

CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT CASE STUDY

Informational Interview and Task List: Brady's Bookstore

Overview

Brady's is a national chain of retail book and music stores. Each location consists of three major retail departments: Books (including new releases, children's, and bargains), Music (including recorded and sheet music), and Café (serving coffee and tea drinks, snacks and dessert, and small lunches.) In addition, each store has its own Human Resources staff, marketing department, stock/cashier staff, and general maintenance office. A general manager oversees the logistics of the entire store; each department is then headed by an Assistant Manager.

Who are their customers?

As a large retail store with a variety of departments, they have the ability to reach a wide audience. The store can reach very young kids and their parents with their children's section – including weekly story time sessions and monthly children's performances (magic shows, clowns, musical performers, puppet shows, etc.). The store can reach young teens and twenty to thirty-somethings with their large music retail department and comprehensive magazine section. And they can reach a middle-aged and aging audience with a huge book selection, targeted topics and magazines for all interest and age groups.

Employer needs

The Book section of the store is the largest. As you toured the store with the Assistant Manager in charge of book retailing, you get an idea of a monthly cycle. The national headquarters dictates which books are rotated, put on clearance or removed from shelves, and lists arrive to the franchises regularly. The cashier staff is the same group of people who does the restocking and remerchandising, pricing and inventorying. You notice a huge unsightly section at the side of the store where 'go-backs' or 'strays' are piled up, either waiting to be reshelved or sent back to headquarters. In addition, the book retail section is responsible for the magazine section, which you notice can get a bit disorganized as people leaf through periodicals and return them in the wrong place, etc. You also learn from the manager that they need to tear covers off of unsold magazines and send them back to the publishers to get partial payment. Not only did cashiers complain about that task, but the manager mentioned they have trouble making the payment cut-off date and can sometimes not be reimbursed.

The Music section is much smaller with a smaller staff. As new merchandise arrives, the most difficult task to keep up with, according to the lead cashier, is those 'stupid sensor packets.' These are the cases that all new CDs are inserted into before they hit the shelves, and when there is a highly anticipated new release or during the holidays, they can have difficulty getting all the actual CDs on the shelf to keep up with demand.

The Human Resources and Marketing departments share space in the back room. Everyone seems to get along well and the feel is very casual and light hearted. They have recently begun sharing two temps from a local agency to put together marketing packets and flyers about upcoming events, along with collating new hire packets and benefits plans. They have cleared away one side of their shared space to stack all their materials to try and get them out of the way.

The Café is run almost as a separate business, with the staff only working in the food area. Sometimes you notice paper coffee cups and napkins left on shelves throughout the rest of the store, and newspapers, magazines and books left on tables in the café. When you asked, it was not clear who had the responsibility of cleaning up. Many answered that the maintenance staff will get it. When you asked the schedule for the maintenance staff, it appeared it was part-time and mainly after closing.

Potential Task List: Brady's Book Store

Stock Clerk/Processing Assistant

- Processing merchandise
 - Attaching security devices
 - Putting CDs in sensor packages
 - Pricing stock
 - Sorting and shelving books for orphan sections
 - Inventorying Books (RLP's)
 - Assisting in the office (Collating new hire packets, data entry, processing invoices)
 - Restocking Go-backs/Strays
 - Straightening magazines, putting out new issues, stripping un-purchased/outdated magazines
 - Marking down clearance or sale items
 - Stocking register areas with bags and supplies
 - Straightening and organizing shelves and tables
 - Folding and mailing *Brady's News*
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Example Business Letter with Proposal

April 5, 2008
Mr. Frank Jones, Manager
Brady's Bookstore
101 Main Street
Wheaton, MD 20902

Dear Mr. Jones: **[Greeting and Recap]**

It was a pleasure meeting you last Monday. I greatly appreciated the time you took giving me such a thorough tour of your store. It was great to see how the store runs and to meet some of your fantastic staff.

[What you observed; employer's needs & potential benefits to employer]

During my tour, I was very impressed with the overall organization of your location. Because you are such a popular store, I also noticed that your staff can get quite busy, resulting in piles of go-backs and strays and magazines that get misplaced on shelves after customers peruse your large selection. I recognized that it is also difficult to keep up with the tasks of stripping magazine covers for money back from publishers, getting all the new CD's out of their sensor packs, and run a café in addition to being such a successful book store.

[Match: Applicant skill to needed tasks]

I currently represent a job candidate named Sara Smith whom I'd like you to meet, and whom I know has some great skills that could really benefit Brady's. Sara is a real dynamo with a great personality. She would be able to, among other things:

- Assist with restocking, stripping of magazine covers, and removing CD sensors
- Support the HR department with their backed-up mailings
- Assist in the café with clean-up and restocking during busy hours

[Further benefits to employer]

In the event you hired Sara, as with any of the job candidates we represent, Brady's would receive any necessary supports from us in accommodating this applicant.

[Closing & Next Steps]

I look forward to discussing this proposal with you and arranging for you to meet Sara. I will call you next week. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to call me at 999-999-9999. My e-mail address is: abc@xyz.com.

Sincerely,