

August 22, 2018

Negro Leagues Baseball Museum
1616 East 18th Street
Kansas City, MO 64108-1610

Dear Negro Leagues Baseball Museum:

Our team has thoroughly enjoyed creating this proposal for you which focuses on customer service training for Negro Leagues Baseball Museum (NLBM) employees and volunteers. Our training program, *At Bat for Customer Service*, aligns with the museum's mission and is customized for vested stakeholders. We believe it will position NLBM for excellence in customer service, not only for the 2019 tourist season, but also for the centennial anniversary of the Negro National League in 2020.

In this proposal, you will learn more about our project objective, company, guiding assumptions, program evaluation, and detailed budget for *At Bat for Customer Service*. We look forward to discussing our proposal with you further and demonstrating how the actions in our plan will help you meet your customer service goals.

Sincerely,

Sustainable Design Solutions, LLC

At Bat for Customer Service:

A Training Proposal for the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum



"Through educational programming and exhibitions, the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum will strengthen and expand its mission to preserve the history of African American baseball."

Developed by Sustainable Design Solutions, LLC

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Project Objective

The founders of the Negro League Baseball Museum (NLBM) collaborated to “preserve the history of African American baseball” (Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, 2004) by creating a dedicated space that would educate current and future generations of baseball and history fans. The challenge for NLBM is connecting these fans to the museum. In 2015, the museum attracted over 75,000 patrons (Internal Revenue Service, 2016). This is only a small percentage of the 2.4 million children participating annually in US Little League baseball teams (Beague, 2014) and the 25 million visitors to Kansas City every year (Visit KC, 2018). With an eye for minimizing errors, a commitment to excellence, and a fastball focus on engaged customer service, NLBM is positioned to create patrons that are life-long advocates and promoters of the museum.

Sustainable Design Solutions, LLC, (SDS) proposes a new customer service training program, branded *At Bat for Customer Service*, that will connect patrons to the museum intentionally and personally. Your instincts to focus on customer service were right on target, and we have the experience to help the museum reach its goals. We have designed a customized training program that combines best practices from business and instructional design. Unlike traditional, static design approaches, our approach is iterative, measurable, sustainable, and customized to the four pillars of your mission:

1. Crafting innovative and thought provoking activities that appeal to the broadest of audiences.
 2. Building exhibitions grounded in sound research and creativity.
 3. Establishing itself as a national center that broadens the study of race and sports in American history.
 4. Promoting lifelong learning in the community.
- (Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, 2004)

The following sections detail our training strategy, instructional technology, project timeline, program evaluation plan, and draft budget.

About SDS

SDS is a training and development consulting firm in the United States specializing in helping small to medium sized businesses and nonprofit organizations. Our instructional designers are trained in adult learning theory, have experience using multiple educational technologies, and excel at collaborating with stakeholders to ensure that our clients' needs are met. In order to quickly create sustainable design solutions, our company utilizes Agile¹ principles as a guiding philosophy.

Sustainable Design Solutions, LLC, Agile Principles

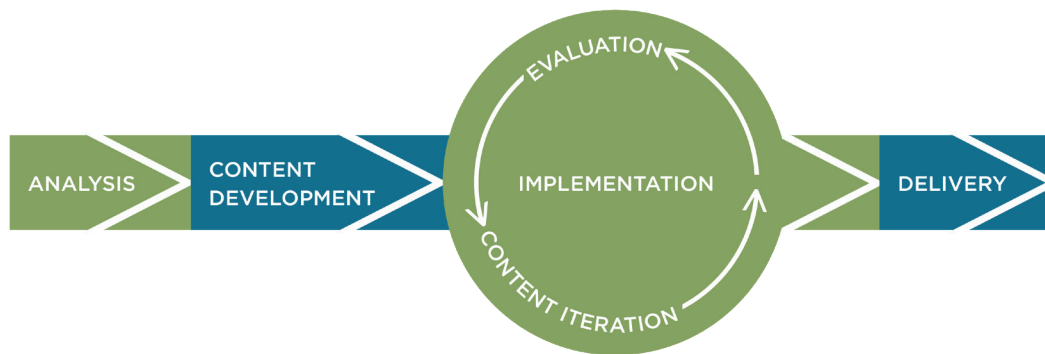


Figure 1. While linear, our Agile philosophy includes a cycle of implementation, evaluation, and content iteration, to ensure each rapidly developed segment for your project is of the highest quality and meeting the needs of your learners.

As detailed throughout this proposal, Agile principles allow us to meet the needs of our clients by developing solutions that are iterative, adaptable, and remain useful across diverse age groups. We involve stakeholders not only at the beginning of the instructional design process, but at every major step (Jenkins, 2018; Pappas, 2015). By using existing training materials provided by the museum, SDS is able to create a training program with language and resources that are familiar to museum employees and volunteers. SDS will divide learning solutions into small segments of deliverables that are developed rapidly, tested, and edited to quickly respond to feedback from your learners and stakeholders (Huhn, 2013; Pappas, 2015; Winner, 2015). We

¹ The Agile concept was first developed in the 2000's in the field of software development (Huhn, 2013; Torrence, 2018) and adopted for eLearning projects by Conrad Gottfredson about ten years later (Clark & Gottfredson, 2009; Pappas, 2015).

accept that change is constant and have incorporated the flexibility to handle change effectively and collaboratively (Winner, 2015). This is especially important for organizations like NLBM, who must respond to evolving cultural trends and needs of patrons. Additionally, our employees are cross-trained and wear “multiple hats” which allows us to offer the museum a training program that is also affordable.

Assumptions

To propose the most comprehensive solution for NLBM, we carefully reviewed your request for proposal, considered existing training materials on your website, and researched other publicly available information about your organization. Based on what we have gathered so far, we have made the following assumptions that we look forward to discussing and modifying with you.

Assumption 1: NLBM is staffed with a diverse set of learners. According to NLBM’s 2016 Internal Revenue Service filing, the museum employs an average of 13 employees. These learners range in age from 14-62 (Department of Labor & Industrial Relations) and are considered a stable group in comparison to volunteers. Volunteers, predominantly ages 62+, represent a large group of individuals who rotate in and out of the museum. Therefore, our customer service solution will meet the needs of learners who are as young as 14 and over 62.

Assumption 2: The museum owns computers that are available for employees and volunteers to use for the eLearning tutorials included in this training.

Assumption 3: Employees and volunteers are passionate about the museum’s mission and invested in learning how to engage and meet the needs of patrons.

Assumption 4: SDS will use NLBM’s existing training materials, such as information posted on their website.

Assumption 5: The hosting of eLearning content is out of the scope of this proposal.

Training Strategy

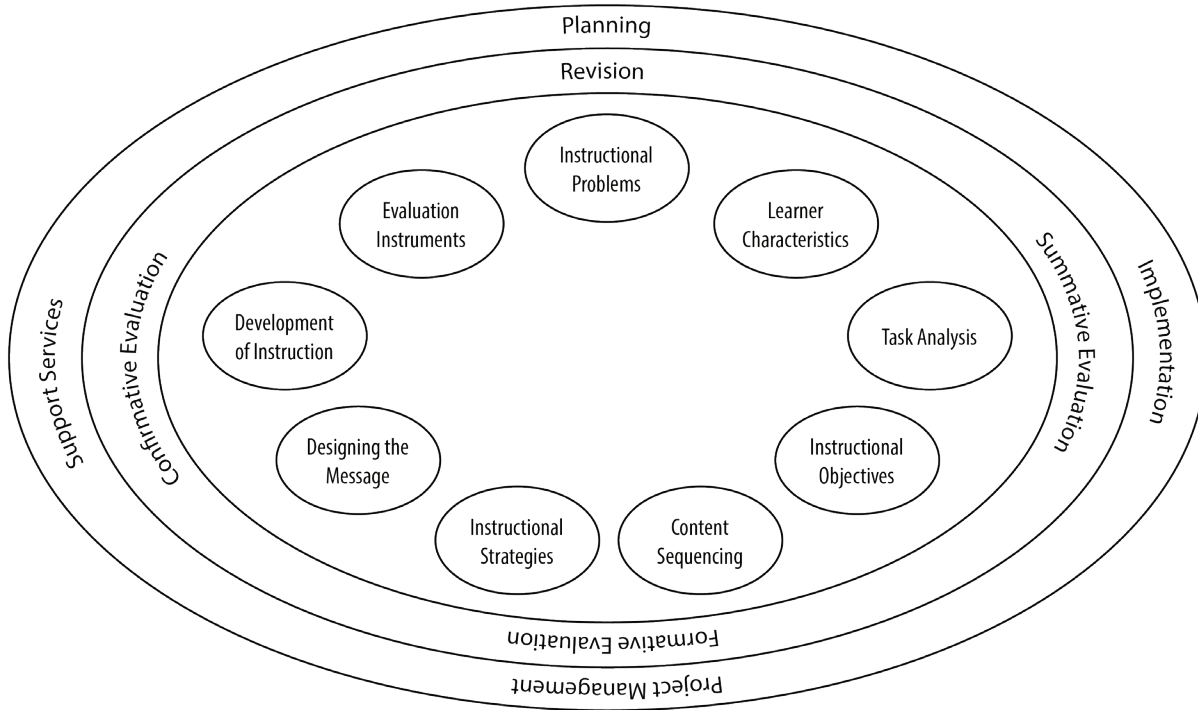
We understand NLBM has a unique training challenge. Your current employees and volunteers must be prepared for the tourist season, yet training also needs to be available throughout the year for new employees and volunteers. We have designed an innovative training program for you that blends eLearning tutorials with face-to-face (F2F) sessions. Yet, rather than treating eLearning as merely supplemental, we will design eLearning that provides your employees and volunteers the subject matter base knowledge they need to be fully engaged during their F2F training sessions. Our overall training strategy incorporates theoretical foundations, instructional design strategy and timeline, instructional technology, and training content.

Theoretical Foundations

Aligned with our Agile philosophy, we choose an instructional design (ID) model that is adaptable to your customer service training needs. We selected the Kemp, Morrison, and Ross model (KMR model)² to guide *At Bat for Customer Service* because it is learner-focused (Akkoyunlu & Soylu, 2008; Kemp, Morrison, & Ross, 1998; McLeod, 2003), appropriate in business contexts (Kemp et. al., 1998; Summers, Lohr, & O’Neil, 2002), and affords unique flexibility to incorporate stakeholder input throughout the design process (Kemp et. al., 1998; Gustafson & Branch, 2002). This is particularly important because NLBM stakeholders are diverse. They include not only your employees, volunteers, board officers, board members, etc., but also patrons, educators, and Kansas City community members. Additionally, the KMR model allows for outcomes-based design and accepts affect as a learning domain (Cleveland-Innes & Campbell, 2012; Kemp et. al., 1998; Reigeluth, 2012). In this context, the term affect is all about feeling and emotions. By using a model that includes the affective domain, we can tap into the emotions of your learners, inspiring them to have a deeper connection to the museum and its mission, and in turn influencing the attitudes of NLBM patrons.

² We reviewed multiple ID models, including Dick and Carey’s systems approach model, Merrill’s Pebble-in-the-Pond, and Allen’s Successive Approximation Model for this proposal (Brown & Green, 2016; Reiser & Dempsey, 2018).

KMR Design Model



recreated image of the KMR design model (Morrison, Ross, & Kemp as cited in Brown & Green, 2016, p. 11)

Figure 2. By using the KMR model in our instructional design, we can fully consider the nine elements needed to develop *At Bat for Customer Service*, while always keeping evaluation in mind.

Instructional Design Strategy & Timeline

Adhering to a streamlined and innovative process, SDS's design strategy and timeline are incorporated into one. There are a total of four phases, with Phase 3 repeating until content iteration is no longer needed and an optimal solution for the museum is found. Phase 3 is cyclical, repeats, and includes the implementation, evaluation, and iteration of the design solution. There are many advantages to this approach, such as finding errors quickly, incorporating stakeholder feedback, reducing development time through quick iteration, and cutting long-term costs by avoiding the development of an unsustainable solution. Each of the phases are defined in greater detail below.

At Bat for Customer Service Timeline

Phase 1 Nov. 2018	Phase 2 Dec. 2018	Phase 3 Jan.–Nov. 2019	Phase 4 Dec. 2019
Analysis & Planning	Content Development	Implementation, Evaluation & Content Iteration	Delivery

Figure 3. The timeline for your project considers our design flow, your work roster, and the work-life balance of your employees and volunteers.

Phase 1 (November 2018): Once initial communications with stakeholders has concluded, a thorough needs analysis will be conducted. The analysis will include an in-depth review of existing training materials, your expectations and goals, learner composition and disposition, and software and hardware needs. Additionally, we will seek approval of a high-level design document for *At Bat for Customer Service* that involves of stakeholders, including designated museum stakeholders, SDS project managers/learning consultants, instructional designers, and technical support.

Phase 2 (December 2018): After the needs analysis is complete and consensus is reached, we will begin the development of training module content for eLearning tutorials and F2F sessions. Development of content could also include the editing of existing materials and creation of job aids. Based on preliminary needs analysis, we understand the museum seeks to have customer service training in play by the beginning of the 2019 tourist season. We will meet this need by prioritizing content development according the most important module topics. For instance, we anticipate that the first five modules leading up to tourist season will include: NLBM History & Values, Knowing & Engaging Your Patrons, Handling Difficult Situations, Cultural Awareness & Accessibility, and Presentation & Guide Skills.

Phase 3 (January–November 2019): Phase 3 includes the implementation, evaluation, and content iteration components of the development cycle. Beginning in January, employees and

volunteers will proceed through a series of training modules, each beginning with an eLearning tutorial that is to be completed prior to F2F sessions. In alignment with adult learning theories and the “flipped classroom” concept, the eLearning tutorials will provide learners the base subject matter knowledge they need to be fully engaged during F2F sessions.

The first five modules will lead up to the tourist season (June through August), at which time there will be a pause in the implementation of the training program. Implementation in training will resume in September and end in November. This pause in training is intentional. It will allow employees and volunteers to apply the lessons they have learned in training and to focus their efforts in engaging personally and intentionally with customers during the tourist season. Simultaneously, SDS will focus on measuring results, program evaluation, and content iteration. The pause in training follows the principles of Agile and allows SDS to assess how the museum seeks to continue *At Bat for Customer Service* in 2020. As outlined in our budget, options for the museum could include the hiring or promotion of an existing employee, to a customer service manager (CSM) position.

The last three training modules, implemented from September through November, are valuable to customer service and vital to keeping learners invested. We anticipate that these modules will include: Active Listening, Negro National League History & Resources, and Nonverbal Communication.

Phase 4 (December 2019): After implementing the eighth and final module in November, final iterations will occur and the *At Bat for Customer Service* training package will be delivered to NLBM.

Instructional Technology

Communication with stakeholders will be accomplished via email, phone, video-conferencing, F2F meetings, and cloud storage. Design and development within SDS will be accomplished through secure, cloud-based collaborative documentation tools. The training deliverables include F2F and eLearning environments thereby leveraging the affordances of each modality.

An industry-recognized eLearning authoring tool will be used to create high-fidelity tutorials with dynamic test banks. These evolving test banks support sustainability and remediation because each learner will experience a unique set of questions and answers. The eLearning tutorials within *At Bat for Customer Service* can be completed at the employees' convenience, yet prior to F2F sessions. One way to customize these tutorials will be to use photographs of current NLBM stakeholders. This would create an authentic environment, greater buy-in, and a potentially stronger cognitive impact (Herrington & Oliver, 2000; Herrington & Reeves, 2018; Mayer, 2008; Sorden, 2012). Also, we recognize the diversity of learners - ages and abilities - of your employees and volunteers. To support these needs and Section 508 compliance,³ we will use alternative (alt) text on images and closed captioning. Alt text conveys essential information about images via text for screen readers (Pisocky, 2015). Our use of alt text throughout this proposal demonstrates our commitment to accessibility and our knowledge of the variance in learner styles.

F2F sessions will include low-fidelity resources, such as paper handouts. We will create informal job aids, tailored to reinforce lessons learned during training. For instance, a “desk binder” could include contact information for public relations and traveling exhibition roles, answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs), and detailed instructions for patrons who want to become an NLBM member.

Additionally, we will edit existing training materials. For instance, the website can be edited to emphasize the museum's investment in customer service. Considering the education programs and resources tab, our experience finds that consistency in navigation and communication works best on a website. For example, descriptions for every link will increase consistency. Introducing topics with in-page links and using headings will make these sections more navigable.

Additionally, ensuring patrons know who to contact for more information on being involved in NLBM programs is important to patron engagement.

³ Section 508, an amendment to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, requires Federal departments and agencies to create, use, procure, and/or maintain accessible electronic and information technology (United States Department of Labor).

Training Content

At Bat for Customer Service offers training that focuses on engaging patrons personally and intentionally through communication and understanding, while also addressing the four pillars of NLBM's mission statement. To prepare this proposal we conducted a preliminary needs analysis and reviewed existing training materials, patron comments on NLBM social networking platforms, and literature on peer institutes and exemplar companies. Our analysis led us to propose eight training modules for *At Bat for Customer Service*. In Figure 4, you can see how these modules (vertical) align with the four pillars of NLBM (horizontal).

Alignment of <i>At Bat for Customer Service</i> Training Modules with NLBM Mission Pillars				
Training Modules	Activities Appealing to the Broadest Audience	Researched & Creative Exhibitions	Study of Race & Sports in American History	Lifelong Learning in the Community
NLBM History & Values	X	X	X	X
Knowing & Engaging Your Patrons	X	X		X
Handling Difficult Situations	X			X
Cultural Awareness & Accessibility	X	X		X
Presentation & Guide Skills	X		X	X
Active Listening	X			X
Negro National Leagues History & Resources		X	X	X
Nonverbal Communication	X			X

Figure 4. This table shows how our training modules for *At Bat for Customer Service* are customized to align with the four pillars of NLBM's mission, enhancing sustainability and learner investment.

As mentioned under our training strategy and timeline, there are eight monthly modules, each with an eLearning tutorial and F2F session. Employees and volunteers will have access to the eLearning tutorials year-round, yet will be expected to complete each module prior to their monthly F2F sessions. This “flipped classroom” concept allows learners to have the same level of base knowledge before the F2F sessions resulting in the opportunity for collaborative and experiential learning. The interactive eLearning tutorials will take about fifteen minutes to complete and will end with a fun quiz (see Figure 6).

F2F sessions will include problem-based learning, authentic case studies, role-playing, and/or sharing of, and reflection on, personal experiences (Herrington & Reeves, 2018; Merriam & Bierema, 2014; Mezirow, 1990). These sessions will be scheduled for an hour and a half and will occur monthly, with the timing decided upon by stakeholder input. SDS will facilitate F2F session for at least the first three to five months, until a decision is reached as to whether a current employee should serve as CSM. If a CSM is approved, then SDS would train this individual to conduct the F2F sessions. The CSM position is described further in the budget section of this proposal.

In F2F sessions, a short amount of time will be spent on house keeping, such as welcoming new employees or volunteers, learning about new parts of the exhibition, or staying informed about upcoming events. Next, we would dive into the month’s topic, addressing any questions consistently missed in the eLearning tutorials before beginning learning activities. A variety of learning activities will be designed for each F2F session to support the museum’s goal of providing excellent customer service. Below are a few examples:

- For *NLBM History & Values* we could divide into teams and play trivia.
- During the *Knowing & Engaging Your Patrons* session we could discuss generational differences as a whole, break into small groups each assigned with a different generation or population segment (preschoolers, tweens, teenagers, young adults, etc.), and brainstorm on ways in which NLBM could specifically engage those patrons.

- As part of *Handling Difficult Situations*, we could break into small groups assigning a case scenario to each group. Groups would share strategies for handling these situations and then share their findings with the class.

In addition to the planned learning activities, an important part of the F2F sessions would be the sharing of, and reflection on, personal experiences – especially when considering the differences between adults and children. Time would be set aside just for this type of dialogue, which contributes to creating an engaged learner.

At Bat for Customer Service F2F Session Time Distribution

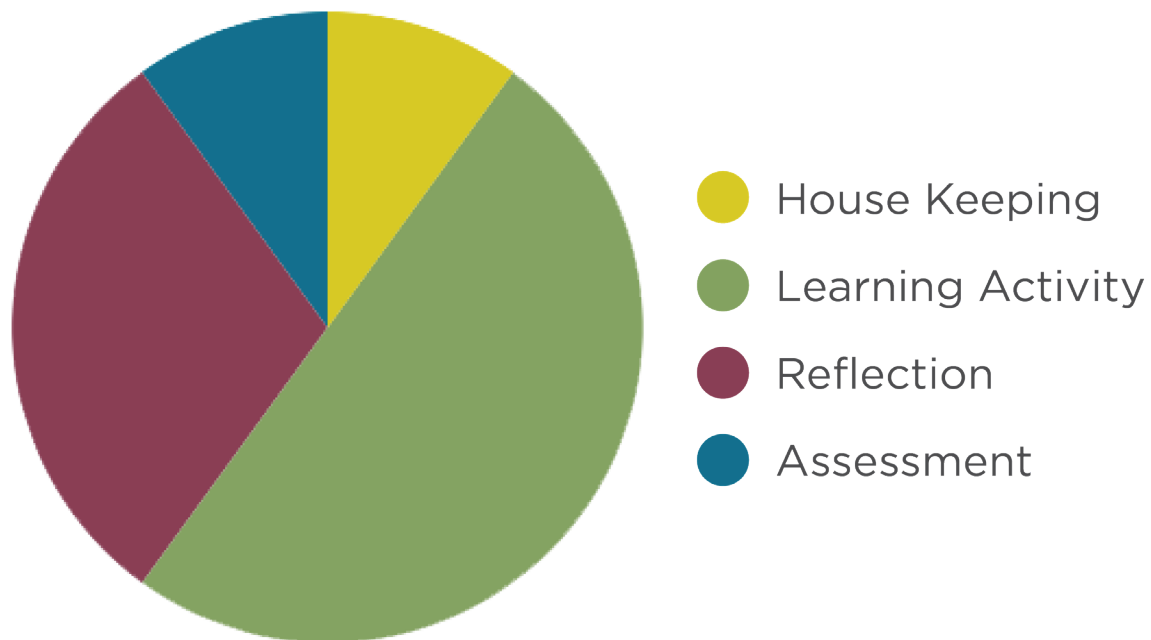


Figure 5. To make the most of NLBM's time, we would devote 50% of F2F sessions on collaborative learning activities, 30% to reflection on personal experiences and patron comments, and 10% each to house keeping items and learner assessment.

Program Evaluation

Evaluation determines whether or not instruction has been successful (Brown & Green, 2016) and in our proposal, evaluation iteratively impacts design. We will use formative evaluation, meaning evaluation occurring throughout the design. For instance, during Phase 3 of *At Bat for Customer Service*, iteration informs the final design (Palloff & Pratt, 2009). This iterative process will also solidify performance objectives, which will change according to organizational needs. We will build criterion-referenced assessments, or quizzes, into eLearning tutorials in order to measure the understanding of content. They will include a mixture of true/false, multiple choice, and/or matching questions (Brown & Green, 2016). An example of a multiple-choice question can be seen in Figure 6.

At Bat for Customer Service eLearning Quiz Question Example

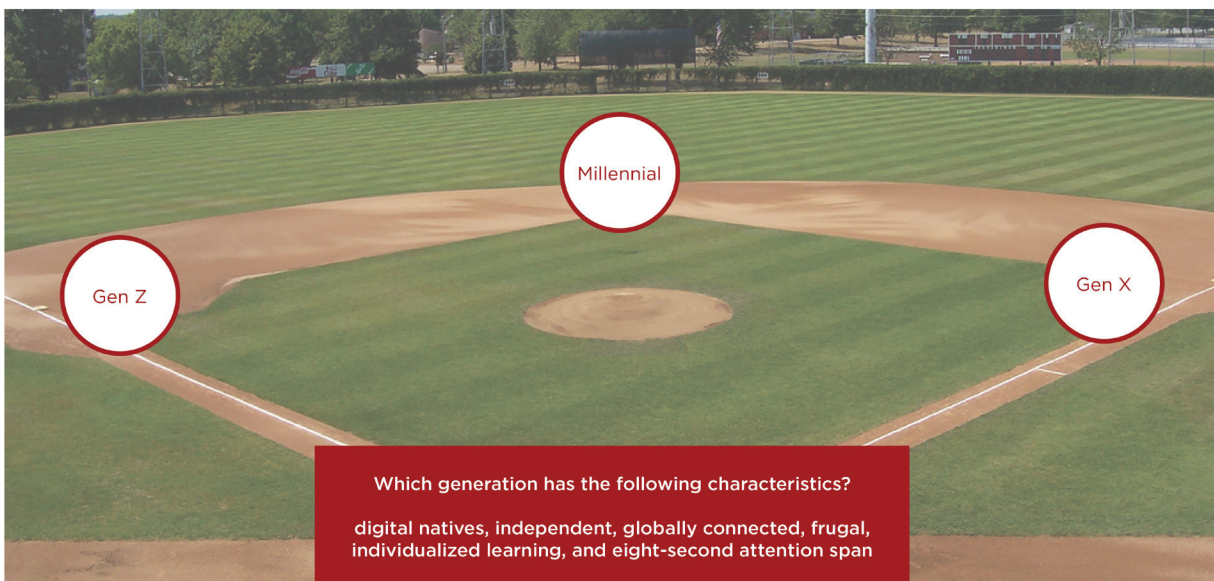


Figure 6. A sample of the quiz questions at the end of each eLearning tutorial showing a baseball field with the question over home plate and the answers associated with first, second, and third base.

Quiz scores from eLearning tutorials will provide the F2F facilitator with a stat sheet, informing which areas need to be reiterated during the session. In order to obtain learner feedback for formative evaluation, the One-Minute Paper (Palloff & Pratt, 2009) will be used at the end of each F2F session. This consists of two short-answer questions: “1) What was the most important thing you learned in this [meeting]? 2) What questions remain unanswered?” (Palloff & Pratt, 2009, p. 31).

During F2F sessions, the facilitator will also use patron comments for learning, evaluation, and reflection. For instance, patrons can rate NLBM and share feedback from their experiences through social networking and travel sites, as noted in Figure 7. In fact, analysis of patron comments impacted our decision on which modules of *At Bat for Customer Service* to develop. As seen in the images below, comments require a nuanced understanding. At face value, overall ratings indicate that excellent customer service is being provided by the museum. However, taking a deeper look into comments can show us growth opportunities. Ultimately, we want patrons to become advocate, influencers, and overall promoters of NLBM. For the museum to reach its patronage goals, promoters are necessary.

NLBM Ratings/Comments from SNS & Travel Sites



Figure 7. We looked at three travel and social networking sites to see what patrons thought about NLBM. With over 2500 ratings, NLBM averages a 4.7 out of 5! With these responses, we can see what works best and should be continued, along with areas in which we can improve.

Therefore, SDS recommends the implementation of a tool that captures net promoter sentiment. A kiosk located near the entrance/exit that asks patrons “How likely are you to recommend the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum to a friend?” is a tool that would be easy for your patrons to use. The design of the kiosk could include familiar emojis such as smiley-face buttons to register a positive or negative response. The kiosk would record information with minimal effort on the part of patrons. Alternatively, more in-depth responses could be recorded by encouraging patrons to engage with travel and social networking sites. A way to facilitate and capture this type of response could be small informational cards with a QR code linking to a page on the NLBM website that houses direct links to social networking or travel sites.

Finally, SDS will compile a summative, final, evaluation report. This report will be delivered in December and include cumulative results of the customer service training program (Palloff & Pratt, 2009). The report will outline the results of *At Bat for Customer Service* and show data prior to, during, and after employee and volunteer training. The number of patrons, metrics of patron engagement through social networking and travel sites, qualitative changes in reviews and comments, and attitudinal shifts among employees and volunteers will be included.

Budget

The project budget details the basic requirements for implementing our customer service training proposal and includes required costs for SDS project managers/learning consultants, instructional designers, technical support, travel, and printed materials. Savings for our proposal stem from our ability to use instructional designers who are skilled at instruction, as well as, facilitating F2F sessions. Also included is an optional project enhancements budget. This budget details opportunities that are mentioned throughout this proposal, such as a CSM and net-promoter kiosk. As your consultants, offering additional solutions that meet the museum’s long-term goals is a responsibility SDS takes pride in doing.

Hourly rates listed in the budget are based on averages in the Kansas City, MO area (Glassdoor, Inc., 2018; PayScale, 2018). Additional salary estimates are based upon national averages. Total cost for *At Bat for Customer Service* is \$78,850. However, we would be honored to offer you a 10% discount as a nonprofit organization. Therefore, the total for our proposal is \$70,965.

Proposed Project Budget				
Staff	Description	Estimated Hours	Hourly Rate	Total Cost
SDS Project Managers/ Learning Consultants	Responsible for all aspects of the project including communication with stakeholders, overseeing content development, and meeting project deadlines.	300	\$100	\$30,000
Instructional Designers	Responsible for development of eLearning and F2F module content, facilitation of F2F sessions, updating existing training materials, and all components of program evaluation.	600	\$60	\$36,000
Technical Support	Responsible for troubleshooting technical issues and testing eLearning tutorials.	10	\$60	\$600
Travel	Travel for F2F sessions.	8	\$1500 (flat rate/trip)	\$12,000
Print Materials	Handouts for F2F sessions, job aids for employees and volunteers, and summative evaluation report.	\$250		
Estimated Total				\$78,850
Minus 10% Discount				(\$7,885)
Actual Total				\$70,965

Optional Project Enhancements

Item	Description	Cost
Customer Service Manager (CSM)	CSM would manage all aspects of customer service training including, but not limited to, the facilitation of F2F sessions and maintenance of training materials. SDS assistance with hiring a CSM, or training of a current employee to fulfill CSM roles, would be an additional charge.	\$55,000 (annual salary)
Kiosk	Located near the main entrance, this kiosk would be used to capture patron affect/experience and feedback. The data from the kiosk could be used for training purposes.	\$2,000

Conclusion

In conclusion, *At Bat for Customer Service* will support and enhance NLBM's goal to strengthen and expand its mission to preserve the history of African American baseball through educational programming and exhibitions. Our customer service training proposal included a project objective, introduction to SDS, assumptions, training strategy, program evaluation, and detailed budget. With our experience of consulting with small businesses and nonprofits, we are positioned to offer the museum customizable, innovative, and flexible solutions. We would be honored to join your team and begin implementing this proposal at your earliest convenience.

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