

Defining the best customer experience

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The basis of great library service is a focus on customers and knowing what customers themselves define and expect as a great experience. The six libraries in the eLGAR consortium in Auckland have undertaken a new piece of research to understand the customer perspective, as part of their Customer Strategy.

The eLGAR managers decided that it was not possible to agree a programme of work without first understanding what it is that matters most to customers, and what customers regard as a great experience.

This approach to library customer research has not been tried before in NZ. The methodology sought input from both staff and customers, in order to understand where the points of difference in perception lie. The customer survey also sought out customers who consider themselves to be advocates and champions for libraries. These people participated in focus groups designed to understand what it takes to make them champions, and what it is about library services that matters most to them.

This paper will outline the methodology and the findings, and how these results have been incorporated into the further work of eLGAR and the individual libraries in the consortium.

The research has delivered a challenging new perspective of our customers and how we can better meet their needs. The methodology and the findings have wide relevance to libraries keen to understand and focus on their customer.

People are the most important aspect of libraries – the people who work in libraries, and the people who use libraries and who are our future.