INFO 285 Week 7 Discussion Post 1: Customer Feedback

I think issues dealing with responding to patrons complaints and compliments should be considered first when developing an assessment program. In previous weeks we have discussed the importance of an adaptive, continually improving library or organization to stay relevant and valuable in the lives of those who work there and to the patrons served by the library or organization. This requires focusing on the needs of patrons (or in other words customers). Removing friction for patrons to voice their compliments as well as complaints is an important first step for an organization to shift towards patron-centered service. "Responsive organizations make complaining easy" (Hernon and Altman, 2010, p. 67). It should be easy for patrons to voice their discontent in writing and online. Establishing a regular system that allows for patrons to provide feedback helps build patron confidence in the library. Confident patrons lead to satisfied patrons which in turn can lead to loyal patrons (Hernon and Altman, 2010, p. 81).

Another aspect of the focus on establishing a customer feedback system (complaints and compliments) is to work with library staff to assess where they stand in relation to patron feedback. Asking question like:

- How are complaints perceived by staff and leaders in the library?

- How do staff respond to patron complaints?

- Are staff excited to respond to customer complaints and compliments?

- What is a department already doing to listen to the voice of the patron?

Asking and answering these types of questions can help motivate staff and leaders to assess where they are in regard to serving patrons and what improvements can be made to take their service to the next level. The common mantra with customer relations that the custom is always right (and therefore must be given whatever they ask for when they ask for it) doesn't work all

the time and should instead be replaced with carefully calibrating expectations of what the library or organization staff and leadership can and will do to serve patrons as well as identifying areas where patrons' complaints won't be addressed and why the library can't help (Hernon and Altman, 2010, p. 72).

References

Hernon, P. & Altman, E. (2010). *Assessing service quality: Satisfying the expectations of library customers*. Chicago: American Library Association.