

Lessons Learned

Transferable Skills

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Notes from the presentation are included on separate slides that were not part of the original presentation.



Foundation in Retail

Customer Focused

Team Driven

Overview

The focus of my portion of this panel presentation will be on the lessons I learned at ProQuest and how I have transferred these skills into my liaison librarian duties

Red Deer
College,
Instructor

ProQuest

University of
Saskatchewan,
Engineering
Librarian

BEFORE M.L.I.S.

AFTER M.L.I.S.

Graduated 2012

Timeline

I want to take a couple of moments to talk about my background and past work experience. My first professional job was at Red Deer College as an instructor in the theatre program. I was then hired at ProQuest to offer training in the K12 market in 2001. My territory while at ProQuest was initially Canada and then expanded to include the North Eastern United States in 2008.

In 2009 I started to suspect that I may be laid off in the near future. I was worried because I had no formal library training, but knew that I loved working in this environment, and with librarians and teachers. With this in mind, I began to pursue my M.L.I.S. at Wayne State University as there were no online programs offered in Canada at that time. Wayne State University is relatively close to Toronto and I could easily attend the one-day in-person orientation that was required of entering students. Unfortunately, I was laid off later that year so good call on starting school and I spent the next 7 months immersed in my studies. After three semesters at WSU and some gentle prodding from my husband, I was ready to re-enter the workforce and targeted my search specifically on the University of Saskatchewan. I started in the Engineering Library as the Branch Supervisor in September 2010 and then transported my office via book-truck across the library to become the librarian in May of 2012 upon completing my degree. So now that you know a bit about me... let's turn to what I learned at ProQuest and how I apply those skills in my work as a librarian.

The image shows the word "OPEN" written in large, bold, white chalk on a black chalkboard. Below it, the words "for business" are written in a smaller, cursive white chalk script. The overall aesthetic is that of a hand-drawn message on a chalkboard.

Customer Service

Image by opensourceway via Flickr Creative Commons License. - See more at: <http://katenasser.com/tag/ultimate-customer-service/#sthash.hCgpbsbJ.dpuf>

Customer Service

One of the first things that I usually say when I am conducting an information literacy session is “if you remember only one thing from today, please make it that I am always happy to help”. For me, customer service means being that friendly person in the library that students feel comfortable approaching with questions or concerns. It also means to me that you are accessible when they need you and that you follow up promptly. That is one of my key takeaways from life working at a vendor. You need to follow up immediately, always. Even if you don’t have an answer, follow up and say you are working on it. The benefit for me is that it helps me to stay organized. The benefit for the client is that they are not waiting for a response. I believe people genuinely appreciate the attention and care associated with an immediate response. I even follow up after I have responded, perhaps a week later, to see how my solution worked for them or if they need any further assistance.

A blue brick wall with a white sign that says "HELLO my name is". The sign is rectangular with rounded corners and is mounted on the wall. The text is in a simple, sans-serif font. The word "HELLO" is in all caps and is larger than "my name is".

HELLO
my name is

Just Ask?

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Just Ask

This is a second takeaway from ProQuest that has translated beautifully into my work as a liaison. You have to be willing to put yourself out there. You need to be able to make connections, meet new people and form partnerships. I acknowledge that this can be very difficult. I find that I often struggle at the intersection between introverted and extroverted. When I am feeling on the shy side, I try to remind myself that the ultimate goal is helping my community of users and therefore I have to go out and find them.

Another point here – I don't usually say no. For example this past week a faculty member from the College of Engineering asked me to create a library template for Blackboard. I don't know how to do this at the moment, but I said yes anyways. So you can guess what I will be doing tomorrow. Because of this I have made many partnerships with faculty members. They know I am willing to help them, so they ask!



Hecklers

Image Creative Commons License. - See more at: <http://blogs.e-rockford.com/applesauce/2013/06/05/heckling-is-not-free-speech-even-when-the-hecklers-are-on-my-side-of-the-political-spectrum/#axzz332Gsk7kQ>

Hecklers

When I worked for ProQuest the majority of my job involved traveling to libraries across Canada to share information about one or more of our database solutions. I was an invited guest, and truly believed that the audience had the choice to listen to me or not. Of course I always tried to make the presentation interesting enough that the audience would be engaged in the material I had to share. Yet from time to time, I would encounter hecklers. These individuals could be unhappy with the product, or had a bad experience of some kind with the company or simply didn't want to be there. I learned the most about presenting from these people. I had to learn to think on my feet. I had to know the materials inside and out so that I was prepared to answer almost any question. If I was stumped, I would provide sincere feedback for their concerns and/or a promise of follow up. And back to the point that I made earlier – I always tried to follow up as quickly as possible.

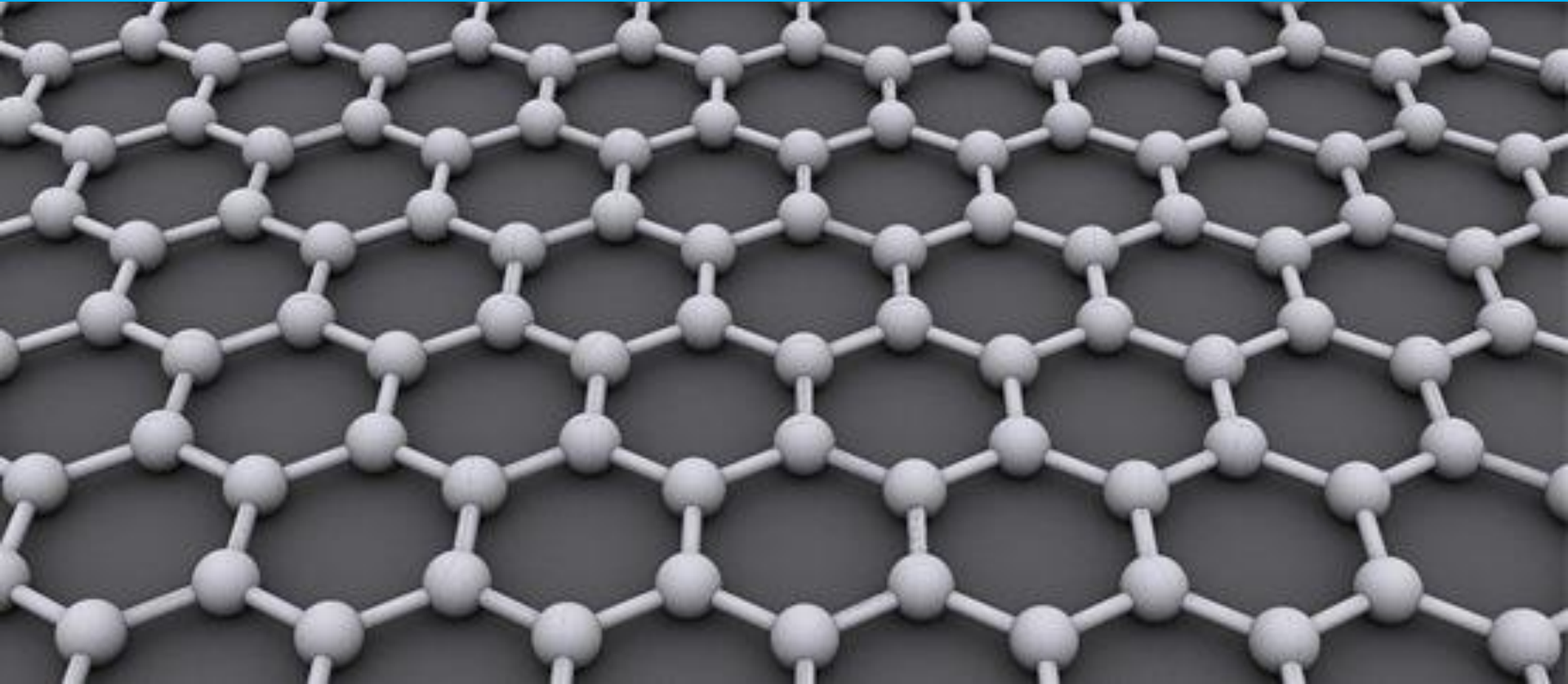
TIME LINE

CUSTOMER SERVICE

COLLABORATION

TEAM SUCCESS

ATTITUDE



Collaboration

Creative Commons Image found at: <http://www.bu.edu/cas/magazine/fall12/santander/>

Collaboration

At ProQuest, I was part of several working groups. The K12 sales team, the Canadian sales team, and the K12 training and development team. A client could potentially be contacted by inside sales, an outside sales rep, a trainer, someone from technical support and on and on. If we did not track connections made with this individual, we would likely annoy them very quickly. Fortunately we tracked that information. The when, where and what... Did the client have a question, problem or concern, what was it and how it was resolved. The benefit of this practice is no one owns the information, it is shared collectively and anyone can pick up where you left off.

With my team in the Engineering Library, we share a file of reference queries and how the question was resolved. We also share project documents so that we can all benefit from shared knowledge and shared responsibility. We have a brief check-in every morning on individual projects. This concept transitions nicely into the topic for the next slide which is team success.

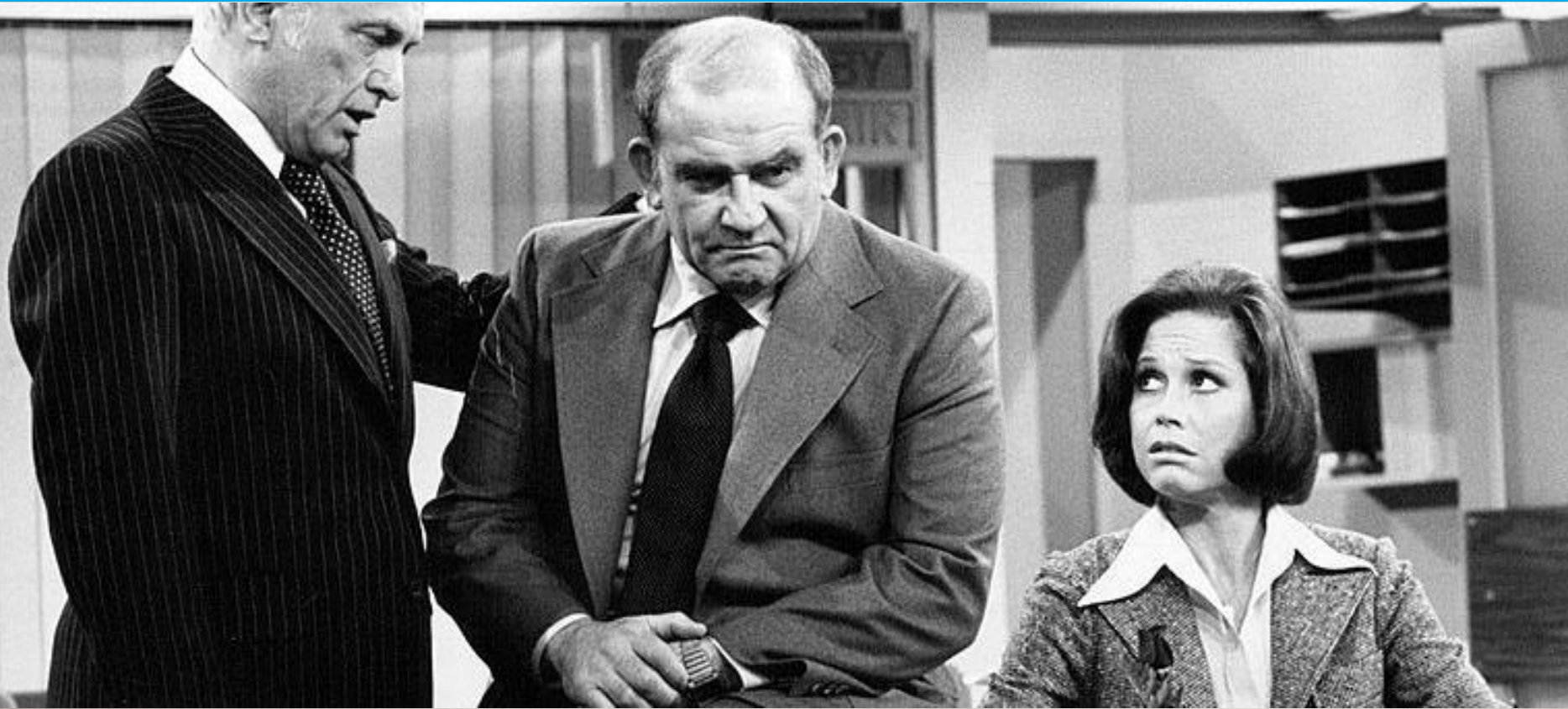


Keys to Success

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Team Work

Sharing knowledge and responsibility in my opinion removes ego from the equation. If all team members feel mutual trust and respect for one another than they will work more successfully as a team. They can capitalize on their individual strengths, maximizing the contributions of the whole. In application while I was at ProQuest, the team that I worked on each person had highly specialized roles; so the organizational structure provided the role definition. We all worked together cohesively to provide each client with the best possible service.



Attitude

1977. Layoffs in the news room. Mary Tyler Moore show. CBS TV/US PD: pub. photo/date/Commons.wikimedia.org

Attitude

No job is 100% secure anymore. At many organizations or institutions, there is a constant threat of being let go. Like I mentioned earlier, I was laid off from a job that I loved.

How have I coped? How do I muddle through the current reality of academic libraries, with ongoing term positions and feelings of uncertainty?

I have always tried to have the attitude that I will work until I am told otherwise. And I will ensure that they will miss me after I am gone. Most of that is about attitude. I am not saying that it is easy, and I am not saying that I don't worry, or get depressed or think twice about buying a new vehicle – but what I am saying is that if I love my job, that passion for the job and for the people that I work with, doesn't falter.



SUMMARY

All I needed to know, I learned
at _____

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