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Diving Into Assessment: LibQUAL+(TM) as a Springboard

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**LibQUAL+™ 2005: Identified 3 Main Issues**

**Focus Groups & Detailed Analysis → 12 Recommendations**

- **A successful process improvement study depends, in large part, on:**
  - discovering customer expectations
  - analyzing where and why the process falls short of those expectations
  - creating and implementing solutions so the process will meet or exceed customer expectations.” (Phipps, 2001)

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**Describing the Pool**

University of Lethbridge:
- One of four publicly funded universities in Alberta, Canada
- Student population c. 8,000 FTE, across three campuses
- Liberal education background, relatively new and growing graduate focus
- Medium sized urban setting, local agricultural economy
- Has the only academic research library in Southern Alberta

**Challenging discovery customer expectations**

& Phipps, 2004)

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- Liberal education background; relatively new and growing graduate focus

- A learning from the library as a "public good”

- ...seeking data that allow questioning of deeply held assumptions that shape current views, biases, and internal perceptions—can keep libraries in touch with reality. … It is important to attain this grasp of reality in order to learn how to change with and for customers.” (Phipps, 2001)

- “Some staff think that by utilizing new measures that are customer-focused, libraries will be driven to 'just do what the customers say' or be driven by a business model focused on competition and the bottom line”. … Research libraries have a shared vision. … Listening to this vision should inform what is learned from customers.” (Phipps, 2001)

- **Fear, Suspicion and Lack of Trust**

  - “There is an underlying fear that expectations may develop that cannot be met.” (Phipps, 2001)

  - Measurement should not be feared as a potential tool for blame and punishment but should be embraced as a means of demonstrating success or learning of the need to change strategies.” (Lakos & Phipps, 2004)

  - “Assessment cannot be seen as a separate 'management activity' but must be appreciated and valued by all members of the culture and assumed to be part of their regular work…” if organizations are serious about change, they need to invest in the development of new skills to sustain it.” (Lakos & Phipps, 2004)

  - **Leadership**

    - Leadership is essential for assessment work to succeed. Leaders must have a clear performance ethic ...be visibly and continuously committed to assessment work ... understand its importance to the success of the organization. …show evidence of utilizing assessment and evaluation data ... need to encourage risk-taking ... continuously articulate the organization’s purpose … engage in meaningful strategic dialog within the organization ... develop incentive programs that support cultural change.” (Lakos & Phipps, 2004)

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**References**


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**Taking the Plunge**

**LibQUAL+™ 2005**

**Focus Groups & Detailed Analysis → 12 Recommendations**

**Positive Feedback Presentation Opportunities Improved Conversations with University Community Reinforcement for Projects Underway Budgetary Justification Articulating Initial Performance Indicators Opportunities to set Future Directions**

- “...traditional input and output data ... are meaningful data, but the more purposeful, effective data these days are outcomes and performance measures that show what good libraries do and how they perform given their human and financial resources.” (Covey, 2005)

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**References**

- Phipps, S. (2001). Beyond measuring service quality: learning from the voices of the customer, the staff, the processes, and the organization. Library Trends. 49(4), 635-661.