

# Buzz From The Transformational Café

*Hospitality*  
*Opportunity*  
*Visibility*



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# Buzz from the Transformational Café

The Transformational Café at the 2007 FOCUS! provided valuable insight into thoughts and feelings of MLS staff members. The overarching theme provided by the staff was becoming more proactive. Staff identified three ways in which our library system could become more proactive. They included hospitality, opportunity, and visibility.

MLS staff members found many of their most rewarding experiences to be the result of working with customers. They feel pride and value in the differences that they make in the lives of our customers, both external and internal. Staff members place a high priority on hospitality. They would like to see MLS staff offering outstanding customer service by smiling, greeting customers, and offering help. They would like to see libraries provide an environment more like retail bookstores including coffee, comfortable furniture, cozy, welcoming areas, and a collection arrangement that is easier to browse. They would like there to be spaces in libraries that focus on specific groups of customers such as teens, seniors, or the business community. Other suggestions included more parking, free parking downtown, drive through reserve pick up, information packets for new customers, and a virtual library with a librarian available 24/7 online.

The opportunity to make connections with customers, internal and external, and appreciation of diversity through cultures, system-wide growth, and learning also created some rewarding experiences for the MLS staff. The MLS staff would like to see special attention given to the opportunities available for staff and the MLS customers. They would like to see more opportunities to learn and develop through classes, programs, cross-training, and job shadowing/rotation. They would also enjoy seeing

opportunities for customers to learn through new programs and information. They would like to see better ways to recognize, encourage, and empower staff. Other suggestions included staff bonuses, offering more online books, and comparable benefits for part-time employees.

MLS staff recognizes the value of being a public resource and feels that it is important to be proactive in making the library visible in the community. MLS staff would like the library to have greater visibility through more advertising with bumper stickers, bus stops, billboards, and commercials. Libraries should be attractive and inviting, with better signage and displays. They would like the MLS website to virtually provide traditional library services and include social networks and services like IM reference. Staff would like to see more marketing of the library system with items like book bags, fans, pens, and library card key chains. Partnering and collaboration with schools and community organizations, and participation in local events like job fairs and parades were also addressed as areas for enhanced visibility. The staff feels that the library system should be proactive in marketing, outreach, and in the use of technology. The more visible we are, the more customers we can serve.

The concepts and suggestions provided by staff indicate their enthusiasm for and commitment to this library system and its future. It shows their desire to become an inviting, innovative link to the world by becoming more proactive through hospitality, visibility, and opportunities. More details on the comments from cafe participants can be found on the succeeding pages.

# Hospitality Buzz

## What MLS staff found rewarding

- ⇒ Building personal, long-term relationships with customers
- ⇒ Providing good customer service
- ⇒ Recognizing that the MLS is a huge part of some customers' lives
- ⇒ Helping people and being a positive part of their lives
- ⇒ Being present for lonely customers who like to visit and make friends
- ⇒ Locating materials for a customer that allowed him to reconnect with his memories from World War II
- ⇒ Connecting a customer in need with GED classes
- ⇒ Conducting a personal family history session that inspired a customer to write his own story
- ⇒ Attending FOCUS and being part of a large group of people all supporting and helping each other
- ⇒ Being a team member and building relationships with coworkers

## What MLS staff members would like to see

- ⇒ Separate spaces and welcoming places for all kinds of customers.
- ⇒ Quiet reading areas, area for seniors, teen areas, improved children's areas, areas for the business community, and computer areas
- ⇒ Dedicated YA librarians, programming (gaming) and separate YA computer areas.
- ⇒ Computer services more accessible to seniors such as larger print on website
- ⇒ Offer great customer service
- ⇒ Smiling staff
- ⇒ Greet customers at the door
- ⇒ Go to customers before they ask for help
- ⇒ Improved customer service attitude
- ⇒ Retrain existing employees in customer service
- ⇒ Library being a meeting place
- ⇒ More parking at all libraries and free parking for Downtown
- ⇒ Capitalize on the human element
- ⇒ Having a Café or free coffee
- ⇒ More attractive, comfortable, and cleaner furniture

- ⇒ Colored vests to identify who is a librarian
- ⇒ Offer some items for sale possibly sold by the Friends of the Library
- ⇒ Drive through service
- ⇒ Better use of space
- ⇒ Arrangement of the collection that is easier to browse
- ⇒ Mobile display cases
- ⇒ More online books
- ⇒ Better signs to guide people
- ⇒ Classes or programs available for kids during adult programs
- ⇒ Have a virtual library-- live chat, 24/7 librarians online or helpline
- ⇒ Information packet for new card members
- ⇒ Offer reading lists, instruction sheets, and pamphlets
- ⇒ Inform customers of behavior expected while they are in the library
- ⇒ Have monthly giveaways at each library
- ⇒ Provide a safer, more desirable environment
- ⇒ Roving librarians

# Opportunity Buzz

## What MLS staff found rewarding

- ⇒ Making a “connection”
- ⇒ Observing a Circulation Clerk converse in Turkish with a Russian woman seeking ESL classes
- ⇒ Bringing people from other countries to multi-cultural programs at the Library
- ⇒ Appreciating the diversity of our customers, staff, and libraries
- ⇒ Assisting a customer with their resume and seeing their resulting job opportunities
- ⇒ Partnering with other organizations to meet the community’s needs
- ⇒ Learning something new every day
- ⇒ Watching the system grow and develop
- ⇒ Witnessing the progression of technology
- ⇒ Being a team member and building relationships with coworkers
- ⇒ Seeing new employees become a part of the MLS and advance in the system
- ⇒ Accepting new positions - growing within a changing system

## What MLS staff members would like to see

- ⇒ Cross-training, job shadowing, and job rotation
- ⇒ More online books
- ⇒ Information packet for new card members
- ⇒ Classes or programs available for kids during adult programs
- ⇒ Ways to bridge the generation gap between seniors who don’t know how to use computers, but read and teens who know how to use computers, but don’t read
- ⇒ Provide training for employees on various topics not previously covered
- ⇒ Comparable benefits for part-time employees or opportunities to buy the health insurance plan.
- ⇒ Staff bonuses
- ⇒ Encourage and empower staff to develop new ideas for helping customers, making decisions, and volunteering
- ⇒ Ability to better recognize staff
- ⇒ Offer training programs for community outreach

# Visibility Buzz

## What MLS staff found rewarding

- ⇒ Recognizing that the MLS is a huge part of some customers' lives
- ⇒ Connecting children with the Library by being Spoticus
- ⇒ Conducting a personal family history session that inspired a customer to write his own story
- ⇒ Providing information and resources to those in need
- ⇒ Helping customers find information that impacts their life
- ⇒ Comprehending the sheer size and reach of the MLS

## What MLS staff members would like to see

- ⇒ Partnering with other organizations to meet the community's needs
- ⇒ More collaboration with the Zoo, Omniplex, and Smart Start
- ⇒ Have a corporate partner
- ⇒ Be visible at local events and in the community such as parades, a booth at the fair, etc.
- ⇒ Book passing or other large, community event
- ⇒ Outreach to schools and school field trips to the library
- ⇒ Provide a better and more useful website, one that helps deliver traditional library service as well as web 2.0 stuff such as wikis, blogs, and social networking
- ⇒ Have a virtual library-- live chat, 24/7 librarians online or helpline
- ⇒ Database Training for customers
- ⇒ Computer based instruction program that customers can access to guide them through the library on who to ask or where to look
- ⇒ Better signs that guide people
- ⇒ More advertising including bus stops, billboards, bumper stickers, TV advertising, or a dedicated library channel
- ⇒ Use of colors, signage, building, lighting, and landscaping
- ⇒ Add scrolling, flashing or informational signage visible to the public.
- ⇒ Staff being proactive promoting libraries at work and outside of work
- ⇒ Create a speakers bureau
- ⇒ Connect with families in our communities
- ⇒ Mobile display cases
- ⇒ The Library serving as a meeting place
- ⇒ Library programs offered at locations outside the library

- ⇒ Information for staff about the other departments and the overall library system
- ⇒ Information and training programs to help with community outreach
- ⇒ Provide materials and displays on library services that could be shared at schools, organizations, job fairs, and miscellaneous events
- ⇒ Place Info Magazine or flyers in different locations around the community
- ⇒ Emphasis that services are free, such as changing the name of the Info Magazine to "Free Library Programs and Entertainment"
- ⇒ Media of the Month spotlight
- ⇒ Offer Metro Library materials for customers such as book bags, fans, pens, etc.
- ⇒ Mini library card key rings
- ⇒ Did you Know? Campaign
- ⇒ Add a café