From Waiting Rooms to Resource Hubs
An Integrated Design Project
presented by the Waiting Room Improvement Team
April 2011

WAITING ROOM IMPROVEMENT TEAM

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In places like Marcy [Brooklyn] there are people who know the ins and outs of government bureaucracies, police procedures, and sentencing guidelines, who spend half of their lives in dirty waiting rooms on plastic chairs waiting for someone to call their name.

But for all this involvement, the government might as well be the weather because a lot of us don’t think we have anything to do with it — we don’t believe we have any control over this thing that controls us.

Jay-Z, *Decoded* (Spiegel & Grau, 2010)
You only get one chance to make a first impression. Many of you are clearly making a difference in the lives of people on probation. Unfortunately, when they think about the Department of Probation, many still think about “dirty waiting rooms & plastic chairs” and too much wasted time. We can do better.

The devoted members of The Waiting Room Improvement Team will create a blueprint for public spaces that reflect our commitment to helping people on probation take control of their lives.

Vincent N. Schiraldi, Commissioner,
NYC Department of Probation
Organizational Excellence

Upgrading facilities to include more resources for staff and clients;
The Mandate
Take stock of current physical conditions
Assess processes
Recommend new design strategies and processes

The Goal
Make spaces more welcoming and attractive
Decrease waiting times
Increase access to opportunities & resources
Improve client experience
Participatory Design Process

1. Current State
   What needs to change?

2. Best Practices
   Sharing and Discovery
   Who else has also done what we are trying to do?
   What can we learn from those examples?

3. Blue Sky
   Solutions and Challenges
   What would things look like if there were no barriers to change?
   What are the biggest obstacles to change?

4. Review of Ideas
   What changes and incremental steps are recommended?

5. Power Point Draft
   Review report and approve.
Number of adults on probation as of July 10, 2010 by community district

- Location of Probation Office
Design Challenge
Look and Feel of Physical Space
Design Challenge
Lack of Resource Materials, Tools, Outside Advocates & Service Providers
Of the 9 Adult Branch Offices, each of the 3 larger branches (Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens) has 700 to 1000 clients coming in each day, and about 500/day at the smaller offices.

This includes people seeing POs for supervision and reporting to kiosks, approximately 111,000 each month.
Design Challenge
Wait Time to See Probation Officer

1. Client arrives
2. Clears building security
3. Clears DOP security
4. Sign in
5. Sits in waiting room
6. PO gets client from waiting room
7. PO & client meet
8. PO escorts client out
Design Challenge
Reporting to Kiosk

- Client arrives
- Clears building security
- Clears DOP security
- Scans hand
- Uses self-serve kiosk & exits
- Exits
Design Challenge
Wait Time Pain Points

- **Heavy traffic at peak times**
- **Lack of scheduled appointments**
- **Workforce management procedures do not account for scheduled and unscheduled staff absences**
- **Staff lack time, resources and support to perform essential tasks**
- **Unexpected but typical client emergencies (job loss, eviction, health crisis, childcare, arrest, etc.) requiring extra attention**
People on probation are complex individuals:

- personality & style
- interests
- parent / child / extended family relationships & obligations
- age and experience
- work and school
- education and work experience
- native New Yorker/transplant
- U.S. / foreign born
- culture
- self-image
- gender / sexual orientation
- income / financial situation
- politics
- philosophy of life
- religion
- criminal justice history
- trauma history

Father of daughter (2)

Single (25)

High school grad

Likes hip hop

Generally upbeat but worries about money

Cooks at Manhattan diner

Helps support parents

Brownsville resident

Wants to travel

Christian

On probation for assault
Design Challenge
Understanding What Clients Want and Need

- Education opportunities
  - Internet access and capacity
  - Mentoring and Coaching
  - Career
  - Youth programs
    - Hard skills / Soft skills
    - Send children to college
    - Technical training and experience
    - Provide for family
    - Leisure activities
- Health / Mental healthcare and Health insurance
- Information
- Housing
- Financial stability
- Networks
- Benefits
- Send children to college

Housing

Improved

Increased

Health / Mental healthcare and Health insurance

Improved

Increased

Protection and improvement

Protection and improvement

Protection and improvement
Design Challenges
Poor Client Experience

Physical Space + Process + Resources = Client Experience
Key elements:

- Greeter to welcome and direct client
- Client treated with respect
- Efficient and effective service

* CSR: Customer Service Representative
Key elements:

- Greeter to welcome and direct client
- Rich learning environment
- Interesting things to do and see
- Treated with respect
- Efficient & effective
- Architecture & design supports the company’s mission
- Space open and optimistic
Waiting rooms are small spaces relatively easy to redesign and repurpose.
• Communicate more positive and welcoming message

• Revamp DOP processes to improve back-office efficiency and to reduce wait time

• Improve delivery and access to richer range of opportunities and resources

• Treat client with respect, as a total person

• Redesign physical spaces of rooms to be attractive and welcoming

• Small steps, big change
### Design Solution
**Repurpose Waiting Rooms as Resource Hubs**

**Resource Hub Resources**

- **Bulletin board & flyers**
- **Magazine rack**
- **Countertop pamphlets**

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**ACTION ITEMS**

- Determine the most cost-effective sustainable resource distribution system.
- Develop a sustainable routine by which resources are kept current.
- Determine what kinds of resources clients need.
- Identify & acquire relevant books, magazines, journals, brochures about:
  - Education
  - Work
  - Transformational mentoring
  - Civic engagement
  - Healthcare, mental health & drug treatment
  - Benefits
  - Cultural events
  - Leisure recreational activities, local and citywide
  - Nutrition / diet
  - Exercise
Jeanette Sims, Education Opportunity Advocate, is available 10 a.m.–4 p.m. today.

Approximate Queue Times

#93
8 min

#94
6 min

How Does DoP Work?

Job Fair Sat Feb 12

Bed Sty YMCA

Tue Jun 20 2011

Jeanette Sims, Education Opportunity Advocate, is available 10 a.m.–4 p.m. today.

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#93
8 min

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How Does DoP Work?

Job Fair Sat Feb 12

Bed Sty YMCA

new message:
DOP NYC
job fair

ACTION ITEMS

Wall-mounted monitors with announcements, opportunities and educational videos such as:

- How To Clean-Up Your Rap Sheet
- Race, Crime & Punishment
- How The Court System Works
- Know Your Rights
- How to Adjust Your Child Support Requirements
- Mayor’s Fatherhood Initiative

Email distribution system shares time-sensitive resource notifications via email.

Messaging system between DOP Resource Hub & clients shares time-sensitive resource notifications.

Self-serve information station

- PCs & printers
- Virtual Opportunity Network
ACTION ITEMS

- Determine necessary signage to establish the names of places, services and personnel
- Establish the use of new and updated terms through the use of signs:
  - Client
  - Greeter
  - Resource Advisor
  - Resource Hub
- Improve language access through multilingual signage
- Brand signage design
- Determine design & production schedule
Design Solution
Introducing the Greeter

ACTION ITEMS

- Repurpose the existing receptionist position as the greeter
- Draft job description
- Recruit and train
- Determine how best to use technology to empower the greeter
- Equip greeter with tablet or iPad
- Develop staffing coordination protocols to reduce wait time
Design Solution
Introducing the Resource Advisor

ACTION ITEMS

• Repurpose DOP staff as resource advisor
• Draft job description
• Recruit and train
• Determine how best to use technology to empower the resource advisor
Design Solution
Adopt Name Tags, Badges, T-shirts or Other Identifiers

**ACTION ITEMS**
- Decide which positions would benefit from identifiers
- DOP branding
- Have identifiers designed and produced
- Encourage agency-wide adoption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Attire</th>
<th>Identifier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greeter</td>
<td>blue shirt</td>
<td>name tag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Advisor</td>
<td>blue sweater</td>
<td>name tag</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| PO           | regular clothes                      | blue lanyard        | name tag
Design Solution

People the Resource Hub with Partner Organizations and Repurpose Space to Accommodate them.

ACTION ITEMS

Identify and invite
- Healthcare providers/insurers
- Advocates to correct rap sheets
- Local employers
- Education advocates
- Job trainers and resume advisors
- Parenting experts
- Housing advocates
- Athletic coaches
- Benefits advocates
- Financial literacy educators
Design Solution
Improve Furniture and Arrangement

ACTION ITEMS

- Establish a short list of necessary furnishings
- Determine NYC contracted suppliers
- Determine available manufacturers
- Determine color scheme & style
- Determine best lighting strategy
- Identify & secure funding resources for purchases or donations

modular seating units
reading table
lounge seating
reading lamp
low table
floor lamp
pc desk
resource advisor desk
A kit of parts enables implementation of an integrated design approach and includes the items listed on this page.

**ACTION ITEMS**

- Hire designer to conduct spatial analysis of existing waiting rooms
- Designer assembles kit of parts, appropriately scaled to each resource room.
15 waiting rooms are mostly located in court buildings spread across New York City’s 5 boroughs, and range in size from 150 – 900 sf.

The waiting rooms will be renamed and redesigned as resource hubs through an integrated design approach which aims to implement the changes necessary to transform the culture of probation.

New York City DOP will become a model nationwide to improve client experience.

A kit of parts enables implementation of an integrated design approach and includes the items listed on this page.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**Small Steps**
- Repurpose waiting rooms as resource hubs
- Update technology
- Introduce the greeter
- Introduce the resource advisor
- People the resource hub with opportunity network partners
- Repurpose space to create private offices for counseling, classes and partner organizations
- Install signage
- Adopt name tags / badge / t-shirt identifiers
- Improve furniture and arrangement
- Prepare a kit of parts for small, medium and large resource hubs
- Revamp office processes and protocols

**Big Changes**
- More welcoming and attractive spaces
- Shorter wait times
- Greater access to opportunities and resources
- Successful probation impact
- Better client experience
Design Solution
Kit of Parts – SMALL RESOURCE HUB

Greeter
Resource Advisor

- Upright chairs
- Table

- Lighting

Printed materials
Electronic technologies

Signage
Greeter
Resource Advisor

Lighting
Upright Chairs
Reading / Tables and Chairs

Printed materials
Electronic technologies

Signage
Design Solution
Kit of Parts – LARGE RESOURCE HUB

Greeter
Resource Advisor

Lighting
Upright Chairs
Reading / Tables and Chairs
Lounge / Tables and Chairs

Printed materials
Electronic technologies

Signage
Small Steps \longrightarrow Big Changes

- Repurpose waiting rooms as resource hubs
- Update technology
- Introduce the greeter
- Introduce the resource advisor
- People the resource hub with opportunity network partners
- Repurpose space to create private offices for counseling, classes and partner organizations
- Install signage
- Adopt name tags / badge / t-shirt identifiers
- Improve furniture and arrangement
- Prepare a kit of parts for small, medium and large resource hubs
- Revamp office processes and protocols

- More welcoming and attractive spaces
- Shorter wait times
- Greater access to opportunities & resources
- Better client experience
1 Create at least two model Resource Hubs by mid-July 2011

This will demonstrate to DOP staff and clients how quickly things can change and the need for similar innovations agency-wide.

- Select at least two waiting rooms for transformation into model resource hubs
- Work with a professional designer to develop a specially designed kit of parts for each new resource hub
- Identify vendors
- Secure funders or donations
- Purchase parts
- Work with Facilities to prepare sites
- Install parts
- Implement new maintenance and cleanliness standards for which office managers are accountable.
Replicate improved resource hub model in all DOP offices citywide
Undertake in-depth facility analysis

While the model resource hubs are being launched, conduct a in-depth facility analysis by an independant consultant to develop recommendations for necessary architectural alteration of DOP spaces in need of maintenance, upgrade, repair and repurposing.

- Determine access to help from Mayor’s Office of Operations, DDC and / or
- Work with independent, licensed architect / designer
- Produce scope of work and budget
- Schematic design
- Design development
- Funding
- Construction
Conduct full process evaluation of current operations to determine:

- Traffic scale and flow, office by office, where delays (pain points) are occurring
- Why they are occurring
- Obtain expert advice from the City or independent consultants to improve office efficiency, reduce wait time and improve client satisfaction
- How to recruit assistance or funding to hire independent consultant

Likely recommendations may include that DOP

- Adopting standard operating procedures and guidelines across all DOP offices to ensure standard level of service quality
- Consistently collecting data and reporting metrics for measuring operational performance and quality of service delivery
- Using quality control measures to ensure delivery of uniform standards of service for clients
- Addressing office-level operational efficiency holistically as part of overall DOP operations