

GROUP 3 PLANNERS LLC

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3 more tidbits....

- Trivia: There are 15,872 public libraries in the US, more than all the McDonald's restaurants!
- Just ten years ago, the top 3 Public Library Issues included: money, technology and internet policy. The top 3 Public Library Technology Issues included: staff training, speed of change, space for new technology. Some things haven't really changed at all! For more information, go to http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/pubs/lib_issues.pdf
- Did you know that if you lay out your library so that 90% of the seating areas have daylight and views as a major component that you qualify for a LEED for Commercial Interiors V2 point? Besides, it is the right thing to do!

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just 3 things...

1– The "Q" Factor

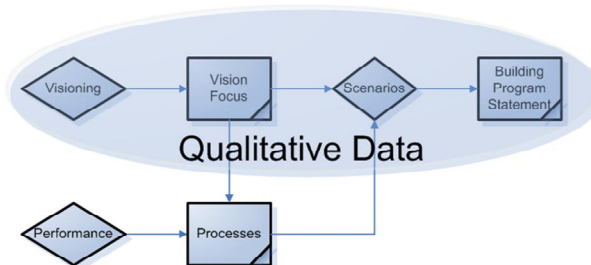
In this case, "Q" does not stand for Quartos, nor does it call to mind that character "Q", all-knowing and most-irritating, from *Star Trek, The Next Generation*. This time "Q" stands for "Qualitative" data. This however, is not your everyday Qualitative data. In these two words may lie the nuggets of understanding or the leap of insight that may be responsible for changing your library from a good library to an exceptional library. Interested?

You may ask "What is the difference between quantitative (that other "q" word) and Qualitative?" Quantitative data measures, counts, mostly looks at the recent or not-so-recent past. Often quantitative questions ask about the performance of the library, the degree of "like" of programs or services. Sometimes at the end of a survey question the respondee will see the word "other", which is *the door* to Qualitative data. Here is where the patron may mention that "it would be nice to have....". Aha! That is the glint of a nugget of understanding. Most often qualitative data is pursued in focus groups, where mining for good information becomes an art form. Now that "nice to have...." statement can be explored for depth, context and group support.



Qualitative data looks for needs and solutions to problems that do not exist today. It may focus on a vision of services and responses to life styles that are dimly understood now, but that may become a pivotal service for the library of the future. The follow-up question would then be "What kind of spaces will be needed to support this new service?" Bottom line, this kind of qualitative data will be key to deciding what to do today with your library: how to position it to take advantage of this new service, and how to modify the delivery of services to be flexible and able to accommodate the changes that are anticipated. Exciting stuff!

Looking back into the corporate world I came from, I remember planning for facility strategies to last for the next 10, 20 and even 30 years. In the 1980's, that changed drastically and the 90's confirmed and established the new norm: planning is critical, update the plan every year and above all BE FLEXIBLE. The library's context is its community. To the extent that the community is connected to the wider world, even on a global basis, that community is changing, too. How, then, can a library that is committed to meeting the needs of its community (and those words are in all those library mission statements out there!) not be flexible, not be looking to the future, not be mining for qualitative data?



How do you mine for qualitative data? It is a key factor in the Needs Assessment process, which permeates each step of the process. It is important to know where we have been (quantitative), but it is more important to know where we are going (qualitative).

- Sharon Rowlen, Principal



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Talk to Us!

Please let us know of any topics you are especially interested in, or if you would like to contribute an article.

We hope that you will view this newsletter as another way to share information with the library community.

Your comments are always welcome and appreciated!

Libris DESIGN Training

We have reached the minimum class size of six. If you are interested in obtaining Libris DESIGN software, please e-mail Sharon Rowlen at srowlen@group3planners.com. A 2-day training class (required to receive software) will be scheduled in October, 2008.

More information about Libris DESIGN is available at www.group3planners.com.

The Libris DESIGN project is supported by the US Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered in California by the State Librarian.

2—What's New at NEOCON?



NEOCON is the annual commercial new furniture show held in Chicago every June. This year, we found some very interesting pieces that may find their way into some of the libraries we design. We look for functional pieces, but also special furniture and finishes that will give a library a special look.



Lighting
Textiles
Shape
Retro

Fun furniture for children, colorful perches for teens, chairs with ottomans for adults and their laptops...and cool OPAC stations for IT folks, too!



Sharon Rowlen, Principal





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G3P at ALA!

G3P participated in:

A Panel Sponsored by the
Research Council

Your Library Is

Your Space...

*using research methods to make
our libraries people spaces*

A handout
of the slides
of that presentation
is available at the
G3P web site

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3—How It's Done...Or, How to Evaluate Library Processes

The Discovery Channel program, "How It's Made," fascinates me. The steps taken to manufacture a product always include consideration of efficiency, return on investment (ROI), ergonomics and safety. When I assess a library process, I use the same concerns in my "How It's Done" evaluation.

Let's look at a sampling of library processes that may need to be evaluated and improved in your library, and apply these critical evaluation considerations.

Book Returns: Efficiency

The key concern here is how often a book is handled before it's finally back on the shelf. Think of your process. Do the books go directly from the return bins to a cart, then onto a shelf for sorting, then back onto a cart to be taken to the public shelves? Or do the books go right onto book carts labeled for sorting and then directly to the public shelves, thereby gaining efficiency?

Would more space for book carts help to make your process more efficient? Would the use of staff pages to shelve materials during high return times alleviate the need for the additional step?

Circulating DVDs: ROI

DVDs are high use items that perhaps require more care and protection than is worthwhile. If the goal is to provide an attractive collection of DVDs for the public to check out, then the question is, "How much money should be spent to protect the DVDs you have versus how many more DVDs can be purchased if so much money wasn't spent on protecting the DVD's?"

Consider the expenses of protecting against theft.

- Adding expensive locking cases to hold the DVDs takes additional paid staff time to process and requires even more expensive space and furniture to house in storage until time to use them.
- Placing the empty DVD boxes on circulating shelves requires patrons to ask paid staff for assistance. The staff is taken from assisting other patrons to get the actual DVDs from behind the circulation desk, where valuable space and additional costly shelving are used to house the unboxed DVDs. And what about the extra costs for processing both empty boxes and the DVDs?
- Security gates cost big bucks both in purchase and in maintenance. Using gates may deter many patrons, but not those who seriously want to steal DVDs. Also, consider if the loss of DVD's mainly through theft from the shelves or theft through non-return of the DVDs.

Processing Collections: Ergonomics and Safety

From the moment the collection materials are delivered to your door to when they are shelved, ergonomics and safety need to be considered. Ask yourself some key questions:

How can the delivery be best handled? Is the receiving door automated for ease of use?

Is a lowered counter provided for directly unloading heavy boxes onto? Is the counter also at the right height for unpacking those same boxes directly onto a book cart?

Are spaces for parking book carts in an orderly manner provided so staff does not need to wind their way through the confusion of book cart storage?

When using the book carts at desks, can they be positioned immediately next to and slightly in front of the staff person to alleviate excessive torso turning? Is the book cart on the correct side of the desk to allow for proper work?

Are plenty of book carts or, secondarily shelves, available for storing items waiting for processing? Or is there a plan to bring in extra staff help to get items moving when storage room is no longer available? If a box does happen to be placed on the floor, how temporarily will it stay there and is it clearly out of any walkways?

These are just a few of the many library processes that can be examined. The next time you walk through your library, especially in the staff areas, stop to check "How It's Done" and start considering efficiency, ROI, ergonomics and safety.



Beth Hager, G3P Network Member