Strategies for Effective Library Communication: Connections, Collegiality, & Cooperation

Webinar presented by
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Hosted by ALCTS,
Association for Library Collections & Technical Services
August 26, 2015
1:00pm-2:00pm CST
Introductions

- Presenter
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- Participants
AGENDA

- Introduction
- Effective Communication Strategies
- Enhancing Internal & External Service Excellence
- Assertive & Open Communication
- Positive Approaches to Problematic People
- Delegating, Sharing Responsibility & Empowering Others
- Q & A – Answering Your Questions
If we can reduce the stressful encounters & multiply the satisfying ones, our working lives will be more enjoyable!
Goal - Service Excellence

- Who are our “customers”
  - External?
  - Internal?

- Why is it important to recognize both?
Effective Communication Strategies

- Think about co-workers you have enjoyed working with the most.
- What communication strategies do they use?
Food for Thought!

- What do these mean to you?
  - Connections
  - Collegiality
  - Cooperation

- How are they communicated?
- What barriers exist that get in the way?
- How could they be cultivated?
General Principles for Effective Communication

- Be Direct
- Be Clear
- Be Honest – Use “I” Statements
- Ask for Feedback
Be Empathetic – Relational vs. Content Needs

- **Content**
  - The “WHAT”
  - Information exchange

- **Relational**
  - “HOW” message is to be taken
  - Relationship of the participants
More General Principles for Effective Communication

- Be Brief – Don’t Beat Around the Bush

- Be Assertive
Communication Styles

- Passive
- Aggressive
- Passive-Aggressive
- Assertive
Passive-Aggressive Style

*Feelings*
- Resentment
- Helpless & powerless
- Repressed anger

*Behaviors*
- Avoid direct response, but vow to “get even”
- Use sarcasm, sniping, indirect criticism
- Avoid eye contact
- Feign compliance
- Use “gunny sacking” technique
Assertive Style

**Feelings**
- Concerned about everyone’s feelings
- Expect everyone to be self-accountable

**Behaviors**
- Give direct eye contact
- Have a confident stance
- Ask others for what they need
Assertiveness Toolbox

- Direct Request
- Declarative Statements
  - “I” statement with direction or explanation
- Calm Confrontation
  - Describe unacceptable behavior & give expectation for future behavior
- Collaboration & Compromise
- Accountability
  - Hold other person responsible for behavior while asking for what you want (with consequences)
Major Cause of Problematic Behavior
STRESS

- Interpersonal relationships with co-workers (& library users) are the major source of stress to library faculty & staff...

- But also the major source of satisfaction!
Who Me?

- Visualize one project or task you are working on right now that you would like to have help with.
- What help do you need?
- Why haven’t you asked for help?
Delegating & Asking for Help

- Ask: “Am I the only person who can do this?” If not, delegate it.
- Ask for help, don’t demand.
- Invest training time for routine tasks.
- Make sure person knows purpose of work & expectations.
- Know who needs closer supervision.
Tips for Communicating Effectively with Supervisors

- Inform them.
- Ask for help.
- Help them.
  - Support managerial decisions.
- Educate them! Different expertise?
- Dazzle them.
- Learn to speak their language.
- Think win-win.
Tips for Communicating Effectively with Subordinates

- Use **assertive** behaviors.
- Be discrete - save face.
- Involve in decision-making.
- Give & request feedback.
- Share information.
- Share credit & allow others to feel important.
- Thank & praise them.
Tips for Cross-Generational Communication  
(Lear, 2015)

- **Baby Boomers (born ‘46-’64)**
  - Want formal communication & etiquette
  - Expect continuous feedback & respect

- **Gen Exers (born ‘65-’79)**
  - Give straight, honest & unfiltered communication
  - Are independent & skeptical

- **Millennials (born ‘80-’95)**
  - Need specific directions & expected results
  - Want to make a difference & their input valued
  - Impatient with red tape
Think about This!
Communication Problems/Issues

- What are your communication problems or issues...
  - With co-workers?
  - With supervisors?
  - With subordinates?

- Self assessment
  - What areas do you need to improve?
Positive Approaches to Problematic Internal Relationships

- Put problem people in perspective. Don’t take personally!
- Take your pick – positive or negative. Can’t focus both on alternatives & negative feelings.
- Don’t expect difficult people to change. They won’t! But you can!
More Positive Approaches

- Learn to respond as well as to listen - state your feelings.
- Give & request frequent feedback.
- Look 1st at policies & procedures.
Yet More...

- Be direct, straightforward, unemotional.
- Be discreet.
- Be gracious - other’s rudeness doesn’t give right to be rude.
- Disarm with kindness, share credit & allow others to feel important.
Conflict Handling Modes (Walsh, 2004)

- Competing
- Collaborating
- Compromising
- Avoiding
- Accommodating

Uncooperative to Cooperative

Unassertive to Assertive
Negative Modes

(Walsh, 2004)

- **COMPETING:**
  - Assertive & uncooperative
  - Behavior at other’s expense

- **ACCOMMODATING:**
  - Unassertive & cooperative
  - Doing what other wants - disregards your needs

- **AVOIDING:**
  - Unassertive & uncooperative
  - Side-steps issues, doesn’t address conflict
Positive Modes

(Walsh, 2004)

- **COMPROMISING:**
  - Between assertiveness & cooperativeness
  - Seeks middle ground
  - May satisfactorily solve problem

- **COLLABORATING:**
  - Both assertive & cooperative
  - Mutually find *lasting* solutions
Conflict Handling Modes (Walsh, 2004)

- Competing
- Collaborating
- Compromising
- Avoiding
- Accommodating

- Uncooperative
- Cooperative
Resolving Conflicts
Three-Steps

1. IDENTIFY the Conflict
2. IDENTIFY Solutions - Collaboratively
3. IMPLEMENT Solutions

May sound easy, but it is not!
Your Attitude & Approach

- “Don’t get angry, get interested!”
- Stay calm & curious
- Focus on other – collaborative approach
- Use positive “Words that Work”
Silence Is Not Safe

- Conflict avoidance is dangerous
- Communicate for healthy conflict
  - Speak up
  - Be constructive
  - Seek input from all
In Conclusion...

- **Practice & self-reflection** needed.
- Some trial & error!
- Take **responsibility** for your behavior.
- Be a **positive** role model for others!
- Effective internal communication is an ongoing challenge for all!!
More Information & Feedback

Questions?

THANKS!

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