

National Library Technician Day



Promoting ourselves, our achievements and our profession

On 16 May 2000, library technicians celebrated the inaugural National Library Technician Day. This day is set aside each year as part of Australian Library Week and gives library technicians the opportunity to celebrate our achievements as well as to promote ALIA, the library profession and our roles within the industry. Most of us take this opportunity to participate in some activity on this day or at least during the week, but what about the rest of the year? How many of us promote our profession let alone ourselves at other times?

Why should we promote our profession?

We offer value for money and professional expertise in the two-way flow of information. Promoting ourselves keeps the profession alive and lets clients know what we can provide in the way of services. This is critical if we are to value-add to the self-service options currently available. Providing good service generates more custom, which perpetuates a need for our services.

What do we offer?

Our services include providing expertise in information gathering, sorting and prioritising according to client need. Yes, Google does this but what we offer is a fine-tuned version of Google and more. We have the ability to access authoritative sources that are unavailable and often unknown to the general public.

How can we promote ourselves?

Getting them in

Sometimes we need to entice clients who would not normally enter our doors. Something as simple as a lolly jar can get a person in and, in turn, they may begin to realise what we are about. Offering a tour for new staff as part of

their induction process can create opportunities to generate new clients. Can you think of any others?

Making them welcome

A smile, a welcoming nod, a cheerful response should be the first impression a client gets when entering our space. Without this we have lost the chance to make a good first impression and maybe even enlist a client. Take a moment to look around your workspace: do you feel comfortable, at ease and confident that you will receive professional service? If you do, congratulations; if you don't, then take some steps to improve the image you are presenting. Things like current information on the notice board, new journals and titles displayed clearly, shelves labelled and easily accessible all combine to make a good first impression.

Meeting their needs

We are a customer service industry relying on customer loyalty. Our customers require a service that meets their needs consistently and beyond expectation. Do this and customers will not only come back but will do our promotion for us. If you can't answer a question quickly, find out when they require it and then offer to get back to them with the information by their deadline.

Getting them to come back

Asking for feedback is a good way to find out if you have met the needs of your customers. Feedback can be gained in a number of ways: by asking clients directly if you have met their needs; by providing a suggestions or feedback box; or by generating a feedback sheet for clients to complete. Other ways to

encourage clients to return are by remembering their names and greeting them when they come in, new title alerts, e-mail alerts, newsletters and keeping the lolly jar topped up! In other words you need to keep the library in the 'news' regularly. Have you thought about organising lunchtime activities, which could include special guests, or organising discussion groups?

Promoting our profession

Apart from Library and Information Week and possibly Book Week, you may think there is not much opportunity to promote our profession, but there is. Career expos are a good way to promote our industry to prospective students of library and information courses. Most TAFE colleges and universities have booths at these expos, but they are promoting not just our courses but hundreds of others as well. Get together with other ALIA groups in your area to organise and staff a booth.

Our vibrant profession will continue to flourish so long as our customers can see the value of our services. Keeping these in the forefront takes practice but the benefits are our future. After all,

Many a small thing has been made large by the right kind of advertising.

— Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* — US humorist, novelist, short story author and wit (1835–1910)

So, please share with us your great ideas for publicising our great profession and services. ■

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PAPER WORLD

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Group activities for Library Technician Day, 24 May 2005

- Tasmania — TALIATecs are planning a breakfast function on Tuesday 24 May at Sal's in Salamanca, 7:30am start.
- ACT — ACT Technicians are getting together for breakfast at the Brindabella Restaurant, Crowne Plaza at 7:30am on Tuesday 24 May. Bring partners, work colleagues, friends and celebrate the day. For more details contact Beth Clary, beth.clary@radford.act.edu.au or ph 6162 6225.
- Queensland — The Queensland Group will be holding its annual dinner and presentation of its award at the Skyline Restaurant, Southbank Institute of TAFE, South Brisbane at 6:00pm on 24 May. Calls for nominations for the award will commence at the end of this month.
- South Australia, Victoria, Western Australia, Northern Territory and New South Wales had no information available at the time of going to print. Please contact ALIA in your state for more details of state activities. ■