

# MATERIAL MATTERS

U N I Q U E M A N A G E M E N T S E R V I C E S , I N C .

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*Library Specialists*

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## Being of Service

By Nicole Atkins  
Chief Operating Officer

**M**ost of us are very busy everyday. It starts when we arrive at work and keeps us jumping until we hit the road to head home. In many cases, the modern business practice of running 'lean and mean' requires that we do the work of multiple people. It seems there is no time for anything other than to keep ahead of the avalanche of demands that come our way.

Our daily tasks and challenges often seem to prevent us from being of service as much as we would like. On the other hand, our busy-ness can keep us from seeing the whole picture clearly. We may think that we are not doing enough to serve, but in actuality we may be doing more than we think.

If you really look closely, you may find any number of areas that you are already being of service, and do not even know it. Responding to requests from patrons with a good attitude, going the extra mile to fulfill a request from a patron or coworker, or taking a moment to lend a hand to a coworker are all examples of how to serve others.

"Customer Service" is not just a singular business function or a simple catch phrase. It is an attitude that permeates our dealings with people we encounter in all our daily transactions—customers, co-workers, friends, and even strangers. It is a basic, personal philosophy that defines how we respond to others, regardless of circumstance.

Every time you hold or open the door for someone, or refill the coffee pot when it is low, you are being of service because you are easing life a little bit for the next person. Whenever you respond to a question with charity and patience, you are serving the needs of others. The neat thing is that doing the little things reinforces the attitude that carries through to the big things.

We often tend to define service in larger terms—big acts that require significant contributions of time and effort. Certainly, there are times when that is true; but the little things add up and they do count.

When we do these small things, not only do we make someone else's world better, we also improve ourselves or others. If we practice doing good, even in small ways, we will soon find that we want to do even more good. Our customers will notice, because it is how we treat them, consistently, all the time.

Here, at UMS, customer service is our way of life. It is a collective attitude that underlies and guides everything we do, each day. It is my sincere hope that our attitude is as visible to you as it is to us.



## Changes Equal Improved Service

By Shannon M. Daley  
Manager, Quality Assurance

**Y**ou can ask anyone who knows me, and they will say I am a bit of a nerd. This is usually based on one comment that I find myself making quite often—"Math is fun. It is like a party." I know, now you are in agreement with all my friends, co-workers, and acquaintances. With that said, I have taken a lot of math classes in my time, and there is one thing I know for certain. With every math equation there is only one correct answer. It may be difficult to see at first, but once you arrive at it the entire equation becomes crystal clear.

Well, the same can be said of the changes happening at Unique. At first it may seem like changes in staff are happening constantly. However, upon further investigation, it becomes clear that these are not changes for the sake of change, but rather changes that result in improved service to our customers.

You may or may not have noticed the subtle change I slipped in just under the title. If not, I will give you a hint—it has to do with my title. You may notice that I am no longer the Director of Customer Service, but rather the Manager, Quality Assurance. I am excited about the opportunities that abound in this new position. These opportunities will range from dealing with internal issues of quality assurance to working with our clients to develop improvements to our service to best meet the changing needs of library professionals.

*(continued on page 6)*



## New Technology...New Vendor?

By Rob Klaus  
Manager, Information Services

Recently at Unique, we have taken a cue from our high-tech ILS vendors that we work with and implemented the WebEx service. For those of you who are unfamiliar with WebEx, it is a software tool that allows one to share a computer desktop through a web browser such as Internet Explorer. There are a number of very helpful things that can be done when we are able to see what you are seeing and typing. Primarily we have started off using it in our support department to assist in setting up new clients, or answering questions our clients have about their debt collection module.

An example of WebEx's utility in UMS' service to the library occurs when the library migrates to a new ILS platform. Once your vendor has installed the necessary debt collect software on your computer system, we can have you browse, via Internet Explorer, to <https://unique-mgmt.webex.com>. From here, it is just two short minutes and our analyst will be able to view your screen as you go through the configuration process. Our ability to see exactly what you see, and see exactly what you are typing is invaluable during this process. We have saved many hours of our clients' time by using this tool to make the communication path clearer, and eliminate setup errors.

We are also using WebEx to demonstrate our online account access site we call InfoLink. This system allows our clients to login and view their accounts as they stand in our system. Once logged in, library staff have the ability to see when payments were made, letters sent and phone calls made to your patrons. You also have the ability to 'suspend' accounts in our system if the patron has entered into a payment arrangement with you. You can also print a 'Paid In Full' letter for a patron that needs written proof that their account has been settled.

If you haven't yet used the InfoLink site, I encourage you to contact your Customer Service Specialist for more information. Many clients have found this to be a very useful and timesaving tool.

Another use of WebEx is to share our training documents with you while we are walking through the site together, making the training process more effective for library staff.

I have to admit when I read the press release of June 21st regarding the merger of Sirsi and Dynix into the new SirsiDynix, I was hard pressed to believe it! I think the thought that ran through our collective minds was 'Is it April 1st?'. All the same, we are looking forward to working with the new combined company as we have had strong partnerships with both Dynix and Sirsi for many years.



## You Don't Have To Take Our Word For It!

By Jonathan Hayes  
Assistant Sales Manager

Unique Management Services currently serves over 700 libraries across the US, Canada, (and soon the United Kingdom) to help gently recover long overdue materials. Last year alone, UMS helped our customers recover millions of dollars worth of overdue materials and outstanding fines! These recovered amounts, for the most part, would have never been returned to the library without the use of our material recovery service. When materials are not returned to the library, one of two things usually happens. Either the library goes without the materials (much to the dismay of many responsible patrons waiting for materials), or the materials are repurchased from valuable funds that could have been spent on the purchase of new popular items.

It is our sincere desire that libraries consider a visit from a Unique Management Services representative for a detailed overview of our material recovery service. In a brief presentation, we can demonstrate how our service works to effectively and gently recover materials and fines. Upon request, a list of neighboring UMS clients will be provided. This will allow you to speak directly with our clients to learn of their experience with UMS. The combination of a detailed presentation along with testimonials from UMS clients will clearly demonstrate that Unique Management Services provides an effective, patron friendly solution to your material recovery needs. Consider these statements from a few current UMS clients:

"Since going with UMS...we have collected over 91% of the balances owed to the Library in combinations of returned materials and fines owed. Very little staff time is required on our part and all of the needed information is maintained on our computers. It's a very reliable and easy process." (Ms. Ginger Olson, Rochester Hills Public Library in Rochester, Michigan. A customer since 1996).

"Unique Management has been extremely helpful and cooperative in all phases of our implementation of their services. Their presentations have been articulate and well prepared; their responses to our questions have been quick and supportive. The details in their reporting service have streamlined the tracking process for our financial management office and made life simpler for in-branch staff as well." (Ms. Elaine Price, Circulation Services Manager, Fairfax County Public Library in Fairfax, Virginia. A customer since May, 2005).

"Even though we are a small library your services have been great. We call and send letters to patrons and they just ignore us. You contact them, and they suddenly can remember to bring back their overdue items!" (Ms. Bonnie Morris, Valley Park Community Library in Valley Park, Missouri. A customer since 2003).

With outstanding reports such as these, there is no better time than the present to call us at 800-879-5453 or email us at [www.info@unique-mgmt.com](mailto:www.info@unique-mgmt.com) to schedule a detailed presentation of our material recovery service. The information in this presentation, as well as the remarks from other libraries using the service, will provide much of the needed information for the library to make an informed decision about material recovery. We look forward to hearing from you!



## Adaptive Toy Collection Available at Pasco County (FL) Library System

By Linda Bragg  
Public Relations Specialist

**I**t's a challenge growing up in the best of circumstances. Children with special needs have an especially challenging time. Unfortunately, several conditions can render a child unable to play and interact as normal children. Whether their disability is from impaired motor skills, making it difficult for them to

control their limbs; or from disabilities such as Down's syndrome, which causes the slow development of vocal communication skills; or they suffer from Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder, making it difficult for them to concentrate on reading, the children will be enhanced through their play with the new Adaptive Toy Collection available at the Pasco County Library System.

In April, this fantastic new toy collection was unveiled. The Adaptive Toy Collection is only the second such collection of toys in the state of Florida, the first being in Palm Harbor in north Pinellas County, and one of only a handful of adaptive toy collections in the entire country! For years, these toys have been used by speech therapists to teach children to become more independent through language development, motor skills, sensory exploration and visual perception. The toys teach special needs children how to control their environment, it teaches them cause-effect relationships, communication, and object manipulation through toys with special lights or textures. Special easy-to-use switches are included to facilitate the use of the toys. Some children cannot even use their arms or hands and an upright switch can be attached to their wheelchair so that the child can use his head to press the switch to work the toy!

The Rotary Club of Keystone-Sunrise proposed the collection for the library to serve more than 1,000 special needs children and families in Pasco County and raised and generously donated the funds for this core collection of adaptive toys. "These toys teach cause-effect lessons," explained Joannie Miesner, adaptive toy chairperson of the Rotary Club of Keystone- Sunrise. "By touching them there is a result – lights or sounds, textures – to serve as extra cues for kids to learn that they have successfully manipulated the toy."

Many Rotarians plus a group of adults and their eager children attended the unveiling and were enthralled by the magical toys. Their delighted faces were evidence of how popular this new collection will be. A few mothers expressed their thanks for having such a collection in Pasco County. The trip to Palm Harbor was daunting for them and now the toys are available to them much more conveniently.

This collection of seventy-plus toys is housed at the Hudson Regional Library, and will be available for checkout from other branches via the library system's courier service.

Additional information about the Adaptive Toy Collection can be found on the libraries website: [pascolibraries.org](http://pascolibraries.org)



## News Release

### New Director Joins Jacksonville (FL) Public Library

Heather Dusseault, Public Relations



The Jacksonville Public Library Board of Trustees has selected Barbara A.B. Gubbin as Director of the Jacksonville Public Library (JPL). Gubbin will manage library operations, oversee a \$32 million budget, and direct the library's Better Jacksonville Plan implementation.

Gubbin joins the Jacksonville Public Library during an era of expansive change, overseeing the opening of four new branches and a new 300,000 square foot Main Library this year. The Library's expansion and the Better Jacksonville Plan contributed to Gubbin's decision to accept the Director position "There are not a lot of cities that have that kind of commitment to their library," she said. "We should take full advantage and more of the beautiful new facilities. As director, I'll be responsible for ensuring that is done in the most positive and far-reaching manner."

A graduate of the University of Birmingham (U.K.), Gubbin earned a Bachelor of Arts Honors degree in History and a Master of Arts in Library and Information Studies.

Following her undergraduate studies, Gubbin served two years in Voluntary Services Overseas, an international service organization similar to the American Peace Corps. She completed her service in Kumasi, Ghana as an English and History teacher at a secondary school for girls. At the school, Gubbin was responsible for maintaining the modest one-room library. She made it her goal to update the collection with works that would inspire her students, such as materials written by female and African authors.

After concluding her service, Gubbin earned a Master of Arts Degree in Library and Information Studies from the University of London, University College.

Gubbin comes to the Jacksonville Public Library from the Houston Public Library, where she served as director since 1995. With a \$35 million budget, the Houston Public Library includes a Central Library and 37 branch locations.

During Gubbin's tenure, she supervised the Houston Public Library's expansion, which included five new libraries and 16 branch renovations. She also championed the Power Card Challenge, a program that tripled the number of children in Houston with library cards and increased juvenile circulation by more than 10 percent.

"Given her background in championing childhood literacy, Barbara will be a powerful force as the Library partners with the Jacksonville Children's Commission to implement Mayor John Peyton's Literacy Initiative, RALLY Jacksonville!," said JPL Board of Trustees Chair Steve Rosenbloom.

If you have comments, suggestions, questions or if you would like to be added to our mailing list, please contact us! We look forward to hearing from you.



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By mail – 119 East Maple Street, Jeffersonville, IN 47130.



By computer – [nicole@unique-mgmt.com](mailto:nicole@unique-mgmt.com) or the "Contact Us" page of our website: [www.unique-mgmt.com](http://www.unique-mgmt.com)

We hope you enjoy  
**MATERIAL MATTERS**  
*A newsletter designed and  
 produced for library professionals.*

### Training Tip

Just as a reminder, if UMS locates a new phone number for a patron, we will report that to you monthly on the Change of Address Report directly below the new address.



## Updates to the Account Access Feature

By Melissa Fenton  
Asst. Director of Customer Service

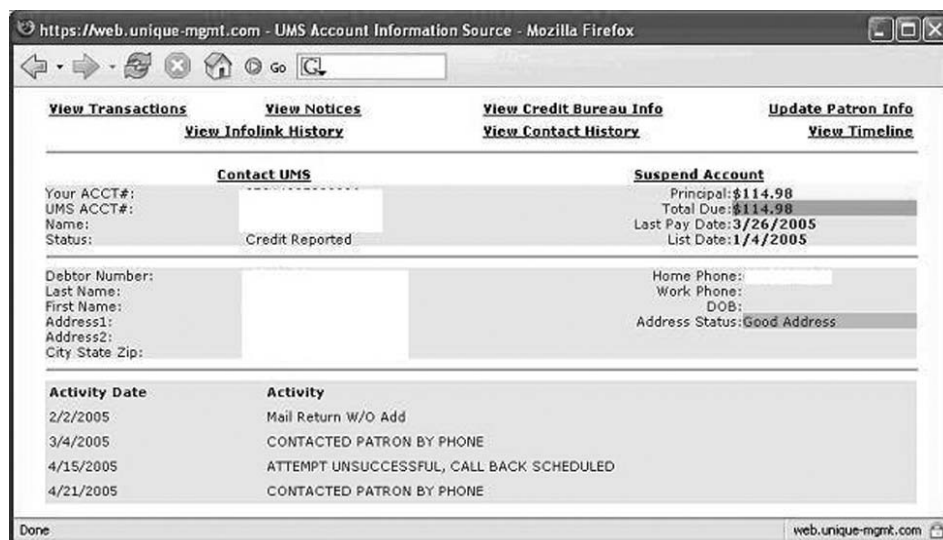
Since releasing our account access feature in 2004, we have heard many positive comments and received many suggestions. The most common suggestion was a request that we include telephone contact information. This request was echoed in our most recent Customer Service survey. Our diligent technical staff has worked hard, and we are happy to report that our clients can now view telephone attempts and contacts under the “View Contact History” link. This link will list both phone contact and any letters that have been sent to the patron. You will also notice that you can now see when UMS has received returned mail for a patron account.

When reviewing the phone contact information you will see one or more of the following messages:

- Mail Returned – this message will appear when a collection letter has been returned to UMS. We will indicate whether or not the returned mail included new address information.
- Contacted Debtor By Phone – this message will appear when we have spoken with the debtor during our phone contact.
- Left Message for Debtor – this message will appear when we have left a message, either with an individual or on an answering machine.
- Bad Phone Number – this message will appear when we have attempted to contact the debtor and have received information indicating the patron can no longer be contacted at the number provided.
- Could Not Contact (Unsuccessful after multiple attempts) – this message will appear if we have attempted numerous phone calls to a patron’s number and have been unable to either speak with the patron or leave a phone message. We have not received any information that this is not a valid contact number.
- Attempt Unsuccessful, Scheduled Call Back – this will appear if we have attempted to contact a patron without success. This indicates that our contact center employees have scheduled another follow up call.

Additionally, you will find a “View Timeline” link. This will allow you to see all activity that has been completed on a debtor’s account (including letters, phone calls, payments, returned mail, etc.) We hope this provides a clear timeline of activity that has occurred since the patron has been referred to UMS.

Please do not hesitate to contact your customer service specialist should you have any questions as you are reviewing patron accounts or should you need additional information. We thank you for all of your feedback.



## Newsletter Fun Fact

How powerful is television as a form of mass media? When Fonzi, the beloved "greaser" in the hit television series Happy Days, got a library card, there was a 500 percent increase in the number of library cards issued in the United States.

## Book-Related Quotes

“One day I fell asleep in a library. When I woke up, a blind man was reading my face.”  
—Rodney Dangerfield

“A classic is something that everybody wants to have read and nobody wants to read.”  
—Mark Twain

“I just got out of the hospital. I was in a speed-reading accident. I hit a bookmark.”  
—Steven Wright

“I'm trying to read a book on how to relax, but I keep falling asleep.”  
—Jim Loy

“A good novel tells us the truth about it's hero; but a bad novel tells us the truth about its author.”  
—G. K. Chesterton

“There are books of which the backs and covers are by far the best parts.”  
—Charles Dickens

“Outside of a dog, a book is man’s best friend. Inside of a dog, it’s too dark to read.”  
—Groucho Marx

“I was reading a book... 'the history of glue' — I couldn't put it down.”  
—Tim Vine

## Changes Equal Improved Service

(continued from page 1)

Andy Harp joins the Unique team as the new Director of Customer Service. Andy comes to Unique with years of customer service and management experience. We look forward to Andy leading the Customer Service Department into the next era of Unique Management Services as he looks for areas to continuously improve the service our clients receive.

While we hated to see Chris Whorton leave Unique, we were glad to see him earn his masters degree last December. Now, we are also glad to see him find the opportunity to use his gifts, talents, and training. He will be greatly missed at Unique.

Brad Rainier was named to a position as Customer Service Specialist during the spring to fill Chris' position. Brad comes to Unique with many years of customer service experience. He will be a great addition to the team and looks forward to working with our clients.

We also hated to see Will Grapperhaus leave Unique, but we wish him the best as he expands his horizons at SirsiDynix.

Steve Christy is the most recent addition to our technical department. He joined the technical team in the spring as a Customer Service Technician to fill Will's vacancy. Steve previously worked as a Contact Specialist in Unique's Contact Center. Steve is aggressively learning the ins and outs of collection agency modules. He looks forward to working with many of our clients. He will focus mainly on clients who utilize the SirsiDynix Horizon Debt Collect module and those with CARL modules.

You may not work random math problems in your spare time. You may even cringe at the mere glance at a word problem or differential equation. However, the changes at Unique should not make you cringe. Rather, they should make you look forward to a bright future with our continuously improving service.

## Correction

Loren Rosson, Circulation Supervisor at Nashua Public Library in Nashua, New Hampshire, e-mailed us with the following insight about an item in our last issue:

"In vol 7 issue 2 of *Material Matters*, there is a list of "fun facts" on page 4. Warsaw, Poland is credited as the place where the "world's first public library opened" in 1747. But public libraries trace all the way back to Greece in the 4th century BCE. Is it meant that the first circulating public library opened in Warsaw in 1747? The first circulating library (in the U.S.) was the one established by Ben Franklin in 1731, but it wasn't public.

Just trying to get these fun facts straight..."

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