Does a *WOW* need to be *BIG*?

By Robin Beck

Late last summer, Mary Case introduced the Library staff to a *W.O.W.* (way of work) that is positive rather than negative. Really it’s just a visual word cue to remind us that we are trying to be more user-friendly and user-centric.

Oxford English dictionary gives us this definition of *WOW*: To make enthusiastic, to impress or excite greatly (esp. an audience).

It doesn’t say the *WOW* has to be big or grand or expensive. It just has to strike a chord with the audience. And we all know that our budgets don’t allow us to make the big or grand or expensive *WOW* gesture very often. But can we do something small but thoughtful that can give our users a *WOW* moment? I think we can and I hope we are.

We are being encouraged to think outside the box. To pay attention to those stray comments we hear when we’re walking by the study tables. Look at our surroundings like we are seeing them for the first time as a user OR the twentieth time as a user.

At LHS-U there is a small bulletin board located in a center area of the library.

Every month a new display would be created. Every month a few students might stop and look at it. But then a staff member was asked if we could post the M1 student schedule somewhere in the library. And he listened to them and converted this bulletin board into a permanent display of the class schedule. And now a lot of students stop by and look at that board. It’s a small *WOW* but one the students appreciate. And it also gave the staff a break from having to come up with new displays (at least for that bulletin board) and to focus on other areas that gave a bigger return on our time investments.
And then there are the small things that can be overlooked but would be easy to do.

I pass this sign probably 15 times a day and so do many students and other staff members.

I made this sign 10+ years ago. It was a fine sign then. Now it’s a little sad. Sometimes I notice it; sometimes it’s just “there”. But I want to update it. Make it fresh. Not so wrinkly. Will that have a big **WOW** factor? Maybe not. But it might catch someone’s eye once it’s been changed and they’ll stop thinking of how worn out that slide cabinet sign looks. (and thanks to LIBQUAL we know they notice things)

And I’ll know that I took 5 minutes to show that our staff does care about the Library and how it looks.

These are just two examples. I have the ability to make small positive **WOW**s around my library space. Most of the Library staff may never be the ones to cut the ribbon on a brand new library but we can be the ones to stop every so often and do a small thing that makes the Library just a little bit brighter, a little more user-friendly, a little less dingy, and a little more like the place we all dream it can be.

So when you get that email asking you to take a Library survey, please take a few minutes to fill it out. We are listening. And if you make a comment to a staff member, know that it may be working its way to the person who can change that into a **WOW**.

Give us a chance. We’re working on **WOWing** you.

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