What role does the library play in your community?
SESSION OUTCOMES

1. Learn Specific Strategies to Communicate Your Worth
2. Do's and Don'ts to Crafting a Persuasive Message
3. Position Your Staff and Library as a Leader in Your City

What should your library director consider when approaching you for library funding?

What Funders Expect to See and Hear

- Vision
- Documentation
- Professionalism
- Persuasiveness
Quote worth remembering

"In a modern world of business, it is useless to be a creative thinker unless you can also sell what you create. Management cannot be expected to recognize a good idea unless it is presented to them by a good salesman."

--David Ogilvy

As directors, leaders and marketing experts for our profession, we must hone our skills of persuasiveness

- Study the environment and people in it
- Resist dichotomous thinking
- Be solution-focused
- Demonstrate your objective expertise
- Highlight the relevance of your proposal
- Emphasize the importance of your "product"

In their book, Getting to Yes, Fisher and Ury remind us to do the following when promoting our ideas:

- Focus on interests, not positions
- Insist on using objective criteria
- Generate options from mutual gain
Speaking of “Mutual Gain”
Speak the language of your audience when describing your “product.”

“Libraries, as unique spaces contribute to strong neighborhoods and a feeling of community.”

Speaking of “Mutual Gain”
Align with Council Strategic Goals

“A city of vibrant and renewing neighborhoods.”

“A city that partners with a variety of educational institutions to support and encourage exceptional quality of education at all levels.”

What causes you to tune out?
Polish Your Documentation

- Clearly establish fact, history, future needs
- Include objective, supportive, concise data
- Demonstrate your knowledge/reliability
- State what you want and why
- Share the true “what if” in the case of a “no.”

When responding to questions from City Management and Elected Officials, LISTEN for what is REALLY being asked.

Question:
If your budget is not expanded, what is the downside?

Poor Response:
Patrons will see the library as less valuable and will most likely stop coming to our libraries.

A more objective/defensible response?

Better Response:
Patrons will continue to be frustrated with wait times to access/check-out items. We will not be able to purchase some portion of items requested to refresh our collection, resulting in our inability to meet established customer service goals. Our citizens are accustomed to a consistently high level of customer service (which includes access to the latest and most requested items). This translates to complaints, letters to City Manager/Council, and less excitement about visiting the libraries.
How does your Library fit within the City’s Vision?

Provide a Vision To Your Funders

• Connect Your Plan to the Organizational Vision
• Incorporate Outcomes to Measure Your Vision
• Write a Library Business Plan

Anticipate possible outcomes before submitting a written request or making a presentation. Think about consequences that may have long-lasting effects:

• Diminished trust
• Opportunity for future requests
• Impact of outcome on future requests
• Anxiety, frustration, distraction
Communication Happens in Several Ways

Be aware of the "total" message that you are transmitting and make congruence a goal.

I am most persuaded by:

A. Numbers
B. Surveys
C. Anecdotal stories
D. Seeing Something in Action

Traps to Avoid

- Shortcuts
- Shooting from the hip
- Failure to keep records/track results
- Failure to review processes/decisions
Do State the Facts

*Over the last several years, the library system has successfully transitioned through:

• Budget reductions
• Increased service expectations
• Decreased funding from external agencies
• Changing needs for staff skill sets

This has been difficult for some staff members, but those who continue to thrive are determined to adapt to an environment that looks and functions very differently from what they were formally educated and trained to expect.*

Do Instill Confidence

Partnerships will continue to be used wherever possible, and staff is actively pursuing grants to cover the cost of existing and new services.

In order to continue providing the level of service expected by our citizens and non-resident patrons, the library system requests funding for the following items to address operational needs (in order of priority).

(A heads-up alerts decision-makers of expectations and invites discussion.)

Do Nurture These Habits

• Keep the basic mission in mind
• Revisit the basis for previous decisions
• State the goal(s)
• Emphasize benefits to organization & community
• Revisit organizational philosophy, as needed
• Forecast future needs/concerns

“One important key to success is self-confidence. An important key to self-confidence is preparation.”

-- Arthur Ashe
What Does a Successful Library Look Like in Your Community?

- Annual Reports
- Grants & Awards
- Donations
- Outcome Measures

Communicate Success

- Cost Savings
- Efficiencies
- Partnerships
- Performance Measures
- Return on Investments

There is a $5.30 return on investment for every dollar invested in the Bedford Public Library.
Community Engagement

- Anticipate Community Needs
- Be a Voting Site
- Collect & Share Stories
- Cultivate advocates
- Develop Signature Events
- Use Volunteers

Community Engagement

- Conduct Surveys
- Listen to your critics
- Use Focus Groups
- User Experience Audit

“My family of five are enjoying reading. Delighted that our TV is not the centerpiece of our family life.”
2016 Survey Respondent

What Should Librarians Avoid When Crafting Their Message?
No Surprises

- Communicate the good and bad news in a timely manner
- Don't let your leaders be caught off guard

Daniel read 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten!

Things Not to Do

- Issue Ultimatums
- Be a Victim
- Lose Control of Emotions
- Manipulate Statistics
- Talk Too Long
- Use Library Lingo

? What Should Your Library Include to Persuade You to a Yes?
Use WHAM in Every Message

- What
- Here
- Applies to
- My Community

Set the Stage

- Do Your Research
- Discuss the Issue/Idea Before You Make the Ask
- Does It Meet a Community Need

Structure to Tell Your Story

- A Real Person
- A Problem
- Library Action
- A Happy Ending
- Tagline

- Roni the Job seeker
- New to Bedford with no computer, internet or job
- Used resources to find job
- Successfully employed
- Enrich, empower and transform lives.
Presentation is Everything

- Know Your Audience
- Be Confident in Your Expertise
- Be Concise
- Benchmark

Presentation is Everything

- Provide Options
- Use Good Grammar
- Use Infographics/Photos
- Wait for the right moment

How Can the Library Position Itself as a Leader Within Your City?
Get Involved

• Be a Part of the Solution
• Find Ways to Say Yes
• Join Local Organizations & City Committees
• Know Your Community
• Offer Your Expertise
• Take Risks

Questions?

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