Overview of presentation

• Context of the research
• Which customers?
• The research methodology
• Findings

Context of the research

Real library challenges…
• Customer expectations changing (challenge)
• Rapid technological change (opportunity)
• Down sizing (challenge)
• Cultural change (challenge and opportunity)
Context of the research (2)

• Constant need to review services in the light of customer expectations
• What expectations?
• Which customers?
• What will we do with the information when we get it?

Which customers?

Many customer segments

• University library
  – Teachers, undergraduate students, research students, researchers, full time students…
• Public library
  – Children, teenagers, parents, adults, minority groups, business people…
Customers' drivers

- Different customer segments have different drivers and different experiences
  - Remote customers have different needs than those who use e-services in a library building or on-campus
- Services and standards can vary according to the particular customer segment

Which methodology?

- Customer satisfaction surveys
  - Questions qualified by focus groups, or
  - Standard survey questions
- Benchmarking tools
  - LibQual
- Interviews etc…
- Customer value discovery research

"Quality in a product or service is not what the supplier puts in; It is what the customer gets out and is willing to pay for; A product is not quality because it is hard to make and costs a lot of money, as manufacturers typically believe; This is incompetence; Customers pay only for what is of use to them and gives them value; Nothing else constitutes quality "

Peter Drucker

http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/4773.html
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Action research methodology

1. Establish baseline
2. Ask the customer
3. Identify values
4. Develop scenarios
5. Interactive value modeling
6. Develop implementation initiatives
7. Implementation
8. Measure results and compare to baseline
9. Draw conclusions

Action research because...

- Applied
- Situational
- Topical
- Collaborative
- Participatory
- Political
- Emancipatory

Hierarchy of value

Unanticipated
Desired
Expected
Basic
Irritated
Angry

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Customer value discovery workshops

Process
- External facilitators
- Wireless keypad technology for voting
- 15 participants per focus group
- Library observers
  - 5 max; Silent

Customer value discovery workshops (2)

- AM session – participants identify irritants and value factors
  - Personal workbook
  - Irritants identified, prioritised, scored on severity of irritation and frequency of irritation – then taken away
  - Values identified, prioritised, then arranged into an affinity diagram to develop theme sets
  - Participants and observers vote on importance and performance
  - Discussion on outcomes

Customer value discovery workshops (3)

- Lunch with participants – time to address some issues
- PM session
  - Library staff collate irritants into similar affinity diagram
  - Discuss issues the immediate outcomes of the workshop
  - There may be “low hanging fruit” that can be addressed immediately
Customer value discovery workshops (4)

- Multiple workshops with same customer segments
- Facilitators combine the outcomes from each workshop into a consolidated set
- Observers and managers attend a consolidation workshop to receive the outputs from the customer value discovery process
- Interactive value modelling workshop held to test the impact of possible interventions

Research methodology – narrative research
(Czarniawska, B., 2004; Narratives in Social Science Research, Sage Publications, London)

- Watching how the stories are being made (library staff observers in the customer value discovery workshops)
- Collecting the stories (customer communications in workshop recorded)
- Provoking story telling (facilitated workshops; developing scenarios with library staff)
- Interpreting the stories (analysis of the hierarchies of values and irritants; Gap analyses)

Research methodology – narrative research (2)

- Analysing the stories (analysis of individual comments)
- Deconstructing the stories (building the model; interactive value modeling)
- Putting together own story (developing implementation initiatives)
- Setting it against/together with other stories (measuring satisfaction and comparing with the baseline data)
Customer value discovery - the benefits

- From the customer’s perspective
  - Personal
  - Immediate
  - Uses their own terminology

Customer value discovery - the benefits (2)

- From the library staff perspective
  - Personal involvement in process
  - Chance to correct perceptions
  - Greater understanding of customers’ problems and values
  - Challenges assumptions

Customer value discovery - the benefits (3)

- From decision-makers’ perspective
  - Priorities are relevant to this library
  - Greater depth of data on performance
  - Interactive value modelling provides data on where to place emphasis
The challenges

- Is it statistically valid?
  - Small numbers of participants in discovery workshops
  - 4-6 workshops give a valid sample
  - Confirmed by student satisfaction survey comprising 3500 students
  - However, there will always be the doubters!

The challenges (2)

- Comparisons are problematic
  - The overall rating is not comparable to % satisfied in traditional surveys
  - Not comparable to another library whose customers may have different values

Academic staff hierarchy of value

- Services clearly communicated to users
- Timely targeted training
- Availability of reliable up-to-date technologies & facilities
- Good quality cheap photocopying & printing
- User-friendly loans policies & procedures
- Managing multimedia & curriculum content
- Opening hours which meet user needs
- Inspiring environment which supports diverse needs
- Proactive partnerships between academic staff & library
- Knowledgeable friendly accessible staff who help me
- Comprehensive available relevant resources
- Easy access to materials when/where I need them

Relative importance

0% 100%
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Academic staff hierarchy of value - gaps

Services clearly communicated to users
Timely targeted training
Avail’ity of reliable up-to-date technologies & facilities
Good quality cheap photocopying & printing
User friendly loans policies & procedures
Managing multi media & curriculum content
Opening hours which meet user needs
Inspiring environment which supports diverse needs
Proactive partnerships b/w academic staff & library
Knowledgeable friendly accessible staff who help me
Comprehensive available relevant resources
Easy access to materials where/when I need them

Relative importance
Low 50% 100% High

Academic staff hierarchy of value - performance

Services clearly communicated to users
Timely targeted training
Avail’ity of reliable up-to-date technologies & facilities
Good quality cheap photocopying & printing
User friendly loans policies & procedures
Managing multi media & curriculum content
Opening hours which meet user needs
Inspiring environment which supports diverse needs
Proactive partnerships b/w academic staff & library
Knowledgeable friendly accessible staff who help me
Comprehensive available relevant resources
Easy access to materials where/when I need them

Performance
Poor Current performance Excellent

• There is a big gap between what the observers thought and what the customers actually voted

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Academic staff hierarchy of value – Pareto chart

B. Easy access to materials where & when I need them
C. Comprehensive availability of relevant resources
D. Knowledgeable, friendly, accessible staffs who help me
E. Proactive partnerships between academic staff & library
F. Inspiring environment which supports diverse needs
G. Opening hours which meet user needs
H. Access to reliable, up-to-date technologies & facilities
I. User-friendly loans policies & procedures
J. Services clearly communicated to users
K. Availability of reliable, up-to-date technologies & facilities
L. Timely targeted training
Key findings

- Irritants often have a corresponding value factor
  - Fix the irritant --- improves value

- There will always be irritants
  - Hopefully these become less critical as improvements are made
Key findings (2)

• Library staff assumptions are not always accurate
  – Under-estimated the impact/value/frequency
  – Do not predict some irritants
• Customers compare library services with other commercial experiences, not necessarily with other libraries

Further analysis

• Results of the interactive value-modelling are high level and indicative
• Involve teams of staff in checking assumptions and working out what can be done to reduce irritation and increase value
  – Involve customers if at all possible in this further stage
  – Involve staff from across the library: improves decision-making; Generates more buy-in; Staff identify and drive change
  – Creates greater commitment to change

Communication

• Communicate decisions to:
  – Stakeholders
  – Participants in the customer value research
  – Library staff
  – Customer community
Performance monitoring

- Monitoring ongoing performance, against
  - Operational plan
  - Service standards
  - Individual performance reviews

Re-plan

- Tell everyone what is happening
- Re-plan
  - More customer value research
  - Check validity of value factors
  - Check if new irritants are emerging

Management observations

- Know your customers – what they want and how they perceive library services
- Don’t just think ‘libraries’ – think bookshops, online booksellers, quick-print providers, video stores, supermarket check-outs…
Management observations (2)

- Customer validation of professional assumptions is a mighty management tool
- Need commitment to change and to allocate resources according to needs and values
- Marketing and communication is very important

Evidence based librarianship

- Collection, interpretation and integration of...
  - Valid, important and applicable user-reported, librarian observed, and research-orientated evidence
  - Applied to improve the quality of professional judgements

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Thank you

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Related publications

- McKnight, S. (2007b) Acquisition and Cataloguing Processes: Changes as a Result of Customer Value Discovery, Evidence Based Library and Information Practice, December, pp. 22-23

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