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The focus of this month's *inCite* is on management as it relates to the library and information field. My comments are from personal observation of some issues which arise in combining a professional and a management focus in doing our work.

The key point I want to highlight is that we are not either a librarian or manager — we are both. Also, institutions must have a focus on both professional library and information issues and management issues in order to achieve their goals.

At the individual level, we all manage our time, our tasks, the processes by which we achieve them, and our relationships with co-workers. We must recognise this as important and take responsibility for doing it well — it is our contribution to the overall management of the institution of which we are part. If we focus on managing what we are doing well and efficiently, we will be in a position to achieve a better result at an institutional and overall professional level, and we are likely to be seen by others, including our funders, as having more credibility.

There is no doubt that we do have to work on the image of our profession, and particularly on that word librarian. This was brought home to me forcibly a few years ago when I was appointed as one of four area managers responsible for the full range of council services in four self-contained areas in the new Auckland City after local government amalgamation in New Zealand. My area was the most complex, including the harbourside, the central business district and some city-wide functions like parking control and liquor licensing. At a function to present the new city structure and plans to a group of senior businessmen, my colleagues and I were questioned about our backgrounds. No surprise was registered about the two engineers and a town planner. The information that I had been city librarian in the old Auckland City seemed to amaze them, and the comment was made that must have been a big promotion for me.

Compared with my colleagues, I had previously been responsible for the largest budget, and the largest staff numbers, deliv-

ering contract service to seven neighbouring authorities as well as Auckland. Unlike them, I had not been promoted, as the City Librarian position was graded on the same level. What really worried me as far as the library image is concerned, is that our senior business audience seemed unable to see managing libraries as real management.

Part of the answer is talking the right language — being confident in identifying and explaining our goals and activities in language which makes sense to others, specifying targets which cover the things which we believe are important, and reporting against them in ways which demonstrate that importance to our communities, be they academic, company, or the general public.

Part of the process of getting to that point must be to genuinely involve those communities in specifying what we are doing — not because the latest jargon filled management tool demands ownership and commitment, but because that is the practical and straightforward way to ensure that we are doing the right thing. Perhaps that is part of our problem. So much of good management is just doing what seems such an obviously right and sensible thing, that we do not bother stating it formally enough, or working with others in presenting it.

Which brings me to another important aspect of being recognised as managers — to be seen out in our institutions and communities participating in wider management roles. Whether that is by working on training, corporate planning or information technology roles, or as a volunteer in sporting or other community management efforts, we will know that the image of managers in the library and information profession has improved when people stop being surprised to find us there.

We will really know that the information age has arrived when, instead of doing an MBA as a management qualification, people see a library and information management qualification as appropriate and sensible. Additionally, a library and information management qualification must be perceived to have the same broad use as a law degree. ■

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