

Extreme Customer Service @ Your Library

Presenters:

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About Us

- Kearney Public Library serves a population base of 50,586 within Buffalo county.
- Main Library and Buffalo County Bookmobile
- 58,653 cardholders
- 19.5 full-time equivalent employees
- Collection Size: 154,576
- 2022 Circulation: 487,511
- 2022 Visitors: 148,431



What Inspired Us...

- ❖ All of us WANT to provide good service
- ❖ Many of us SAY that we provide good service
- ❖ Our patrons EXPECT us to provide good service
- ❖ Every interaction is an OPPORTUNITY to exceed their expectations

Why We Keep Evolving



- Why are we doing these things? What is the benefit?
- What do we do that upsets patrons the most?
- What is in the way of patron access?
- How much would it cost to make changes?



Specific Policies We Changed in 2013

- Policy on bringing in replacements for damaged/lost items
- Eliminated \$5 processing fee on lost items.
- Allowed access to library computers regardless of fine amount.
- Giving patrons the benefit of the doubt on claimed returned items – Freebie rule.
- Changed checkout time on new books to avoid confusion.

Specific Changes Since 2013

- 1st letter from Unique reads more gently and looks like it's coming from the library.
- No requirement of ID for a computer guest pass.
- Acceptance of meeting room deposit from anyone in group.
- Making online registration, meeting room applications, and MakerSpace appointments more user friendly and useful.
- Automatic renewals, texting options for renewals and item due reminders, and a library app.
- No more fines!

Changing the Climate

- Shift your focus from the LIBRARY to the PATRON.
- Question what you are doing – WHY? Is there a real benefit to the community? Continuously evaluate your policies.
- Communication is key to success.
- Change takes time – Make it easy for patrons and staff.



Empowering Staff

- Empower staff to make decisions (within set guidelines).
- If it is time consuming for staff, how can you make it easier?
- Take pride in the library.



What is the Most Important?

- Focus on performing your basic services at your full potential before getting wrapped up in adding additional services.
- **The most basic service you can offer your community is good customer service.**
- “The most important asset of any library goes home at night – the library staff.” – Father Timothy Healy

Personalize Service

- How can you say yes?
- Meet patrons halfway – Can you forgive a portion of the fees?
- Give the public the benefit of the doubt.
- Listen to the patrons! Show them you understand their situation.

Ask for Input

- Act on suggestions of patrons and board members.
- Have you heard comments from many people about the same thing? Consider changing it in some way.
- Continue to ask how the library can be more user-friendly.



I want to make
changes, but where
do I start?



Focus on Basic Customer Service

- Greet patrons when you see them.
- Don't point – Show.
- Make service as personal as possible.
- Focus on the front line.
- Communication is key!

Focus on Basic Customer Service

- Explain what you are doing.
- Think about your own bad experiences.
- Answer the phone, emails, etc. ASAP.
- Acknowledge the patron when waiting.
- Avoid transferring patrons when possible.

Share Your Success

- Document your success stories.
- Sharing these stories with the community, government officials, etc. can help increase awareness of the importance of the library.



Questions?

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