

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 .

Volume 4, Issue 3

Library Specialists

Winter 2001

From the President

Looking for the Good and Making Good Things Happen

By Lyle J. Stucki,
President

With all the terrible things that we observe and experience, it is easy to see the bad. If we are not careful, we can even begin feeling that things are much worse than they really are. No matter how bad things may seem at times, it is hoped that each of us will remember there is much good all around us. We are happier when we look for it, find it, and create it.

The following are things we already know and need to keep reminding each other about.

A positive attitude is contagious. There is tremendous power in simply believing that positive things will happen because often times they do. Part of it is because positive people are pro-active and are anxiously engaged in making good things happen. People can, when they believe they can. Even when something appears to be negative, people with positive attitudes find ways to turn lemons into lemonade by creating something sweet or good from something that appeared to be very sour. All of us can ask ourselves the following questions; "How positive is my attitude?" "How pro-active am I in making good things happen?" "When something bad happens, do I look for the good such as

what was learned and how we can benefit?"

Positive people are excited about the prospect of helping others. When someone knows we really

“...Positive people are proactive and are anxiously engaged in making good things happen.”

care, that alone can make a huge difference in their life. We can never underestimate the impact of a kind word, a smile, a soft answer, a thoughtful suggestion, the extension of a helping hand when needed, a heart felt compliment, a simple thank you, a word of encouragement, etc., etc. I am reminded of a verse in the song entitled, Have I Done Any Good written by Will L. Thompson. We might ask ourselves the same questions asked in one of the verses; "Have I done any good in the world today, have I helped anyone in need, have I cheered up the sad and made someone feel glad, if not I have failed indeed."

It is important not to "type" people, just try to like them. Say why you like people not why you don't. Say things from the positive side enough that it becomes habit.

Thumper's mom was right when she said, "If you haven't got something good to say then don't say anything at all." Some people are harder to like than others. However, we can find some good in everyone.

Some of our challenges in life are almost over-whelming. Reaching our goals can take major effort. It has been my experience that when we believe we can achieve something we usually can and will. For an instant lesson just read "The Little Engine That Could". Read it regularly because it is a philosophy for a lifetime.

If you want to keep things in perspective, count your blessings every day. A good exercise is to think of everything good and make the list as long as you can. It does not take long before we realize that there is a lot of good all around us. When we really reflect, we can many times feel great joy from simple things that are good. A friend of mine encouraged me often to take time to smell the roses That counsel has helped me find much more enjoyment in life. We find that the fragrance of life is much better when we look for the good, find it, and create it.

Reduced Budgets? How Can Unique Management Help?

By Dick Neal
Manager, Strategic Partnerships

As I was talking to a prospective client the other day, he made the following statement: "Why haven't we started this service already?" To a sales manager, that is music to my ears. Now, let us determine why he made such a statement.

First of all, maintaining patron goodwill with their patrons was very important. Secondly, he liked the fact that we strive to get materials returned to the library for circulation. Thirdly, the ability to transfer information electronically is very inviting. Fourth, we can provide him budget neutrality. These four items are critical to almost every library with which we work.

His next statement is what motivated me to write this article. "They are cutting our budgets, and we have to find ways to reduce cost.." As I call around the country, I hear this comment repeated many times. I would like to share a couple of ways that Unique Management Services can assist in these budget-cutting days.

Unique Management's material recovery service is one of the most cost effective, high return investments a library can make. Our guaranteed ability to help the library recover lost materials and fines protects the library's assets, reduces expense, and increases revenue. The average return on investment for our service, among our more than 400 customers, is between \$4 and \$7 for each dollar invested. Returns are

defined as the value of materials and cash recovered/resolved.

“ Unique Management’s material recovery service is one of the most cost effective, high return investments a library can make. ”

The cost of our service should be calculated based on the projected number of accounts to be submitted by the library. For prospective customers, our cost can be estimated at \$8.95 per account submitted. The number of accounts submitted can be projected to be twelve accounts per month for each 100,000 items in annual circulation - assuming a minimum account balance of \$25. For current customers, actual past experience is an accurate guide for budgeting for future years, notwithstanding anticipated increases in circulation.

The library's projected cost for replacing lost materials should be reduced. Our service will recover approximately 50% of the value of materials submitted to Unique Management Services for recovery. The line item expense for the library's collection can be reduced accordingly.

Income should be projected to increase because of money recovered from accounts submitted to Unique Management. The estimated value of materials and fines recovered/resolved should be at least two times greater

than the projected cost of our service. If the library is using our service as recommended, that is: submitting accounts with minimum balances of \$25, within 60 days of being overdue, and adding a \$10 late fee, amounts recovered will likely be between four to seven times higher than recovery fees paid. In other words, our clients typically get \$4 to \$7 back for every \$1 spent on our recovery service.

How about value added? The materials we recover are typically the most popular items in the library's collection. As those materials are returned for re-circulation, the availability of those items greatly increases. Financial considerations based on the library's circulation size are positively impacted. In addition, the ability of the library to more fully meet the needs of patrons is significantly enhanced. It is difficult to quantify the value of improved customer service because items are available when patrons want them. However, we can be certain that improved customer service has tremendous value for the library.

As I reflect back on the prospect's statement: "Why haven't we started this service already," I realized that he was looking at the service as an expenditure only. When he saw that it would actually generate income and increase value of materials returned, that magic light came on. His return on investment was well worth the library's investment with Unique Management.

First Things First

By Shannon M. Daley
Production Manager

By far, people are most interested in hearing about how Unique Management Services goes about contacting patrons by telephone. However, there is a group of people who assure that the new patrons are processed correctly prior to the patron receiving a telephone call. The eleven people pictured here are the people responsible for entering those patrons into our system to begin the recovery process.

Each of these production specialists assures that new patrons are entered into our system accurately and in a timely manner. From email to sending letters, from electronic to manual entry, from updating to quality assurance, from assuring receipt of all files to following-up on patron disputes, each of these individuals does their part to assure that patron records are accurate and up-to-date. From time to time, these individuals may contact you; do not be alarmed. They are simply doing their part to assure that your patrons' records are as accurate as possible.



*Randy Williams, Tim Williamson, Drew Morgan, Kurt Michaelis
Chris Dillabough, Kristi Smith, Lora Wiggers, Danielle Corley,
Shannon Daley, Becca Owsley, Karen Spainhour*

We hope you enjoy
MATERIAL MATTERS

*A newsletter designed
and produced for library
professionals.*

If you have comments or suggestions please don't hesitate to call us at (800) 879-5453.

Or send e-mail to:
lyle@unique-mgmt.com

- Please make corrections to my name and/or address information as shown below.
- Please add the person listed below to your mailing list for this newsletter.
- Please send the person below more information about your material-recovery service.
- Please send me more information about your material-recovery service.

Name: _____

Title: _____

Library: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Migrations and Upgrades

By John Goodyear
Manager, Information Services

The library automation world is definitely in a state of flux. There are so many libraries migrating you almost need a program to tell the players. All these migrations have a big affect on us here at Unique.

When you send your files to us, both submissions and updates, we expect a very specific format. We have data models custom designed for you, which take your data from the expected format and translate it into a format that we can import into our collection software package. This is UMS' equivalent of your library automation system.

Even something as simple (Well, it could be simple!) as an upgrade to a newer release of your existing software can throw off our model by slightly changing the layout of the data you send. This happens most often with those who have had custom work done to these reports on their system; for instance, to separate consortium members in the submission report. So, it is fairly common that within one software system, most libraries have minor differences in what they send and how we process it. With advance notice, we can work with the vendor to make sure that the formats remain consistent.

A full-blown migration to a new system changes everything. Different systems send their data in very different formats. They have various methods of flagging patrons for collection, and their block structure may be quite distinct. While we work at some level with most major systems, we do need to be prepared for your specific situation. It takes effort from the automation vendors to be sure all the data migrates correctly, and we will need to make new models for your data.

We feel it is imperative you keep us well informed about your upgrade and migration plans, in order for us to work with you to help ensure a smooth transition to your new software. Let us know as soon as you begin planning for a migration, and we can coordinate with you on the specifications for UMS' part of it. If you are planning an upgrade, by all means let us know ahead of time so that we can anticipate changes to your file formats and ensure that the corrections are made before you send again. This could save us all a lot of cleanup work, which can happen after an incorrect file is generated.

If we keep in close contact, any software changes can result in a smooth process with minimal interruption. And besides, we like to hear from you.

Please visit
our newsletter
online at
www.unique-mgmt.com

Los Angeles Public Library's Electronic Neighborhood

By Kenes Bowling
Director of Customer Service

When you visit the website of the Los Angeles Public Library (one of our newest customers), you feel immediately invited to explore. Aside from being visually appealing, the site is rich in content and relevant to the full range of the patrons it serves. Steve Newcomer, Manager of Information Technologies for LAPL, developed the website. He describes it as a “virtual library” to their website visitors. One feature among the site’s full array of services is especially interesting. It is called the “Electronic Neighborhood.” Steve explained it “as a unique one-stop information resource for information on California and regional history topics.

“Through the Electronic Neighborhood, the Los Angeles Public Library is electronically sharing indexes and visual resources previously only available to individuals actually visiting the library. By searching its databases: California Index, Photo Collection, Menu Collection, Turnabout Theatre, California Fiction, one can access data and visual images – indexes, documents and photographs – that provide unique information on local communities, neighborhoods, and people that date back hundreds of years. Steve also explained that there are thousands of digitized historical resources



that are in demand by local history researchers. “The Electronic Neighborhood site also includes valuable links to other regional history and informational web pages,” he said.

The Electronic Neighborhood is accessed via the “Regional History Resources” icon on the website’s homepage. It is a true treasure trove for anyone who wants to visually experience the history of California.

As for the website in general, Steve describes it as “a work in progress.” “We’re constantly upgrading the site with new features and offering more services and resources over the web,” he said.

The site is obviously a great resource for Los Angeles Public Library’s patrons, and the Electronic Neighborhood is a great place to visit.

Feel the Urge to Purge?

By John Goodyear
Manager, Information Services

It is a natural thing. Periodically, you do need to cleanse your system of the patrons who are no longer using your library. Stop and think about this first. There is a combination of events that can impact which patrons you send through your purge or delete process. You will need to be careful not to delete those patrons who are currently in collection. For instance, if a patron who was sent to collections has since paid a portion of their balance, dropping the account balance below the original \$25 threshold, and your patron purge threshold is set to \$25 and below, the patron would be

purged from your system. However, the patron would still be in UMS’ system. Therefore, UMS would get no future updates on this patron, and the library would have no record in their system to reference should UMS or the patron contact the library concerning the account. It may not happen often, but when it does, it can be a problem. If your software does not automatically prevent this, you should provide your own mechanism for maintaining those patron records. Feel free to call if you have any questions or concerns about this.



Did You Know?

By Mike Lawrence
Customer Service Specialist



- ☉ Universal Studios, Florida has a life-sized scale model of the New York Public Library.
- ☉ The only 15 letter word that can be spelled without repeating a letter is “uncopyrightable”
- ☉ “Q” is the only letter in the alphabet that does not appear in the name of any of the United States.
- ☉ There are no words in the dictionary that rhyme with: orange, purple, and month.
- ☉ Ernest Vincent Wright wrote a novel, “Gadsby,” which contains over 50,000 words—none of them with the letter E!
- ☉ The Main Library at Indiana University sinks over an inch every year because when it was built, engineers failed to take into account the weight of all the books that would occupy the building.

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