



CASE STUDY

PAMUNKEY REGIONAL LIBRARY BIGGEST IMPROVER CHALLENGE CASE STUDY



save**TIME**



save**MONEY**



improve**PERFORMANCE**





WHAT IS IT?

The Biggest Improver Challenge is a new initiative that helps libraries to make their collections perform better for patrons.

Participants have two things in common: each is a public library and each subscribes to collectionHQ. Contestants are assigned a dedicated collectionHQ Account Manager who helps to define goals for each stage of the collection management workflow. The library must then work with collectionHQ Action Plans and review progress regularly via the Dashboard to complete the challenge successfully.

WHAT AREAS DOES IT HELP TO IMPROVE?

The Biggest Improver Challenge aims to improve the service a library offers as a whole. To do so, contestants must demonstrate high performance in each stage of the collection development workflow:

- Selection
- Collection Management
- Marketing
- Performance Monitoring

PAMUNKEY REGIONAL LIBRARY

Pamunkey Regional Library in Hanover, Virginia, is made up of 10 libraries and serves a population of more than 130,000. Library Director, Tom Shepley, decided to take part in the Biggest Improver Challenge 2017 to increase collection performance improvements by training more staff on how to use collectionHQ.

After 10 months of applying collectionHQ consistently, monitoring performance and reviewing progress with the Account Manager, the team at Pamunkey Regional Library was awarded Winner of the Biggest Improver Challenge 2017. We caught up with Patty Franz, Collections Librarian, to find out how they did it.



GETTING STARTED

When collectionHQ was first introduced to Pamunkey Regional Library, the team rolled out Collection Check which greatly improved the accuracy of the library's catalog. However, progress from that stage was restricted as Patty was the only user of the tool. For this reason, taking on the Biggest Improver Challenge was daunting at first. Patty shared: "I was creating all the weeding lists and I had not even looked at materials transfer, spending plans or marketing experiments. So, were we up to the challenge?"

TRANSFERS

To make better use of existing items and to reduce waste, Patty applied collectionHQ parameters to increase the number of Transfers (dead items moved to locations of higher demand based on evidence of circulation). She involved one branch manager at first to take on the responsibility of pulling items in from other locations to replace grubby items in the branch's Adult Fiction collection. As the introduction of Transfers started to return results, Patty gradually invited more branches to take part in the replacement of grubby items with existing material. She shared: "In January, February and March; Ashland, Atlee and Mechanicsville all did more grubby transfers. They created lists, and the smaller branches pulled materials." This approach helped the team to meet their goal of 1,627 transfers over 10 months, an increase from 0 transfers at the start of the challenge. As a result of transferring poorly performing material to new locations, those items received collectively an additional 308 circulations after having been dead for an average of 5 months.

Patty's strategy to improve results achieved with the Transfer tools by encouraging more users was effective. Staff uptake of the tool was helped by the fact that they could see the positive results of using collectionHQ to identify grubby items and replace with material from other locations. Patty shared: "Thanks to this transfer alone, we had within one month of starting the challenge achieved the goal of having five people use collectionHQ. The manager of Mechanicsville, the branches that the transfer items were coming from, and me, all had used collectionHQ. Now we just need to keep that going."



GRUBBY ITEMS

Where previously Patty alone would download weeding lists from collectionHQ and distribute across the branches, she acknowledged that it was necessary to offer branches direct access to collectionHQ in order to make progress. She therefore assigned collectionHQ users at each of the branches, enabling them to download weeding lists and manage the process. This approach helped to reduce the percentage of collection in a grubby condition and freed up more of Patty's time to spend on other parts of collectionHQ.

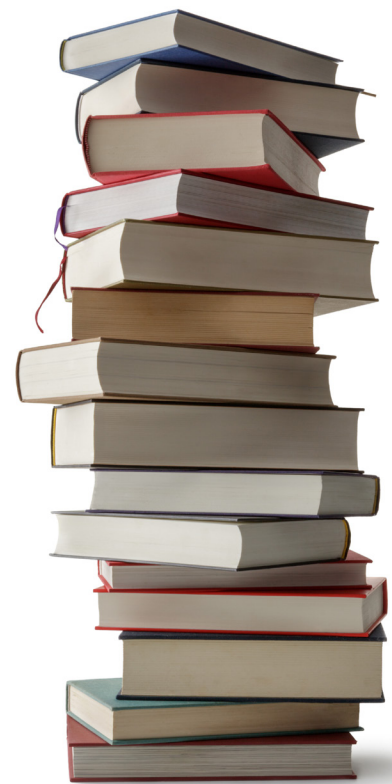
SPENDING PLANS

Having spread the collectionHQ workload more evenly across the team, Patty had some time to look at Spending Plans in collectionHQ's "Select" module. The Spending Plan tool helps collectionHQ users to plan budget over the year based on evidence, therefore helping to align supply with patron demand. The Biggest Improver Challenge set the goal of creating 14 Spending Plans, and by the end of the challenge, Patty had created 15. She described: "I created a Spending Plan for the whole budget using \$360,000. Then I created smaller Spending Plans for Adult Fiction, Non-Fiction and Non-Book. Also, I made plans for parts of the Young Adult and Juvenile collection."

MARKETING

Prior to the program, Pamunkey Regional Library had zero active marketing experiments with collectionHQ. The "Marketing" module in collectionHQ offers a useful tool to help libraries monitor the circulation of specific items or new collection displays to evaluate their impact on performance. Therefore, the library was set the challenge of creating 12 experiments by the end of the 10 month period. By the end of the Biggest Improver Challenge, the team made significant progress by introducing 11 experiments and will continue to apply the collectionHQ Marketing tools consistently.

Patty shared the benefits of the marketing experiments: "The marketing experiments were mostly used by the reference staff. There were at least two benefits. First of all the reference librarians got to use a tool that they had heard about, but didn't know was relevant to their responsibilities. Secondly, they were trying to increase use of another library tool, NoveList Plus. The marketing experiments showed them if the ideas they had for that tool were working."



SUMMARY

By setting goals and reviewing performance regularly, the Biggest Improver Challenge has helped the team at Pamunkey Regional Library to make substantial progress in improving their collection with collectionHQ. One of the key factors behind the library's success was increasing the number of collectionHQ users from 1 to 9. collectionHQ is a comprehensive solution which offers a number of powerful tools and therefore requires a collective approach for maximum results.

Patty shared with us her final thoughts on the challenge and collectionHQ:

"I think that most of the libraries look much better. There is room to breathe, and room to do displays. Before Collection Check and the other weeding we have done using collectionHQ, the shelves were packed and every available space had more materials on it. It was just hard to see what the Pamunkey Regional Library actually had.

Many of our staff did not know how grubby some of our collection had gotten. Most staff don't look inside the books before they are shelved. I think staff were glad to replace grubby materials rather than just weed them. We all have materials that we want on our branch's shelves because we know it will circulate. Staff could see that we were putting the materials where they would circulate best.

If you are considering collectionHQ, I highly recommend it. The Pamunkey Regional Library has limited staff and this tool helped us do the weeding that had to be done and it helped us utilize staff time in the best possible way."





KEY BENEFITS

**Improved catalog
accuracy**

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**More relevant
collections and
satisfied patrons**

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Staff time savings

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**Increased
confidence in
collection data**

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Better results