

## Branch Experience Update

<b>Date:</b>	June 20, 2022
<b>To:</b>	Toronto Public Library Board
<b>From:</b>	City Librarian

### SUMMARY

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The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Branch Experience initiative at Toronto Public Library (TPL). This initiative began as a pilot in 2019. It is about working with staff to realign the ways in which services are delivered across TPL branches given the ongoing changing environment. The initiative started at Brentwood as a pilot, and by early 2020, was taking place in six additional branches. The pandemic interrupted further rollout. The initiative has recently been reinstated and is rolling out across additional branches.

### FINANCIAL IMPACT

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This report has no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the current year's budget.

The Director, Finance & Treasurer has reviewed this financial impact statement and agrees with it.

### ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

The Branch Experience supports the Strategic Plan priorities of "Investing in Staff" and an "Innovative Service Culture".

### EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The Branch Experience responds to the needs of customers in each individual branch. Staff work together to meet each community's unique needs, including those of equity-deserving groups.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

At its December 16, 2019 meeting, the Board received an [educational presentation](#) on the Branch Experience.

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

TPL's service environment continues to change and so do the needs and expectations of Torontonians. People are looking for a great customer experience, technology support, more programming, user education and community outreach and engagement. Staff require time to learn and plan to continue to deliver great service. The Branch Experience initiative creates an opportunity for dedicated time to support staff with this work.

## **COMMENTS**

The Branch Experience initiative began in 2019. It is about working with staff to realign the ways in which services are delivered across TPL branches given the changing service environment. The initiative started at Brentwood as a pilot, and by early 2020 was taking place in six additional branches. The pandemic interrupted further rollout but it has recently been reinstated, and is rolling out across additional branches.

There three goals for the project are to provide:

- Customers with better service at the first point of contact with support for staff so they are more comfortable and confident;
- More and better technology support for all services;
- Staff with more time for community outreach, and delivering user education and programming sessions.

The project works by engaging all branch staff including managers in the process through training sessions and peer mentorship opportunities. Training sessions are focused on technology, information services, scheduling and branch specific needs. To date, some of the results have been:

- Stronger staff teams and more confident staff;
- Increased staff awareness of all of TPL's services;
- Fewer customer referrals;
- Improved connections between different branch service points, such as the reference and circulation desks.

The next steps include developing a coaching team, engaging additional branches in the project, and assessing additional opportunities through the capital budget plan.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Vickery Bowles  
City Librarian



# Branch Experience

**Heather Mathis & Claire Argyropoulos**

Monday, June 20, 2022

# branch experience re-launch

- Getting started again
- What's happened so far



# branch experience project

- How we offer the service in our branches
- How we allocate staff time to the services that are most important to our customers



# tpl strategic plan priority



Investing in staff and an innovative service culture

# customer experience

## great experience activators

**1 More visibility**

of spaces and services

**2 More welcoming**

online & in person

**3 More personalized**

**4 Consistently exceptional customer service**

**5 More ways to collaborate and engage with TPL**

**6 Stay true to our roots**

# employee engagement

Addresses concerns raised in Employee Engagement Survey

- Time to pursue training
- Building management understanding of staff issues



# learning culture statement

At Toronto Public Library, we are all part of a community of learners.

With organizational commitment and support, we are empowered to reach our full potential by learning from our experiences, connections and mentoring, through informal and formal training, and from each other.

We share and grow every day, enabling us to be flexible and innovative, to thrive in a changing environment and to deliver exceptional customer experiences.

# branch experience

## why

Our service environment is changing, and so are the needs and expectations of Torontonians



# branch experience

## goal 1

- Customers get better service at the first point of contact (and staff are more comfortable and confident)



# branch experience

## goal 2

- More and better technology support for all services



# branch experience

## goal 3

- When possible, freeing up staff time for outreach, User Education and programming



# branch experience

## goal 4

- Working in branches that are re-opening after capital projects
- Albert Campbell District, Wychwood, Maryvale, York Woods



# branch experience

## how it works

- Engage all staff in the whole process
- Management engagement
- Training sessions
- Peer mentorship



# training focus

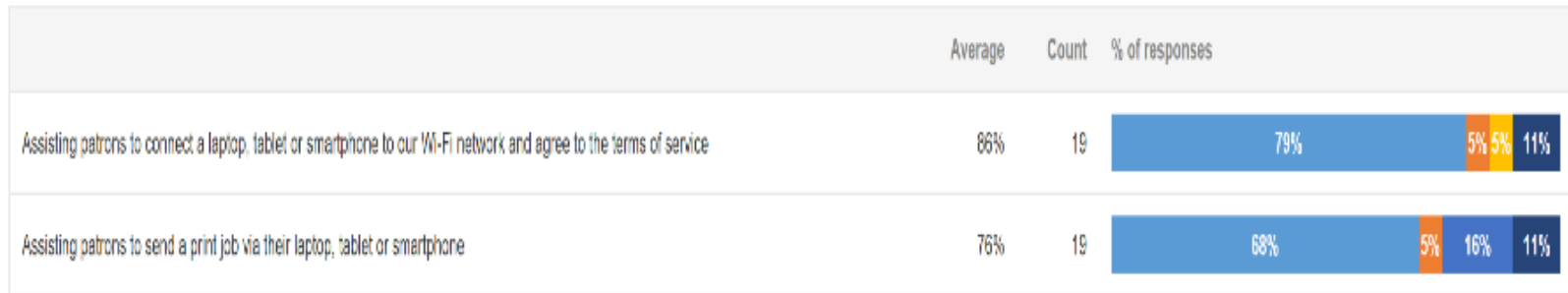
- Technology
- Information Services
- Scheduling
- Branch specific needs



# training focus

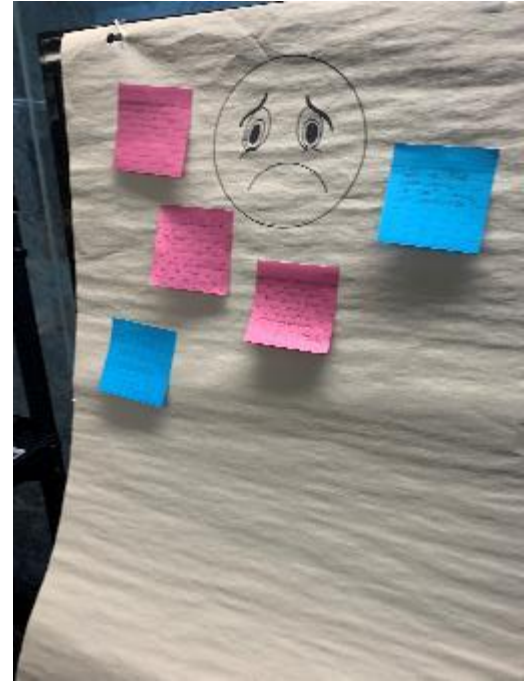
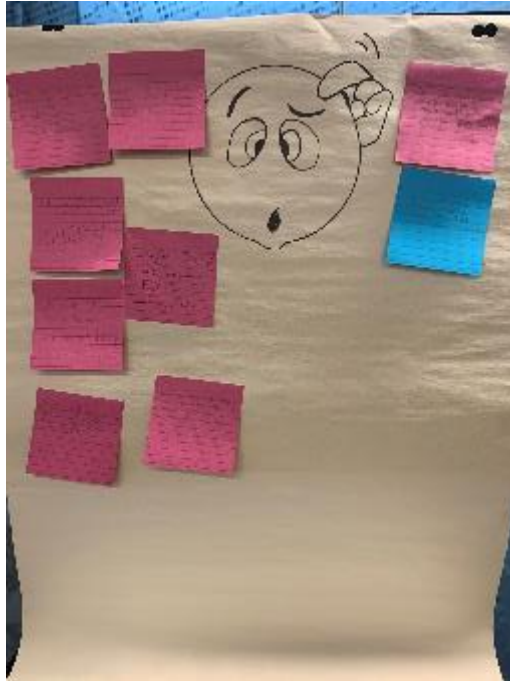
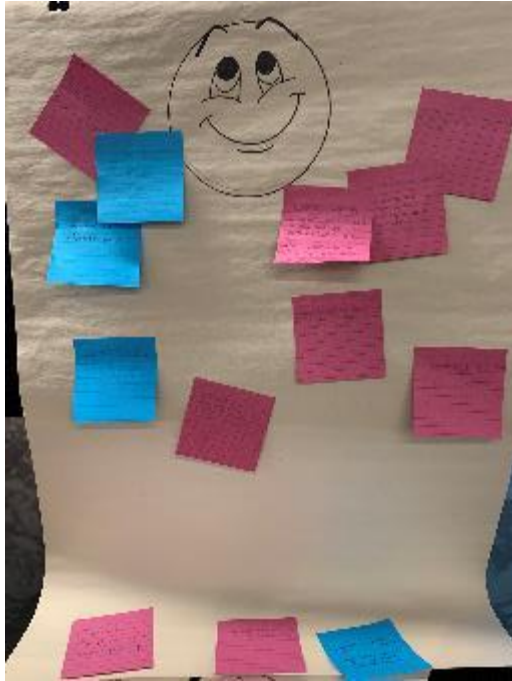


## Tech survey to determine skill levels of staff



N 19

# forcefield exercise



## successes

- Building strong staff teams
- Increased confidence & fewer referrals
- Greater awareness of TPL services
- Changes to scheduling practices
- PSAs taking on new roles
- Breaking down silos between Circulation & Reference desks

# lessons learned

- Change management approach useful
- All staff involvement is key
- Management presence helps
- Take the time a project needs so that real change happens
- Repetition of message is important.
- Taking a tailored approach for each branch. Not everything works, and that's ok.

## next steps

- Developing a plan and timeline for rolling out system-wide

questions

**tpl:**