

Redefining Customer Service

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Definitions of Customer Service

- Delivering professional, helpful, high quality service & assistance (*service with a smile*)
- Meeting patron wants, needs & expectations
(*delivering on the promise*)
- Building a relationship of trust & loyalty beyond immediate interaction (*integrity*)

Front End Basics

- Ask the right questions
- Actively listen
- Focus on the individual
- Know your collections & services
- Know your policies & procedures so you can be flexible & apply good judgement in adapting to individual wants & needs
- Treat the patron how you would like to be treated
- Do what you say you will
- Resolve complaints helpfully & patiently

APL's Customer Service Philosophy

- *Every customer who uses our library will be welcomed, valued and respected.*
- *Every customer is entitled to their individual style of use of the library as long as it gives consideration for the well being of others.*
- *Each day is viewed as a new beginning and each circumstance as an opportunity for growth and learning.*

Note: No commitment to the non-social needs of patrons.

Customer Relationships

Libraries tend to emphasize the relationship between patrons and staff and how this relationship impacts:

- actual service delivery
- patron perception of service delivery

Meeting Needs

Classic reference studies of the past showed that patrons were happy if they were treated well, even if they were given incomplete or incorrect information.

Social needs are huge and we ignore them at our peril, but are social needs enough?

What is the Library's Mission?

APL's Mission

Airdrie Public Library is an accessible centre of information that enhances quality of life and provides opportunities through its inclusive services, programs, collections and spaces which support literacy, lifelong learning, leisure and cultural connections within the community.

Recent Business Research Emphasizes the Importance of 3 Things

1. Reducing customer effort: make it easy to do business with you by providing seamless processes and procedures.
2. Hiring the right people: staff who are genuinely interested in serving the customer and who know their product inside-out.
3. Knowing the market: making the customer feel you understand their preferences and needs, that in fact there is a relationship between the customer and the company.

How are Most Public Libraries Doing on the 3 Important Things?

- ✓ Reducing patron effort
- ✓ Hiring the right people
- X Knowing the market

✓ Reducing patron effort: make it easy

- Reducing fines & fees
- Applying rules flexibly
- Delivering service at the point of need
- Sharing agreements and infrastructure to support them
- Establishing user-friendly partnerships

✓ Hiring the right people

- Good customer service skills & attitude are important attributes for most public libraries when evaluating potential hires and doing performance reviews.
- Customer service and conflict management training is often offered.
- Many public libraries are becoming more fluid in their job classifications to ensure the right person is placed in the right position.

APL Circulation Staff Accountabilities

Professional Development	By When
American Library Association webinar titled <i>How to Deliver Great Library Customer Service</i>	28 April 2017
Attend professional development opportunities provided in house by APL and Marigold that pertain to Circulation and customer service	December 2017

X Failing

Knowing the market: making the customer feel you understand their preferences and needs, that in fact there is a relationship between the customer and the company.

Patrons Love Us

APL has high circulation and approximately 33% market penetration measured by active memberships.

Even Non-users Love Us

Airdrie residents give high ratings of satisfaction to the library and consider the value received for tax dollars to be good to excellent, even if they are not regular library users.

What About the Missing 66%?

What are we not giving the 66% of our citizens that are non-users?

Foundational Question for Service Planning and Delivery

How can we better meet the needs and wants of our existing and potential patrons?

Customer-focussed service can:

- Increase turnover rate of our collections
- Increase visits to our facilities and programs
- Increase satisfaction rates and positive evaluations
- Deepen the impact of our services
- Increase community awareness and support

Offer Customer-focussed Service

- Study your community, demographic, use patterns, gaps in market penetration.
- Know what your stakeholders need & want, even if they are non-users.
- Prioritize customer needs and wants.
- Write a customer-focussed Plan of Service that reflects this prioritization.

Avoid Prioritizing the Wrong Things

- Staff needs and wants
- Library efficiency
- Library policy

Don't Overlook Important Factors that Impact on Customer Service

- Institutionalization
- Crowding & clutter
- Facility layout & design

Take the Patron Seriously

Avoid professional superiority like the plague!

How does your library demonstrate that it takes its patrons seriously?



Key Concepts

- Give them what they want
- Give them what they need (let them define it)
- Make it easy
- Make it attractive and comfortable
- Serve with integrity
- Be nice (warm, welcoming, inclusive, flexible, responsive)

Building Relationships of Trust and Loyalty

Build a better relationship between the library and the community by demonstrating that you understand community preferences and needs.