

POS Focus Group
Assistant Directors
March 21, 2006

Issues/Challenges

- Space
 - Technology needs room to expand
 - Space to deal with everyday tasks related to circulation
 - Teen area
- Teens
 - No space for teens
 - Not many come in
- Patron behavior problems
 - Mostly problems with adult behavior
 - Arguments over time on the computer
- Friends Groups
 - “need one that works”
 - problems in understanding their role; overstepping boundaries
 - lack of communication between Friends and library board
 - How to mediate these problems?
 - Assistant Director (AD) is often the staff liaison to the Friends
- “The Role of the Assistant Director”
 - day-to-day management issues
 - staff often comes to AD first; policy/procedure for staff lines of communication not always formalized
 - “middle-management”
 - no organizational chart; no formal responsibility for staff evaluation; no one reports to AD directly
 - all are responsible in some way for ensuring coverage at the front desk; more “fluid” than formal procedures
 - “in-charge” when the director isn’t there; no authority however, when the director is there (this was not a complaint)
 - “frontline representative of the library” for both patrons and staff; more visible to both
 - this job is “all other duties as assigned”
- Training
 - Dealing with part-time staff
 - No formal training on Millennium, new people learn from their co-workers
 - No customer service training in-house; rely on Central Library CS offering
- Funding
 - Fear losing part of their funding (Grinnell)
- Busier than ever, more patrons
 - “more sophisticated [reference] needs”
 - patrons come to staff after already having searched Google; higher level of assistance needed
 - interested in different modes of providing reference support (i.e. via phone)

- still patrons who won't use the computer / OPAC; need assistance or for staff "just to do it for them"
- higher patron expectations – "the more you do the more they want, the faster you go the faster they want it"; less and less patience from patrons when there is a hold-up (i.e. technology problem)
- Technology
 - Connectivity – "faster is better," for staff and patrons
 - Problems with SAM eating up a lot of time
- Dealing with the media
 - How to respond to negative / controversial coverage?
- Formats
 - VHS / DVD divide – when to know what not to buy?

System Services

- Delivery / holds system
- Millennium
- Web Site
 - Especially for Millennium info: procedures and policy
- Continuing Education
 - All areas
 - Would like more reference related CE
- Listservs
 - Appreciate the opportunity to network with peers (i.e. "how do you handle x?")

How do you define "Quality Service"?

- Patrons receive a level of service that makes them say "thank you"
- Customer service = "be nice"
- Friendly, helpful, pleasant staff
 - Good reputation throughout town (even to those who don't use the library)
- Speed of service ("faster is better as far as patrons are concerned")
- Explanations of services are provided to patrons
 - Explain how the holds system works
 - Explain relationship with other libraries and how this benefits the patron
 - Staff are prepared when they have to explain an unpopular change in service (i.e. when the holds queue disappeared)