

Assignment 1

Librarian Interview


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Overview:



- A few weeks ago, I interviewed a Media Coordinator from a local elementary school here in Cumberland County. She has been working in this school  over 14 years and will soon be ready for retirement in another 3. She is a friendly librarian, but one who readily admits that she needs to get with the technological age we are presently in. She had never heard of either Raving Fans or First, Break All the Rules. She was more than happy to accommodate me with this interview. I learned that you can, in fact, teach an old dog new tricks, as long as they are willing to learn.

I. Introduction



- I interviewed the Media Coordinator, Mrs. K at a local K-5 elementary school here in Cumberland County

The research method I used was both written (questions presented ahead of time) and verbal (questions asked as we went along that I may not have thought of previously)

II. Administrator Tasks



- Tasks: teacher, collaborator, BOB coach, librarian (in the traditional sense), “mini” tech, AR Coordinator, Web page guru, inventory person, mentor
- Mrs. K was not familiar with the 1/3 rule but once explained to her, believed that she did not follow this at all. Looking further at it, she decided that while they still weren’t evenly divided, her time was spent on areas like external customer service more than she had originally thought.
- She defines leadership as someone who is in charge and who you know is in charge. They are someone who can be seen by anyone and everyone throughout the school. They are not a micro manager but a facilitator and a director. They are someone you can go to for support and who will have your back. They are like the CEO of the school. They want the best for the school and all who enter its doors.

III. Opportunities for improvement



- Probably her biggest area for improvement is in the area of technology. She is learning how to incorporate it with her lessons, but not as much as she would like. She would also like to see a makerspace in the library, but again, doesn't know how to start and feels overwhelmed trying to tackle this herself.
- Ideal qualities would be empathy and understanding not only for the "customers" but the employees as well. She feels that if the leader knows whom they are leading and encourages relationships among coworkers this makes for a better workplace. She also feels an ideal leader is someone who is involved, and not just someone that passes the buck.
- Some of her pearls of wisdom are:
 - 1. In the end, I have to remember that a librarian is still a teacher in some form or another.
 - 2. We shouldn't isolate ourselves from the rest of the school.
 - 3. Forgive kids of their fines at least once.
 - 4. Ask for help when you need it.
 - 5. ALWAYS have an open door. You never know who may need to cry on your shoulder, and vice-versa.

IV. Compare and Contrast our readings to your administrator

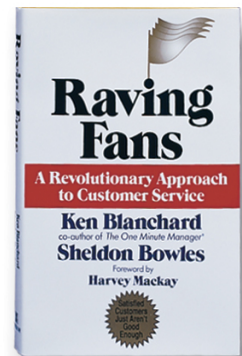


Image Source:
kenblanchard.com

- Secret 1: What do you want? Mrs. K knows that she wants more resources for her library (especially kindergarten non-fiction books, Spanish chapter books, a Makerspace, more technology)
- Secret 2: What do your customers want? These are similar to what she wants for the library. She puts out a page for students and teachers to write book recommendations on
- Secret 3: Customer service plus one. Adding books to teachers requested pull piles, recommending books to students, fine forgiveness, open circulation times
- 12 Questions? This was a mix of yes and no answers. No to having the materials she needs to do her job and the recognition/ appreciation she gets. Yes to principal talking to her about her progress, having a bestie at work, PD's for educational growth

Emotional Leadership? Mrs. K doesn't feel the present administrator has the same qualities as the previous one: not personal enough, doesn't get involved with school activities, won't make concrete decision but instead refers question to someone else.

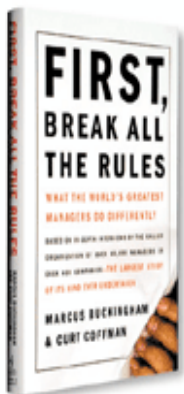


Image Source: <http://cdn05.summary.com>

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary: While I have worked in a library, I never really took a look at what it truly entails and how much work is really involved behind the scenes. There's more to being a librarian than just teaching lessons and checking out books. My limited part-time job didn't allow me to see the whole picture of the job of Media Coordinator. I have a better appreciation for all that they do and also have a better idea of what I will be expected to do. My focus has been on the students, but as the 1/3 rule explains, I also need to devote equal amounts of time to the general public as well as the business aspects of running a library. And while I may not be able to answer yes to all of the 12 questions at first, it is in doing so that I will be truly proficient at my job.

Strengths and opportunities for improvement: Perhaps the biggest opportunity for Mrs. K to do would be to take some time for herself, no matter what is thrown at her. Not overloading yourself by saying "no" sometimes will make for a more productive you. People work better when they feel appreciated so I would say that maybe having a special librarian appreciation day during teacher appreciation week might give Mrs. K some well deserved kuddos. Getting that Makerspace up and running would be a great improvement to the media center that everyone in the school would enjoy. Technology isn't going anywhere, so might as well embrace it.



Thanks for listening! Any questions?



Image Source: <https://pineblufflibrary.org>