Chapter 14
The Librarian and the Designer:
Working Together to Create a Showcase for Contemporary Learning

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Many institutions of higher education are designing spaces that reflect the established correlation between learning spaces and student achievement, mastery, and retention (Hunley & Schaller, 2006). In this case study of a renovation of an 18,327 square foot business library space into a dynamic learning environment, Melinda McGee, the Interior Designer for the project, and Tomalee Doan, the Associate Professor and Head Librarian of the business library, share the experience of their successful partnership that required a creative and an in-depth collaboration with each other and with several other stakeholders not usually found in an academic setting. Their goal is to provide a resource for educators, students, and administrators desiring to create learning spaces that encourage student achievement. Basic design terminology, the role technology played in the design, and the importance of the product manufacturer's interest in creating effective products for higher education are presented.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

The Parrish Library, formerly the Management and Economics Library (MEL) until the completion of the recent renovation, is one of twelve Purdue University campus libraries; it is a special library primarily serving the faculty, students, and staff of the Krannert School of Management, the Department of Agricultural Economics, the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, and the Department of Consumer Sciences and Retailing. The library, in close relationship with the Krannert School, provides information strategies instruction, data, and collection services. Most print materials are in a light archive easily accessible to researchers through a daily delivery service. A majority of business information is available online and to the desktop, allowing the library space to become a "learning place" for student success.

SETTING THE STAGE

The transformation of MEL, a traditional-style library, into a multifunctional space that resonates across campus and beyond, began in 2005 with a focus group comprised of students, staff, faculty, and administrators that was created to develop a student-centered vision for the Management and Economics Library. A white paper resulted from this group that established the goal for MEL to become a dynamic partner with its constituents in increasing information literacy on campus. We wanted to make the space available for all students yet maintain a priority for those whom we primarily serve. The renovation was to be carried out in three stages with only the areas being currently worked on being closed to users. Prior to the initial meeting of the librarian and the interior designer, the renovated space from phase one had already attracted attention. During construction, students continued to be surveyed to determine how they wanted to use library spaces. It was learned that students wanted to use the space for a variety of purposes—quiet study as well as collaborative learning and just relaxing. John Campbell, Purdue's Associate Vice President for Academic Technologies, observes about the current trend toward reliance on technology:

   With each passing year, students are influencing the campus technological environment by bringing in the latest consumer electronic gadgets. As institutional leaders, we must be aware of these changes by talking with students, observing how they interact with the current environment, and anticipating what new technologies will become available. Based on this awareness, institutions should consider

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