

Speed Dating: Circulation Style

New Buildings and Renovations

Presenter: Maryann Bowler, Circulation Supervisor Glenview Public Library

No one knows your workspace better than you do.

- Your ideas are important- Voice them!
- Circulation supervisors are very creative, re-assess your areas, organize spaces for more room

Whether you are planning or in the midst of building a new building, remodeling an existing space or just trying to find “room”- this discussion offered many great suggestions for a smart approach to the project.

Several essential components are:

- Communicate
 - Involve your staff- ask them, “If the sky’s the limit, what would you ask for?” Getting their input gives them ownership of the space. They have great ideas.
 - Inform your customers- newsletters, handouts, and press releases. Also, keep them involved by updating your website information. Some libraries provide a kiosk with a live feed of the construction project.
 - VERY IMPORTANT: Communicate with your architect and director- communicating with them is an important key to a successful design.
 - Take a weekly tour of the project to catch problems early. (I realized that the frame for the drive-up window for the branch was installed too low for cars to pick up material.)
- Space planning
 - Visit other libraries, tour their ‘behind the scenes’ and take advantage of their experience (and learn from their mistakes as well.) Take time to have lunch with other circulation managers and ask for their input.
 - Functional and Flexible designs that adapt to changing needs (such as adding new formats like PlayAways and other electronic devices), module desk units that can be rearranged and/or adjustable work stations for staff comfort
 - Assess your space needs, based on your existing use and future use
 - Be creative- if your budget doesn’t allow for new furniture or equipment, reuse and recycle existing pieces for new uses
 - Use laptops if you have Wi-Fi and need computers in temporary areas or increased demands for special events
 - Even if you cannot afford to remodel- REORGANIZING can give you additional space

- Remember that you want a smooth workflow
- You will be surprised how fast that new space will fill up!
- Staffing
 - As they say, “If you build it---They will come...” New building projects make our spaces exciting and attendance increases significantly.
 - When you have more customers than ever using your library, your circulation statistics increase significantly.
 - So, your staff will be busier than ever and guess what- your staffing needs will also increase significantly. You may even be adding staff, like shelvers to work in your area. Plan for the most efficient use of space for all staff that will be working in the area.
 - Two trends help staff work smarter to provide service to meet increased demands- RFID and Self Check machines

RFID takes space- plan enough space for a sorting system (conveyor belt and scanner) and space for bins for the material to be sorted into.

Self check machines, especially those with Fines and Fees units are a real convenience for customers and staff. Customers still need staff to assist with problems, but the self check machines reduce the repetitive stress injuries that are common in handling large amounts of items to scan and desensitize.

Drive-up windows were discussed briefly. They are especially useful in situations with limited parking (or as our branch- small interior space). They are a fast, convenient point of service.

Lockers, such as the ones at Warren Newport Public Library, are another option to providing a convenient point of service.

Maryann also recommended using your Outlook Calendar to record your ideas. They will pop into your head as you are driving or even in the middle of the night- write them down.

More important hints-

MAINTAIN YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR AND STAY POSITIVE!

And when your project is finished- don't forget to celebrate your accomplishments!

(At Gail Borden Public Library we had Party 270 -an afterhours pot luck dinner in our Quiet Room- with lots of loud laughter and shared memories of all that we went through to get there.)