

Shop Your Way to Service Excellence: Secret Shopping for Academic Libraries

A. Kathy Bradshaw

Kathryn M. Crowe

University of North Carolina at Greensboro

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About UNC Greensboro

- Public University
- University of North Carolina system
- Total enrollment – 17,500
 - Undergraduate – 14,300
 - Graduate - 3200

University Libraries



- Walter Clinton Jackson Library
- Harold Schiffman Music Library
- 1.2 million book volumes
- 37,000+e-subscriptions
- 500 databases
- Open 24/5
- Approximately 100 faculty and staff
- Approximately 100 student workers

What is Mystery Shopping?

In a mystery shopping exercise, a proxy acts as a shopper and then rates his/her experience, based on criteria provided by the employer. The data gathering should evaluate general service quality and performance goals reflective of the institution's mission.

Weidinger, Elizabeth, Candice Benjes-Small, Eric Ackermann, and Virginia R. Kinman.
“Why and How to Shop Your Reference Desk.” *Reference Services Review* (2010) Vol 38, No 1.
p 38.

Previous Assessment of Public Services

- High scores in 2008 LibQual+ but...
- Qualitative data indicated there were issues at the service desks
- Desired more in-depth assessment of services

Initial Outcomes & Actions 2010

- Develop customer service values.
- Conduct mystery shopping in the Libraries.
- Determine if training needed based on mystery shopping results.
- Repeat mystery shopping exercise to determine impact (if any) of training.

Procedure

- Created a survey team
 - Associate Dean for Public Services
 - Human Resources Librarian
 - Assessment Analyst
- Staff not given specific dates of event
- Requested sample questions from public services department heads and survey team.
- Included in-person, phone and chat services

Protocol

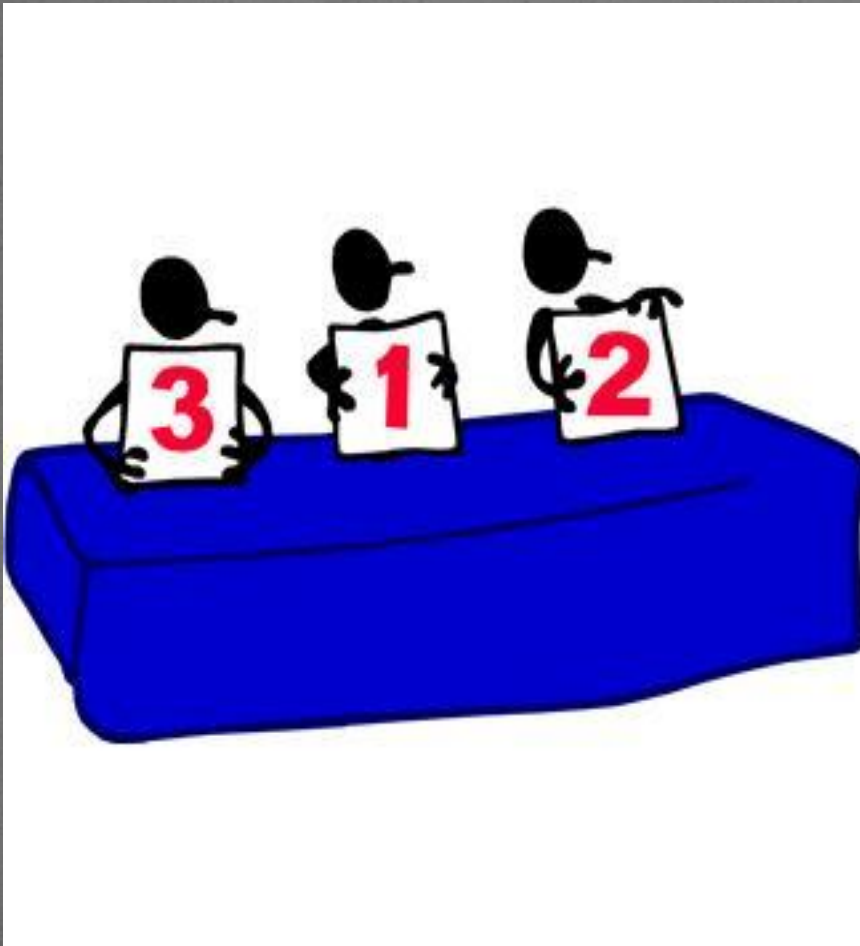


- Focused only on customer service *experience*
- Recruited “shoppers” from UNCG Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management
- Conducted training for student shoppers
- Protected anonymity of staff

Types of Assessment Conducted

Reference Desk	Access Services	Music Library
In Person	In Person	In Person
Telephone	Telephone	Telephone
Chat		

Criteria



- Devised custom rating sheet for shoppers to score each interaction.
- Provided criteria for each interaction
- Evaluation based on behavior reflecting customer service values

What did we assess?

Rating 1 - 3

- Greeting
- Appropriate follow up
- Confirming satisfaction
- Appropriate referrals

Yes/No

- Respect
- Avoidance of jargon
- Did we go the extra mile?

Initial results 2010

Behavior	Average rating (1= Poor, 2=Satisfactory, 3=Very good) n=40
	2010
Greeting	2.71
Follow up	2.24
Confirmed satisfaction	1.68
Referral	2.73

Initial results 2010

Yes/No questions	% Yes n=40
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2010

Treated with respect	97%
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97%

Avoided jargon	92%
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92%

Went the extra mile	36%
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36%

Follow Up to Initial Assessment

- Overall results shared with all staff at meetings and posted on assessment LibGuide.
- Departmental results shared with heads.
- Public service “standards” developed.
- Training developed.

Customer Service Training

- Training provided for all library staff Summer 2011
- Emphasis on both internal and external service providers
- Training videos created for student workers and LibGuide developed

Improvement!

Behavior	Average rating (1= Poor, 2=Satisfactory, 3=Very good) n=40		N=70
	2010	2012	
Greeting	2.71	2.76	
Follow up	2.24	2.73	
Confirmed satisfaction	1.68	2.44	
Referral	2.73	2.84	

Improvement!

Yes/No questions	% Yes n=40	N=70
	2010	2012
Treated with respect	97%	97%
Avoided jargon	92%	92%
Went the extra mile	36%	59% (no=61)

Outcomes

- Gained informed evidence of service quality
- Staff learned about available services they did not know existed.
- Staff were able to focus on helping each other solve special concerns.
- Helped enhance “culture” of excellent customer service

Lessons Learned

- Challenges of working with college students
- Step delicately
- No, we are not Barnes & Noble, but...
- Students may need to have more than general knowledge to ask questions of specialized service points such as the Music Library and Special Collections.

Next Steps

- 2012 LibQual+
- Task Force to study service points.
- Repeat training if task force recommends reorganization of service points.
- Skills enhancement
- New staff attend customer service training offered by University Human Resources.

Helpful links

- Customer Service Skills LibGuide
 - <http://uncg.libguides.com/customerservice>
- Customer Service Values
 - http://library.uncg.edu/info/mission_statement.aspx

Questions

