsibilities of their individual jobs and about the library in general has become an agenda item at recent managers’ meetings. The solution, of course, is to form a team to develop a process master for CII training.

Updating the process masters to accurately reflect ongoing changes is another instance of continuing challenges. New equipment, new software, and expanded facility are all occasions for reexamining and updating process masters. These occasions also represent opportunities to introduce new staffers to process master development through team work. Involving the very newest staffers in process master testing is an excellent means of introducing them to the CII way and making them feel an integral part of the organization.

Managers need to be vigilant against the temptation to make a decision rather than taking the time to form a team and to go through the steps of analyzing data, flowcharting, and developing consensus. Continuing to include and to listen to the people who are doing the frontline work is as critical to sustaining Continuous Improvement as is the acceptance that CII will never be completed.

Finding ways to make the day and the work fun is key to sustaining CII as well. What constitutes “fun” varies among individuals and at LPL it needed a core group of people concertedly planning “fun” to be

incorporated on a regular basis. Fun needed to go beyond the activities of the Children's department and beyond staff dinners on special occasions. Creating fun is work. Weekly themes, costumes, songs, book cart drill teams, joke of the day, friendly competitions, surprises for patrons and staff, after-work outings, and food on any occasion all can contribute to a festive ambiance. Real fun develops naturally and daily only when staff, volunteers and customers feel themselves to be valued members of the team, whose concerns and suggestions are seriously considered. When that occurs Continuous Improvement sustains itself.

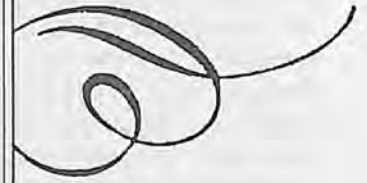
Circulation of materials in our library district increased by 40 percent from 2002 to 2006. The first half of 2007 indicates the increase is continuing. Complaints about customer service are virtually non-existent. There is a steady flow of applicants for employment and for volunteer service. These results are highly motivating and demonstrate to the board, managers, and front level staff that Continuous Improvement has been worth our investment of time and effort.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sally Stegner, Director of the Lawrenceburg Public Library District, has been employed with LPLD since 1990 and became Director in 2000. She has also held positions as a children's librarian, and as a reference librarian at several other libraries. She earned her MLS at George Peabody College, which is now part of Vanderbilt University. Stegner is the current president of the Small and Medium Size Libraries Division of the Indiana Library Federation.

THE BEST KNOWN WAY

by Mary Kempfer



In 2002 the Michigan City Public Library Director Don Glossinger combined the Audio-Visual and Circulation Departments to more effectively utilize library space and staff. This resulted in a Circulation staff of 12, each of whom felt he/she knew the best way to do things. During this confusion, Assistant Director Andy Smith learned of the "Breakthrough Circulation" seminar, conducted by Sara Laughlin, Denise Shockley, and Ray Wilson, and recommended it to the circulation supervisor.

Circulation Supervisor Sarah Redden thought it was a great idea and chose four staff members to attend. Mary Kempfer, Pat Kemiell, Barb Miller, and Donna Long arrived at the workshop hoping for some good ideas for promoting unity within the department.

What we learned was truly a "Breakthrough!" Seeing our enthusiasm, Sarah gave us her total support.

Which circulation process to "master" was our first quandary. A list of fifty processes were compiled and then voted on by the entire department to determine the top three problem areas. Sarah then chose the one she thought needed the most work. The next question was WHEN we could work on the process. The work schedule was rearranged to allow us to meet on Thursday mornings from 8 to 10. Sarah often attended the first hour to offer comments or answer questions on library policy.

OUR FIRST PROCESS MASTER: ISSUE A LIBRARY CARD

Mary, Barb, Pat, and Donna worked on the first process to gain sufficient skill to teach our fellow staff members. Our starting process was one we thought would be easy: "Issuing a Library Card." (See the Key Steps in Figure 1). We soon learned our "easy" process should actually be four processes for the four types of library cards: Resident, Reciprocal, PLAC, and Out-Of-State.

After this problematic start, we developed our first process which we named "Issuing a Resident Library Card." We were proud of it and enthusiastically presented it to the entire Circulation Staff. After the

presentation, some staff members were confused and critical of the program. We then invited the skeptics to participate in the next process team for "Issuing a Reciprocal Library Card." As the project took shape, our co-workers willingly committed to working as a team for a more efficient department.

SHELVING AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS

One of the areas of concern was shelving Audio-Visual materials. Every time an area was shelf-read, large numbers of out-of-place items were found. Of course, we blamed the patrons! As different interpretations of shelving came to light, we eventually realized that perhaps we were the problem. For example, do you shelve MR as "mister" or as "Mr.?" What do you do with numbers? Where do hyphenated letters and numbers (K-9) go? We needed HELP! (See the flowchart in Figure 2.)

Original workshop staff member, Pat Kemiell, has recently moved to the Youth Services Department. Shortly after starting there, she was instrumental in implementing the "Shelving Process" techniques for shelving their AV materials. Patrons can now browse Adult, Young Adult, and Juvenile material and find uniformity of shelving methods.

SHELVING BOOKS

For expert advice we asked the Stack Maintenance Supervisor, Marilyn Eddy, to join our process team. She brought with her 25 years of library experience, nine of them in shelving, and the ALA Shelving Rules book. (See the team in Figure 3.)

After participating in the workshop, Marilyn said, "I was so impressed with the way they were conducted, I decided to meet with the shelvees. We had meetings before, but I liked the organization and staff participation shown at Circulations' sessions. As I attended several meetings, I started thinking how this type of presentation could benefit the shelvees. We held several "Process Master" meetings, and I was curious to see what the results would be. To verify the shelvees were doing the job correctly, I recorded a title or Dewey number from each shelving area on the shelving

Figure 1: Key Steps Worksheet: Issue a Michigan City Resident Library Card

Step	Key Step Name	Best Known Way	Tricks of the Trade	Consequences
1	Request picture ID	Ask person for picture ID. Acceptable IDs: 1. Drivers license 2. School 3. Employment 4. Military 5. State 6. Passport	Ask that ID be removed from wallet.	Person will not receive library card.
2	Verify home address	Ask if address on ID is current. Acceptable proof of home address: 1. Utility bill 2. Pay stub. 3. Bank book 4. Check book 5. Car registration 6. Rent/lease receipt 7. Current tax receipt (for out-of-state property owners) 8. Voter registration card	ID/document verification must have name and address	Mail is returned to library. Wrong person gets library card.
3	Sign up children under 18 years old	Ask adults if they are: 1. Parent 2. Step-parent 3. Legal guardian *Exception: Grandparent (Stress grandparent will be held financially responsible for all materials and fines on child's card when signing up a child.)	Adult must have a library card in good standing: 1. Fines under \$5. 2. Overdues: Nothing more than 2 weeks.	Library held legally and financially responsible.

carts. I then did a visual search to see where the book was shelved and if the area had been straightened. I kept a log of mis-shelved books (Figure 4).

I started to notice a drop in errors and was impressed with the difference between the "before average (mean) of nearly 16 and the new average (mean) of 2.4 errors (Figure 5).

Accurate shelving is a must. If a book is out-of-place, it's lost! I'm glad I was given the opportunity to be a part of Circs' meetings. Learning can come when you least expect it!"

CONCLUSION

Using the idea of uniformity to guide us, we have standardized many processes, ensuring that every staff member has a solid understanding and acceptance of each process. We hope to eventually have a complete

Department Process Manual that any new employee can pick up, read, and successfully apply. It is nice to use our process meetings as a way to acclimate new staff members in the way a process is thought out and formulated, as well as providing them the environment to find their voice within a team dynamic. It's been five years since we started the program, and we are still doing new processes or revising old ones as needed. The techniques learned through "Continuous Improvement" have followed us into our daily lives. We don't fill out "A Charts" or "Flowcharts," but in our minds we're still doing the process. We think about our "Internal and External Customers" and the "Best Known Way" to do a task, and have shared this knowledge with family and friends. Donna Long, another original workshop member, has since moved out of state and is seeking employment with her local libraries. Who knows? The Process Master program may find another home!

Figure 2

Michigan City Public Library
Shelve Audio-visual Materials
January 2004

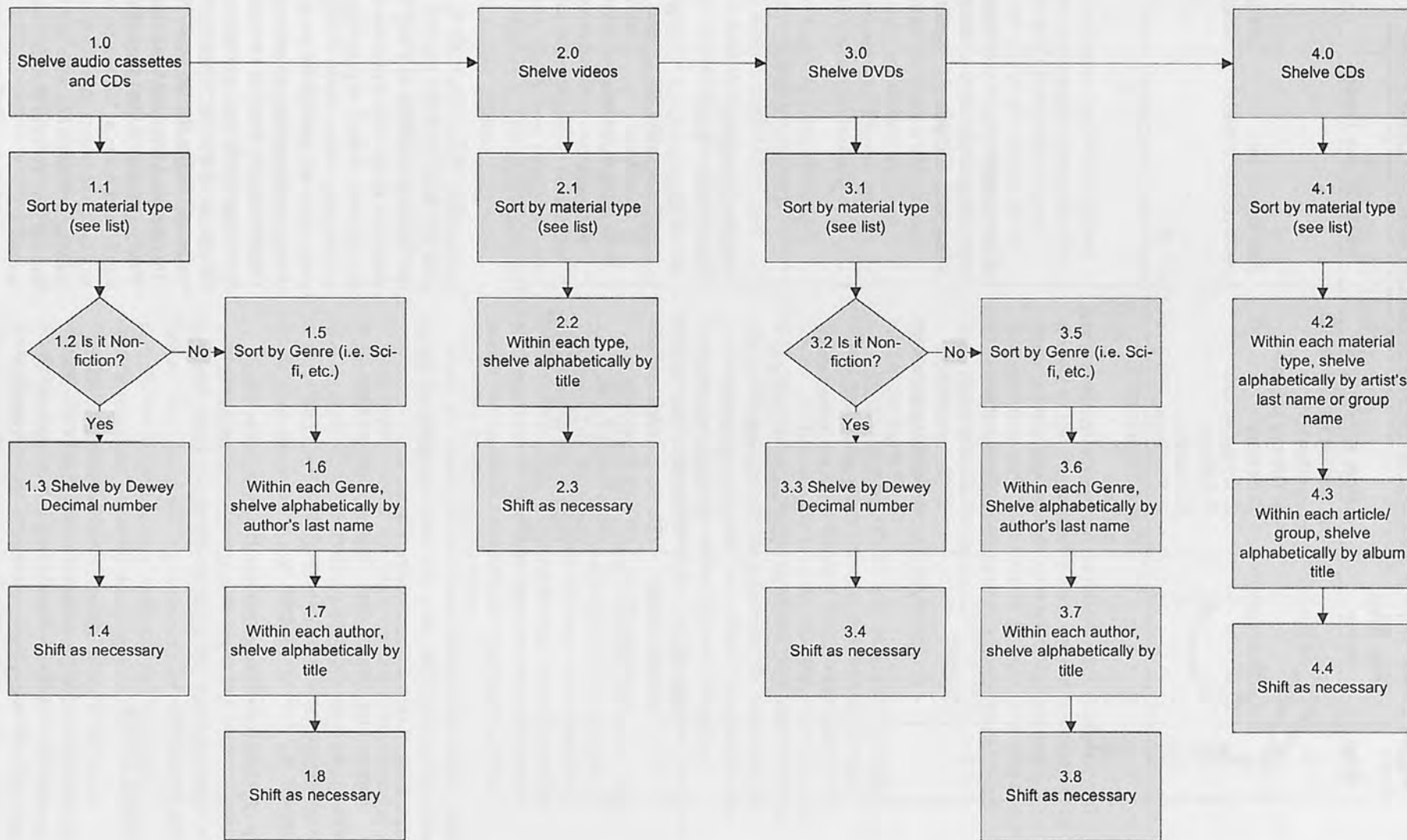




Figure 2: Michigan City's process improvement team, left to right are: Marilyn Eddy, Mary Kempfer, Sarah Redden, Patricia Kemiell, and Barbara Miller.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mary Kempfer has been on the staff of the Michigan City Public Library for 10 years. She has also participated in "Breakthrough! Circulation" presentations at the 2005 ILF Conference in Indianapolis and the 2006 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago.

Figure 4: Shelf Reading Log				
Area Read		Date	Out of Order	Comments
Begin	End			
600 F428	613.5 B676c	5/5	12	
613.5 B676n 2001	615.822 H192	5/8	16	Fewer than I expected
615.822 W933r 2003	616.8589 H158d	5/9	9	
616.8589 P759o	618.6 R665n	5/13	17	Most in pregnancy books
618.76 S614d 2004	629.22234 M547p	5/20	25	
FICTION Abani, Chris	FICTION Austen, Jane	5/22	15	
629.223 G9593	635 Y39	5/27	27	Car books. One was three whole shelves out of place
635.029 S253h	636.6865 K83e	5/31	12	I lost count.
636.6865 L95c	641 W217g	6/1	16	Wasn't too bad til I got to fish/aquariums. Found two different books with same call number
641.013 B63a	641.5 S088	6/6	0	Once again, I overshot my section! Sorry!
FICTION Austenleigh, Joan	FICTION Bellows, Nathaniel	6/6	3	
FICTION Benaissa, Slimane	FICTION Bull, Bartle	6/12	1	
FICTION Bunckley, Anita R.	FICTION Cochran, Molly	6/19	3	
FICTION Codrescu, Andrei	FICTION Davis, Amanda	6/20	5	

Michigan City Public Library													Shelve Books	
Date	5/5/2007	5/8/2007	5/9/2007	5/13/2007	5/20/2007	5/22/2007	5/27/2007	5/31/2007	6/1/2007	6/6/2007	6/6/2007	6/12/2007	6/19/2007	6/20/2007
Out of Order	12	16	9	17	25	15	27	12	16	0	3	1	3	5
Moving range		4.00	7.00	8.00	8.00	10.00	12.00	15.00	4.00	16.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00

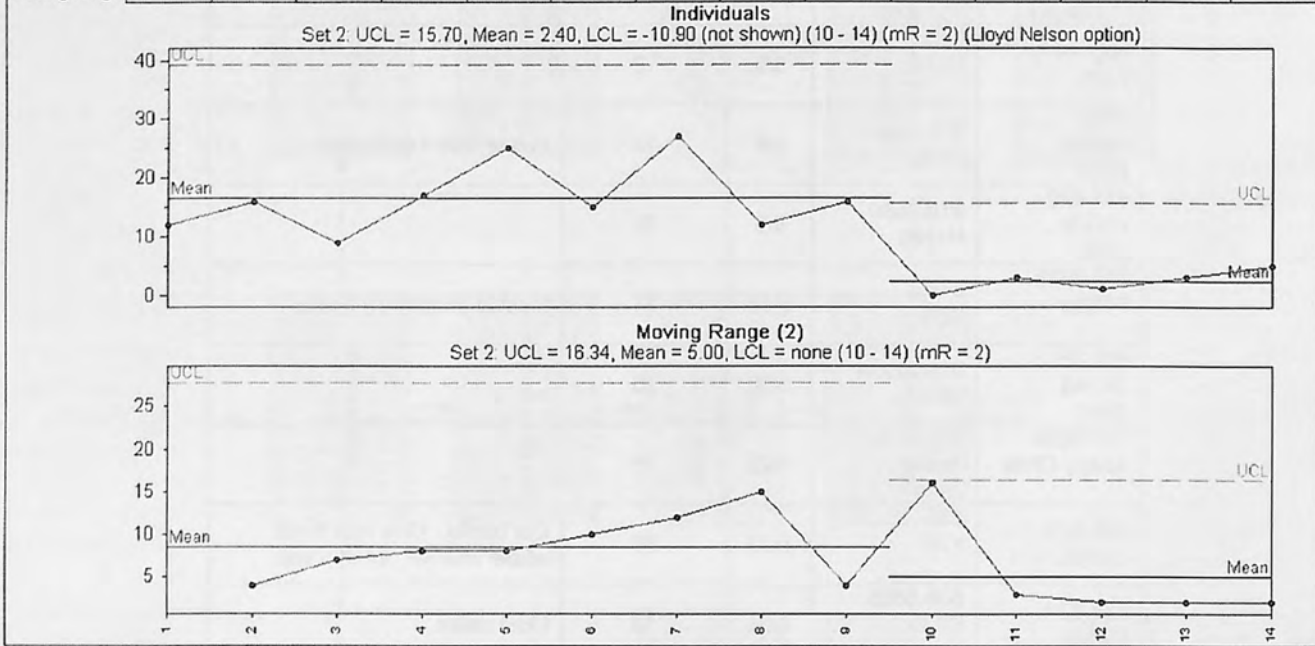
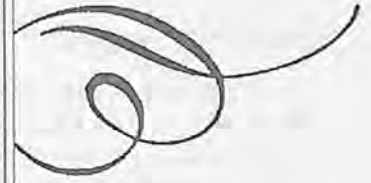


Figure 5: Process behavior chart, showing 'before' and 'after' means and upper process units.

FITS AND STARTS: SUNY COBLESKILL'S CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT JOURNEY

by April Davies & Nancy Van Deusen



SOME BACKGROUND

The Van Wagenen Library is a small academic library serving a student population of approximately 2,400 FTE at the State University of New York at Cobleskill. In 2004, two of our professional staff members committed to the eight-month Continuous Assessment-Continuous Improvement (CACI) workshop series; total staff at the time included five professionals and five clerical staff plus part-time and student workers.

DURING THE SERIES

As part of our "homework," we held four full-staff meetings plus bi-weekly librarians' meetings at which we tried to bring everyone into the CACI mindset. The entire staff participated in revising our Mission and creating Vision and Values statements. The "Constancy of Purpose" document that resulted was something everyone seemed truly happy with. More importantly, the process we went through opened up communication and allowed us all to express both positive and negative things about the Library and how we all work together. Creating the Values statements in particular, helped us figure out what was really important to all of us.

While this was going on, we also worked on system maps for several areas, implemented some qualitative measures in Reference and Technical Services, chartered a Technical Services team to examine processes in that area and create process masters for one or more of them, and started using comment cards to elicit user feedback.

In Reference, we began recording positive and negative user comments in the areas of resources, services, and facilities. Shortly after beginning this effort, we decided to add a head count of users on the main floor at various times of day. These measures have allowed us to validate ideas that had previously been only anecdotal. Did we have to refer students to Interlibrary Loan for classic items we really ought to have? Is it cold in the Library in the morning? Does network performance drop in the afternoon? How

many people are using the Library after 9:00pm? Being able to answer these questions in a verifiable manner has given us evidence to take to campus maintenance and computing departments when asking for improvements, has helped us identify and fill some gaps in our collection, and has given us useful ammunition when pushing for staffing and hours changes.

In Tech Services, we began tracking the number of enhancements made and errors fixed in catalog records. Again, this has helped us to quantify previously anecdotal information. It has also helped us to demonstrate some of the "value added" activities that are a routine part of the cataloging process. The whole notion of gathering evidence rather than proof has significantly changed our outlook on data collections and the value of even small pieces of data.

The process mastering team in Technical Services studied the process of getting books from receipt to shelf. This was a very thorough examination of one of the key processes for the department and the Library in general. In the end, we had very clear procedures in place that any staff member with a minimum of training could follow and complete the necessary tasks correctly. This proved very useful when cataloging operations switched from using OCLC's CatME software to their new Connexion platform. Everyone in the department had a solid understanding of what we were already doing with the old system, and this made it very easy for us to figure out and appropriately document new and changed processes.

Comment cards were introduced in 2004 along with a bulletin board devoted to sharing our responses to users' questions and problems—we call it "The Feedback Loop." Among other things, we got questions about exactly where tuition money is spent, complaints about our heating/cooling system, and suggestions to buy more resources on topics like saltmarsh invertebrates and maple syrup production. We especially got requests for longer hours, particularly for the lower level, which is home to the Center for Academic Support and Excellence (CASE), DisAbility Support Services, and the Writing Center, but not much "library" except for open access computers. At the time, the

lower level closed at 8 p.m. while the rest of the building closed at 10 p.m. Users were understandably confused and unhappy—more about this situation later.

SINCE THE SERIES

At the end of the workshop series and the end of that initial push, we had several things we hoped to accomplish as we moved forward. We wanted to create complete system maps for all departments, do process masters for managing reserves and other circulation activities, and develop a measurement plan. As of July 2007, none of those things have been done. The efforts begun during class have continued and sometimes grown, but moving CACI beyond those areas has stalled. This is due to a number of factors, most of which were unavoidable. For example, we replaced two professional staff members in Fall 2004 and then promptly spent the next six months preparing for and migrating to the Aleph 500 library management system.

Despite the problems we've encountered, we continue to benefit from our CACI training and to believe that we will eventually expand our efforts. The comment cards/requests for longer hours issue mentioned above is a prime example of why. Our users wanted longer hours and so did the Library. This was especially important as we had moved the entire juvenile collection to the lower level in October 2005 and we needed to integrate the academic support activities housed on this floor into the rest of the Library. Since no extra money was available at the time, as a compromise, we started closing the main part of the Library one hour earlier and the lower level one hour later, meaning both closed at 9 p.m. We also started keeping the Library Café (with its network ports and wireless access) open until midnight. We knew it wouldn't be popular but it was the best we could do. To get specific feedback, we added a specialized comment card along with a second card deposit box in the Café. We asked, "What do you think of the change in the Library's hours?" and people told us! We explained the reasoning behind the change and told users that if it mattered that much to them they should tell people outside of the Library as well—like deans and other administrators. Well, they did. Student and faculty complaints via our comment cards and other means provided the evidence needed to convince the administration to give us the funds needed to keep the whole Library open until 10 p.m. and to keep the Café open until midnight all week long. The reduced hours lasted only one semester, but the improving of public support helped further our move toward an Information Commons environment.

In January 2006, CASE, DisAbility Support Services, the Writing Center, and Instructional Technology Support became part of the Library/Information Com-

mons, reporting to the library director. During the academic semester, our hours have been extended until midnight throughout the building Sunday-Thursday; the Café is still open until midnight seven days a week. We also added two more hours on Saturdays. We have increased open access computing and now have on-site tech support to cover the 9 p.m.-midnight hours. We've set up more group work areas and gotten additional comfortable furniture for lounge seating areas. We renovated the classroom on the upper level to improve the instructional capabilities of the space and to give students a place to practice multimedia presentations. We have also introduced a popular reading collection (utilizing the McNaughton lease plan).

There's more that has already happened on this front with more changes still in the works. Our CACI efforts helped to make all of this possible. Comment cards and remarks collected at Reference combined with LibQUAL+ results from 2003 (which is what led us into CACI to begin with) and earlier focus groups provided evidence of sustained user demand for longer hours, leisure reading material, etc. Head counts combined with traditional reference statistics and gate counts helped show how many people were using the facility and in what ways. Using data collected from our library management system and log files from our EZproxy server, we have been able to map what percentage of our students either borrowed a book or used an electronic database. This evidence suggests our acquisitions dollars should be allocated more heavily toward electronic resources and that we need to stress instruction more. We may have gotten support for all of these changes without CACI but it probably would have taken longer and been tougher.

CACI activities in Technical Services have also continued. When the Library migrated to a new automation system several months after the workshop series ended, the change was very smooth for Tech Services thanks to our process mastering work. We are still tracking enhancements and error corrections for new and existing catalog records and now have a growing dataset that can be analyzed. We recently began another tracking measurement—the receipt-verification gap, i.e., how long it takes routine material to move through the department from the time it is received to the time it is ready for final processing and shelving. Analysis of this data may help us find ways to improve efficiency, or it may simply confirm that we're already functioning quite well and help us continue doing so.

We have seen the benefits of CACI in many other areas. When we went through our first full program review in 2006-07, we had a big advantage. We knew our Mission, we knew who our customers were, and we'd been consistently collecting statistics in various areas. On another front, when the campus began work

on a facilities master plan, our director was able to use our Vision statement to give the consultants a good idea of what we want to be and they seemed quite enthusiastic about trying to make it a reality. We feel confident that we are making progress in many areas. In Spring 2007, the Library participated in LibQUAL+ again and our results were very positive, showing an improvement from the 2003 survey.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Looking ahead, we hope to bring new areas of the Library/Information Commons into the CACI fold. With many new staff members and new services, we realize that we need to refresh our effort. We plan to introduce a specialized comment card for the various academic support services, revisit our Vision and Values, and do more process mastering. When viewed as whole, our CACI training and continuing work have nicely positioned the Library to provide leadership as the College moves forward with campus-wide assessment.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

April Davies has served as Catalog and Authority Control Librarian for SUNY Cobleskill's Van Wagenen Library since 2002. She currently serves as Chair of the campus Strategic Planning Committee and is the library's liaison to the School of Agriculture & Natural Resources. She also coordinated the library's recent LibQUAL+ survey run

Nancy Van Deusen serves as Director of Library Services at SUNY Cobleskill, having spent more than 20 years in various capacities at the Van Wagenen Library. Prior to becoming director in 1999, Nancy was Head of Technical Services and Automation Librarian. She recently served as project manager for the Aleph automation migration, and was instrumental in development of the Information Commons model.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Have you ever thought about using this journal for professional development? Here's an idea: Hold a study group. Ask staff to read the issue (or even a single article) before coming. Use the Discussion Questions below (or just a few of them) to start the discussion. The questions are designed to move through participants through three viewpoints:

- o Text-to-self (i.e., a participant's own experience)
 - o Text-to-world (i.e., participants' application in his/her environment)
 - o Text-to-text (i.e., participants' knowledge about other theories, research, or writing)
-

1. What kinds of customer feedback does your library gather? Did you get any ideas from the articles about new methods that your library might employ?
2. What are your library's Mission, Vision, and Values? If you don't know, how might you find out? If your library doesn't have a shared Mission, Vision or Values, how might you go about developing them?
3. What are your library's Key Success Factors? (They might be called "goals" or "strategic directions.")
4. Do you know how many processes your library has? What ideas for improving your processes did you get from reading the articles?
5. What kinds of data do you gather about the performance of your processes? How do you use the data to make improvements?
6. If you were going to adopt the process improvement approach in your library, where would you begin?
7. As you reflect on the continuous improvement approach, how would you compare it with other planning and improvement efforts with which you are familiar?

Indiana Libraries

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was most recently updated in 2001; some online information on using the APA Manual is available at <http://www.apastyle.org/>. The article should be double-spaced throughout with one-inch margins on all sides. Pages should be unnumbered. Manuscripts should be original and not published elsewhere. Authors are responsible for the accuracy of all materials including quotations, references, etc.

Length. Contributions of major importance should be 10-15 pages double-spaced. Rebuttals, whimsical pieces and short essays should be 2-7 pages, double-spaced. However, articles of any length may be submitted. (Graphics, charts, and tables are not included in the page count.) Charts and tables should be submitted separately from text.

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6. Short bio of author(s), about 3-4 lines for each author.

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3. Save files with distinctive names (i.e., your last name, or a word or phrase specific to the article content) rather than with generic ones which anyone might use (i.e., indianalibrariesarticle.doc or reference.doc).

See Also:

1. The Librarian's Guide to Writing for Publication (Scarecrow Press, 2004)
2. APA Style Home at www.apastyle.org

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