

Merchandising the Collection: Trading Spaces Project

Mount Laurel Library Staff Walk-Through #2 Notes - July/August 2003

Thirty-two library staff/volunteers were given an overview of why we're doing the project, details about the timeline/funding, a walking tour of Dave Genesy's recommended changes, and time to give their reactions and what they're excited/concerned about with this project.

This was the handout they received...

Library Walk Through 2 ...Two Goals
FIRST: Recommendations See Dave Genesy's recommendations for our new floor plan. What's your reaction?
SECOND: Excitement/Concern What excites you about this project? What concerns you about this?

Here are their responses: (Number indicates number of groups that discussed same item)

Reactions ... In general

- Don't clutter it up (4) *Won't look cluttered, will it? Preserve a sense of openness*
- More like a B&N (2) People now expect bookstore display
- Makes better use of our space
- Great to put bestsellers out front
- Most of plan is very good
- We'll need baskets to carry all the things people will borrow (Note: Got 'em!)
- I predict that you'll get very positive comments from the community
- Community Center - remember the Township just spent millions of dollars on a community center across the street
- I like the variety of ways staff can communicate: anonymously, emails, etc

Excited About

- Family place (6) *parenting books there? Colorful ...all kids stuff in one space... good noise control*
- Internet Café (6) *though counter is hard to picture*
- Quiet area by Reference (5) *moving periodicals, use lamp tables in this area?*
- Overall design accommodates those who like quiet along with giving flexible space to kids/teens
- Videos/DVDs (4) *display media near entrance ... robust collection*
- High demand items in obvious places (4)
- Self checkout (4) *How about self-check-in? Self hold shelf*
- Change is exciting (4) *Nice to see a change for the better*
- Geared to customer self-help (3) *Allows browsing, Customer independence can be a measurement of success As well as circulation*
- CD browsers (3)
- Public catalogs throughout building (3)
- New books area (3) *I like keeping them here for up to 2 years, Expanded, more copies*
- Moving college collection (2)
- Vending (2)
- New look (2) *what's done with open space and displays is very appealing*

Excited About (continued)

- As people walk in they'll see computers (2)
- Adult stacks: Integrating oversize into nonfiction (*use bottom shelves for OS?*)
- Everybody serves everyone (all ages)
- Challenging
- Inviting
- Public computers ... *reorient these near reference*
- Moving YA ... collections more user friendly
- Juv Media near center of building (*put CDROMs there?*)
- Cutting YS desk to make it more approachable
- Uses space as it should be used
- Displays on slat wall near circ ... almost like impulse purchasing ... I like it!
- Copier in lobby ... move outlet on column to near large display case?
- "Surprisingly good"
- Lighter, brighter, open inviting, positive
- More defined space
- Slat wall

Concerned About...

In General

- Too much slat wall? Where will we hang the annual quilt show with all this slat wall?
- Loss of aesthetics
- Preserve open feeling
- Hard to find what you want
- Want to go to a specific location
- Don't want to turn us into Borders/Starbucks
- Ambitious - will it all happen for \$45,000?

Staff

- B&N has a central info desk.
Where's ours?
Do we need another para-professional job title to cover this?
It's critical that there be someone available to ask. (2) No librarians in center to ask
- Who will keep displays filled?
- Will there be any changes to better things for staff?
Better floor behind circ desk?
Easier access from circ desk to floor? Shorten circ desk?
- Another terminal to checkout kids books?
- Staff may be jittery about the change

Media (CDs, Videos, DVDs)

- Right up front (issues about theft, security, why make it so prominent, why push this?)
- CD browsers may feel like blocking the easy open entry way to library (2)
- Observing media in center
- Entry way is "eye candy" with DVDs, videos, new books
- Check-in noise/conversation may disturb folks at CD browsers

Concerned About... (continued)

Circulation

- Self checkout (2) *I like the interplay we have now between staff and patrons, Balance personal checkout service with self checkout*
- Check-in - remain the same?
- Hide shelving carts? It's not a problem. Should be a destination.
- Lines at circ desk will extend into skylight area

New books area

- Block sightlines to other end of building?
- Feel cluttered?
- What will rugs be like when current stuff moved? Need area rug?
- Be mindful about the occasional skylight leak (rain when the wind is blowing *just right*)
- Be aware of how sound amplifies under the skylight (2)
- I like the *current* sofa seating area

Family Place

- New furniture needed? (current stuff is ratty)
- Be mindful of fire alarm near exit (don't cover with slat wall)
- Be mindful of access for ladders to change fluorescent lamps
- Juv reference so near to Easy Readers will discourage use
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Cafe

- Vending machines (4) *Not aesthetic, Operational/troubleshooting issues, Include office supply vending, Put vending in a different area...where? don't know*
- Spills from refreshments (3) *sticky books, picking up "empties"*
- Noise from vending machines (2) *put near new periodicals area*
- Limit refreshments to one area? (2) *Problem with food/drink near computers?*
- I don't like neon

Young Adults

- Kids Ref/Moving YA Ref...how will it work? (4) *Who will do YA reference? Is reference staff equipped to work with teens?*
- Integrating YA Nonfiction into Adult stacks
- Will we outgrow YA space as collection grows? (3) *Is there enough room to expand? Will it fit? What we have may look cramped, look like we shoved it in first available space?*
- Will noise from YA be a concern so near Reference and the Quiet space (can something be done to muffle, absorb sound)

Periodicals:

- Will stacks block windows/view?

Reference

- We need a more private area for Reference questions

Concerned About... (continued)

Collection issues

- Moving oversize books (2) *Why not display oversize books rather than integrate to boost circ?*
- More intuitive approach to finding stuff
- What will our collection be like 5 years from now if we make a strong focus on popular materials and order what people want? Why stop reading/ordering from reviews? How will this "wear"? Will we lose quality and depth of collection?
- Need collection code in catalog for New Books
- Adds layers of complexity to finding things
- Who/how will we make decisions about self holds shelf, paperbacks as separate collection?

Signage

- Need clear signage, directory, map (6) *Color coded directory (you are here) like malls direct to stores ... Poetry ... go here*
- Need eye level signage in stacks
- Signage in lobby
- Prominently label iPACs so people don't think they're Internet computers
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