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Meyer, Sarah K. *Interdepartmental Teamwork in the Event Management Process at University of Wisconsin - River Falls University Center*

Abstract

The University Center at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls is the central hub of campus, hosting most campus events and by housing campus dining. 12 fulltime staff members, one graduate student intern and approximately 70 undergraduate student employees are employed in the University Center Operations Department making up seven individual work groups.

Supervisors in the University Center have observed that student employees in the event related work groups do not understand the entire event process, how the players interact and how they affect the customers. This lack of understanding creates missed opportunities for collaboration and lost efficiencies as well as negatively affecting the customer's experience.

To analyze if and how the student employees are being trained about the roles in the event process, supervisors were interviewed and training agendas were evaluated. The results indicate that all work groups learn about their own role in the event process but not all learn about the other work groups' roles. Opportunities to improve student employee success and customer experiences were also uncovered. Recommendations include exploring ways to facilitate collaboration between work groups as well as future research examining the effectiveness of the training that is already in place.

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Chapter I: Introduction

The University Center (UC) at University of Wisconsin-River Falls (UWRF) hosts over 4,000 events per year (J. Plemon, personal communication, August 3, 2017). Located on the main campus, the UC serves as the student union, houses all campus dining, and serves as the central hub for student activities and involvement. The University Center Operations Department at UWRF is comprised of 12 fulltime staff members, one graduate student intern, and approximately 70 undergraduate student employees. In addition to being the student center, the UC provides event management and support to customers from both on and off campus. For the on-campus customers, which are mainly university departments and recognized student organizations it is important to be responsive to their needs. The UC has 11 meeting rooms of varying sizes, a ballroom and an entertainment complex (University of Wisconsin - River Falls, n.d.). Under the UC umbrella are seven separate work groups, five of which are responsible for the event management process from start (reserving a space) to finish (invoicing). Each work group focuses on one aspect of the event process and the related customer service.

Anywhere from a few days to a few years before the event date, Campus Reservations assists the customer in selecting dates and locations for their event. They guide customers through the event planning process and gather information to set the stage for the rest of the UC's work groups. As the event draws closer, the Production Services staff works with Campus Reservations and the customer to define setup details for the physical layout of the room as well as audio or visual technology. Production Services employees are responsible for the setup and strike of the room as well as the operation of the technology during the event. The Campus Information Desk provides service over the phone and to walk up customers regarding general campus information and event specific questions. The University Center Building Manager

position handles the day to day operation of the building, which includes supporting events small and large that take place in the UC. They meet the customer upon arrival and often accommodate last minute additions, setup changes and troubleshoot equipment failures alongside the Production Services staff. University Center Custodial staff are tasked with keeping the facility clean and well maintained which includes cleaning event spaces. The final step in the event process is the invoicing, which is completed by professional staff in the Campus Reservations work group.

Individually, each work group serves customers of the UC directly and indirectly. Together, they provide a full-service event experience to the campus and community. Each work group creates and completes their own employee training. The groups that have a more direct connection to customers (Building Managers, Campus Reservations, and Campus Information Desk) tend to focus on customer service training more than those who do not have direct contact with the customer. Recently, supervisors of the work groups have observed and reported that there is a lack of understanding of each other's roles. For example, Campus Reservations may not realize the extent to which the information they gather affects Production Services' ability to set the room. Another example is Custodians not realizing how their actions and efforts affect the customer or other teams. There have also been situations where one group does the work of another, either because it has not been done or because there is confusion of who was responsible for what.

Statement of the Problem

Supervisors in the UWRF UC have observed that student employees do not understand the entire event process, how the players interact and how they affect the customers. This lack of

understanding creates missed opportunities for collaboration and lost efficiencies as well as negatively affecting the customer's experience.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the existing training protocols for student employees about the event process in the UC and how each work group completed their responsibilities in the event process. A literature review sought best practices in customer service training, using computer-based training modules, and adult learning to assist in the creation of additional materials or trainings developed to build knowledge about how each work group works together to create the best possible experience for UC customers.

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Review training materials in each work group for evidence of training related to the event process.
2. Interview student employee supervisors about the training and information given to employees about other work groups' roles.
3. Develop recommendations of how to better inform the staff of each team's role to develop a training program that will assure customers have a good experience.

Assumptions of the Study

The assumptions of this study are that:

1. Each work group has some sort of training on the entire event process
2. Employees understand their own role within the event process

Definition of Terms

The key terms in the study are given the following operational definitions:

Customer. On campus academic or service department or Recognized Student Organization that reserves space within the University Center for an event.

Event management system (EMS). EMS, the software used to schedule campus spaces and hold event data. All work groups use this software to get event details and schedules.

Strike. To tear down and remove the equipment from the event space including but not limited to tables, chairs, lighting or audio equipment.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study are that:

1. Only the UC staff and building facilities will be included.
2. Only the customers from the UWRF campus community will be addressed.
3. Training modules will not be fully implemented or evaluated.

Methodology

Data was gathered in two ways. First, individual interviews were completed with each student employee supervisor in the UWRF UC work groups. The interviews gathered data regarding if and how the work group learned about their own roles in the event process as well as the roles of the other groups. Supervisors were also asked to provide information and examples related to how a better understanding of the event process could benefit the student employee's success as well as improve the customer experience. Following the interview, example training agendas were evaluated to look for evidence that the team was trained on each work groups' role. It was also determined if the students were trained on the overall event process.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Additional training and materials are needed to build knowledge about how each work group in the UWRF UC fulfills their responsibilities in the event process and works together to create the best possible experience for UC customers. This literature reviews the best practices in adult learning, using computer-based training modules, and customer service training.

Additional topics include: the benefits of cross functional training as well as service climate in hospitality settings and customer relationship management practices.

Adult Learners

Knowles was one of the first to state that children and adults learn differently and called the process of adult-learning andragogy (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2014). Historically, pedagogy has focused on young learners and is generally more teacher focused, rather than learner focused (Knowles, 2005). From his research, Knowles (2005) made six assumptions about the characteristics of adult learners and how they differ from learners in the traditional pedagogy methods.

Knowles' (2005) andragogical model is based on these assumptions:

1. Need to Know: "Adults need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it" (p.66).
2. Self-Concept: "Adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions, for their own lives" (p. 65).
3. Adult Learning Experience: "Adults come into an educational activity with both a greater volume and a different quality of experience than that of youths" (p. 65).
4. Readiness to Learn: "Adults become ready to learn those things the need to know and be able to do in order to cope effectively with their real-life situations" (p. 67).

5. Orientation to Learning: “Adults are motivated to learn to the extent that they perceive that learning will help them perform tasks or deal with problems that they confront in their life situations” (p. 68).
6. Motivation to Learn: “Adults are responsive to some external motivators (better jobs, promotions, higher salaries, and the like), but the most potent motivators are internal pressures (the desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, quality of life, and the like)” (p.70).

Individuals and organizations that are creating educational and training materials for adult learners frequently use Knowles’ assumptions to guide their work.

Prior to the application of adult learning theory, evaluation results of new hire training at a large electric utility company showed that training was inadequate and did not effectively prepare new hires for their jobs (Woodard, 2007). Trainers incorporated concepts of andragogy in the training program for newly hired utility company employees. To make the changes, trainers looked at each of Knowles’ assumptions and found ways to incorporate it into the program. An example of the applying assumption number one, trainers allowed time each day for the trainee to focus on concepts of their choice to have the autonomy to self-direct (Woodard, 2007). After applying Knowles concepts, the employee’s perception of training changed positively and increased the effectiveness of training (Woodard, 2007).

In her research, Ghost Bear (2012) surveyed 380 eBay users to determine what learning strategies they utilized to learn about and how to use the Internet auction system. Data collected was related to how the participants navigated the site, formed and exercised bidding strategies, communicated with other users, and how they felt about the skills they learned. She then described the learning strategies used by the participants and found that the process in which the

learners engaged in to learn the online auction process supported Knowles' assumptions (Ghost Bear, 2012). For example, assumption number two involves self-direction; Ghost Bear (2012) found that eBay users are self-directed in nature and know what their goals for using the auction process are. Ghost Bear (2012) recommends that "facilitators of adult learning situations must recognize the strengths of each learner and respect each person's individual differences" (p. 40).

Benefits of Cross-Functional Training

Employees that have developed knowledge and skills related to areas outside of their normal function are considered to be cross-functionally developed (Woods, 2013). The benefits of cross trained employees include an adjustment to the employees' perspectives and perceptions. They feel more valuable to the organization (Carrison, 2012), can respond better to change (Nembhard, 2014), feel better about their job security and managers can feel better about unexpected crises (Carrison, 2012). Carrison (2012) also states that employees who have been cross-trained have a better perspective of the bigger picture and build connections between tasks and employees in other departments. Cross trained employees "are able to transfer their acquired skills at multiple tasks to a wider range of changing products and processes" (Nembhard, 2014, p. 143).

A major challenge of cross functional training is the cost of the added training, both in time and monetary resources (Carrison, 2012; Nembhard, 2014) because employees must divide their time between multiple activities. Additionally, lower production rates occur when there is a break of sufficient length between learning the task and performing the task (Nembhard, 2014). Often an employee may not use the cross trained skills very often, which may affect their productivity when faced with the task.

A study of international tourist hotels in Taiwan during a labor shortage found that cross functional training improved service quality, retention, job satisfaction and promotion in both the front office employees and the restaurant employees (Chen & Yseng, 2012). To do the study, researchers completed face-to-face and email interactions with industry leaders such as human resource managers, departmental managers and line supervisors from the housekeeping, front office, and restaurant departments. From these interactions, a list of industrial domain skills was generated which included functional skills, managerial skills, general skills, emotional skills, and aesthetic skills. Researchers and industry experts also identified ability skills, which were specific to certain positions and include abilities such as checking guests in/out, counter operation and payment, restaurant facilities maintenance such as cutlery polishing, and laundry service. Chen and Yseng (2012) used a Delphi technique and questionnaire to create a definition of multi-skilled and non-multi-skilled employees from these skill categories.

A survey was distributed to 350 international hotel employees, of which 120 were returned. Results showed that cross functional training improved service quality and promotion for housekeeping employees but did not provide better retention rates or job satisfaction (Chen & Yseng, 2012). Front office employees provided a higher service quality and experienced better retention, job satisfaction and promotion. Restaurant employees also provided better service quality and experienced better retention, job satisfaction and promotion. While there were some benefits, the research did find that cross functional training did not result in higher pay for any of the three employee types (Chen & Yseng, 2012).

While some research has shown the benefits of cross-functional integration and training, not all studies have had such clear results. A three-phase study of 266 manufacturing plant organizations in nine countries found that “even though the effects of achieved integration on

several dimensions of operational performance are positive, the performance effect varies from one dimension to the next” (Turkulainen & Ketokivi, 2012, p. 447). For phase one, managers’ perceptions in buyer-supplier relationships with different levels of cross-functional involvement were analyzed. To gather these perceptions, a seven-question questionnaire was used to guide conversation during interviews. In phase two, researchers identified the financial measurements such as profit impact of joint initiatives within each buyer-supplier relationship.

The final phase of the study included interviews with key managers of both the buyer organization and the supplier organization to gather data about how perceptions and behaviors changed after the financial data was made available to them. Turkulainen and Ketokivi (2012) used data from each phase to develop five propositions on how cross-functional integration affects performance. The five propositions were:

- Proposition 1: A supply chain orientation at both the buyer and supplier side of a relationship supports cross-functional, cross-firm integration.
- Proposition 2: Cross-functional, cross-firm integration is a key enabler of value co-creation.
- Proposition 3a: Managers are capable of identifying that the profit impact of initiatives conducted in a cross-functional relationship is higher than in a buyer and salesperson relationship.
- Proposition 3b: Managers do not recognize the magnitude of the difference in profit impact of the initiatives conducted in a cross-functional relationship and a buyer and salesperson relationship.

- Proposition 4: The availability of financial measurements of value co-creation increases managers' commitment to support the transition to a supply chain orientation.
- Proposition 5a: The availability of financial measurements of value co-creation changes managers' perceptions about customer relationships.
- Proposition 5b: The availability of financial measurements of value co-creation changes managers' perceptions about supplier relationships. (Turkulainen & Ketokivi, 2012)

The researchers were unable to prove a beneficial effect caused by cross functional integration. They concluded that there is difficulty in connecting cross functional integration with performance because you first must prove that the organization is successful in integration practices and further research would be needed to determine that aspect. They recognize that integration has “beneficial effects on multiple performance dimensions” (Turkulainen & Ketokivi, 2012, p. 460) but recognize that that the key question is not if a beneficial effect exists but what the theoretical interpretation is. They suggest that an unexpected result of the study was the realization that while there is not a direct correlation with innovation, successful cross-functional integration may have beneficial effects on design flexibility, volume flexibility, and development lead times which often leads to innovative design (Turkulainen & Ketokivi, 2012).

Using Computer-Based Modules

Computers provide multiple tools for employers to train their employees instead of traditional stand and deliver techniques. Online learning is becoming a common aspect of the classroom (Battaglino, Haldeman, & Laurans, 2012). In 2015, 26.4% of training was delivered via online or computer-based technologies (Training Magazine, 2015). When compared to

traditional education, 92% of all distance and online education studies find that distance and online education is at least as effective if not better than traditional education (Nguyen, 2015, p. 315).

Often, in times of budget reductions, training costs are one of the first to be cut (AHC Media LLC, 2009). While costs vary, online education may reduce training costs for organizations. Two common types of online education programs are virtual schools and blended programs (Battaglino et al., 2012). The research team defines virtual schools as those where all instruction takes place online, with students and teachers at a distance from each other. Blended programs rotate or alternate in some fashion between in-person instruction and online instruction (Battaglino et al., 2012). Because of the range of possibilities in online education, researchers were not able to determine a definitive cost for either blended or virtual programs but have developed estimates for each. The estimated per-pupil expenditure for all public schools across the United States is \$10,000. The estimated per-pupil expenditure for blended programs is \$8,900. Fully virtual models have an estimated cost of \$6,400 (Battaglino et al., 2012). Even if the cost estimates are not definitive, it does seem as though both virtual and blended online education programs are less expensive than the traditional brick and mortar programs, which may help organizations meet their budgetary goals. In addition to the budgetary savings, computer-based training systems may have other advantages to traditional classroom training such as flexibility, easier record keeping and the ability to train many people in a short amount of time (Jacoby, 2005).

Computers and technology can improve training programs; however, they can also cause issues if they are not effectively integrated. Researchers recruited 530 adults to take a free online course on Microsoft Excel to study how their learning was affected by technical difficulties

(Sitzmann, Ely, Bell, & Bauer, 2010). The course was self-paced but learners had to view the modules in a pre-determined order. Error messages were pre-loaded into the program to pop up in varying places and amounts to a random sampling of participants. After completion of training, participants completed a 20-item multiple choice assessment of declarative and procedural knowledge. After analysis, researchers found that trainees were more likely to have lower test scores when interrupted by technical difficulties (Sitzmann et al., 2010). Researchers also found that trainees had a higher probability of dropping out of the course if they experienced technical difficulties, even if they had a higher level of pre-training motivation. Because of these findings, the researcher suggests that employers be mindful of training interruptions when using computer-based modules (Sitzmann et al., 2010).

Some organizations take a more blended approach and use computer-based training modules in conjunction with on-the-job training and instructor led training rather than an approach that is strictly computer-based. Over a span of three years, a group of mines in North America, switched their training to provide a blended approach for new haul truck operators (Frey, 2014). As the mine workforce turned over, companies saw an increase in operators who had no previous experience operating heavy machinery. They found that computer-based training alone was not enough because operators were struggling to transfer the knowledge to on the job when driving the machines (Frey, 2014). Pairing new operators with experienced operators also provided similar challenges. In response, trainers created a model of training using multiple modalities and media. Frey (2014) lists eight typical components, some of which include instructor led sessions, structured on the job training activities, computer-based model, job aids, and computer-based lessons which included problem solving scenarios or best practices. The mining companies found that this blended approach better met the needs of adult learners so

they can “grasp, practice, and internalize the knowledge and skills they need to master to become safe and proficient operators” (Frey, 2014, p. 80).

Training Employees in Customer Service

Dunham (2006) interviewed several executives of large companies such as Jet Blue and J.D. Power and Associates regarding their ideas surrounding customer service. Customer service is different in every company, often depending on their product or industry. Several companies have found that being proactive and anticipatory, rather than reactive to complaints is more productive (Dunham, 2006). How organizations train and prepare their employees on providing exemplary customer service can make the difference.

A study of perceptions of customer service between the employees of a dental supply company and the dentists (the customers) doing business with the dental supply company was intended to look at whether employees had the same perception of good customer service as customers (Helton, 2010). The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 dental supply company employees and 10 dentists who had active accounts with the company. Interview questions focused on “employee-customer insights of corporate culture, employee-customer service values and customer perceptions of quality customer service” (Helton, 2010, p. 73). Helton’s (2010) analysis of the interview results discovered four core themes. The themes identified are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Emergent Themes, Their Meaning, and Evidence from the Data

Theme	Meaning	Evidence from the data
1	Employees and customers have the same perception of good customer service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses were more varied among employees than customers but beliefs agreed • Shared belief that good customer service is providing a product or service correctly and promptly while meeting the needs of the customer • May provide leadership with guidance on how to improve training to enhance customer service
2	How does the culture in an organization affect performance of customer service representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns how the company makes the employee feel appreciated • Most common responses: employee benefits, management support, empowerment for success, recognition of accomplishments, better compensation, freedom to make decision
3	Job satisfaction influence level of customer service received from employees to customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns how the customer perceives customer service • Responses included: establishing a friendly relationship, giving personal attention to client needs, showing respect/curtesy, employees display happiness • Disparity between when the customer feels valued and when they get value for expense on the product
4	Significant relationship in the perceptions of good customer service between employees and customers of an organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discusses how problems and issues are resolved between customers and employees • Both customers and employees had similar responses, stating that the company stood behind the product and took responsibility for errors

Though the four themes are individual and unique, Helton (2010) did find some connections and correlations between the themes. Helton (2010) suggests that the interrelationship of themes two and three are crucial because it displays that the morale and

attitudes of employees are important for good customer service. Themes one and four were found to be correlated and gave organizational leadership “the foundation to build and facilitate programs that communicate these results not only to the rank and file employees but also to the management of human resource and training programs” (Helton, 2010, p. 138).

Ukens (2009) suggests that there are two levels of customer service training, the first level includes specific technical knowledge needed to answer questions and solve problems while the second goes beyond and deals with how an employee interacts with a customer. In order to engage employees in the training and provide excellent experiences for both employees and customers, using experiential training techniques such as skits displaying poor service experiences, listening exercises, or group inquiry (Ukens, 2009).

Success in customer service is often measured by the level of customer loyalty or satisfaction. Pezeshki, Mousavi, & Grant (2009) found a correlation between performance of service attributes and customer satisfaction by surveying 270 University students and their experience with the mobile telecommunications industry. Researchers identified two hypotheses to study the potential relationship between service quality attribute performance and service quality attribute importance. “Service attributes with different levels of importance have different impact on satisfying customer expectations” (Pezeshki et al., p. 83) so it is important for companies to understand the impact of how service attributes affect customer satisfaction. The first hypothesis states that “attribute performance and attribute importance are dependent, therefore, attribute importance can be interpreted as a function of attribute performance” (Pezeshki et al., p. 86). The second hypothesis was that “the relationship between attribute performance and customer satisfaction is asymmetric and non-linear” (Pezeshki et al., p. 86). Study results indicated that service attributes such as accuracy of billing and payment has a high

impact on customer satisfaction when performance level is ranked low but are not as impactful when performance level is high. Final results showed that both hypotheses were correct, there is an asymmetric relationship between performance of service attributes and overall customer satisfaction and that attribute importance can be seen as a function of attribute performance (Pezeshki et al., 2009).

Promoting a Service Climate in Hospitality Settings

“Service climate may be defined as employees’ perceptions of organizational policies, practices, and procedures, which promote a climate that expects and rewards customer service” (He, Li, & Lai, 2011, p. 592). Chinese hospitality employees were surveyed on how the aspects of a service climate improved customer satisfaction and employee commitment. The researchers considered service climate to have three components, which included: customer orientation, work facilitation, and managerial support (He et al., 2011). Customer orientation includes aspects of customer feedback and practices such as offering high quality service and supportive conditions. Work facilitation includes areas such as human resource practices, guidance and cooperation all support the delivery of quality service. The third component, managerial support, involves the immediate manager supporting and rewarding their employees delivering quality service (He et al., 2011).

To collect data, 300 questionnaires were sent to employees in three and four star rated hotels in China (He et al., 2011). 216 questionnaires were considered complete of the 230 returned. The survey measured customer orientation, managerial support, work facilitation, employee commitment, and customer satisfaction using a Likert scale (He et al., 2011). The researchers found that both managerial support and work facilitation indirectly improved

customer satisfaction by directly affecting employee commitment. Additional findings did not indicate that customer orientation had significant positive influence on employee commitment.

Researchers concluded that this unexpected result may be influenced by the Chinese culture, where people are more loyal to individuals rather than to an organization (He et al., 2011). Also believed to be a result of the Chinese culture, the researchers learned that managers have a large role and influence on the performance of employees, therefore managerial support was much more important than work facilitation when improving employee commitment. He et al., (2011) suggest that managers focus on customer orientation by clarifying the value of high quality service and by emphasizing the importance of customer feedback. Managers should also communicate and provide adequate support for their employees.

Another study looked at service climate and ethical climate at a major digital movie theater chain in China and how the two types of climate affect business performance (Jiang, Hu, Hong, Liao, & Liu, 2016). Service climate was defined as a climate where employees are capable and motivated to fulfill customer requests and ethical climate refers to their honesty and integrity. Organizations can have service climate or ethical climate or both service and ethical climate (Jiang et al., 2016). Two of their hypotheses were relevant to this research. One was “service climate will have a positive indirect relationship with business performance of a service unit through service behavior, when controlling for ethical behavior” (Jiang et al., 2016, p. 1556). The second was “ethical climate will have a positive indirect relationship with business performance of a service unit through unethical behavior, when controlling for service behavior” (Jiang et al., 2016, p. 1556). Two times over a six-month time period, researchers surveyed employees and managers of a digital movie chain China about their perceptions of service climate and ethical climate.

Using company archival data, researchers also measured objective business performance outcomes (Jiang et al., 2016). Business performance outcomes that were objectively measured included the average percentage of seats occupied in an individual screening room for a movie and operating income consisting of ticket revenue as well as food and beverage revenue. Consistent with the first hypothesis, data showed that service climate had a positive relationship with service behavior and that service behavior had a statistically significant relationship with service climate. The second was also supported by data that found that ethical climate, unethical behavior and business performance were all statistically significantly related (Jiang et al., 2016). Results showed that only when unethical behavior is avoided does service behavior contribute to business performance. The researchers in this study suggest that organizations balance service excellence and ethics by teaching employees that good service and ethical service are both necessary. Corrective actions should be taken by managers before unethical behaviors occur (Jiang et al., 2016).

Customer Relationship Management Practices

Simply put, customer relationship management (CRM) is the way you “manage your relationships with current and prospective customers” (Guay, n.d., para. 5). Generally, CRM management is done using the web, often a software or app that an organization may purchase. Services and designs vary widely but a CRM system often tracks and documents customer contacts, leads, and deals, as well as customer/employee communications. CRM systems continue to gain popularity and 73% of big business in the United States have already invested in CRM systems or plan to do so soon. In Europe, 46% of chief information officers have immediate plans to invest in CRM systems (Verhoef & Lemon as cited in Simmons, 2015, p. 1).

Simmons (2015) used an archival operational database data from 203 North American industrial equipment manufacturing companies to examine the relationship between CRM system usage, customer satisfaction, and gross revenue. Customer satisfaction data, a count of logged issues, and revenue data were provided by the organization (Simmons, 2015). Multiple regression analysis to review the provided data and found a significant relationship between customer satisfaction, CRM use, and gross revenue (Simmons, 2015). Results indicated that customer satisfaction only accounted for 2% of the variation in gross revenue, while CRM usage accounted for 22% of variation in gross revenue. Simmons (2015) pointed out that while there were many benefits in using a CRM system, including the possibilities for collecting customer data. Just collecting the data does not make a company successful with customer satisfaction. A balanced approach to CRM implementations may be a key to CRM success and that organizations should focus on people, process and technology to improve the chance of success (Simmons, 2015).

Prior to CRM implementation, full plans for process re-engineering, employee retraining and full-scale business reviews should be developed. Once implemented, CRM utilization should be measured to ensure comprehensive use of the system, employee performance should be monitored, and additional support or training provided if necessary (Simmons, 2015).

Summary

To understand the topics of adult learning, using computer-based training modules, and customer service training, a literature review was completed. While not all studies agreed, there was evidence to suggest that cross-functional training has benefits to the service industry.

Similarly, there was evidence to suggest that CRM practices and programs are beneficial. The

literature review provided information help UWRF UC fulfill their responsibilities in the event process and to work together to create the best possible experience for UC customers.

Chapter III: Methodology

In the UWRF UC, there are five student employee work groups that all have a specific role to play in the event process. Supervisors in the UWRF UC observed that student employees did not understand the entire event process, how the different groups interact and how they affect the customers. This lack of understanding creates missed opportunities for collaboration and lost efficiencies as well as negatively affecting the customer's experience. Existing training protocols for student employees about the event process in the UC were examined. Student employee supervisors were interviewed to determine how each work group is trained on their responsibilities in the event process. Data was collected by reviewing existing training agendas and materials and by interviewing with the student employee supervisors about their perceptions related to the topic.

Subject Selection and Description

Subjects of the study consisted of the supervisors of student employees who work in the event process in the University Center. The supervisory team includes five full time, professional staff members ranging in age from 25 years old to 55 years old. As leaders of each work group, they had access and knowledge of how their employees were trained or gained additional knowledge of the event process.

Instrumentation

To examine where training could be lacking leading to the problem of student employees not understanding the event process, existing training practices, and topics needed to be identified. Data was collected by interviewing student employee supervisors for evidence of training related to the event process and each work group's role in the event process. Interview

questions (Appendix A) were developed to gather data regarding the student employee supervisor's training protocols and their suggestions for improvement.

Organizational training agendas and documents were also examined for data showing training on each work group's role in the event process. A training material evaluation form was used to assess the existing materials (Appendix B).

Data Collection Procedures

To collect data, the researcher met with professional staff in the University Center who supervise students in the areas of: campus reservations, campus information desk, production services, custodial services and University Center building managers. Meetings were held in a private consultation room in the UWRF UC. Interview questions included questions about how the student employees learn about the event process and each team's role in the event process (Appendix A). The researcher also studied existing training agendas (see Appendix C For example agenda) and documents for data related to the topics. A training agenda evaluation form was used to document the contents of the training (Appendix B).

Data Analysis

Once practices in training on the event process were identified either in the existing materials or gathered from the supervisors, they were organized and inventoried. A combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data was completed to create a comprehensive inventory of ways that each work group trains student employees on the event process. Analysis also looked at how each work group learns about the other work groups' roles in the event process. The completed comprehensive inventory was used to identify and address gaps in the training practices.

Limitations

The study was limited in scope, as it only looked at work groups within the UC at UWRF. The training agendas are not all inclusive of the training employees receive. Also, the researcher did not examine the effectiveness of the present training practices, only if the identified topics were present.

Summary

Student employee supervisors have reported that student employees may not understand the event process and the roles of employee work groups as well as expected. To determine where and how training about these topics occur, the researcher interviewed student employee supervisors and reviewed training agendas. Information gathered looked at if and how the work group was trained on their own role in the event process, the other teams' roles in the event process and how it may affect the student's success and the customer's experience.

Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of the study was to determine where and how undergraduate student employees in the UWRF UC are trained about the different work groups' roles in the event process. From the supervisor interviews and training agenda evaluation, it was determined that training methods and content varied with each work group.

Demographics

Research participants consisted of five student employee supervisors in the UWRF UC. Among the five were two men and three women. The participants ranged from age 25 years old to 54 years old. Approximately 60 undergraduate student employees report to the participants.

Summary of Findings

The following summary of findings is organized by interview question and the responses received from the student employee supervisor for each work group. The analysis of the interview results revealed that all work groups learn about their own roles in the event process but not all are informed about the other work groups' roles. Though the supervisors acknowledged the existence of negative customer experiences, most had difficulty describing specific instances from recent history. However, none of the supervisors had difficulty providing suggestions for additional interactions and collaboration between work groups.

Their own role. All work groups train student employees on their own work group's role in the event process. Each work group completes this training differently and at various points in their training timeline but each does train their employees on their group's specific role. Table 2 reflects supervisors' responses about training on their own role in the event process and provides notes on the level of information provided to student employees.

Table 2

How Do the Students on the Staff Learn About the Role They Play in the Event Process?

Work Group	Students are Trained on their Role	Notes on the Level of Information Provided
Campus Information Desk	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information provided multiple times, throughout training period Discusses each work group's function Discusses each work group's interactions with Desk
Campus Reservations	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Starts discussion during first session and continues throughout entire training period Uses scenarios to demonstrate Utilizes the business practice flowchart
Custodial	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No detailed information is given Supervisor does not believe Custodians directly participate in the event process
Production Services	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No set dialogue or session, but the content is woven throughout entire training period Uses hands on, lecture, discussion, scenarios as training formats
UC Building Manager	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn through discussion, role play, scenarios, shadow shifts, on the job training Topics include: their role in the UC, how to answer event customer questions, troubleshooting and communicating issues Utilizes the business practice flowchart

Other work group roles. Table 3 shows if a work group is trained on the other work groups' roles in the event process. The information displayed is based on supervisor responses during the interviews and the training agendas provided by supervisors. Data shows that 60% of the work groups are trained on the others' roles in the event process. The custodial work group is the only one of the five that does not learn about any of the other work groups' roles.

Table 3

Is Each Work Group Trained on the Other Work Group's Roles in the Event Process?

Work Group	Training on Campus Information Desk role	Training on Campus Reservations role	Training on Custodial role	Training on Production Services role	Training on UC Building Manager role
Campus Information Desk	--	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Campus Reservations	Yes	--	Yes	Yes	Yes
Custodial	No	No	--	No	No
Production Services	No	Yes	No	--	No
UC Building Manager	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	--

Table 4 goes into more detail about how the student employees in each work group learn about the role the other work groups play in the event process. According to the results of the interviews, UC Building Managers receive the most information about the other work group's roles. This is because they are trained cross-functionally so they can fill in on the other teams when needed. Custodial staff and Production Services are expected to gain most of this knowledge from the annual All Staff Training.

Table 4

*How do the Students on the Staff Learn About the Role the Other Teams Play in the Event**Process?*

Work Group	Notes on the Level of Information Provided
Campus Information Desk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gets first introduction at initial employee orientation session • Limited information provided about custodial, production services and campus reservations • Detailed information provided about possible interactions with building managers due to their close working relationship
Campus Reservations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided with in depth knowledge of each groups' role in the event process • Has individual time with production services coordinator • Uses real life scenarios, shadow shifts and practice reservations to demonstrate roles and relationships
Custodial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No targeted training on the event process or other work groups • Relies only on All Staff training
Production Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learns about other groups through the process of learning about their own role • Framed in the context of getting their own questions answered by other staffs • Relies on returning and experienced staff to share their knowledge
UC Building Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most extensive training of all groups • Have specific training sessions focusing on each work group • Most managers bring experience and knowledge from their former roles on the other teams

Student success through better understanding. When interviewed, all supervisors agreed that a better understanding of the event process could positively affect their success in the operation. Each supervisor had ideas of how their staff could benefit from a better understanding, some thoughts overlapped and were consistent with the other supervisors. Table

5 shows the supervisor's agreement with the question and lists comments made regarding how the staff could benefit.

Table 5

Could a Better Understanding of the Event Process Benefit a Student's Success in the Operation?

Work Group	Agreement	Supervisor Comments
Campus Information Desk	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees do not always understand the whole process or everyone's role within it • Looking to include event related scenarios in situational training in the future
Campus Reservations	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could answer customer questions faster and more often to serve the customer better • Could take on more difficult tasks and reduce work load of supervisor
Custodial	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could help with timing and coordination of tasks • Maintains that custodians do not interact with event process
Production Services	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee response time could improve, thus improving customer service • Focus would be on interactions and possible collaborations with building managers
UC Building Manager	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already have good base knowledge • Room for growth in communication with other staffs • Could help the staff determine if they can solve a problem on their own or if they need to contact outside help

Avoiding negative customer experiences. While all supervisors acknowledged that the customer experience could most likely be improved through a student employee's better understanding of the event process, few were able to give concrete examples of actual negative customer experiences. The Campus Reservations supervisor shared more general examples of

student employees sending questions to the supervisor rather than answering it themselves, which prolongs the timeline of getting a response back to a customer. Having an increased knowledge of the event process could also assist the Campus Reservations student employees in getting more clear and detailed event information to better serve the customer and their coworkers on the Production Services and Building Manager teams.

The Custodial supervisor stated that there are operational fail safes to prevent negative customer experiences and that generally a Production Services Event Manager or a University Center Building Manager will catch an error before it affects a customer. The supervisor again stated that he does not believe that the custodians interact with the event process so their knowledge of the process does not affect the customer experience.

For the Production Services work group, a situation was shared where the event space was very hot and the Production Service staff did not know there was a way to adjust the room temperature but had they known more about EMS and how the Building Manager uses it, they could have made it more comfortable for the customers in the space. There was also a situation shared where several guests at a high-profile event were getting rowdy in the crowd but the Production Services staff was busy performing their duties with the sound and light equipment and did not have an extra person to deal with the crowd though they knew the issue existed. Again, if they had a better understanding of the Building Manager role, they could have radioed the Building Manager to deal with the rowdy guests while still completing their own tasks.

Finally, the Building Manager supervisor shared one example of how a misunderstanding of the event process affected a customer. The day before a large event in the UWRF UC, the customer asked the Building Manager a question about the setup planned for the event. The Building Manager was not able to give a clear answer and forwarded the customer onto the

Production Services Coordinator, upsetting the customer since their event was taking place so soon. If the Building Manager had more information about the event process, she could have reached out to multiple other people and utilized resources to answer the customer's question immediately.

Increased collaboration between work groups. The student employee supervisors all agreed that additional collaboration and interaction between work groups could increase student employee understanding of the event process. From their perspectives, there are already good practices in place with areas for improvement. There were two practices that were suggested by multiple supervisors. These two practices were a common new employee onboarding program currently in development and the Lead Meeting which is already in practice. Table 6 shows additional suggestions and comments made by supervisors.

Table 6

How Can Student Employees Interact and Collaborate More to Increase their Knowledge of the Event Process?

Work Group	Ideas for Additional Interaction and Collaboration
Campus Information Desk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a chart or infographic depicting the entire event process and each work groups' role in it • Continue with creation of the new employee onboarding program • Believes supervisors should collaborate more and increase their knowledge of other groups
Campus Reservations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believes employees already have a good start and should continue building on existing relationships • Ideas for training format: shadow shifts between work groups or situational training with multiple teams present
Custodial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believes additional training should only focus on those students who take a personal interest • Believes the UC should be focusing on giving student employees skills that can carry over into any job, not just roles in the UC
Production Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggested facilitated socialization between staffs to encourage interaction • Would like to focus on interactions between production services and building managers as well as how production services uses EMS • Continuation of the Lead Meeting is encouraged
UC Building Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor indicated managers often have a single vision of their own role but do not look beyond to the other roles • Suggested a graphic depicting the event process step by step • Suggested a mid-semester review of training topics to review questions that have come up

Summary

Through the student employee supervisor interviews and the evaluation of training agendas, the researcher learned more about the UWRF UC training process as it relates to

student employees and the event process. All work groups are trained on their own role within the event process but the protocols for training about the other work groups' roles is not consistent among the supervisors. The supervisors had difficulty providing concrete examples of how a lack of knowledge about the event process has negatively affected the customer. However, all supervisors agreed that additional collaboration between work groups could be beneficial to the students and the customers and were able to provide ideas for future interactions.

Chapter V: Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation

Supervisors in the UWRF UC observed that student employees do not understand the entire event process, how the players interact and how they affect the customers. This lack of understanding creates missed opportunities for collaboration and lost efficiencies as well as negatively affecting the customer's experience. The purpose of the study was to examine the existing training protocols for student employees about the event process in the UC and how each work group completed their responsibilities in the event process. The following chapter will discuss the results of the study and how the researcher recommends the UWRF UC moves forward with training future student employees and/or opportunities for future research.

Discussion

Student employee supervisors may be seeing a lack of understanding of the event in their student employees because the student employees are not being fully trained on the event process. Each team was trained on their own roles in the event process but not all were trained on the other work groups' roles. All work groups also learned about how their role affects the customers of the UWRF UC, however each work group received varying levels of related information.

The Custodial work group supervisor had a very different view of their student employees' role than the other supervisors. He indicated that the custodians provide an environment conducive to successful events, rather than directly participating in the event process. Because he did not believe that his team played a role in the event process, he provided little to no training about the event process.

The other four work groups varied in their approach and exact details provided but had a similar perspective in their belief that their team needed a holistic view of the event process and

the role of each work group. Production Services and Campus Information Desk supervisors provided a narrow view of the other teams, focusing only on how the other teams' role related to their own role. Campus Reservations plays a major role in the event process and thus provide a detailed look at each work group and their interactions. Building Managers also provide an in-depth view of each team since they are expected to fill in as needed on the other teams.

Conclusions

Data from the student employee supervisor interviews and training agenda evaluations show that all groups learn about their own role but not all groups learn about the other work group's roles. All five of the work groups give at least a brief introduction to their own work group's role in the event process. Approximately 80% of the work groups give a more in-depth summary of their role in the event process. Only 60% of the work groups train their employees on the roles that other UWRF UC work groups play in the event process. Two of the five work groups rely mainly on the biannual All Staff Training to relay the information about the other work groups' functions in the event process. However, in the recent past this training has not included any of that information. When exploring ways to integrate additional work group collaboration or training, 80% of the supervisors expressed a positive interest in this future action.

Recommendations

Moving forward, it is recommended that the UWRF UC continues with the training they provide for the student employees. At the minimum, each work group learns about their own role in the event process. However, it is recommended that each work group provides more detail about the other work groups' roles so the student employees have an opportunity to have a more holistic view of the event process and operation. If 100% of the student employees receive

training on each work group's role, there could be increased understanding of the event process in the UWRF UC, thus solving the problem recognized by the supervisors. To provide this detail of the event process, it is recommended that a chart or infographic is created to show a comprehensive view of each work group's responsibilities in the event process. This graphic should be easy to understand to provide a clear understanding according to the recommendations of two work group supervisors. By providing a visual reminder of the process an event follows, anyone on the team can see where each work group completes their tasks. Employees could also see how their work affects the other groups and where there are links between each group's responsibilities.

Since most groups have training the same dates, a student employee roundtable could be integrated into existing training. This roundtable discussion would include panelists or speakers from each work group and would give opportunity to students to discuss concerns and questions directly with each other. Guided discussion topics could include ways to help each other out or examples of what a normal shift looks like for each staff. Another option for this type of discussion could be a panel discussion of professional staff to provide their input and experience. This panel discussion could also be an opportunity for supervisors to model expectations of collaboration among each other.

It is also recommended that the UWRF UC move forward with the collaborative onboarding program currently in development. This training could be an opportunity for the student employees to interact and start to build relationships that help them serve the customers. Ideally, this onboarding will be the first introduction to the UC for student employees demonstrating the values and mission of the UC. The training will be facilitated by a supervisor and employees will be in small groups of four to six individuals. It is recommended that, at a

minimum, a summary of the event process be included in the onboarding protocol but ideally there will be more in-depth information given about the details of the entire event process.

One suggestion for an additional onboarding topic is to include situational training such as a case study focusing a potential issue within the context of the event process. An example of a possible case study could be to look at a large event such as the residence life spring banquet taking place in the ballroom and to walk this event through start to finish. The facilitator could also include some hypothetical roadblocks such as an absent staff person or an emergency such as a fire alarm going off during the event. Discussion around this situation could focus on how the teams work with each other to assist the customer in hosting a successful event. The collaborative onboarding could also be an opportunity for supervisors to discuss the general life and work skills that a student employee will learn by being part of the UC staff.

Developing relationships between work groups would also improve collaboration and understanding. The UWRF UC has already implemented lead meetings which are weekly meetings of student employee representatives from each work group. The purpose of this student led meeting is to connect student employees from each group and provide opportunity for work groups to communicate and collaborate. It is recommended these meetings are continued to maintain the connections that have been built as well as to allow student employees to work and communicate cross-functionally. Additionally, relationships could be built using social engagements outside of the normal work shift to engage students on a personal level. It appears that some pairs of groups work more closely than others, especially the Campus Reservations, Production Services and University Center Building Manager staffs. There are opportunities to strategically pair these teams to build relationships, such as staff exchanges or shadow shifts

between them. These opportunities could help student employees understand and appreciate what their coworkers do daily as well as relating their work to that of the other work groups.

Future Research Agenda

Through the course of this research, supervisors had difficulty providing concrete examples of negative customer experiences. The implementation of a customer feedback survey could assist in providing this information to supervisors. From the analysis of customer feedback, additional issues may be brought to the attention of the department that may or may not be related to student employee training on the event process and each other's roles.

The current study only reviewed what training was currently in place so further research could review the effectiveness of the current training. With a more in-depth look, a researcher may find that the existing training is not effective and that it is the cause for the problem stated by the supervisors. Alternatively, the researcher could find that existing training is adequate and there is another cause for student employees not understanding the roles played in the event process. Gaps in the current training may also be identified with additional research or there could be the identification of existing training that could be shared among work groups. Further research of this nature could supplement current research and broaden the understanding of the current UWRF UC training practices. There has never been a comprehensive view of the UWRF UC's student employee training protocols. Supplementary research could also include how additional training on the event process affects the customer and the services UWRF UC provides them. The researcher could also review customer feedback for examples of situations where further training could have prevented a negative customer experience. Both could assist the UC in creating a more positive experience for customers hosting events in the spaces of the UC.

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Appendix A: Supervisor Interview Form**University Center Supervisor Interview
Team _____**

1. How do the students on your staff learn about the role they play in the event process?

2. How do the students on your staff learn about the role other teams play in the event process?

3. In what ways, if any, have you observed instances where better understanding of the event process could benefit the student's success in the operation?

4. Please share any examples of instances where a negative customer experience could have been avoided if the students had a better understanding of each team's role in the event process.

5. What ideas do you have of ways that the student employees can interact and collaborate more to increase their knowledge of the event process?

Appendix B: Training Agenda Evaluation Form

Training Agenda Evaluation

Training Agenda is from _____ work group.

1. Is the training for all staff members or a limited number, such as leads?
2. Is there evidence that the staff is trained on the overall event process? If yes, how?
3. Are they trained on Campus Information Desk's role in the event process?
 - a. Does it include interaction between the two staffs?
4. Are they trained on Campus Reservations' role in the event process?
 - a. Does it include interaction between the two staffs?
5. Are they trained on Custodial's role in the event process?
 - a. Does it include interaction between the two staffs?
6. Are they trained on Production Services' role in the event process?
 - a. Does it include interaction between the two staffs?
7. Are they trained on University Center Building Manager's role in the event process?
 - a. Does it include interaction between the two staffs?

Appendix C: Example Training Agenda

Campus Reservations Training

Wednesday, January 18, 2017

Attendees: Sarah, Kaitlyn, Nicole, Taylor

9:00am Welcome and Introduction – meet at Info Desk

- Clocking in and Out
- Hiring paperwork
- Training Schedule Overview
- 3 minute Jterm Highlight Recap, GTKY Question
- Who is in UC Operations and what do they do?
 - Cara, Joan, Deb M, Sarah, Jay, Ben, Kristin, Corie, Amy, Karyn, GSIs
- UC Student Staff Organization
 - Building Managers, Desk, Custodial, Production, Reservations
- Campus Reservations Overview
 - Definitions

10:00am-10:45am

- Grouping Categories
- Business Practice Flowchart
- GPR/PR

10:45am-11:30am

- StrengthsQuest assessments on their own

11:30am-12:15pm Lunch

12:15pm

- GTKY Question

12:15pm-1:00pm

- Resources: Manuals (CR, UCC, Abbott, LLLC), Website, A-Z

1:00pm-2:15pm

- Tour of the UC and IC
- IC Culture

2:15pm-3:00pm

- Check Accounts: S Account, EMS, Footprints

Campus Reservations Training

Thursday, January 19, 2017

Attendees: Sarah, Kaitlyn, Nicole, Taylor, Abby

9:00am - 9:15am

- Welcome back, review yesterday, GTYK question

9:15am-10:30am

- Customer Service

10:30am-11:00am

- EMS and Footprints Tour

11:00am-12:00pm

- University Center/IC Tour

12:00pm-12:45pm Lunch**12:45pm- 1:00**

- Diagrams
- Production
- Creating PS FP Issues

1:00pm-1:30pm

- Production Services Tour with Ben

1:30pm-2:15pm

- Expectations

2:15pm-3:00pm

- EMS, VEMS and Footprints

Campus Reservations Training**Friday, January 20, 2017**

Attendees: Sarah, Kaitlyn, Nicole, Taylor, Abby

9:00am - 9:15am

- Welcome back, review yesterday, GTYK question

9:15am – 10:30am

- EMS, VEMS, Footprints practice

10:30am-12:00pm

- Special Spaces and Processes
- RSOs

12:00pm-12:45pm Lunch**12:45am – 1:30pm**

- Campus Tour

1:30pm- 3:00pm

- Catch up
EMS, VEMS, Footprints