

Merchandising the Collection: Trading Spaces Demonstration Project Mount Laurel Library Staff Walk-Through #1 Notes - July 2003

Thirty-six library staff were given an orientation to the project and then given paper and pencil, taken outside the library and asked to walk through the library as if they were a first-time customer. This was the handout they received...

Library Walk Through ... Two goals

FIRST: Awareness

- Walk through library like a first time customer.
- Jot down what makes it hard or easy to find your way around?

SECOND: Desire

- What's on your Wish List?
- What changes would you like to see?

Here are their answers to these questions.

(Number in parentheses indicates number of groups that brought up same idea)

What makes it easy to find things in our library...

- Very open space (7) spacious, neat, well decorated, tasteful, encourages browsing
- Overhead signs in adult stacks (5) notes if books filed by author or subject
- Large Children's sign on soffit (4)
- Only 2 directions to go past the Circ Desk (3) logical layout
- Signage on new books shelves and in AV alcove
- Children's videos easy to find
- Walking toward light in the middle
- Can see computers
- Attractive central area
- Natural light, large windows
- Circ desk in front, first thing seen

What makes it hard to find things in the library ...

OUTSIDE

- Exterior book drop needs highlighting (3)
- No sign indicating don't use drop for videos or other AV
- Can't read library hours sign from car, hidden behind post

What makes it hard to find things in the library... (continued)

LOBBY

- Dark (7) *dull*
- No signage about public phones, restrooms, meeting rooms or water fountain (7)
- No directory (7) *need "mall type" you are here directory*
- The no food/dogs sign in lobby
- Nothing "hits you" as you come in, no teaser/focal point
- Privacy for public phones

CHECK-IN AREA (near New Books)

- Nothing encourages people to ask for help (5)
- No signs say Check-in, Library Cards, Ask Questions, Pick-up Holds (4)
- Library information bulletin board in a dark tucked away place in the library (2)
- First person someone sees is in the check-in area (2)
- Chandelier is large, weird and too dark
- Can see back of easel sign as you come in
- Returns area too dark, needs revamping

NEW BOOKS

- Cramped, not many people can browse at the same time, not easy for wheelchairs (2)
- Too many little signs
- Tight corners by CD's, copier
- New books block the "Have you missed" books

CIRC DESK

- Too high for wheelchair access
- People waiting to check-out books can disturb people on sofas
- Baskets

CENTER OF LIBRARY

- Can't see copier easily (2) *new copier too complicated*
- Looks like a "sample home" not a real home
- When you first come in there's lots of blond wood, but no people
- Very corporate looking

What makes it hard to find things in the library... (continued)

YOUTH SERVICES

- No signs for restrooms, water fountains
- No consistency in language on signs Children's, Juvenile, YA, Teens, Easy Readers
- Confusing in general
- Teen area lacks "coolness" - posters, color
- Too much stuff on YS desk

DISPLAY

- Can't always tell if it's OK to take a display book

AUDIOVISUAL

- CD's not alphabetized by artist within category

ADULT STACKS

- Low lighting (4)
- Study carrels divide the space in two
- Can't see the depth of the adult stacks
- A long hike to get stuff
- No large signs on soffits say Fiction, Nonfiction, Biographies, etc.

REFERENCE DESK

- College Collection is tucked in a far corner (3)
- Too much stuff on desk
- Need privacy for Ref area, move public computers
- Long walk to Ref Desk

MAGAZINES

- Can't see magazines until you're in top of them (2)
- Old issues hidden under shelves

COMMUNITY INFO

- Community information is hidden (3)

PUBLIC CATALOGS

- Computer Catalogs are all too far from entry (2)
- No instruction for catalog ... how-tos, map of library
- Books on display, location/status doesn't show in computer

SIGNAGE

- No sign for Circulation Desk, Juvenile, Teens (4)
- Stack ends signs too small (3)

- No indication about what's on different computers (iPAC, Internet, etc) (2)
- Overload of little signs (2) ... hard to read until you're on top of 'em
- Lighting near big signs (Children's, Reference) is poor
- Signs are high (Children's Catalog, Reference) people tend not to look up
- No signs for Reference Desk, YS Desk
- No big signage until skylight
- No signage for AV Alcove, Computer Lab (3)

IN GENERAL

- We've built around the edges of the library to preserve open space in middle
- Big gaps in space/layout
- Can't tell where Internet is
- Map of library is out of date

Changes I'd Like/Wish List

OUTSIDE

- Outdoor book & media drops with access from driver's side
- Landscape area near Reference (where pavers are now stored)
- Building looks outdated ... add new, pitched roof for a new look
- Open up pretty patio for use

LOBBY

- Brighten lobby, (3) add What's Happening sign, plants

CENTRAL AREA

- Café (7) Water Cooler, Food vending/refreshment area
- Information/Reception desk when you first walk in (6)
- Displays in center of sofa seating area

CATALOG & COLLECTION MAINTENANCE

- Move catalog closer to front of building "Search for books here" (3)
- "How to" signs at public catalogs (look up items, place holds, renew, etc)
- More spine stickers (historical fiction, romance)
- Guide to stickers "This --- means this:"

Changes I'd Like/Wish List (continued)

CIRC DESK

- Improve lighting near check-in (3)
- Better shelving for holds
- Have sign on circ desk with library hours
- Let circ staff sit at circ desk
- Redesign circ desk for a shorter walk from behind to in front of desk
- Another Circ computer near Children's end of counter
- Welcome banner as you walk in
- All copy machines in one central location
- Use rigid dividers (not folders) on holds shelf
- Redesign all service desks

POLICY

- Patrons able to place holds on checked in items
- Adopt cel phone policy

AUDIOVISUAL

- More videos/DVD (3) popular titles, *charge if you need \$ for collection*
- Neaten up Audiobooks area
- Use AV Alcove space as area for relaxing
- Separate circuit video to feature it
- New CD racks with easier access
- Face out display of audio books
- Clear signage for audio books
- Videos more accessible
- More books on CD
- Print new CD/Video lists

REFERENCE

- More seating areas in near windows in Ref (3) *with plants added*
- New literature rack for reference, similar to one near Circ
- Better phone book display, labels
- Redesign all service desks
- Don't move reference desk
- Organize reference handouts ... off the desk
- Signs indicating Reference Desk

Changes I'd Like/Wish List (continued)

YOUTH SERVICES

- More display in Youth Services (2)
- Lower stacks for Juv materials (too high for some kids)
- Listening stations in YA and Children's
- Have more paperbacks, Easy Readers
- Make Kids magazines more prominent (now hidden by YA)
- Easy fiction better organized
- Redesign all service desks
- Large signs for Circ Desk, YA, Juvenile, Computer Lab (3) *bold, bright signs*
- New books, staff picks display in YA and Children's
- Slat wall displays at ends of YA stacks
- Signage in Juvenile Non Fiction similar to Adult Non-Fiction (large, broad areas)
- Brighten YA & Children's areas (3), *add computer to YA*
- Get new children's furniture
- Move Juvenile collection closer to center of building
- Signs indicating Youth Services Desk

MAGAZINES

- Circulate adult magazines (2)
- Periodicals browsing area with back issues easily accessible
- New periodicals shelving with no grotty protective covers (2) displayed on angles
- Combine YA & Children's Magazines with some indication of division

ADULT STACKS

- No books on bottom shelves (4) *on bottom two shelves*
- Better lighting (2)
- Directory to Dewey numbers
- Need an "elevator for books" to bring them up to the patron
- Signs on interior stack ends, both on stacks ends and overhead so you can read while walking down the inner aisle
- Use back wall behind stacks for more shelves
- Use shelf ends for display (slat wall)
- Move Short Story shelves ... or ... integrate into Fiction
- Make Adult New Reader collection more prominent
- For shelvees - clear labels about where the item is to go

Changes I'd Like/Wish List (continued)

FURNITURE/COMFORT

- Reupholster furniture (4) *or toss*

- Better lighting in library (4)
- Move center sofas (3) to quieter area
- Fireplace (2)
- Throw out circa '75 furniture (wood/teal chairs, old kids furniture) (2)
- Comfy chairs (2)
- Sunroom off indoor garden for Café
- Rows of study carrels look institutional ... move 'em (2) move to back of library
- More stools
- Establish different areas for different functions - learning, leisure, life

QUIET SPACE

- More quiet study areas (3) that don't need to be reserved
- Establish a quiet study area near college collection
- More tables/chairs behind adult stacks
- Reading area near windows (near Ref) with plants, etc

Signage

- Bold Bright, colored signs (3)
- More big signs on soffits (3)
- Neon signs (2)
- Color coordinate shelves to topic (blood red for mysteries)

DISPLAY

- Bestsellers list posted prominently (2)
- Face out display of all new books
- Get rid of ugly display racks
- Eliminate re-issued editions from New Books area
- More bestsellers
- Emphasize how to get books in other languages
- Display staff picks with staff name attached
- Balance display with spaciousness
- Print book lists (bestsellers, Oprah, etc.)
- Put shelves on angles
- Have a new thing to look at every 2 feet
- Improve display table in front (ugly, needs covering)

Changes I'd Like/Wish List (continued)

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

- Visible Community Information Bulletin Board (4) *more displays*

PUBLIC COMPUTERS

- Move public computers away from Reference desk (2)
- More computers
- Wireless network
- Laptops to loan
- Offer more computer classes in PM
- Sign "Plug in your laptops here"

OTHER SERVICES

- Vending for office supplies ... or a price list for office supplies
- Have more programs for seniors
- Public fax
- Have used books available to buy again
- Create Book swap for adults ... book sale for adults
- Place to preview software before borrowing

ADDITIONALLY...

- More staff on floor
- More/better maintenance equipment
- More attention to maintenance needs
- Window falling out in Children's
- More trash cans
- Bigger clock (digital display) *More clocks at adult end of building (all showing the same time)*