Lost Books Project

- Problems: Lost items remained in “lost” status too long. Disappointed patrons had to wait for needed items that were “Lost” or “Not on Shelf” (NOS). Time-consuming staff procedures included non-value added steps and paper shuffling.
- Goal: Have more efficient lost book process and Search & Notify procedures leading to a more accurate, useful catalog and more timely delivery of materials.
- Changes in practice: Interlibrary loan made available for lost, missing, and overdue items. Search & Notify requests and NOS items entered immediately into Excel to eliminate paper, filing, etc. Use of computer tablet and spreadsheet on a shared drive streamlined many steps and eliminated duplication of work. Items are replaced or removed from catalog within 3-4 months instead of 6 months (or more).
- Results: Eliminated years-long backlog of lost items in the catalog. Systematic approach improves communication among staff. Long-overdue items are recovered more quickly. Lost items are billed more quickly. Fewer non-value-added activities result in less faculty and staff effort and saved resources.

Lost book process: BEFORE

Lost book process: AFTER

Lost book project process: BEFORE

Lost book project process: AFTER

Lost Book Circulation System

Laptop Circulation Project

- Problems: Laptops often returned late. Frequent turn-aways because laptops were not available. Laptops often not working well. Tag-team checkouts by pairs of patrons limited the availability to broader group of users.
- Goal: Provide short-term access to well-functioning laptops to as many people as possible.
- Changes in Practice: Staff run through maintenance checklist when laptop is returned and send for repairs as needed. A new tracking system ensures that laptops are also updated monthly.
- Change in Policy: Dramatically increased the fine for overdue laptops.
- Results: Laptops function much better overall and are returned on time making them available to more patrons. Laptop turn-aways are tracked to help assess the service.

Laptop checkout form: BEFORE

Laptop checkout form: AFTER

Laptop Circulation Project timeline: August 2015 - January 2016

References and Resources


Lean Enterprise Institute. http://www.lean.org/WhatsLean/

Neal, Dennis. Everything I Know About Lean, I Learned in First Grade. Cambridge: Lean Enterprise Institute, 2008.


Look for Problems and Find Opportunities: Lean in Your Library

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Abstract

Introducing Lean

A set of tools A methodology A culture A Journey

Lean is:

- Focuses the work of the organization on what is valued by the patron (or customer, patient, stakeholder)
- Engages participants in an indepth critical analysis of processes and procedures
- Systematically improves the flow of work and eliminates “wastes”

Lean Principles:

- Focus on customer’s view of value
- Every step adds value, reduces waste
- Processes flow efficiently for customers and those doing the work
- Just-in-time processes/practices
- Continual review

A Lean Review:

- Involves those doing the work and outside eyes
- Can be messy
- Requires careful scoping of the problem
- Reveals complexity, even in simple processes
- Begins with initial training for all library staff

Benefits:

- Sets up clear standards to assess progress
- Documents procedures in detail, including systematic updates
- Changes the work culture
  - Reduces barriers between staff and librarians
  - Encourages staff to think differently about the work they do
  - Empowers staff at all levels to address problems

Common Types of Waste in Libraries:

- Defects or Poor Quality
  - Equipment not performing well
  - Catalog not accurately showing what we own
- Waiting
  - Patron waits for needed materials
  - Staff waiting to resolve bottlenecks
- Motion
  - Excess filling, moving paper from place to place
  - Moving people or items more than necessary
- Overprocessing
  - Unnecessary paper or forms
  - Redundant steps
  - Inefficient processes

A Lean Review:

- Involved those doing the work and outside eyes
- Can be messy
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A culture of having no problems is a problem!