

**Becoming a Value Added Public Librarian**  
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## ***Introduction***

- How many people here today are librarians?
- How many are councilors, local government managers or senior staff?
- How many librarians here today have had increased budgets in the past year?
- How many librarians have had their budgets decreased or pegged?
- How many librarians would like more money to spend on the library services they provide?
- How many councillors, local government managers or staff have lots of left over money to spare?

From the show of hands we assume most librarians here today believe they could achieve more in their libraries with more funds. However, increasingly in every walk of life there are competitive pressures for funding. Therefore to be successful it is necessary to be able to demonstrate clearly the value of goods or services provided.

- While we are in a questioning mode, who in this room is in sales?
- How many people here get paid?

## ***Using Marketing Techniques to Communicate with Management***

It could be argued that we are all "in sales" if we receive money – either a budget or an income - in exchange for goods or services delivered.

Librarians are in sales. And it is fun! It is not demeaning. It is not frightening. And it is satisfying when one gets it right. When we acknowledge we are in sales, we can put into practice the 4P's of marketing:

- **PRODUCT** – is all about designing and delivering a product or service that is needed for a particular market sector. Perhaps the public library market includes a number of sectors – toddlers, students, teenagers, young adults, mature adults, seniors, business, education, government?
- **PRICE** – is the cost that is acceptable to the purchaser or funder. We are not necessarily talking here about fees for services – although let's face it many libraries charge fees for some services – such as reservations. And why not charge for services such as venue hire or training?
- **PROMOTION** - is about planning and executing the communication that needs to take place advising the goods or services available. Sometimes people when they refer to "marketing" are only really referring to the "Promotion" part of marketing but we hope you will share our view by the end of our presentation that this is often a waste of time if it is not carefully integrated with the other 3 P's.
- **PLACE** - is where and how and when the products or services will be delivered. Do you have only one place? No we hope you have many "Places" for your various sectors.

The more successful we are at executing the 4 P's of marketing, the more money we are likely to attract whether we are a government funded organisation, a not-for-profit organisation or a company.

In Australia, lobbying on behalf of libraries rarely appears to have been based on a robust marketing framework. Instead it appears to usually be focussed on just 2 of the 4 P's – PRICE and PROMOTION, for example:

- We need more money and we are free!
- Libraries are great mate!

## The Importance of our USP

USP - Unique Selling Proposition - is an advertising term to describe what is "unique" about products or services being offered.

The USP is what **makes that product or service different from any other**. It's why consumers will buy or choose a product or service even though it may seem to have some similarities with others. Perhaps the product or service is more convenient, it looks better, feels better, has more attractive packaging, is cheaper or will last longer – many different reasons. It may even be more expensive.

Ultimately you should be able to distil the USP message into one clear unambiguous sentence.

[www.findlaw.com.au](http://www.findlaw.com.au) and many other sources explain why promoting without knowing and communicating what your USP is a waste of effort!

"The standard approach to getting customers is promote, promote, promote. But what are you promoting? To generate a return from promotion you must be offering something unique. You need to stand out from the crowd and your unique selling proposition must be articulated in your promotion. This could relate to the services or products you provide, guarantees offered, delivery mechanism used, auxiliary services provided, pricing or any attribute associated with your business. However it must be unique, it is useless promoting cheap prices if everyone else is promoting the same. If everyone were offering cheap prices you would be better off promoting higher prices for better quality and service (as long as you do provide better quality and service)."<sup>1</sup>

## What is our Value?

We think a more useful approach to becoming a librarian whose value is appreciated and recognised is to understand:

- what are our unique skills and strengths
- who are our competitors and what are their unique skills and strengths
- what is the value we deliver to our community through our library
- and so ultimately, what is our USP - our unique selling proposition

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bizpeponline.com/Article6.html>

We acknowledge that the two of us are not public librarians and we do not know your business as intimately as you do. However, we both use libraries, and Maree takes her children to public libraries. As experienced librarians who have now run successful businesses for the past 10 - 15 years, we would like to share with you our perception of the value you provide to your communities. We believe you may have opportunities to communicate your value more effectively to your managements and to attract the funding you need to reach your goals.

## Unique Strengths of Libraries and Librarians

Firstly let's examine the unique strengths of libraries and librarians.

What images come to mind when people talk or write about libraries? Do you picture large quiet spaces with lots of bookshelves and sometimes stern library staff behind the reference desk or check out counter dealing with patrons in various queues?

Or do you think of exciting multi-faceted community centres with lots of people of different ages absorbed in a wide range of activities and friendly staff helping their patrons in many different ways. Do you think of bustling centres where people of all ages are tapping away at computers? Or enjoying a coffee in the library's café? Or attending a training session? Or a storytelling session? Or preparing for a library sleepover? Or in quiet areas studying? Or exploring family or local history?

We believe your libraries offer some unique, valuable community benefits.

1. From an ***educational perspective***, you provide a non-competitive environment for all members of the community from pre-school to retirement to pursue both formal and informal learning goals and to seek knowledge on any topic at any time throughout their lives, and so your libraries provide a pathway to employment and self sufficiency<sup>2</sup>.
2. From a ***social perspective***, you provide in your libraries invaluable community assets for supporting the disadvantaged and disenfranchised members of the community; your libraries can be hubs fostering community involvement and networking in a non-judgmental environment.
3. From an ***economic perspective***, a strong well-resourced well-staffed public library can help local business with access to information that will allow them to grow their businesses, help their staff develop skills and solve problems.
4. From a ***cultural perspective***, in your libraries, you provide an inclusive environment for all groups in your community, promoting acceptance and harmony, equal access to information for all and preserving your local history and protecting the community's heritage.

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<sup>2</sup> Anne Cunningham, Head of Libraries, Idea Stores

5. From a *recreational perspective*, your libraries provide fiction and non fiction or AV materials for everyone's interests and for children games and puzzles.

## **Librarians' Unique Skills are Often Under-Valued and Unrecognised**

If librarians only focussed on collection building, we would basically be skilled at managing warehouses.

We believe the unique skills of librarians extend far beyond building physical collections.

- ***Librarians have a unique understanding of the entire publication supply chain for ultimate easy use*** - from manuscripts to publication in all sorts of forms – books, magazines, newspapers, directories, encyclopedias, AV materials, online resources, reports, novels etc. etc. covering the entire range of human knowledge and suitable for all ages from toddlers to seniors, for fun or for learning, in all sectors from agriculture, education, health, business, the professions and so on. Added to this librarians have the skills to organize this hugely disparate collection for easy access and use.

This is a big statement. Let's take a moment to consider the two aspects to this.

1. **For the library patron** it means that anyone in your community should be able to go to their local public library and obtain assistance in locating quality, relevant information on any topic for any purpose for any level – whether it is health information for the person with cancer, information for a school project, information for a business enterprise, information for a hobby, or publications to read for leisure or for learning, or AV materials to listen to or view for recreation or for learning.
2. **For the librarian** it means managing an enormously complex collection of a huge variety of materials on all topics, often these days in multiple languages, different sizes, suitable for different groups of people. It involves knowing how to select the most appropriate material, how to display it, when to replace and discard it, it involves managing this huge complex inventory in a logical sequence in your library – either in themed rooms or in Dewey order, and it includes indexing (in your catalogue – these days hopefully in a web accessible catalogue) so the publications and often the information contained inside the publications can be found.

Now some will definitely say but bookstore managers and staff also know a lot about publications. True. But how many bookstores focus on the entire range of publications in all their forms – books, fiction, non-fiction, journals, conference proceedings, directories, newspapers, government reports, trade directories, in all subjects for all ages, for all levels of expertise, both current

and non-current and how many bookstores make their collections available for use free of charge? How many bookstores keep on their shelves material of historical or cultural importance even if the publications are not in demand?

- ***Librarians have a unique understanding of information online -*** whether the information is on the open web, the Invisible Web, the deep web, in proprietary databases such as Gale, Ebsconet, Proquest, etc. Just as librarians understand the content of print publications, so they have a unique understanding of information online - i.e. online content – and how it can be used by various groups in the community for recreation, for learning, for problem solving. We would like to believe that at least the professional or the reference staff in every library are more knowledgeable about searching for information online than most of their users, and when your users come into your libraries they will receive accurate information about using these resources. We believe this means that as you will sometimes have junior or para-professional staff rostered to help on desks, you will either a) have trained them with some basic skills or b) at least have a procedure in place that they do not give out incorrect information such as “Oh there is nothing useful on the Internet”, or “Yes we have newspapers online” and then show the user a 6 month out of date CDROM! As a bare minimum the library assistant in a NSW public library who gave me those experiences, should have been able to advise me to go to the free Google News or Yahoo News site for some current Australian papers or to the dedicated sites such as Fairfax Digital and Newstext.

How unique is this skill? IT staff, webmasters may be said to have this skill. We believe IT staff and webmasters understand the pipes, the plumbing, the hardware and software, but they are not skilled or knowledgeable about the content, especially in the Invisible Web and the for-fee services and they don't understand how the publications will be used.

We believe it is sad that NOIE (National Office for the Information Economy) now AGIMO (Australian Government Information Management Office) has been given the task of managing Australian government publications online instead of the National Library of Australia. AGIMO staff no doubt do have expertise in the “use of new information and communications technology” including hardware, software and communication technologies but they do not have knowledge of the publishing supply chain nor online publications content necessary to manage skillfully Australian government publications for online use in our view.

- ***Librarians have unique skills managing largely free medium sized publications-based enterprises for all sectors of the community.*** These special community services cost NSW councils over \$217 million a year in 2002/3, and provide services with tangible benefits to all sectors - from toddlers to seniors, for business, the education, and farming and in some cases your corporate councils. Individual councils spend anything from a few hundred thousand dollars to \$7+ million dollars on these special community assets. The Library Managers need specific library and information skills but in addition to these skills, they also need HR skills to manage and motivate people of varying expertise, interpersonal skills to manage relationships with other local community organisations and in government, marketing, financial, and logistics skills to manage the libraries and their branches including capital

assets which sometimes involve \$500,000 pantechnicons, and various capital works such as new or refurbished buildings.

But is this unique? We all know that McDonalds is not a competitor in terms of information provision, but it does compete with libraries in terms of enticing customers to spend time in their facilities. And it is tantalizing to imagine what may happen if local McDonalds outlets installed a few computers for Internet access. But let's leave that aside for the time being.

The first McDonalds outlet in NSW opened in 1971 and there are now 270 stores in NSW. From financial statistics provided at their website, our guess is on average each store costs about \$2 million to operate. McDonalds stores are open 18 hours a day and some are open 24 hours a day. They are a major employer of young people. Each store has a management team of about 6-8 and a crew of 60 to 80. Structured on the job training is provided. 70% of the management teams started as crew members. Their website details their focus on community affairs – Ronald McDonald House Charities. McDonalds is also a major Olympics sponsor.

The average operational cost of 99 central public libraries in NSW in 2002/3 was over \$2 million without the capital grants from the State. So clearly the management expertise required to run a central library with its branches is at least as complex as McDonalds and may be more so. On top of that they are largely free services provided for the entire community with government support and as such the managers have to be especially skilful to understand precisely what services must be provided given there is no purchasing mechanism to highlight market demand, and at the same time they have to be especially vigilant at managing costs.

As a rider to this, we assume that Public Libraries are encouraged to invest as much as McDonalds does, in management and staff training.

## **What is the Unique Selling Proposition of Public Libraries?**

So let's come back to your USP. It really is not for us to define your USP. This is something you need to do for yourselves. But perhaps it needs to incorporate several key benefits:

- Your library service is free of charge
- Your library service benefits all members of the community economically, socially, culturally, educationally and for recreation
- You evaluate publications so you provide access to quality publications and quality websites
- You provide easy access to publications and online information through your organisation, display and catalogues
- You source publications from around the world sometimes in many languages
- The information you provide may be old or new but always useful
- You offer access to print publications, online resources and AV materials
- Your services are designed for recreation, problem solving or for learning by young or old

Perhaps your USP may end up being something like:

**Everyone's free, convenient gateway to the  
world of quality online and print publications –  
for fun, problem solving, and lifelong learning - is *where?*  
AT YOUR LOCAL LIBRARY OF COURSE!**

We think that is a powerful message about the unique values of modern public libraries.

## **Value Chain Management**

Before moving to reinvention or survival strategies, let's just take a quick look at Value Chain Management and what it is. Value Chain Management is the process of reviewing all the elements of a value chain to improve the performance and efficiency of the entire chain. So for a business that means:

- Reduced cost of doing business
- Increased market share
- Reduced lead times
- Reduced inventory or physical stock movement
- Increased capacity"<sup>3</sup>:

Translate that into a library environment and that means:

- Reduced costs per transaction
- Increased usage
- Faster turnaround
- More targeted collections
- More patron friendly spaces
- Increased services

In business these goals are achieved by:

- Identifying and eliminating value destroying inter-company activities or processes, e.g. lengthy unnecessary meetings
- Sharing knowledge and information among the various members in the chain, e.g. effective knowledge sharing among key staff
- Identifying activities that are currently physical but can be virtual , e.g. remote access to your collections and services to anyone with an Internet connection, online loan renewals, self checking of loans

## ***Making your Value Visible - Some Reinvention Strategies***

So we've talked about using marketing techniques to communicate with management, the importance of our USP, what is our value, unique strengths of libraries and librarians are often under valued and unrecognised, and value chain management. How then do we make our value visible. We know what we do is valuable. However, others may not have the same perception and we all know - perception is reality.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.bizpeponline.com/Article6.html>

## The Big Picture

From a big picture perspective, what's happening to businesses and technology in general? Services that previously were discrete entities are now converging e.g.

- o bookstores are now incorporating cafes and children's play areas as well as online ordering and delivery;
- o cafes are now incorporating internet access;
- o computers can play CD's, DVD's and show digital images, mobile phones can access the Internet, send SMS messages, take photographs or phone friends.
- o businesses are becoming multi faceted, Woolworths now sells eggs and petrol.
- o technology is now frequently multi-functional.

## The Challenge for Libraries is Often the Value is Hidden

When anyone – patrons or local government Managers - visit the library, how visible are:

- The children being helped with their homework?
- The safety and inclusiveness every person feels in your library?
- The information your staff delivered to a person with an illness, or with a problem child, or a handyman building a stable for his daughter's horse?
- The invaluable information provided to a local business? Can they see the benefit of the information provided to build the skills of staff in a local enterprise?
- The eager teenagers attending Internet training sessions
- The patrons logged on to your website from home accessing the databases you have available through NSW.net – Gale Health & Wellness, Literature Resources Centre, APAIS Full text and the Standards database?
- The collection of resources set aside for students with school projects to complete
- The parents enjoying quality time with their children in your library

Hopefully these days there are no libraries left where perceptions are formed by:

- Shabby books and magazines
- Tired old smelly heritage buildings
- Inconvenient opening hours
- Disinterested, bored or defensive staff
- Lots of DON'T SIGNS such as "No food or drinks in the library" rather than DO signs "Do ask about our Internet training"
- Miles of ropes to herd the queues
- The Shhhhhhhhhhhhh! feeling that sends such a strong message even to energetic 4 year olds and certainly to chatty teenagers.
- A few vending machines with softdrinks and chips - the only sustenance available if at all

- The prominent list of fees for reserving, losing or returning publications late. If you need to charge for anything, we would prefer to see charges for value rather than for punishment
- The promotional focus on what library patrons can do for the library ( e.g. donations, volunteers) rather than what the library can do for patrons

## How are our Competitors Reinventing Themselves?

Many **bookstores** today are very effectively re-inventing themselves. Until recently bookstores were often conservative. Declining sales have forced them to become more market oriented. Today:

- The trend is to offer bigger spaces – not so much for more book stock but for colourful themed displays, to encourage browsing, to provide comfortable sofas and arm chairs, and to incorporate facilities so customers can buy snacks and even meals.
- The opening hours are user friendly – not just business hours. Book chain stores now do almost half of their weekly sales at weekends when library opening hours are restricted and when people have time to browse.
- Signage has improved – it is rarely negative - there are fewer “Don’t” signs; large signs are used for identifying book genres and many displays are colorful and skillfully illuminated.
- Because research has confirmed that slow classical or pop music (not “easy listening” or silence) increases sales, they have background music which impacts on customer behaviour.
- Some have scheduled entertainment events as well as literary events – e.g. a folk singer one night and book club discussion another.
- Some have even focussed on the “smell” of the bookstores – not just the smell of new books but the smell of coffee or pastries.

Many bookstore owners now understand that reading and searching for information activities do not occur in isolation from other human activities such as eating, playing music and lounging around.

- **The Internet** is everywhere.
  - Internet Cafes emerged to respond to customers who wanted access to their emails when traveling or if they didn’t own a PC. Young people in particular wanted cheap access to the Internet.
  - Now teenagers access the Internet with their mobile phones any time of the night or day.
  - Children are accessing the Internet from school and often now from home.
  - The Internet’s huge benefit is colourful, easy access to its huge resources. Increasingly they are being used by large numbers of people of all ages who previously would have come to the library for information.
  - More and more people are ordering books on the Internet to be delivered to our homes after reading book reviews online.
  - More and more now download DVD’s to their laptops when they travel.

But what about the quality of the information on the Internet? Yes there is ugly information on the Internet. But there is also fantastic information on the Internet often for free and importantly it is accessible when needed night or day.

Anyone familiar with [www.lii.org](http://www.lii.org) *Librarians Index to the Internet* compiled by librarians in the USA will know about the professional databases Agricola, PubMed, ERIC are all available online for free. As librarians we all know about the excellent free portals developed by our colleagues in the large libraries such as the Pandora site at the National Library of Australia, the Parliamentary Library portal, the terrific portal for the National Library of New Zealand, the university library sites and so on.

## What can Libraries Learn from Bookstores and the Internet?

From bookstores<sup>4, 5</sup> we can learn to:

- improve the presentation of our library buildings with colour and better use of space
- fine tune our customer service so that we smile when we greet our library users instead of huffing, grunting or ignoring. Many library staff are not trained to greet library patrons and to encourage them to ask for assistance.
- improve our signage and make the signs positive rather than negative, e.g. Ask a Librarian!
- consider using background music in some areas
- plan activities such as **Meet the Author** events – maybe in partnership with the local bookstore
- set aside some 'noisy' or 'free to eat' areas in the library
- plan activities with other organisations in your community – schools, voluntary organisations (Bush Fire Brigades) etc.
- cooperate with drama and book clubs
- plan fun events for children and parents such as sleepovers
- check what our libraries smell of – is it coffee or mildew?
- prepare booklists of the most popular fiction writers and provide links to websites that recommend similar authors
- add red dots to the spines of popular books

**From the Internet**, we can:

- start thinking of our libraries as being the publication hubs of our physical communities linked to every PC in our locality – in homes, in offices, in schools, on mobile phones
- develop our web sites as local portals to encourage our users to understand and appreciate our USP – that our libraries are the “gateways” to the world of quality online or print information and publications. [www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au) and [www.wagga.nsw.gov.au](http://www.wagga.nsw.gov.au) are excellent models to study
- promote our “gateway to the online world” at our websites
- ensure our websites go far beyond a simple brochure advising on how to use the physical library by linking the front web page to

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<sup>4</sup> [www.ckls.org/~crippel/marketing/bookstore.html](http://www.ckls.org/~crippel/marketing/bookstore.html)

<sup>5</sup> [www.trelease-on-reading.com/whgatsnu\\_4.html](http://www.trelease-on-reading.com/whgatsnu_4.html)

*findarticles.com* and other useful Internet sites so that our users can check them from their home PC's

- demonstrate our knowledge and expertise by promoting "Website of the month"
- hold training sessions for various groups – teenagers, oldies – on searching, on how to evaluate websites, on cool tools, on blogging and searching blogs, 'wicked websites' in language appealing to teenagers.
- promote the online access to the terrific professional databases available via NSW.net
- use the Internet to promote our services to online users with E-newsletters
- make sure web pages are as user friendly and fun as a Google screen?
- make sure our desk staff either are knowledgeable about the Internet or know how to refer clients to staff who are.
- accept that some of our users will want to use our services out of hours from home

## **How are Other Libraries Reinventing Themselves?**

We find the Idea Stores concept in the UK, described as "street corner universities", particularly exciting. <sup>6</sup>

An East London Council, Tower Hamlets has decided to make a major investment to prepare its local library and adult education services for the millennium. After a thorough survey, Tower Hamlet households made it clear they wanted a high-quality, convenient modern libraries that had more books, more computers and more services.

As a result, a lot of money is being invested in bringing together library, adult education, arts and information services to seven (7) state-of-the-art buildings in areas close to shopping and other mainstream activities. The use has trebled already, and the old library buildings many of them run down heritage buildings, are being sold and recycled for other activities, some in the education sector.

In addition to the normal library and information services the new Idea Stores offer:

- health living advice
- lifelong education
- career support
- training
- a crèche
- meeting areas
- arts and leisure pursuits.

With this new concept, a revamped brand and image is being created by top class professional PR consultants. Instead of being called "libraries" which now has such an old fashioned institutional image, the new centres have been branded Idea Stores.

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<sup>6</sup> [www.ideastore.co.uk](http://www.ideastore.co.uk)

The first Idea Store was opened in May 2002 on the old Roman Road at Bow in the Docklands area of East London.

What do these Idea Stores offer and how are they different or similar to existing libraries?

- Of course they still provide traditional library services and the household survey found citizens ranked as being important that they wanted “more books”, “more computers”, more services, and more convenience – both in terms of location and in terms of opening hours. Sunday in particular was identified.
- The Web pages are not far removed from the best of NSW public library websites, e.g. sites such as Wagga’s or Newcastle’s.
- Staffing however appears to be different. The Idea Stores have a programme of investing in young people called Idea Champions, rather similar in concept to McDonalds’ “crews”. The Champions aged 16-19 work part time in teams and help with the youth curriculum and book stock development as well as supporting the Idea Store services for young people, such as fashion shows, a horror party, and developing courses with arts organisations on film making, poetry, dance choreography, and making music videos. The Idea Stores also employ window dressers to help with displays and IT staff to move around the complexes making sure all the IT equipment is working.
- The Idea Stores have huge lists of imaginative events. Younger children have enjoyed sleepovers with their parents involving book hunts, a Harry Potter Quiz, poetry and story telling and most popular of all, printing T shirts with favourite images from books by authors such as Jacqueline Wilson.
- The buildings have large windows on the ground floor, like shop windows, so passers by are able to see the activities inside and the wall between the café and the training rooms is also glass so those relaxing in the café can observe the training sessions in full swing.
- Seniors have their own special events such as meetings with experts on various topics over coffee.
- A glossy magazine is delivered to all households quarterly.
- A large electronic Times Square type billboard outside the building advertises coming Idea Store events.

So what is the cost? The cost is high - 25% higher than current library expenditures. However, because the usage has trebled, this means transaction costs have been cut dramatically, and the libraries have moved dramatically up the Value Chain!

Added to this (and with this increased usage it will be easier) Tower Hamlets hopes to offset increased costs with a variety of strategies:

- Partnerships with retail stores
- Revenues from the cafes
- Advertising on video walls
- Professional fund raising <sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Beans, bangs and bucks: diversified revenue streams. Swan, E. Paper presented at Lianza, 2003.

## What can we Learn from Other Libraries?

From the Idea Store, we can learn to be brave - brave enough to:

- Embrace change for an exciting future for our libraries, library staff, library patrons and our government funders
- Listen to what our users really want – they still want books, they also want computers and high quality services and they want convenient modern locations and convenient opening hours.
- Form partnerships with appropriate organisations in education, the arts and commerce
- Recognise that libraries need to be as attractive and as vital as a David Jones store and not like the local Motor Registry Branch
- Be prepared, like McDonalds, to work with young people to achieve their buy-in and their ideas for both collections and services and events
- Employ experts – whether they are expert window dressers, PR consultants, interior designers, or trainers
- Seek additional financial support from willing partners just as organisations such as SBS and community radio do.

## So How can we Make our Value Visible and Move up the Value Chain?

Just observing the activities of competitors such as bookstores and the Internet in its various guises, and learning from other libraries, we can learn many ways we can make our value more visible and move up the value chain.

There are other opportunities also such as developing partnerships with:

- schools and colleges
- sporting groups
- older citizens groups?
- business groups - Chambers of Commerce, Rotary, etc.
- various ethnic and your cultural groups?
  
- Ensure your staff, whom we know you value, are well trained and knowledgeable about publications and online resources, but also skilled in customer service.
  
- Measure and report what matters – how many children have received help with homework? How many residents have traced their family histories? How many events have been sponsored by local businesses? What partnerships can you form for win/wins? Collect and report patron testimonials?
  
- Make sure enough time is devoted to value added activities and not just managing the store?
  
- Reach out to the non-users?
  
- Provide your Mayor, your Council General Managers and your State Library Consultants with material that makes them look good!

## Conclusion

The key to being seen as a value added librarian we suggest is to ensure that your community and your government funders understand:

- the unique value of your libraries to your entire communities
- that your USP is much more than storing and lending books
- that you strive to move up the value chain by reducing transaction costs and eliminating waste - wasted time, wasted resources, wasted knowledge
- the need for them to support your development of value added services often in partnership with other sections of your communities
- the benefit of working with experts in other disciplines and with young people – if McDonalds and the Idea Store can find ways to do this, so can you
- the need for them to support investment in management and staff training so that you can be as fresh, resourceful, useful and exciting as the Idea Stores

As Anne Cunningham Head of Libraries of Tower Hamlet said, let's "put a stop, once and for all, to the long-held view that librarians [check] out books and nothing else<sup>8</sup>".

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July 21, 2004

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<sup>8</sup> [www.libraryjournal.com](http://www.libraryjournal.com)