**THE PROJECT**

High-quality customer service is a priority for academic libraries, but is often a struggle to deliver consistently. Could part of the problem be a disconnect between what supervisors think motivates their employees to give good customer service and what actually motivates the employees?

**THE METHODOLOGY**

Developed surveys with corporate administration models in mind to collect data on potential gaps in customer service motivation. IRB Approval through the University of Tennessee Knoxville. First round of surveys was sent via direct email to one institution. Lack of respondents led to IRB revision to include mass distribution via ALA listserv and social media spaces for academic librarians.

**THE SURVEY**

1. Versions of the survey:
   - 1 for supervisors of front-line employees
   - 1 for front-line employees

2. Categories of motivating factors:
   - Work Environment and Working Conditions
   - Relationships with Co-Workers & Supervisors
   - Other Factors

**IMPLICATIONS**

Not as many gaps as we anticipated. Many of the comparisons between the supervisor and employee survey revealed that respondents are on the same page when it comes to motivation to give good customer service.

**Survey Demographics**

- 41 employee respondents
- 22% identified as staff (exempt)
- 19.5% identified as faculty (non-tenure track)
- 19.5% identified as graduate student workers
- 33% work in a doctoral-granting institution
- 44% work in a reference position
- 29% work in a public services position

**SELECTED RESULTS**

- 47 supervisor respondents
- 36% identified as staff (exempt)
- 23% identified as faculty (tenured)
- 64% work in a doctoral-granting institution
- 23% work in a reference position
- 4.9% work in a public services position

**LIMITATIONS**

Better proof-reading in survey type caused confusion for respondents on supervisor survey. Pre-survey or focus groups to understand the best ways to phrase survey questions to appeal to library supervisors and employees.

**FUTURE RESEARCH**

Recruitment for interviewees, and another round of modified surveys will begin in 2023 and is expected to take much of the year to collect and analyze data. A full report will be forthcoming in 2020.

**NOTABLE GAP**

For me, it is important to have autonomy in my job, but it is also extremely important to have a supervisor who can help answer the really hard questions. I have been in my professional library job a little over a year now, and I have found that I am extremely unmotivated when I can’t get answers from my supervisor—they tend to not respond adequately often.

**Employee Survey Comment**

Some will be extra motivated to give better customer service if they get negative reviews from users. For others it will make them angry, cynical and less likely to care about good service. That is, distinguishing supervisor perspectives from the staff member’s personality is tricky territory.

**Supervisor Survey Comment**

Phase 2 of this research project involves interviewing front-line supervisors and front-line employees to better understand responses to these surveys.