

LIBRARIES BY DESIGN

No Insta? No Problem! Partnering with the Business School to Raise Awareness about a Business Library Space

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The Gast Business Library: Pre-Pandemic

The Gast Business Library at Michigan State University opened in 1997 as a branch library of the MSU Libraries System primarily serving students, faculty, and staff of the Broad College of Business. Located across the street from the business college, it had often been a challenge to get the word out about our space to students who attended classes in a different building. Word-of-mouth sufficed, however, and over the years, foot traffic picked up steadily, and we became a busy and vibrant space. Additionally, over the past ten years or so, the Gast Business Library became a center of activity on the east side of MSU's campus, since many nearby branch libraries closed. The space had become a hub for not only business students, but many in the sciences as well. Needless to say, 20+ years after opening and with a recent upswing in use, the place needed some sprucing up.

The Gast Business Library: Renovation

The renovation of the Gast Business Library had been a top priority for several years prior to the pandemic, and incremental improvements--mostly involving the renovation of group rooms--had been made over recent years. In 2020, many things changed very quickly, and the decision was made to shut down the business library to ensure everyone's safety during the pandemic. While this was initially thought of as a short, temporary closure, the Gast Business Library did not in fact reopen in any capacity until August 2021. Rather than maintaining the status quo during this time, however, the MSU Libraries' leadership seized the opportunity presented by the shutdown to renovate the business library. A significant investment into the space was made, and when the Gast Business Library reopened in the fall of 2021, it was a more user-friendly space featuring comfortable seating in a range of configurations to accommodate the many ways people used the space.

The Gast Business Library: Reopening

As mentioned, prior to the pandemic, the Gast Business Library was a very busy space with a lot of foot traffic, thousands of group room reservations annually and the most print jobs anywhere on campus. When students returned to campus in August 2021, however, there was a noticeable drop in all of these services. Neither first- nor second-year students were aware of our location, given that classes had been mostly online up to that point. So, we clearly needed to get the word out about our newly renovated space. The question was how best to do this? What channel would reach the most students and not require a lot of staff time? While there were a range of options for marketing our space (email, digital

signs, print posters or fliers), the best option to get the message out to most students seemed to be social media. Unfortunately, the Gast Business Library suspended its social media accounts just prior to the pandemic given the lack of engagement on them.



Figure 1. The Gast Business Library's renovation included new carpeting, contemporary furniture, and a new color scheme. We replaced larger tables with smaller ones (and more of them) and added café tables. The booths shown here have all proven to be extremely popular with students working in small groups.



Figure 2. We also created a lounge-y feel at the front of the library that included several larger comfortable chairs, a sofa-like unit, and a smaller, more visible shelving unit for our current periodicals. The computer area was repositioned and new tables (including adjustable height desks), chairs and short privacy was added.



Figure 3. While we renovated most of the space, one area that we did not touch was our quiet study area, which is comprised of individual study carrels. We had also previously renovated our classroom and group rooms. The contemporary furniture and color scheme of the newer renovations were chosen to coordinate with the previously renovated spaces.

Getting the Word Out: Instagram Takeover

While the Gast Business Library's social media accounts were not active, those of the Broad College of Business were, and the Marketing and Communications team in the Broad College were often requesting ideas for content. We reached out to them to explore the option of taking over one of their social media channels for a short awareness campaign in the middle of the fall semester. Ultimately, we decided on a takeover quiz in Instagram. Not only could we highlight our new space this way, but we could also get the word out about our other services, staff, and resources too--hopefully in a fun and engaging way. The business library crafted the quiz questions and provided the graphics and photos, and the Marketing and Communications team within the Broad College of Business did the rest.

Gast Business Library Instagram Quiz

1. How many people work in the Gast Business Library?
 - a. 2
 - b. 5
 - c. 12
 - d. 20 (correct answer)

There are four business librarians, each specializing in a specific area of business, two professional staff and fourteen student employees available to help you with your assignments, projects, and presentations.

2. Does the business library have a quiet study area?
 - a. Yes (correct answer)

b. No

Our quiet study area is located in the library's atrium (in the back) and has a number of carrels for individual use.

3. Is the library open on football Saturdays?
- Yes. (correct answer)
 - No.
 - Sometimes.

Yes! We are open every Saturday from 12-6. Check here for a list of all of our hours:

<https://lib.msu.edu/hours/gast-business-library/>

4. You can reserve a group room in the Gast Business Library online for two hours at a time up to sixty days in advance. How many group rooms are there in the business library?
- 5
 - 7
 - 9
 - 11 (correct answer)

We have group rooms of various sizes – one of which can accommodate up to fifteen people.

Reserve a room online here: <https://bookings.lib.msu.edu/spaces?lid=1652&gid=5200>

5. Prior to the pandemic, which public printer on campus printed the most documents?
- Wells Hall
 - Gast Business Library (correct answer)
 - University Village Community Center
 - Computer Center 210

One of the three printers in the Gast Business Library was the most active on the entire campus prior to the pandemic. You can print your papers, resumes and presentations, in black & white and color, quickly and easily here! We also have a scanner, fax machine and photocopier.

6. Which of the following can you access online through the business library for FREE?
- Wall Street Journal
 - Barron's
 - Financial Times
 - The Economist
 - All of the above (correct answer)

The business library subscribes to all of these publications, and you can access them online through the library's website for free. Here are your tuition dollars at work!

7. The Gast Business Library was renovated during the pandemic. We now have a range of comfortable seating, booths, and tables to accommodate different types of learning. Can you guess the official color of the fabric on these new cool chairs?

- a. Peacock Green
- b. Seafoam Blue
- c. Endurance Neptune (correct answer)
- d. Turquoise Tweed

8. Where is the Gast Business Library located?

- a. There's a business library?!
- b. On the third floor of the Main Library
- c. In the basement of Eppley
- d. Across the street and on the bottom level of the Law College Building (correct answer)

We are located in the bottom level of the Law College building.... "On Shaw, Under Law." Fun historical fact: Before the Law College was built, we were located in the basement of Eppley.

9. How many specialized business resources and tools does the Gast Business Library subscribe to?

- a. 5
- b. 12
- c. 30
- d. 65 (correct answer)

The business library subscribes to over sixty specialized databases and tools which provide content you cannot find by doing a Google search on the free web. Financial statements, analyst reports, market research and more are all available online 24x7 and librarians can help you select and use the right one for your projects. Click here [<https://libguides.lib.msu.edu/busdatabases/>] for the complete listing.

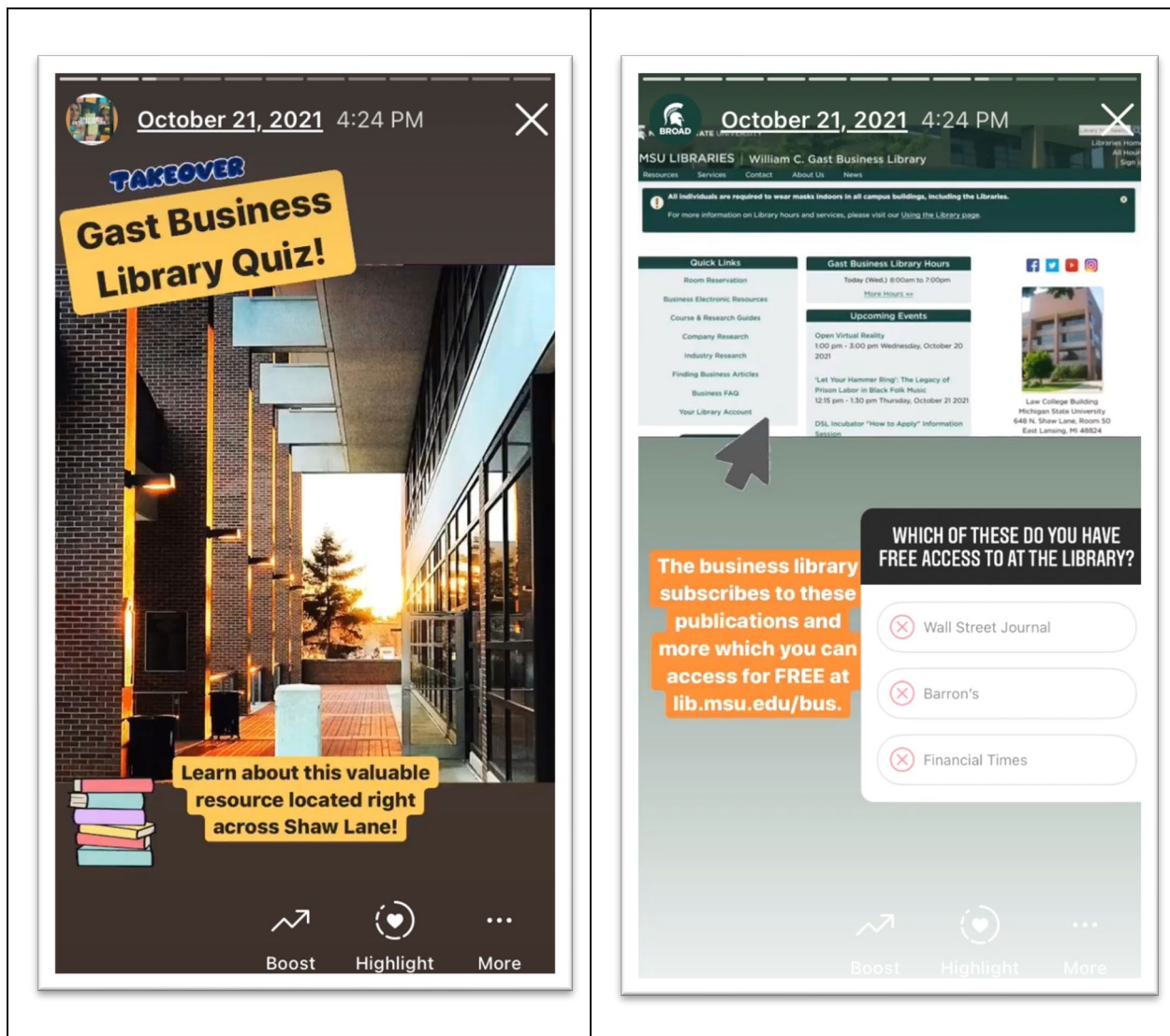


Figure 4. Screenshots of the Gast Business Library Takeover Quiz of the Broad College of Business's Instagram account. Fall 2021. © Broad College of Business, Michigan State University. Used with permission.

Gast Business Library Insta Takeover Quiz: The Results

The quiz ended up having ten slides with nine multiple-choice questions and went live on October 21, 2021. It was quite successful and received a total of 7,683 impressions, with an average of 768 impressions per slide. This was astounding to both the library and the Broad team. The average number of impressions on any given Instagram Story run by the Broad communications team up to that point was in the hundreds, and there was no engagement remotely close on any of the business library's social media channels. Responses to the quiz questions weren't as high but were still impressive. The quiz received a total of 1,952 responses, with an average of 216 per slide/question. The hardest question by far was the name of the fabric on the new chairs... most people thought it was the Peacock Green. The easiest question was whether the library had a quiet study area.

Conclusion

In the end, the Instagram takeover quiz was a great success. With relatively minimal effort, it increased student engagement with the Broad College of Business' Instagram account while simultaneously increasing awareness of the new business library space. A true win-win! Foot traffic in the Gast Business Library has also steadily increased, and the library's relationship with the Broad Marketing and Communications team was strengthened. Their interest in future projects with the business library remains high based on the success of this initial campaign, and the doors have been opened for further collaboration via other channels.