



Destination Information

Librarians will get you there faster!



Australian
Library and
Information
Association

The library is... *you!*

Special libraries have a unique focus for their organisation. The library is not the collection – the library is judged by the service provided. The library is You!

Following are some ideas that can be used to develop this concept of the library being driven by the librarian. The ideas are divided into four topics – one or more of which may appeal to you and lead you in a new direction. These ideas have been implemented in special libraries in a number of different environments across Australia. We hope you feel motivated and will try implementing them in your library – Australian Library Week would be a great time to start.

PROMOTION

One of the basics of promoting yourself and your library is to develop a good relationship with key stakeholders in your organisation, for example CEOs, managers, as well as secretaries and personal assistants. Strong relationships within your organisation can be the key to success, as many libraries have discovered.

A way of raising awareness about the library and its resources can be through product presentations. These can be done within the library and in the clients work areas. Use the resources of your vendors/suppliers to help you promote yourself and the information product. Both your supplier and you will benefit from the exposure.

Present yourself appropriately for the level of your position – dress for success.

Think of yourself entrepreneurially, that is, as a consultant providing information to clients within your organisation and people outside your organisation. You

are running an information business for your organisation. An example of this is the medical librarian providing a variety of different information sources to non-medical people with health problems.

TECHNOLOGY

Get access to the Internet – if you haven't already. This is a great form of networking with people as well as a very powerful information resource.

Network your OPAC and CD-ROM products throughout your organisation. People should be able to gain access to your OPAC and CD-ROMs from any PC or terminal in your organisation – reach out into the organisation rather than making your clients come in to the library.

Scan in-house documents in your library system. For example, in-house magazines, your organisations annual report etc. You could also consider, with publisher approval, scanning the current contents pages of journals onto the library's OPAC. You can then make this information accessible through the organisation's network as well.

Deliver current awareness services electronically. Information from newsletters, titles from the library's collection, and on-line search results could be combined to form a regular service that is e-mailed to your clients.

CLIENT-FOCUSED SERVICES

Although networking electronically can be very useful you should never give up networking socially and professionally within your organisation.

This could be in the form of in-house committees and discussions forums.

You can also develop contacts with new staff by

inducting them in how to use the library and its services – particularly the library staff. You should be able to receive the details of new staff from your organisation's personnel section.

Find out about your clients' business ... what services are important to them? The focus should be on what your clients need to get their job done – not on the wonderful new book that has just arrived in the library.

Don't forget that people can be resources as well – use your external contacts, particularly within the library world – they are a wealth of information.

Be aware of your organisation's financial, political and strategic issues and environment. This can impact on the importance of information and the credibility your library can develop.

Synthesize information from other sources and present it to your client in a form and at a place that suits your client.

Develop and provide services for traditional non-

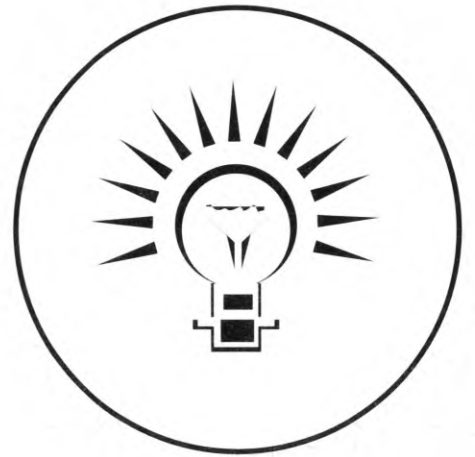
library users. For example, people associated with your organisation who are not actually part of the staff – local doctors could be provided information services from a hospital library.

HOT ISSUES

- Outsourcing – don't fight it, embrace it and sell it as one of your services. Use the resources of other information providers to extend your services within your organisation. Don't forget that you might have to pay for outsourced services.
- Management skills – Library managers need to develop skills other than those provided by a library degree. For example – financial management, IT skills, personnel management skills.

Destination Information is a happening thing! Librarians and their libraries are leading the way. Libraries can do it!

ALIA Special Libraries Section



Looking at law libraries

Law libraries are usually private libraries which service a specified clientele and are not open to the public. They include:

- university law libraries attached to the law schools
- court libraries, primarily for the use of judges, cover a wide range of jurisdictions
- bar libraries which are funded by barristers
- attorney-general libraries, federal and state, used by government solicitors
- law societies and law institute libraries funded by solicitors in each state
- law firms which vary in size and type of collection, and are used by the lawyers working in the firm.

There are law collections at the National Library and at the state libraries which are available for use by the public.

The type of material which forms the core of a law library comprises law reports (of cases

decided in various courts); legislation (acts, bills, regulations); government gazettes; treaties series; legal digests; legal encyclopedias and loose leaf services.

Australian Library Week is a great opportunity to offer an activity or range of activities which bring users into your library and create a positive impact. The public relations spin-off in educating our users – lawyers, law students, judges, barristers – about our skills, our collections and our services will repay us many times over.

Financial constraints, lack of time to organise events, perceived lack of relevance of the theme can all be used as excuses to ignore Library Week. Weigh these excuses against the positive response your users will have towards your enthusiasm and ideas – organise your time and be creative in your efforts.

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