With a Single-Service Desk
at UMSL Libraries:

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Decisions, Decisions!

• Background: Retirements, budget cuts required the merge.
• Research studies
  • Blended service points
  • The good, the bad, and the ugly
• Organizational Changes
  • Cultural
  • Structural
• Factors Impacting Decisions and Results
Strategic Planning

• 2013: Strategic Planning Committee began to research merging the Library’s service desks.

• Literature review of this possibility.

• Spoke with local libraries that had shared service desks.

• Designed a mock schedule for staffing the Desk, including librarians, staff and student workers.

• Compiled a report of recommendations to the Dean of Libraries.
Compiling the Data: Before & After Merge

• Challenge:
  • Difference in how Reference and Circulation recorded statistics before the merge.

• Paper vs. Online statistical tracking

• Going Forward
  • How stats are compiled after the merge.
Retirements,
Moving On =
Decisions

• 2015: Library Dean charged the Projects Committee to “just do it”.

• Patrons found it confusing about which desk to go to for service.

• Researched the options for merging service desks.

• Began the process.
UMSL Thomas Jefferson Library

- Previous set-up of Reference Desk
- Next to computer lab
- Far away from Library entrance
Two Library-wide meetings were held to gain input from all departments, especially those affected.
The Projects Committee visited UMKC Library to consider how they combined their service desks.
Using the location of existing Circulation Desk is the most logical arrangement.

- Reserves, ILL, MOBIUS materials, laptops already housed in Circulation Area
- Plenty of room for (weeded) Ready Reference
- Close to Security gates
- If Desk placed on other side of lobby, expense to move data ports and electrical would be too high.
- Reference Librarians and Circulation Staff began shadowing and cross-training.
  - Helped build rapport and work out the kinks.
Old Reference Desk

**Project Budget:**
$50,000
Came in under
$35,000

Creative
Re-Purposing
- Demolished old Desk.
- Re-purposed shelving to the Acquisitions Dept.
- Found pieces of carpet to replace old carpet.
move electric to 10" from end of wall

2' overhang

7 1/2" overhang

159

2 roll around file cabinets
Function and needs addressed in the second Library-wide meeting.
It was determined that the architectural drawing jutted too far out, interfering with foot traffic flow (egress).
NOT the scene of a crime!

But this is how the Projects Committee determined how far out the new desk could be placed, while allowing easy egress.
New Floor Plan
Demolition & Construction Time Table

- Project began Dec. 28, 2015
- Project Completed Jan. 15, 2016

- Working with campus Facilities Services – they found new bits of carpet for us to use.
  - More Re-Purposing
Circulation sign painted over →

Because of bright lobby lighting, overhead lighting for Desk not needed (more dollars saved!)
The prominent position in the front of the lobby, and the color-changing LED under the counter, helps draw patrons to the new Public Services Desk.
Bridging the Gap: Effect on Patrons & Library Staff

• Previously, patrons confused which person to ask for help.
• In time, our “regulars” quickly knew who was a librarian, staff member, student worker.
• Patrons HAPPY with arrangement.
• Librarians & Library Staff work fewer weekend shifts (HAPPY).
• Reduced time on Desk allows Librarians to focus on other tasks: collection development, library instruction, research consultations, special projects.
THANK YOU!!

Questions??

UMSL LIBRARIES

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