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THE BEST KNOWN WAY

by Mary Kempfer

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n 2002 the Michigan City Public Library Director Don Glossinger combined the Audio-Visual and Circulation Departments to more effectively utilize library space and staff. This resulted in a Circulation staff of 12, each of whom felt he/she knew the best way to do things. During this confusion, Assistant Director Andy Smith learned of the "Breakthrough Circulation" seminar, conducted by Sara Laughlin, Denise Shockley, and Ray Wilson, and recommended it to the circulation supervisor.

Circulation Supervisor Sarah Redden thought it was a great idea and chose four staff members to attend. Mary Kempfer, Pat Kemiel, Barb Miller, and Donna Long arrived at the workshop hoping for some good ideas for promoting unity within the department.

What we learned was truly a "Breakthrough!" Seeing our enthusiasm, Sarah gave us her total support.

Which circulation process to "master" was our first quandary. A list of fifty processes were compiled and then voted on by the entire department to determine the top three problem areas. Sarah then chose the one she thought needed the most work. The next question was WHEN we could work on the process. The work schedule was rearranged to allow us to meet on Thursday mornings from 8 to 10. Sarah often attended the first hour to offer comments or answer questions on library policy.

OUR FIRST PROCESS MASTER: ISSUE A LIBRARY CARD

Mary, Barb, Pat, and Donna worked on the first process to gain sufficient skill to teach our fellow staff members. Our starting process was one we thought would be easy: "Issuing a Library Card." (See the Key Steps in Figure 1). We soon learned our "easy" process should actually be four processes for the four types of library cards: Resident, Reciprocal, PLAC, and Out-Of-State.

After this problematic start, we developed our first process which we named "Issuing a Resident Library Card." We were proud of it and enthusiastically presented it to the entire Circulation Staff. After the

presentation, some staff members were confused and critical of the program. We then invited the skeptics to participate in the next process team for "Issuing a Reciprocal Library Card." As the project took shape, our co-workers willingly committed to working as a team for a more efficient department.

SHELVE AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS

One of the areas of concern was shelving Audio-Visual materials. Every time an area was shelf-read, large numbers of out-of-place items were found. Of course, we blamed the patrons! As different interpretations of shelving came to light, we eventually realized that perhaps we were the problem. For example, do you shelve MR as "mister" or as "Mr?" What do you do with numbers? Where do hyphenated letters and numbers (K-9) go? We needed HELP! (See the flowchart in Figure 2.)

Original workshop staff member, Pat Kemiel, has recently moved to the Youth Services Department. Shortly after starting there, she was instrumental in implementing the "Shelving Process" techniques for shelving their AV materials. Patrons can now browse Adult, Young Adult, and Juvenile material and find uniformity of shelving methods.

SHELVE BOOKS

For expert advice we asked the Stack Maintenance Supervisor, Marilyn Eddy, to join our process team. She brought with her 25 years of library experience, nine of them in shelving, and the ALA Shelving Rules book. (See the team in Figure 3.)

After participating in the workshop, Marilyn said, "I was so impressed with the way they were conducted, I decided to meet with the shelvers. We had meetings before, but I liked the organization and staff participation shown at Circulations' sessions. As I attended several meetings, I started thinking how this type of presentation could benefit the shelvers. We held several "Process Master" meetings, and I was curious to see what the results would be. To verify the shelvers were doing the job correctly, I recorded a title or Dewey number from each shelving area on the shelving

Figure 1: Key Steps Worksheet: Issue a Michigan City Resident Library Card

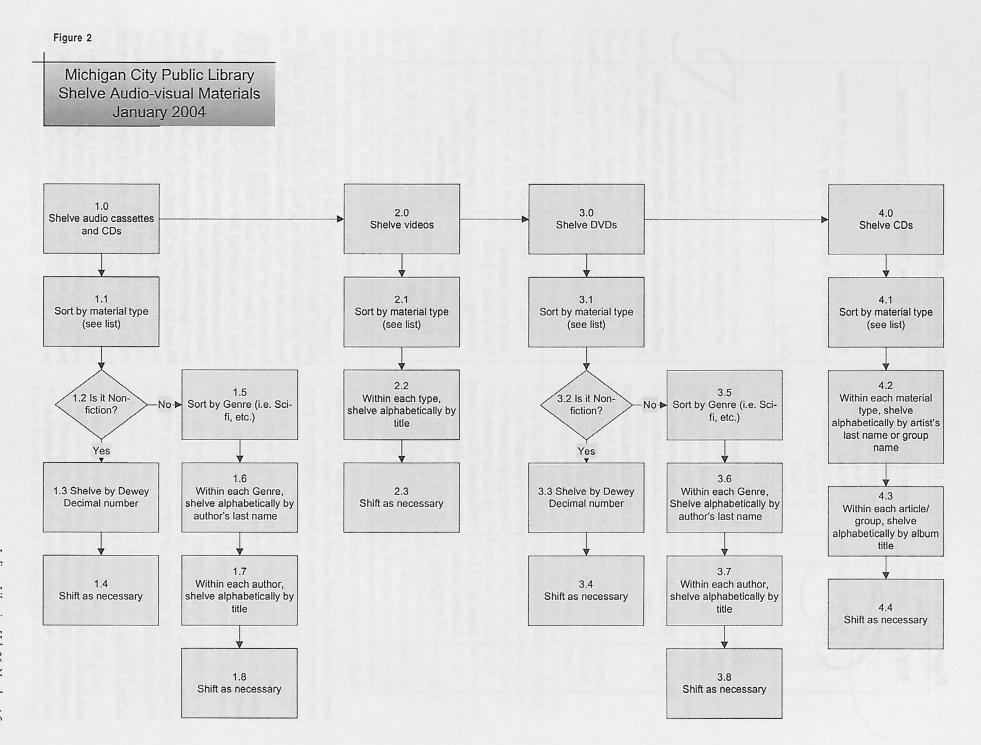| Step	Key Step Name	Best Known Way	Tricks of the Trade	Consequences
1	Request picture ID	Ask person for picture ID. Acceptable IDs: 1. Drivers license 2. School 3. Employment 4. Military 5. State 6. Passport	Ask that ID be removed from wallet.	Person will not receive library card.
2	Verify home address	Ask if address on ID is current. Acceptable proof of home address: 1. Utility bill 2. Pay stub. 3. Bank book 4. Check book 5. Car registration 6. Rent/lease receipt 7. Current tax receipt (for out-of-state property owners) 8. Voter registration card	ID/document verification must have name and address	Mail is returned to library. Wrong person gets library card.
3	Sign up children under 18 years old	Ask adults if they are: 1. Parent 2. Step-parent 3. Legal guardian *Exception: Grandparent (Stress grandparent will be held financially responsible for all materials and fines on child's card when signing up a child.)	Adult must have a library card in good standing: 1. Fines under $5. 2. Overdues: Nothing more than 2 weeks.	Library held legally and financially responsible.

carts. I then did a visual search to see where the book was shelved and if the area had been straightened. I kept a log of mis-shelved books (Figure 4).

I started to notice a drop in errors and was impressed with the difference between the "before average (mean) of nearly 16 and the new average (mean) of 2.4 errors (Figure 5).

Accurate shelving is a must. If a book is out-of-place, it's lost! I'm glad I was given the opportunity to be a part of Circs' meetings. Learning can come when you least expect it!"

CONCLUSION

Using the idea of uniformity to guide us, we have standardized many processes, ensuring that every staff member has a solid understanding and acceptance of each process. We hope to eventually have a complete Department Process Manual that any new employee can pick up, read, and successfully apply. It is nice to use our process meetings as a way to acclimate new staff members in the way a process is thought out and formulated, as well as providing them the environment to find their voice within a team dynamic. It's been five years since we started the program, and we are still doing new processes or revising old ones as needed. The techniques learned through "Continuous Improvement" have followed us into our daily lives. We don't fill out "A Charts" or "Flowcharts," but in our minds we're still doing the process. We think about our "Internal and External Customers" and the "Best Known Way" to do a task, and have shared this knowledge with family and friends. Donna Long, another original workshop member, has since moved out of state and is seeking employment with her local libraries. Who knows? The Process Master program may find another home!

Figure 2

Michigan City Public Library
Shelve Audio-visual Materials
January 2004

| 1.0 Shelve audio cassettes and CDs | → | 2.0 Shelve videos | → | 3.0 Shelve DVDs | → | 4.0 Shelve CDs |

1.0 Shelve audio cassettes and CDs

1.1 Sort by material type (see list)

1.2 Is it Non-fiction? —No→ **1.5** Sort by Genre (i.e. Sci-fi, etc.)

Yes

1.3 Shelve by Dewey Decimal number

1.4 Shift as necessary

1.6 Within each Genre, shelve alphabetically by author's last name

1.7 Within each author, shelve alphabetically by title

1.8 Shift as necessary

2.0 Shelve videos

2.1 Sort by material type (see list)

2.2 Within each type, shelve alphabetically by title

2.3 Shift as necessary

3.0 Shelve DVDs

3.1 Sort by material type (see list)

3.2 Is it Non-fiction? —No→ **3.5** Sort by Genre (i.e. Sci-fi, etc.)

Yes

3.3 Shelve by Dewey Decimal number

3.4 Shift as necessary

3.6 Within each Genre, Shelve alphabetically by author's last name

3.7 Within each author, shelve alphabetically by title

3.8 Shift as necessary

4.0 Shelve CDs

4.1 Sort by material type (see list)

4.2 Within each material type, shelve alphabetically by artist's last name or group name

4.3 Within each article/ group, shelve alphabetically by album title

4.4 Shift as necessary

Figure 2: Michigan City's process improvement team, left to right are: Marilyn Eddy, Mary Kempfer, Sarah Redden, Patricia Kemiel, and Barbara Miller.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mary Kempfer has been on the staff of the Michigan City Public Library for 10 years. She has also participated in "Breakthrough! Circulation" presentations at the 2005 ILF Conference in Indianapolis and the 2006 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago.

Figure 4: Shelf Reading Log				
Area Read		Date	Out of Order	Comments
Begin	End			
600 F428	613.5 B676c	5/5	12	
613.5 B676n 2001	615.822 H192	5/8	16	Fewer than I expected
615.822 W933r 2003	616.8589 H158d	5/9	9	
616.8589 P759o	618.6 R665n	5/13	17	Most in pregnancy books
618.76 S614d 2004	629.22234 M547p	5/20	25	
FICTION Abani, Chris	FICTION Austen, Jane	5/22	15	
629.223 G9593	635 Y39	5/27	27	Car books. One was three whole shelves out of place
635.029 S253h	636.6865 K83e	5/31	12	I lost count.
636.6865 L95c	641 W217g	6/1	16	Wasn't too bad til I got to fish/aquariums. Found two different books with same call number
641.013 B63a	641.5 S088	6/6	0	Once again, I overshot my section! Sorry!
FICTION Austenleigh, Joan	FICTION Bellows, Nathaniel	6/6	3	
FICTION Benaissa, Slimane	FICTION Bull, Bartle	6/12	1	
FICTION Bunckley, Anita R.	FICTION Cochran, Molly	6/19	3	
FICTION Codrescu, Andrei	FICTION Davis, Amanda	6/20	5	

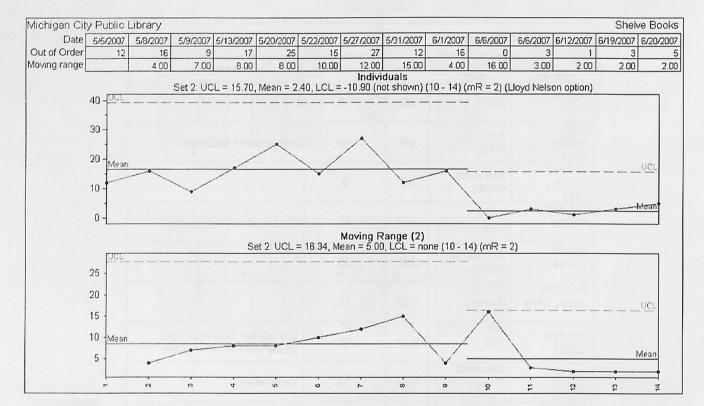| Date	5/5/2007	5/8/2007	5/9/2007	5/13/2007	5/20/2007	5/22/2007	5/27/2007	5/31/2007	6/1/2007	6/6/2007	6/6/2007	6/12/2007	6/19/2007	6/20/2007
Out of Order	12	16	9	17	25	15	27	12	16	0	3	1	3	5
Moving range		4.00	7.00	8.00	8.00	10.00	12.00	15.00	4.00	16.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00

Figure 5: Process behavior chart, showing 'before' and 'after' means and upper process units.