April 20, 2006

Kathryn Flint
411 English Building
Champaign, IL 61821

Dear Kathryn Flint,

This letter pertains to the research report that our group prepared for our final project. The purpose of our ethnography is to provide information to the public about the Patron Services at the Krannert Center. We want to inform others about the activity system itself and how it works. By examining the textual tools used at the Patron Services, we gathered information about the activity system.

Within the Krannert Center there are many activity systems that come into play. The Patron Services caters to the customers who go to the Krannert Center. In our report, we discuss many of the services that employee assist customers with such as coat checks, handicap support, and directions. Our report focuses specifically on the textual texts that are used by both management and employees.

After researching the Patron Services at the Krannert Center, we came up with a few recommendations for change. We noticed that the handbook was very helpful, yet after interviewing many employees, we realized that no one really read through it. If management were to implement more of the manual into their training, it would cause the employees to value it more. We also believe management can use certain incentive techniques to ensure that employees would go through the booklet once in awhile. The handbook itself can also be changed a little. In previous years, the brochure has included maps of Krannert Center, which can be very beneficial to new employees. The important information and main points were also made to stand out more in the past. It now seems to clutter all the information together, making it undesirable to read. These changes could possibly cause the manual to be read more often by the staff working at the Patron Services.

I hope that this ethnography report provides applicable information about the Patron Services at the Krannert Center. If you have any further question, please feel free to contact our group. We will be available at your convenience.

Sincerely,

John Barney
Tracy Mariano
Michelle Ng
Chris Yoo
304 N. Lincoln #304
You Look Like You’re Looking for the Bathroom?:
An In-depth Look Into Patron Services
At The Krannert Center For Performing Arts

May 8, 2006

John Barney
Tracy Mariano
Michelle Ng
Christopher Yoo
Table of Contents

1. Abstract 4

2. Introduction 5
   Background 5
   Issue 5
   Purpose 5
   Scope 6

3. Analysis of Activity System 6
   Division of Labor 6
   Patron Services Hierarchy 7
   Subjects 7
   Rules 7
   Motives and Goals 8
   Community 9
   Tools 10


5. Recommendation 12

6. Conclusion 13

7. Appendix 14

8. Sources 20
Abstract

This report takes an in-depth look into the Patron Services within the Krannert Center. It shows the history behind the establishment of the center, including the founders and the mission behind it. It provides an analysis of the activity system Patron Services plays an active role in. Patron Services also uses many textual tools, which are an important part of the job. The Patron Services at the Krannert Center has a handbook that is the foundation of their activity system. The handbook contains information regarding their mission, the rules, and information about the center. After researching the handbook thoroughly, along with other textual tools used by the employees of Patron Services, we have concluded that all the tools could be very beneficial in helping employees to exceed at the job. However, through many interviews, we concluded that many of them don’t take advantage of their handbook. Some have never even opened them. By making minimal changes to the handbook, such as reorganizing, it can make the handbook more appealing. The training can also be conducted in new ways to give employees incentives for reading through the manuals. Through this, it can cause the employees to value the importance of their handbook.
Introduction

Background
Often compared to the Lincoln Center in New York, the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., and the Los Angeles Music Pavilion, the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts is a world-class facility rooted deeply in the Midwest heartland. The Krannert Center is as much a performance venue as it is an educational resource. It was opened in 1969 as a gift from Herman and Ellnora Krannert to the University of Illinois. From this generous gift, thousands of students and countless community members have benefited from the building that has brought together art, education, and culture in Champaign County.

Construction of Krannert

The Krannert Center was constructed to meet the need of a high quality facility for the already established faculty, staff, and curricula of the performing arts disciplines on campus. Herman Krannert, a 1912 alum of the University, was a philanthropist as well as a large supporter of the arts despite his educational background of mechanical engineering. Herman and his wife, Ellnora, donated $26 million to the university to have a performing arts center built. “The complex was architected by Max Abramovitz, a University of Illinois graduate who was partially responsible for New York City’s Lincoln Center” (Leetaru, 2004). The center is comprised of five theaters, including an outdoor facility, the Amphitheatre. Each theater, Foellinger Great Hall, Tryon Festival Theatre, Colwell Playhouse, The Studio, and Amphitheatre are designed to house certain types of events. For example, the Foellinger Great Hall is almost acoustically perfect, which makes it an ideal venue for events to be recorded. The Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Yo-Yo Ma are just a few artists that have performed in the Great Hall. Similarly, The Studio was built in such a way that makes it suitable for a specific performance type. The Studio is capable of changing seating arrangements and seats 210 patrons, which makes it intimate. This setting would be most appropriate for theatre and dance performances for close contact of artists and audience members.

Issue
Within the Krannert Center community lies several activity systems whose main goals are to generate smooth activity of performances. These communities include patron services, food services, the gift shop, and several departments producing student performances.

The several communities within the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts rely heavily on textual documents to communicate not only with each other, but also internally in their groups. Patron Services employees, who act as Krannert’s front-of-house staff, follow motives, guidelines and rules outlined in handbooks. While some employees take the handbook very seriously, there are others who disregard it as “a waste of paper.” Patron Services must find a way to make such an integral part of their training of equal importance to all employees.

Purpose
The purpose of this report is to help the University of Illinois community understand Krannert Center’s Patron Services as an activity system. This includes understanding what patron services
does, how they do it, in what context do they do it in, and how they use communication tools, specifically workplace writings, to sustain their system.

Scope
This report investigates the components of the Patron Services activity system within the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts. In addition, the report will explore Patron Services’ motives and textual tools to understand their practices.

Analysis of the Activity System

An activity system is an organization where the subjects of the system hold the same objectives. There are six segments of a system that can be analyzed. From the analysis, one can gain a clearer prospective of how the system works and what makes the subjects act accordingly.

Division of Labor
The patron services staff is mostly comprised of student workers, yet there are several positions available. The labor is divided into four main positions, which are hosts, supervisors, assistant house managers, and a director of patron services. The host’s duties directly deal with patrons by taking their tickets or helping people in wheelchairs to their seats. When hosts are promoted they become supervisors who sit at the front desk. Supervisors answer patrons’ questions, inform the front of house staff when an event is at intermission or ending, and also act as a go-between when members of the staff need to reach each other. Student supervisors can receive one more promotion to the title of Assistant House Manager. These managers are stationed at the gates of the theaters with the hosts and take care of special cases that might arise during a performance. They also act as a supervisor to the hosts. The final position in patron services is the Director of Patron Services. This position is demanding in that the person has to act as their own human resource department dealing with many communities within Krannert. Current Director of Patron Services, Courtney Egg, coordinates the front-of-house staff, usher volunteers (KCSA), backstage managers, ticket office, and food services. Although she is not in charge of all these activity systems, she works closely with each of them to ensure pleasant experiences for all patrons. The Director of Patron Services reports to the Assistant Director and Senior Associate Director of Marketing & Patron Services. Finally, these directors report to the Director of Krannert, Mike Ross.
Subject
The subject of the Patron Services activity system is the staff. Also known as the front-of-house staff, these people are mostly university students. Until recently, the name of the staff was Public Service Staff but was changed to Patron Services after 1997 to specify that the services of KCPA catered to its patrons and supporters (KCPA Patron Services Guidebook, 2005). All employees of patron services work part-time, except for the Director. The main job of the staff is to take care of the patrons of the Krannert Center. The front-of-house staff care for these people by assisting them if they are lost, bringing wheelchair access patrons to their theater seats, relaying pertinent information to them in emergencies, and generally watching for their well-being while they are at the center.

Rules
The patron services have their own set of rules for their employees that may differ from other activity systems within Krannert Center. Patron services focuses largely on serving the customers that attend events at the center. They are there to assure that no problems arise during the events and to assist customers in any way possible. They are to be knowledgeable about the center and the other services it offers.

In order to provide customers with these services, an employee of patron services must fully understand all the rules that the center has established. Knowledge of the following basic rules is
crucial in order to maximize customer satisfaction. The dress code and the physical appearance of the staff is very important. They are required to wear clothing that fall under the guidelines that is presented in the patron services handbook. This includes black bottoms, black shoes, and a white tuxedo shirt. The goal is to look not only neat and clean, but professional as well. The appearance of the employees then reflects the center as a whole. When working with such large number of employees, it is also important to have a set procedure for dealing with schedules. Employees working at Krannert Center are allowed to have two personal conflicts within a month. Personal conflicts include extracurricular activities, going home on certain weekends, and other personal instances. These conflicts need to be submitted before the work schedules for the next month are put together. Failure to turn in personal conflicts would result in possibly being assigned to work. If employees can not work at those times, it is their responsibility to find replacements. Other rules include the employees’ attitude and behavior while working. When people are hired to work for the Krannert Center, they are expected to be polite, respectful, and helpful. This includes being on time, performing necessary tasks, and interaction with customers. Though this may not be easy, especially while dealing with difficult customers, employees are still obligated to maintain their professionalism.

If employees can obey the rules it reflects positively on how others view the entire center. The attitudes of the workers can determine the whole perspective of the center. The determining factor of whether or not the center is successful lies within the perspective of others. If they view it positively then prosperity will more likely occur.

**Motives and Goals**

Many places have goals and motives and neither Krannert Performing Arts Center nor the division of patron services is any different from these other places. Many of the motives instigate employees do their job to a higher standard. These motives include many small parts which will be discussed later but overall there job specific to Krannert is to provide an enjoyable and safe atmosphere for patrons to watch a concert. Many of these motives are not exclusive to patron service but also include many parts of Krannert such as the ticket office and the concession stand/coffee bar.

Before we investigate the goals and motives of patron services we must investigate the goals and motives of larger part of the system which is the Krannert Center. These goals are very important to look at because patron services, while paying close attention to their own motives and goals, are also a part of the larger system and are also working with those motives towards the goals of Krannert Center as a whole. The motives of Krannert Center include many things, and do not focus solely on the performance aspect of the center. Their mission statement describes these motives and goals very clearly and states, “The mission of the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts is to nurture excellence and innovation in the performing arts through presentation, education, research, and public engagement” (Krannert Website; Mission statement). This mission statement states that Krannert is not only interested in providing quality performances for patrons, although it is a highlight, but also to help the community to better understand performing arts. The main goal is stated very clearly and shows that Krannert wants to nurture excellence and innovation. There are also smaller goals which Krannert provides in their mission statement. It wants to provide a professional laboratory for students. The mission statement does not just focus on the students; their mission statement claims that they look for
very talented professional performers to come play for students and the community alike to foster passion for the arts. Krannert also strives to be a model in arts management, design technology and administration. Later the mission statement goes on to say that Krannert follows the mission statement of the larger group which they are in as well as their own. The larger system in which Krannert is a part of is the University of Illinois, whose mission statement is commitment to teaching, research and public engagement. In this we can see that the goals and motive of the two larger systems impact our sub-category of patron services.

Patron services follow similar goals and motives as Krannert center but they also have their own unique motives that better serve their common goal. As found in the handbook handed out to employees of patron services, the motives and goals stem from the original founder’s, Mr. Krannert, one main goal. In the handbook they provide this statement at the opening line of their mission statement: “We chose the center for the performing arts because we are convinced education through participation in culture is one of the most rewarding and enriching experiences our people can enjoy-and in these complex days a most needed one.” (KCPA Patron Services Guidebook) This shows why the center was even conceived and shows also why it is still around today. The mission statement later goes on to bring out the main goal of patron service and states very clearly, “Your role in this mission is quite simply to take care of the patrons that permit us to exist.” (KCPA Patron Services Guidebook) This smaller goal provided in the patron service handbook shows how integral the role of patron services is to the success of the Krannert center as a whole and even further in the larger community to the success of the University of Illinois.

Through further analysis one can see that every part of this system has some common goals but also that some of the goals vary due to the specific task needed to be done by the specific group. In this specific case patron services facilitates the larger goals of Krannert who then also follows the goals and motives of the University. This sense of community provides strong support for the strength in numbers argument with many people working towards a similar goal.

Community

To help analyze the activity system, we also needed to study the community surrounding it. In our system, the community is the Krannert Center for Performing Arts. They provide the rules and expectations for Patron Services along with the many other divisions that make up the community. For example, all divisions within Krannert must follow standardized emergency guidelines regarding fire exits. Looking at the community in a broader perspective, Patron Services must mold its motives, objectives, and outcomes around the rules set by the Krannert community.

This community consists of many various services and programs, besides Patron Services. These include the Student Association which provides volunteers to assist with ushering and Hospitality Services who tend to the performers. Together, this community provides the means to staging a successful show.

Aside from the direct community affecting Patron Services, there are a number of indirect forces that mold this system. For one, Patron Services must abide by the University’s rules as the University is responsible for funding the Krannert Center. Also, Patron Services must mold itself around the city of Urbana. City regulations and codes affect the University which in turn
will affect the Krannert Center and Patron Services. Patron Services is situated within many various communities, and must be able to adapt to the expectations created by each of these communities.

**Tools**

Patron Services performs its duties successfully through the use of various tools. Some of these tools are spoken while others are textual documents that assist the subjects of this activity system. For example, an important tool for the employees is the information sheets provided before a show. These sheets provide times for the start, end, and intermissions of a show. They also give information regarding the availability of emergency medics, the supervisors on duty, and when to seat late arrivals. Info sheets prepare each host for the respective show they are working. Since many details will change from show to show, it is important to keep every employee updated.

Another important tool is the training and adjustments provided by management to all employees. Training includes a two hour session with the head manager, Courtney Egg, along with shift shadowing to familiarize new hosts with some of the nuances involved in Patron Services. This training process seemed adequate in explaining the basics of performing the various duties. Along with new employee training, management will adjust the way employees perform certain tasks. This on-going assessment of performance allows Patron Services to be dynamic and continually provide the best service for a changing environment (C. Egg, Personal communication, April 14, 2006).

Every month, managers must create the schedule that details who will work which shifts. Included in this schedule, are the shifts of hosts as well as the managers and supervisors. In creating this tool, another tool is used. Each employee must fill out a conflict sheet so the head manager, Courtney, will be able to coordinate the schedule. A hard copy of this schedule as well as an online copy is available to the hosts and managers. (Personal Communication, April 14, 2006).

### March Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Host</th>
<th>Shift 1</th>
<th>Shift 2</th>
<th>Shift 3</th>
<th>Shift 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schildt, Jonathan</td>
<td>6:30p - 11:30p</td>
<td>6:00p - 11:30p</td>
<td>5:30p - 10:30p</td>
<td>6:00p - 10:30p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sukmboi, Sandra</td>
<td>6:00p - 11:30p</td>
<td>2:00p - 5:30p</td>
<td>7:30p - 9:30p</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suriro, Claire</td>
<td>6:00p - 11:30p</td>
<td>6:00p - 11:30p</td>
<td>6:00p - 10:30p</td>
<td>7:30p - 9:30p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thompson, Amber</td>
<td>6:00p - 11:30p</td>
<td>6:00p - 11:30p</td>
<td>6:00p - 10:30p</td>
<td>7:30p - 9:30p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trivedi, Ashka</td>
<td>6:00p - 11:30p</td>
<td>2:00p - 5:30p</td>
<td>7:30p - 9:30p</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yu, Steve</td>
<td>6:00p - 11:30p</td>
<td>2:00p - 5:30p</td>
<td>7:30p - 9:30p</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambrano, Tania</td>
<td>6:00p - 11:30p</td>
<td>6:00p - 10:30p</td>
<td>7:30p - 9:30p</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhen, Jenny</td>
<td>6:00p - 11:30p</td>
<td>2:00p - 5:30p</td>
<td>7:30p - 9:30p</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 5p Bands Illinois Loyalty 100th Anniversary (FGI)
- 7:30p A Flea in Her Ear (FGI)
- 7:30p A Flea in Her Ear (CPL)
- 7:00p Night Cap (Interlude)

- 11a Fest (FGI)
- 6:45p Student Performance (Interlude)
- 7:30p Sinfonia da Camera (FGI)
- 7:30p A Flea in Her Ear (CPL)
- 9:30p Marque Post Reception (Kranert Room)
- 10p Aberglove New Orleans (FGI)

- 11a Fesiv (FGI)
- 6:45p Student Performance (Interlude)
- 7:30p Sinfonia da Camera (FGI)
- 7:30p A Flea in Her Ear (CPL)
- 9:30p Marque Post Reception (Kranert Room)
- 10p Aberglove New Orleans (FGI)

- 11a Green Thumb Theatre (CPL)
- 12:30p Green Thumb Theatre (CPL)
- Host Emergency Procedure Resher
- Supervisor Emergency Procedure Resher

- 5p Barbershop (FGI)
- 9:30p Marque Post Reception (Kranert Room)
- 10p Aberglove New Orleans (FGI)
Management also provides a general handbook which details what they expect of employees and how employees should perform certain tasks. After interviewing two hosts within Patron Services, we learned that the employees view these handbooks as useless. One of the reasons for this as stated by a host, Mark, is that the job requirements are “…pretty self-explanatory. After a couple of shifts you have it down” (M. McArthur, Personal communication, April 18, 2006). Since managers can clearly outline the expected tasks during training, employees feel no need to read the handbook. They most likely feel that the handbook does not provide any additional insight in completing their tasks. Although employees may feel this is a useless tool, we will later discuss how other subjects within the activity system use this tool effectively.

Analysis of the General Handbook

The general handbook outlines three aspects of the host position. First, there is a general description of the Krannert Center and all of the areas within the Center. This includes a description of the four indoor theaters and the outdoor Amphitheatre. The Krannert Center also includes a Lobby and auxiliary facilities such as the Intermezzo Café and The Promenade. Also included in the general description, is the mission statement for the Krannert Center. All other divisions and services located within the Krannert community, such as Patron Services, must coincide with this mission statement. This beginning section of the handbook gives a skeleton outline of the community to the hosts.

After briefing the readers about the surrounding community, the handbook begins to discuss the duties of the host. This second section of the handbook gives a detailed description of the hierarchy within Patron Services and explains how to properly perform the jobs of the host. In addition to their expected duties, there are also guidelines to follow when handling unique situations. The handbook provides brief information regarding emergency situations, disgruntled patrons, and how to help those requiring medical assistance. The second section of the handbook is the most important regarding a host’s job.

After detailing the expected duties of the hosts and the situational guidelines, the handbook offers a four page glossary for terms that may be unfamiliar. Since shows may be fast-paced and subjects involved in the system may speak quickly, we noticed the glossary defines acronyms along with many abbreviated terms used on the job.

As stated earlier, employees feel the handbook is not much help. Our group found this to be an interesting fact considering the handbook has been in circulation for many years. Management has also updated the handbook most recently in 1997 (personal communication, April 14 2006). If each employee is given a hard copy of the handbook, even after extensive training, there must be a reason for its existence. We came to the conclusion that the handbook is indeed important for three reasons. First, at the very least, the hosts have a hard copy of their duties to refer to in the future. If they missed an important point in training or they need to refresh their memory on certain procedures, the hosts can always look back to their handbook.

Although the hosts do not rely heavily of the material included in the handbook, the managers do. The second reason for its importance is that this is what the managers follow to train all of the new employees. The reason hosts do not read the handbook can be attributed to the fact that
their training includes the exact same information. Lastly, managers also rely on the handbook as a guideline for their employees to follow. When a host fails to perform a particular duty, a manager can directly reference the violation in the second section of the handbook. Not knowing can no longer be an excuse for a host’s misconduct.

After analysis of the handbook, we concluded that there are useful aspects of the handbook, as stated above. Even though the hosts may not use the handbook to its full potential, other subjects within the activity system indeed find this tool very important to their success. While studying this activity system, our group wanted to engage the hosts’ interest in handbook. We would like to have seen such an important textual tool used by all of the subjects within the Patron Services.

Outside of this narrow community, we can find that workers generally do not read their employee handbooks. Each one of our group members were able to relate to this experience and offer personal insights into the flaws of employee handbooks. First, the text within the handbook is excessive. There are details regarding every aspect of Krannert, which may not be entirely useful to the staff of Patron Services. The glossary also seemed to be excessive. This just adds more pages to the document which will never be read. We also noticed a lack of organization within the handbook. It was hard to understand the purpose of reading certain sections and how reading this will make me a better host(KCPA Patron Services Guidebook). We have created some recommendations to improve the various flaws of this handbook so workers will take the time to read it.

**Recommendation**

While researching further into Krannert system one will find that there are many tools which help to organize the group, lay out goals of the group, and also lay down the laws of the group. This in turn helps the whole activity system to run smoothly and achieve a common goal. Patron services use many tools and while conducting research we found out what many of these tools where meant to do and also some flaws that the tools possess. The main tool that we found has a problem and could be better communicated is the tool of the patron service handbook. We found through many surveys of people in patron services that they find the tool not useful and sometimes confusing. For example we found that the handbook was often confusing with its headings. Other examples include a glossary that we felt had terms that did not need to be there. To solve this there are many things that could be done easily to make this a more effective tool.

The first recommendation that we thought could help employees learn the material in the handbook is to offer quizzes with rewards. We feel that this would motivate employees to learn the manual better and also help them to better deal with situations that may arise. The next recommendation that we felt would better help the employees use this tool and help them find there way around would be to incorporate maps of the facility. This has been integrated into earlier manuals but has since fallen out of the current manual for unexplainable reasons. This would be helpful for employees due to the size of Krannert, with five auditoriums the building can be quite daunting to new employees The last main point that could be done better in the manual is the basic organization of the manual. It seems that much of it is confusing with unclear headings, which were placed in odd orders and did not separate the sections onto different pages. Some main points that we saw that could be fixed within the organization is first to condense and
highlight the main points to give the manual a better flow. A second thing that could be done better in the manual is to number the main points and put them on separate pages instead of just flowing one into another with just a bold typed heading. This would allow for easier reference of the source and make it a more user-friendly tool. The last thing that could have been made more accessible is the glossary. There were many terms in there could have been deleted in our mind. The piece also could have had words in the glossary highlighted in the main body of the text so that readers could no when to use the glossary. Overall these corrections would better help put all the staff on the same page and would make a more efficient work group in turn making patron services more efficient in achieving their goal of providing patrons with the best service.

Conclusion

Despite the success patron services has achieved, it is still improving its inner workings. Patron services is evolving to meet the needs of Krannert’s visitors. Director of Patron Services, Courtney Egg believes that if a patron is seen wandering the lobby, a front-of-house employee should approach the person and say, “You look like you’re looking for the bathroom. It’s right around the corner” (personal communication, April 14, 2006). Employees practice active customer service, which makes patrons feel cared for, and more at ease. Egg is also improving the paper trail for future directors, hosts, supervisors, and house managers. This activity system continues to comply with the rules outlined in the handbook. Some rules, like the dress code, are enforced now more than ever with new management. While this activity system changes, there is still more to do in terms of improving employee morale and communication.

Patron services’ handbooks have been revised many times over the past thirty years. Unfortunately, many hosts still do not find the handbook pertinent to their job. In our findings, we concluded that the handbook is, or should be, used as a reference for employees, and a training tool and rule enforcer for managers. Hosts may not find the handbook useful because all the information in it is included in training sessions. While this means that Krannert Patron Services provides stellar training, the handbook should serve as a reliable reference tool for when student employees are working by themselves. By analyzing this workplace textual tool, we have gained insight on how tools are used. Even though some textual tools are meant to be used by managers and not necessarily for hosts, the patron services handbook is definitely one to be used by hosts. By continually revising the handbooks, all members of the activity system better understand what aspects of their jobs is most important.
Appendix

Interview with Host, Mark McArthur
Tuesday, April 18, 2006

What do you think are the responsibilities of Patron Services?

*Patron Services is designed to help the patrons who come to the Krannert Center. Patron services does a variety of tasks, such as giving directions to patrons, taking their tickets, helping patrons with physical disabilities to their seats, checking coats, and being generally friendly to Krannert patrons.*

How long have you been working in Patron Services?

*I’ve worked with Patron Services for about a year and a half.*

What are your duties as a host?

*Hosts have a variety of jobs. As a host, I rip tickets and help patrons with physical disabilities get to their seats, as well as intermittently help with coat check, parking and merchandise. Hosts also do various cleaning jobs and recycling.*

Have you read the employee handbook?

*I’ve read the disaster plan, and if I’ve read a general handbook, it was a really long time ago, when I first started working.*

Do you think the handbook is important to the success of performing your duties?

*I don’t think it’s that important because we have training and the job is pretty self-explanatory. After a couple of shifts you have it down.*

Do your managers mold/define the way you should act on the job?

*From time to time they have to modify what we’re doing that we can serve patrons better. Other than that, we knew what we were supposed to do when we first started working there.*

Does your experience make you a significantly better employee?

*Working in Patron Services for a longer period of time helps you become a better employee primarily because you learn more about the Center so you’re better at giving directions and answering questions.*

How do newer employees get along with veteran employees?

*There are no real problems with this. Everyone’s really friendly and gets along well.*

How closely do you follow the info sheets given before a show?

*This really isn’t a huge issue for hosts. As long as we know how long the acts and intermissions are, we’re okay. Otherwise we usually know who all the house managers and supervisors are for the night.*
How important do you think these info sheets are?
   I think it’s necessary to have all of the information for the night in one place, so I’d say they’re fairly important.

How are the duties of Patron Services divided? On what basis are they decided on? (basically who does what, and how do they decide)
   At the beginning of each shift, we have a meeting where we’re told what theaters have performances that shift, and how many people are going to be working at each job. Then the house manager says the name of a job, and we have to raise our hands. Whoever’s first get the job.

Have you seen the info sheets change formats since you have been hired?
   To my knowledge, they haven’t changed.

Has this change been better or worse?
   n/a

Why have you kept this job for so long?
   It’s pretty good money, and the job’s easy. You can do homework while you’re there too, which is convenient. I also like the people who work there.

How long do you think most people keep this job? (Or what is the normal length of hire)?
   It depends. Most people stay until they graduate, so it depends when they start. On average though, I’d say maybe about 2 years.
Interview with Director of Patron Services, Courtney Egg  
Friday, April 14, 2006

Did you have any previous experience with any kind of customer service/patron service before working at Krannert?

Yes. As an undergraduate student at Indiana University, I was a host at the performing arts center. I got promoted to an assistant house manager, and I also worked as a house manager at a community theater.

What kind of training did you receive when you got the job at KCPA?

I got nothing. No training, no handbook, and no documentation. The guy doing this before me was actually an interim, and didn’t get the job full time. He left me nothing, so I had to make it up as I went along. I had a lot of dinners with the house manager to get acquainted with how they did things here. I also asked a lot of silly question because I just didn’t know anything.

Since you started with a blank slate, what were your immediate goals?

I knew my end goal was to have a cohesive staff to provide quality service to Krannert Patrons. So I started hiring people at the beginning of the school year and gave them blitz training. I document EVERYTHING now so no one will ever have to go through what I did when they get this job.

What is the host handbook used for, and how important do you think it is to the FOH staff?

The handbook is very important. It serves as the foundation of training. When we train hosts, we emphasize active customer service, which is something I added to the handbook. Before I came, Krannert had a wonderful FOH staff, but the attitude was very much “let the patron come to you.” I believe it should be the other way around. If you see someone wandering around the lobby, approach them and ask them if they need help finding something. That is active customer service.

So there was a prior handbook left to you when you came?

I actually only uncovered an old handbook a couple years ago when I was digging through old files. I spent a lot of time with the house managers and supervisors revising it so it fit our current staff. I also revised it last year to change the parking shift policy. Before people doing parking could come to work in jeans and gym shoes. Now everyone must wear the standard uniform in case we need him or her to come in to work a gate after they do parking.

Can you explain the hierarchy of patron services?

Sure. I report directly to the Assistant of Marketing and Patron Services. I can get you a chart of all the people involved in patron services.

What do you do on a typical day; let’s say today (Friday)?

Every Friday I have a staff meeting at 9. It’s just to touch base with the other directors. Very informal. Sometimes we get people from the opera department or dance school come in to give presentations on their upcoming shows. On a typical day I update the schedule, I constantly
check my email and respond. I deal with issues and complaints from patrons about the building. Sometimes I work with other directors on upcoming big events and plan for them.

If there is a show at night, what do you do?

   I used to stay at the Center the whole day because I thought I should be here to learn things and absorb the atmosphere. Now that I’m used to the job, I walk away for a few hours and come back for the night shift. When shows are up I check up on the supervisors at the front desk and the house managers to make sure they have everything they need. I also work with KCSA and their supervisors so we’re all on the same page. I handle merchandise and the money at the end of the night.
Interview with Host, Katie Keane
Friday, April 14, 2006

What do you think are the responsibilities of Patron Services?
   To assist people with things they are having trouble with. And we try to do whatever possibly to make sure that they have a safe and enjoyable time at Krannert.

What are your duties as a host/hostess?
   To provide directions, tear tickets, assist handicapped customers with wheelchairs or anything else they need help with.

Have you read the employee handbook?
   No, not really. I’ve skimmed through some of it.

Do you think the handbook is important to the success of performing your duties?
   No, not at all. I shadowed another host before I started working on my own. I felt that was really helpful. For the most part, you learn as you work.

Do your managers mold/define the way you should act on the job?
   Yes, they tell us to be polite and helpful.

Do your managers explain how to perform your duties or are they picked up?
   Both. You learn from observing others. But for the things that we didn’t get to observe, the managers explain to us how to do.

How do new employees get along with veteran employees?
   At first, it’s a little hard when no one knows you, but after awhile, everyone is just a part of one big group.

How closely do you follow the info sheets given before a show?
   I listen to the information when they are going over it, but I usually don’t remember all of it.

How important do you think these info sheets are?
   I think that they are important. For example, if a patron were to ask long an intermission is or long the show is expected to last, I would be able to answer their question.

How are the duties of Patron Services divided? On what basis are they deciding from?
   At the meeting before the shows, the house managers explain each show to us, we raise our hands and whoever raises their hands first gets to work the show they want. It’s not very objective.

Do you like this job more/less than previous jobs?
   I like it the same really. Sometimes it can get kind of monotonous, but what job isn’t.

How long do you plan to stay with this job?
I plan to stay until I graduate. All the people I work with are nice.

How long do you think most people keep this job?

I think most people stick with it until they graduate from the University.
SOURCES


C. Egg (Personal Interview, Friday April 14th 2005)


K. Keane (Personal Interview, Friday April 14th 2005)


M. McArthur (Personal Interview, Friday April 18th 2005)
