



## **9-21-14 Wayfinding the San Jose Way Webinar Q&A Log Questions from Live Demco Webinar as answered by Ruth Barefoot**

### **Color and Other Visuals**

**Q: At my library (public library) the very popular children's area is not easily seen by customers as they enter (there's a screen behind our self-service check out machines). Any tips on using other parts of the building -- columns, etc., to make it easier for folks to locate the children's area?**

A: Why not paint the columns Dr. Suess-ish? Communicate whimsy and playful and wonder through color usage. Try to introduce something on the floor, walls, and from the ceiling. Let's say you have no money? Could you paint just the insides of the window sills or door jams a color? Could you get approval to paint little designs from books on the floor leading up to the children's area like a little peach for *James and the Giant Peach*?

**Q: Did you color code adult vs. youth?**

A: Oh yes, and do the adults appreciate it. Go with a sophisticated pallet for adults, simple and playful for kids.

**Q: Or adult classes vs. youth classes.**

A: Absolutely. Make sure if you have rooms that operate as class/workshop space for customer groups in a customer group area (like adult area) use the palette and interior treatment consistently in that area.

**Q: The question has to do with different color coding for adult programs vs. youth programs?**

A: Yes, this is a popular question as you read the two previous answers. Let me also add, I have seen adult space use sage greens, Ginko leaves and bamboo fabricated barriers or screens, or rich red trim with cherry casework. So step it up with the adult area because they will enjoy the ambience. With kids areas you will undoubtedly have to repaint in no time so paint with washable and super durable paint colors, without departing too far from primary colors. I have seen really bright yellow on all walls which is a mistake if it overtakes the whole space. So watch how much color you use. Think of which wall would be nice to "pop" or highlight and paint that colorful and leave the rest a coordinating color. Think of the walls as a canvas, the furniture as the figures on the canvas, the books as colorful posters moving in and out...

**Q: So adult areas could be brown, children's red, teens blue?**

A: Color scheme is a great way of defining spaces but it also depends on the size of your space. I would say more of a green or gold for adult if you are using reds and blues.

## **Branding and Labeling**

**Q: How did you come up with the new lingo? Circulation to Checkout, Reference Desk to Info etc.**

A: The best way is to listening to how customers/patrons are talking. Staff started to listen and call it the same.

**Q: For renaming. There is a wonderful book, Transforming Our Image, Building Our Brand- The Education Advantage by Valerie J. Gross. Absolutely wonderful book that addresses these issues.. Valerie has spoken at PLA, ALA and other conferences.**

A: Yes, wonderful books, thank you for sharing those.

**Q: How important is it to have the library logo or other element of branding on signs? Especially things like library hours, posted flyers, etc.**

A: It has tremendous impact when the logo is simple but powerful and doesn't steal the show of the other content on the page. Try to use your branding logo when you can. Rebrand if it's no longer useful and powerful at a glance.

**Q: Signs are great if people read them. Any tips for designing signage that people will read?**

A: I know!! So either redevelop with a cleaner signage package or you could use digital signage or PA system. Use word of mouth to communicate and if you are swamped then use signage that incorporates questions to start. Slip in a contest sign every so often and post the winner.

## **Multiple Languages**

**Q: Did you say you avoided using more than 1 language in a sign/flyer?**

A: I was referring to the Primary signs and in that case yes, I would only use one (message) in one language. In the case of facilities that are serving large numbers of language speakers regularly you might treat your Secondary signage with the two primary languages, or if there are three, do three.

**Q: Just a clarification: I think you said San Jose citizens speak 4 different languages, yet all library signs seem to be only in English. How has that affected those that don't speak English well?**

A: Largely the population of San Jose is represented by 4 different language groups: Chinese, English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Although there are 14+ well represented languages spoken in San Jose our City government operates with this in mind and tailors much of the communication this way. So even though we will have flyers written in many different languages the City will promote at least the 4 biggies.

## **Early Literacy/Pre-Reader Spaces**

**Q: We're updating our Early Literacy Area (for children age 0 - 5 and caregivers) and would be happy to learn more about accommodating this groups' interests and needs.**

A: Hold a focus group and ask them what the Early Literacy Area means to them? What do they like about the area? What could they not live without..? What would be the one thing they would change? Get them involved with the design by showing them the progress along the way to get "feedback" and take it into advisement. Be careful not to let them direct the project. You could have them help with the kick off of the redesign and help them set up the grand opening celebration...

**Q: What is the best approach in creating signage for lower grades?**

A: Pictorial based with simple popular language descriptors. Use colors to color code per grade ranges...K-1, 2-3, 4-5. This type of signage also has the bonus of supporting language learning practices.

**Q: I have Kindergarten and First graders. Any ideas to help them when they cannot read?**

A: Well, the webinar was on wayfinding and signage but I do have a BS in Elementary Ed and what I've seen as successful is labeling things in a certain area. Then next time mix them up and ask them to label 2 items in the area. This is sort of signage related. ;o)

**ADA Guidelines**

**Q: How much did you try to adhere to ADA guidelines? I think using text on its side is discouraged. I'm referring to the slide I saw that showed the word "fiction" on its side on a banner.**

A: San Jose is fully compliant with ADA regulations. The ADA guidelines are more focused on the secondary signage. For Primary signs use them well to build "experience"! Secondary signage can be for directional such as end of range, door labels...

**Q: Do you need to put Braille on overhead signs?**

A: No you do not. You need Braille on secondary signs so the little sign label next to the door about 5 feet up (where disabled customers are feeling for it.)

**Budget Concerns**

**Q: Do you have suggestions for smaller libraries with limited budgets?**

A: See some of the suggestions above. I would also add painting your bookshelves and removing anything that is old and dusty and showcasing anything new and popular. Have a "paint kids furniture" program/contest or ask your local scout troop to take on the project for a badge. A can of paint is \$25 in the Silicon Valley but it will do wonders for any area. Also, popularize your packaging of your popular mystery movie with the mystery book counterpart, by putting them together in a "kit" for checkout. Same with teens and kids stuff. People want experiences. What does your neighborhood want? Get teens together to pilot some ideas for their peer group...

**Other**

**Q: What were the color blocks mentioned in presentation while talking about slides I think colors were Blue, Orange, Purple what were they representing again?**

A: I believe that you are referring to the 5 blocks showing how wayfinding and signage are knitted into the building program and customer experience? They are: customer-centric vision, wayfinding, adjacency diagram, branding, signage guidelines. You can reference the slides on demco.com.

**Q: We are introducing a mobile service model in our new branch and will not have a circulation desk. What ideas can you share about making sure the customer finds a staff member, when needed? Assuming staff are constantly greeting people.**

A: Have all staff be able to help from wherever they are in the building so it allows you to be untethered. Try to have adequate staff scheduled during the peak hours and lighter on the light hours. About 13 years ago SJPL did research to understand how customers think and do for themselves and

they are pretty smart! They will find staff. Make sure staff have current customer service training and can deliver service to a wide range of customer groups.

**Q: If possible, talk about how this [wayfinding] is applied to special libraries such as language libraries, i.e. Latin Studies or Asian Studies library areas.**

A: Wayfinding is very important to these specialty libraries and if done well the signage will be very effectively matched up. If you have all of these specialty collections within one facility I would suggest doing your primary signage (the big, over-arching) for each of these main areas or library collections. If they are smaller and can be shelved on less than 1-3 ranges then use secondary signage to designate.

**Q: How do you measure the ROI of the remodel projects.**

A: Lovely question!! Do people come in and browse first and ask questions only if they are stuck? Look for 80% decrease in directional questions. Are customers rating the library experience higher, like good or excellent? You should see an increase of customers finding what they are looking for without staff intervention. And this will increase with their confidence. Measure the number of staff assisted questions you have after a wayfinding/signage remodel? It should be less. If there are questions you still get...note them and improve the wayfinding first then see if it improved customer discovery. Use signage only after you have exhausted wayfinding techniques. The ROI that you discover will be in being able to utilize your staff to provide a more meaningful customer experiences and you should also find that they are more fulfilled in their work.

**Q: How do you deal with someone who knows not to bring drinks or food in the library but does it every day. Some days we catch him, other times we find it in the wastebasket.**

A: SJPL started to review its food and drink policy almost 20 years ago. SJPL staff decided they didn't know what customers did with the materials when they checked them out. That SJPL wanted to promote the use even more than the caution of keeping them in perfect condition. We found out that most (95%) do respect the materials both at the library and at home. We saw that the few rotten eggs were causing restrictions that were unfair to the vast majority. We changed the policy to covered drinks only and snacks in specific areas only. This gave customers choice. It created so much goodwill that folks went out of their way to help monitor spaces, self-monitor too. We booted out offenders like your sneaky Pete above. Hope this helps.