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ABSTRACT
                This paper examines the role of communication in
library leadership. The discussion is organized into 14 sections: (1)
multidimensional approaches to effective leadership communication and
varying communication style to the situation; (2) the importance of
conciseness; (3) streamlining library communication; (4) the vision
being communicated by library leaders; (5) simplification of library
communication and avoidance of jargon; (6) listening as an essential
part of communication; (7) qualities of effective communication; (8)
the importance of clarity of language; (9) humor and participatory
management; (10) leading by example; (11) motivation, values, and
time related to leadership communication skills; (12) personnel
evaluation; (13) a library communication model; and (14)
communicating about librarianship. (42 references) (MES)

THE LANGUAGE OF LIBRARY LEADERSHIP: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

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THE LANGUAGE OF LIBRARY LEADERSHIP: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
Abstract

Perhaps no area of library leadership receives so much criticism as the area of communication. A library is a human communications network, with library personnel who have different needs, attitudes, and abilities.

Leaders with effective communication skills vary their communication style, emphasizing empowerment at the grass roots level. Language and communication should be streamlined (less is more) for efficiency and impact.

Library leaders must communicate a vision which is based on perspective and respect. That vision should be presented without jargon or ineffective messages. The ability to listen is the key to good communication; a good listener understands what is being stated, both verbally and nonverbally. In communicating the leadership message the sender must encourage the receiver to act ("I am able") through positive reinforcement and through clearly-defined expectations.

Effective communication should appeal to both sides of the brain. Humor and participatory management encourage participation, while trust and the delegation of responsibilities encourage library team building. Library leaders must be willing to take risks and to keep the channels of library communication open. They must provide motivation and yet avoid a rigid stand ("shotgun") which can be counterproductive to the library organization and to good use of time. This blending of qualities in the ideal library leader hedges on one very important quality: the ability to communicate effectively.

Evaluating library performance is an important part of effective communication, offering an opportunity for praise and criticism. Library leaders must learn through awareness the best communication model which effectively promotes teacher-learner behavior, striving at all times to make effective communication an art. Above all, making one's meaning clear is an essential communication skill.

Library leaders must offer a library language that addresses proactive communication skills. Effective leader-ship communication is responsiveness, closely linked to creativity. Library leaders must speak eloquently for library values. Growth as a communications leader consists of more than a series of memos or a batch of directives.

Growing to greatness as a library communicator is a never-ending process.

THE LANGUAGE OF LIBRARY LEADERSHIP: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

"I don't know what you mean by _your_ way, said

the Queen, "all the ways about here belong to _me_..."

Lewis Carroll, Through the Looking Glass

THE CONCEPT OF LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION

Perhaps no area of library leadership receives so much criticism as the area of communication. Demands for better communication between and within library departments, for more openness between personnel and the director, and for greater input into the dynamics of the library organization occur frequently in libraries. Quite often the feeling is that library leaders speak like the Queen of Hearts in Carroll's Through the Looking Glass, communicating from the top down, so that "all the ways about here belong to me." How can we provide for better library communication without a loss of privacy, the creation of a paper-cluttered world, or a world of endless chatter? How, too, can we prevent the abuse of communication, which could turn it to bad ends? As one of Shakespeare's characters states, "The abuse of greatness is when it disjoins/Remorse from power." Certainly improved communication must be a goal of every effective library leader. Many of us remember the words spoken by the prison warden in the movie _Hud_: "What we have here is a failure to communicate." This failure to communicate is reflected in the business world where the estimates for the

costs of ineffective communication range as high as $100

billion a year.[1]

Library communication is essentially no different from

other types of business communication.   It is a _human_ act

involving a sender (speaker) and receiver (listener).   It

is a dynamic act, interactive, and, when most effective,

based on dialogue which in turn creates a proper action.   It

is a given that communication does not exist in a vacuum, but

is part of a social matrix.   A library is a human

communications network, with library personnel who have

different habits, needs, attitudes, and abilities. As

the forces creating pressure upon libraries become more

extreme (these pressures being technological, funding,

networking, staff evaluation), the necessity for effective

communication becomes more pronounced. Communication is a

forum for the articulation of concepts, one that permits in

the words of the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins, the articulation

of "all things counter, original, spare...."   Its importance

cannot be emphasized enough, for as Herbert S. White has

pointed out "communication shortcomings lie at the root of

the great majority of management problems."[2]

MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACHES TO EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

COMMUNICATION

Librarians are not the only professional group these

days talking about leadership and communication, though it is

commonly accepted that every library job description carries

with it emphasis on communication as a job requirement. For
example, a recent study of school principals noted that 60 to
70 percent of a principal's daily activities "fell under the
heading of communicating...and that these interactions were
informal, brief, and fragmented...few exchanges were longer
than ten minutes."[3] Within a library leader's day, frequent
interruptions seem to be the fare of every sender. As a
result of these interruptions, communication exchanges may
become muddled. The receiver frequently takes away mixed
messages.

Consultant Kenneth Blanchard maintains that, if the
sender wishes to influence in an effective way, that person
must concentrate on the behavior of the receiver.[4] He points
out that there are two types of behavior: directive behavior
is one-way communication in which the leader tells the
followers "what to do, where to do it, when to do it, and how
to do it. The three operative words for directive behavior
are structure, control, and supervise." Supportive behavior
permits the leader to engage in two-way communication which
"provides support and encouragement; facilitates interaction;
and involves the followers in decision making. The three
operative words for supportive behavior are praise, listen,
and facilitate."

Leaders with effective communication skills have long
known that it is important to vary the communication style
to the situation. An administrator presenting a proposal for
a new computer system to a board of trustees utilizes a

different approach than the library administrator,who is
counseling a staff member. A library director explaining a
library policy to a disgruntled patron speaks with a style
different from that used in speaking with a maintenance
person about the procedure for setting up the meeting room.

The leadership style of communication may vary between
the two approaches, directive or supportive, resulting in
that message which is most effective for that situation; at
its most basic, "different strokes for different folks"
according to a leader's modus operandi. Management
consultant Clayton Sherman cautions, however, that "Some
people literally do not understand what it is you're saying.
You can tell them there's a problem - and internally they are
not going along, even though they might be nodding their
heads."[5] He notes that standards of performance must be
communicated. Likewise, "selling the library program"
remains one of the tests of the efficacy of a library
leader's communication skills.

Therefore, it is essential that the denotative and
connotative value of the words chosen when relaying a message
be clear and precise. The sender's obligation is
to make the message understandable! It is never the
receiver's responsibility to interpret the message. For
example, I once had a difficult time getting my message
across to a staff secretary who insisted on placing her
office chair and desk in a position with her back toward
anyone who came into the office. Only after I had explained

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the consequences of her furniture arrangement - that the
person entering the room felt ignored, that there was not a
friendly recognition of service - did she modify her pattern
and move her desk to face the public.

LESS IS MORE WHEN COMMUNICATING LEADERSHIP IDEAS

Library leaders should have improved communication as a
stated goal. Some leaders interpret this to mean more is
better: more meetings, more memos ("more M & M's," as one of
my staff calls them). These are often not effective
communications. The library leader who rules by memos, who
continues to drone on at staff meetings, the constant
verbalizer is less effective than the leader who is succinct.
Overemphasis on structure and "the last word" can make
policies and procedures nothing more than cumbersome
documentation rather than staff-generated input and
ownership. There is also the danger that in making
communication too verbose library leaders may be
so devoted to this goal that there will be little time left
to actually do anything. (Just as some are engaged in
perpetual long-range planning but never complete the
pragmatic work.)

Effective communication, like management, may lie in the
process of gaining control by giving up control, a Zenlike
concept. This presupposes, however, a level of sophistication
on the part of the communication leader. Most library
leaders simply "give up" or "give in" to pressure. When the

stakes are high, when demands must be met, when deadlines are
imminent, direct communication becomes even more important in
one's routines. Yet nothing is as simple as it seems, most
notably a command of effective communication skills. As the
English poet Robert Graves stated, "There's a cool web of
language winds us in."

STREAMLINING LIBRARY COMMUNICATION FOR EMPOWERMENT

How is communication to be streamlined? How do we
simplify structure and eliminate bureaucratic rules?
Communication when initiated at the top allows for
responsibility for the action of that communication at the
grass roots level, where true empowerment occurs. This
action is reflected in site-based budgeting, for example,
where each library department is given responsibility for
making decisions about budget as close to the environment in
which it occurs as possible.   Some communication experts
maintain that "the manager's job is to establish the
boundaries around a fairly broad space. The individual's
responsibility is to find the best way of doing things within
that space." [6] Hence the productivity and service of a
reference department is tied to the empowered individuals
working within that department who assume ownership for the
outcome of the work.

It probably does little good, however, for library
leaders to express their belief in empowerment when the
accompanying resources are not provided. The technical

services department needs a budget which will permit them to carry out their functions; the reference department must have a topnotch reference collection in order to provide excellent service.

Language, too, should be streamlined and precise. Clear, precise speech discourages flip-flopping on an issue and encourages the use of language to bring to light the truth. Streamlined communication can be compared to a haiku, a form of poetry that is compressed and suggests so much that more words would lessen its meaning. A control of diction is a search for the right word with the exact meaning, of not putting words between the truth and ourselves. Far too often, those who have nothing of substance to communicate practice the art of rhetoric. Library leaders know that they are responsible for promoting the library as an information-rich resource. The statement has been made that our society is information-rich but knowledge poor (one of the premises of Theodore Roszak's book, The Cult of Information). When it comes to clear, potent communication skills, the volume of words has little to do with the motivation toward action described by the message. If library leaders can communicate quickly as well as clearly, the action will occur in a more timely manner and will lead to streamlined performance. It does not mean that communication will necessarily occur even with the right information. What do we want? "Just the facts, ma'am, just the facts," without any negative connotations.

LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION: A VISION OF DELIGHT

Clarity of words and communication of vision are inseparable. Every library leader communicates a sense of purpose and direction - either verbally or nonverbally. One business leader asserts that "sharing of vision is the highest principle of management. That is leadership."[7] But good leadership involves delivering a message in a timely manner, with the end result being a call for action ending in results. Should the leader overstate the message, the vision of the message may be lost. What is the vision being communicated? The secret to effective communication, as in good salesmanship, is to get the message across with no negativity involved. What type of message must library leaders deliver in order to motivate library staff toward excellence of service and product?

Library leaders sell the vision of effective, productive library systems almost exclusively through communication. In a sense all communication is "in process," for it means constant re-thinking and re-evaluating. This communication brings vision into focus. Great leaders communicate a vision: the ALA president communicates the direction of ALA; leadership forums present opinions on what candidates for office wish to offer the membership (including ALA presidential candidates offering their vision of ALA's future).

Linked indelibly with vision is a sense of perspective.

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Perspective is a capability which comes with experience, but
is a necessary, expected quality of library leadership.
There is a basic energy born out of the creative power of
perspective--that of ideas, of trust, and of integrity.
However, many leaders do not lead; they simply follow staff
or public opinion. Effective leaders are "...not necessarily
popular. They want to take us somewhere, and some of us
don't necessarily want to go there."[8] The race is not
necessarily to the swift but to the sensible. Lewis Carroll
wrote in _Alice's Adventures in Wonderland_. "take care of the
sense and the sounds will take care of themselves."

Library personnel not only want a vision, but want to
respect that vision. For too long, the vision that library
personnel have had of library leaders has been tarnished by
those leaders' inability to give clearly directed
instructions, to convey information precisely, to make
requests which result in timely action or, in some cases, to
communicate library needs to the outside world. It would
certainly appear that a darkening of the vision was brought
home in 1984 when the United States Department of Education
issued _A Nation at Risk_, complete without a mention of the
library's role in national education.   True, library leaders
quickly responded with _Alliance for Excellence_,[9] a librarians'
response. But it seemed to have arrived too late to bolster
some of our confidence in both library leadership and
effective communication skills.

Fortunately, some library leaders have recovered from

that sin of omission.   Recently, for example, Marilyn L.

Miller presented her powerful statement on the importance of

school library media centers to a Senate subcommittee.[10]

Library leaders now participate in the annual Library

Legislative Day in Washington, D.C.   More are unafraid to

speak of library ideals and readers' rights - witness Judith

Krug of the ALA Intellectual Freedom Office - rather than

give into the censor, to fail to uphold free access to

libraries, or to base decision on whimsy or fashion.

There is always a danger that, in spite of the Library

of Congress's massive presence in the city of Washington,

D.C., that our national library vision will not be

communicated.   James Madison once wrote tnat "A popular

government without popular information, or the means of

acquiring it, is but a prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy; or,

perhaps both.   Knowledge will forever govern ignorance, and a

people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves

with the power which knowledge gives." Effectively

controlled, positively reinforced communication is that

power.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION: SIMPLIFIED OR

SIMPLISTIC?

If there is one basic precept about effective library

communication, it is that the message must be simplified, not

simplistic. We in libraryland still go around speaking a

type of Orwellian Newspeak. We speak of retrospective

conversion (as though it were a new religion), of COM
catalogs, of CD-ROM and other technology, and expect that we
are communicating. To a large extent we are...with
ourselves. For a time some library staff saw the
designation MARC and asked, MARC who? Certainly no
profession is without its list of buzzwords. Techies
speaking computerese ("Now try a cold boot") are often viewed
as the leaders in their profession; and perhaps these are the
people who indeed guide our destinies. But there is a need
for enhanced communication that is effectively intelligible.
K.I.S.S., the acronym for "keep it simple, stupid," is a
helpful, if at times humbling, reminder.

Jargon and growing reliance on computers have created a
communication block. The use of technological words or
jargon impede the flow of effective messages. They add
nothing to the information being shared and may indeed
prevent any decisive action being taken by the receiver. The
computer distances us from the source. Leaders may treat
staff members in the same way as they treat the cold
mechanics of technology, taking little note of personal
feelings or conditions. Worse, relying on technological
language may foster a solution which is too simplistic,
totally at odds with an understanding of the humanistic
services and the human complexities so necessary for
effective library communication.

COMMUNICATION BY LISTENING

Yet the goal of speaking the truth, which is the purpose
of all libraries, should not be forgotten. Up to this point,
we have been speaking of the leader as a good sender of
messages. Being a good listener is the other essential part
of communications and should not be forgotten. Thomas
Jefferson was fond of saying, "Here [the University of
Virginia] we are not afraid to follow truth wherever it may
lead, nor to tolerate any error so long as reason is left
free to combat it." The library leader is a truth seeker,
and a listener, someone who delays responses until the facts
are clearly understood. In a survey conducted by Padgett-
Thompson in 1985, 1,000 respondents were asked to name the
three qualities of a good boss that enhanced on-the-job
satisfaction. The results demonstrated that 27 percent
wanted a boss who provided freedom for independent action
(the sense of empowerment mentioned earlier), while 23
percent noted that an ideal boss "listens to staff, is
accessible, has open-door policy."[11]

The key to powerful communication lies in listening.
Or, as one library director remarked, "I communicate by
listening." It takes, however, a sense of security to
communicate by listening. Moreover, it takes a sense of self
and knowledge of what good leadership is all about. John
Heider points out that "Enlightened leadership is service,
not selfishness. The leader grows more and lasts longer by
placing the well-being of all above the well-being of self

alone. Paradox: By being selfless, the leader enhances
self."[12] One need only read the program offerings for
conferences and see that "How to Deal With a Problem Boss" is
a popular subject because many library leaders do not have
the communication skill to listen effectively. A good
listener is one who hears what is being said but also
understands what is being stated, both verbally and
nonverbally (metacommunications).

COMMUNICATING THE LEADERSHIP MESSAGE: I AM ABLE

In order for communication to be effective it must be:

Understandable: The intent of the speaker must be
easily understood, with no buzzwords, jargon, or unclear
messages.

Believable: the communication must be acceptable to
the personal value system (credibility) of the speaker and of
the listener. There must be no sense of power-seeking; only
the message is the media.

Achievable: Communication should encourage creativity
and discourage negativity. It should be positive in its
intent and action, success-oriented. Many library workers
fall back on worn phrases ("We've tried that before; it won't
work here") when a goal seems unobtainable.

Desirable: Does this fit with the concept of library
service? will it be worth doing? Does it promote a sense
of self-worth in the process?

Controllable: Communication is directed speech. It is

not random, sporadic, and nonsensical. It should have impact
and power; it would be timely and not wasteful of energy. It
must use established channels of communication. It should
encourage participation/feedback and discourage responses
such as "I was caught off guard. I was blind-sided." It
should not have a revenge motive.

All these terms convey a sense of able; that is, I can .
do (it).

Everyone wants to communicate effectively, but often we
are too busy or too distracted to achieve that desired end.
Peter Drucker has noted that "If there is any one 'secret' of
effectiveness, it is concentration. Effective executives do
first things first and they do one thing at a time."[13] So too
with communication. Effective communication skills require a
logical progression of thought. The receiver of the message
must feel that acting on the message will create a sense of
pride, self-esteem, and will avoid conflict. The receiver
must believe that by proceeding expeditiously it is self-
actualizing (to use Abraham Maslow's theory of human
motivation) to perform the stated request.

COMMUNICATING LEADERSHIP EXPECTATIONS: WHAT DID YOU SAY?
WHAT DID YOU MEAN?

Communication which is misdirected or misunderstood can
be problematic. Note, for example, this invitation to a fine
arts program: "You may pick the tickets up either the day of
the event or the day prior, whichever comes first."[14] Would we

be surprised to "hear ourselves as others hear us?"

Of course the use of obtuse language is also a barrier.
Most things printed by the U.S. government are impossible to
understand. "A Bureaucrat's Guide to Chocolate Chip
Cookies,"[15] which asks the baker to "associate key chocolate
and nut subsystems and execute stirring operations," is an
excellent example of obfuscation. Then there is the Iowa
farmer who wrote the county commissioner to find out if a
paint he was going to use was safe. The commissioner
provided a series of obscure, jargon-filled responses; e.g.,
"Temporal necessities predicate that application be
neutralized negatively." After lengthy correspondence because
of the farmer's inability to understand the message, the
correspondence culminated in a final, precise message from
the commissioner: "Don't use it. It eats the hell out of
your pipes."[16]

Too often the communication in libraries comes in after
the fact, when a staff member must be reprimanded for not
achieving a desired result. Staff members not only need to
be spoken to and listened to, but they expect clear direction
and guidance when performing tasks. No wonder so many say "I
didn't know that is what you wanted; tell me what you want."
As Herbert S. White points out, "It is not usually their
actions or decisions that get managers into difficulty with
staff members...it is a failure to explain, a failure to
specify intent and a failure to convince others that
decisions have been carefully thought out."[17] No library

leader should settle for less than topnotch performance, but
no leader should expect that performance without precise
communications.

Consultant Robert Half believes that it is important to
"spell out assignments" and "publicize company goals."[18]
Library leaders, busy with day-to-day demands, often forget
that the unproductive worker may be unproductive because the
job responsibilities are not clear. If tardiness on the job
is a problem, the simple solution may be to say, "Be on
time!", but the effective communication is far more involved
than that brief directive. Communication must make the
corrective behavior a desired action through positive
reinforcement, not fear of punishment or reward. Any library
leader knows that the most important person in the
organization is the happy, satisfied, productive employee.
One of the signals of an unproductive environment, Half
notes, is "any sudden and substantial rise - or decline - in
the amount of communication between employees and
management."[19]

COMMUNICATION ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BRAIN: HUMOR AND
    PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT

Frequently, scant attention is paid to both the
reasoning (cognitive) and emotional (affective) content of
communication. When library leaders are convinced of the
importance of their "mission" - providing and promoting
library services to everyone - the resulting communication is

directed to the cognitive side of the brain. The result is often rigid, narrowly focussed, serious, and dull. Instead of appealing to curiosity, openness, experimentation and innovation, the appeal is often stoical, self-contained, tough.

Norman D. Stevens, an academic library director, places great value on humor and creativity. "The careful and appropriate use of humor can... go a long way towards creating a climate in which creative and innovative ideas have a better chance of being put forward and given serious consideration."[20] Effectively controlled levity can ease tension and provide a release value for any strained communication. This technique encourages staff to understand the message in a positive atmosphere.

In addition, more attention is being paid to the role of participatory management, which provides communication channels for staff involvement in decision-making. Libraries are now involving all levels of staff, in the form of advisory committees, to promote better communications, both intra-group and interdepartmental. One of these examples occurred at North Texas State University where junior staff members were introduced to the administrative process;[21] another took place at Tulsa Public Library where staff were asked to share in the budgeting process.[22]

This involvement through participatory management provides a heightened sense of responsibility for completion of tasks (empowerment) and for the fulfillment of a staff

member's set of values and beliefs. It allows communication
to occur at many levels, avoiding all "the rules for stifling
innovation,"[23] which are described in Rosabeth Moss Kanter's
book, The Change Masters. Good communication must appeal to
both sides of the brain. There must be opportunity for risk-
taking, for creativity, and for innovation.

LIBRARY TEAM BUILDING THROUGH COMMUNICATION: LEADING BY
    EXAMPLE

Effective communication must be based on trust and the
establishment of trust, so that responsibilities can be
delegated and so that the development of the library's most
valuable resource, its staff, can occur. The leader must be
capable of conveying clarity and vision so that the overall
goals of the organization are articulated and everyone on the
library team understands the overall mission of the library.
That trust is conveyed by delegation and empowerment. More
often, how a person is told is as important as what the
person is told. The one word summing up communication
delivery is attitude. Clement Stone stated that "there is
little difference in people, but that little difference makes
a big difference. The little difference is attitude, and the
big difference is whether it is positive or negative."
Herbert S. White confirms that attitude is important:
"Intra-group communication is subject to a number of factors,
including jealousies and rivalries, conflicts over authority
and the fear that good ideas are stolen if freely divulged."[24]

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With massive changes occurring within libraries
technological automation being the major one, it is
understandable why staff may oppose change. Jay Daily has
summed up many of the conflicts that evolve in the area of
library automation. He notes that "the major difficulty of
any kind of administration is summed up in the word
communication."[25] In short, an effective leader must be able to
get everyone working together, rather than at cross purposes.

How do leaders take risks? Better yet, how do leaders
communicate to others that it is important to take risks?
Quite often library leaders are not willing to be
controversial. Many want to rest secure in a point of view
that cannot be disputed, attacked, or controverted. Many
fall for easy compromise or, worse yet, expediency, to
achieve the end product. Many wait for consensus, rather
than being a molder of consensus. Or some wait until all
action is "killed in committee." A few may not even profit
from the self-knowledge gained by experimentation and thus
rob themselves of the opportunity to know themselves and
other library staff members through discourse and dialogue.
Perhaps many are not astute problem-solvers or good listeners
because of distractions about anticipated future problems or
cares. As the poet William Wordsworth wrote, "The world is
too much with us, late and soon,/Getting and spending, we lay
waste our powers." ·A great leader need not feel that power
has lay waste when that power is perceived as effective by
the staff who must carry out the action.

In the September 1987 issue of <u>College</u> & <u>Research</u>
<u>Libraries</u> a number of articles address the issue of "What
Professional Librarians Expect from Administrators."   One
librarian provides a list of thirteen qualities (stability,
leadership, and others), remarking that "in the course of
providing leadership, an administrator should not penalize a
librarian who may disagree with him or her" because "fear is
the worst element that can be unleashed in an organization."[26]
Another librarian notes that " the ideal leader is above all
a model."[27] Finally, a library administrator notes that
"getting librarians and administrators to view their
respective roles realistically and work together
constructively in a collegial, congenial, trusting
partnership would seem to be the top priority."[28] This
blending of qualities in the ideal library leader hedges on
one very important quality: the ability to communicate
effectively. These qualities prevent communication by
crisis; i.e., "If there's a crisis, we communicate." Crisis
management leads to reactionary and divisive factions,
distrust and fear, and misunderstandings.

LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION SKILLS: MOTIVATION, VALUES, AND
TIME

Library leadership must provide the working environment
and communication channels that provide for good motivation.
Leaders can communicate motivation through money, promotion,
prestige, recognition, or praise. Yet according to a recent

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survey by Wyatt Company Consultants, fewer than 50% of

American workers think their bosses properly motivate them,

provide regular feedback, or solve "people problems."[29] Pushing

and pulling library staff do not work; an open, receptive

atmosphere where the library worker experiences self-worth

does work.

Stuart M. Schmidt and David Kipnis identify four types

of communicators:[30] Shotguns (those who "refuse to take no for

an answer"); Tacticians (those who actively try to influence

others, relying on reason and logic); Ingratiators (active

persuades, relying on flattery); and Bystanders (those who

seldom influence, but stand by watching the action). Schmidt

and Kipnis assert that there are different combinations of

communication methods, not just being "overly assertive as

the best tactic." Reason, friendliness, coalition, higher

authority, and bargaining also work. They conclude, for

example, that the shotgun method "has its long-range costs,

including less favorable evaluation, lower salaries, more job

tension and greater personal stress." Another article

maintains that the 21st Century executive will need "a double

dollop of moxie and charisma...must be less a commander than

a coach who 'converts people and persuades them to shared

values..'"[31] Library leaders must make those values clear and

shared.

Effective communication leaders must know the importance

of time. Peter Drucker points out that leaders "do not start

with tasks. They start with their time."[32] He encourages

leaders to know personal limits. Just how much time is there to communicate? Demands on time can lead to exhaustion and fatigue, which in turn impede communication skills, sometime diluting the message, or creating a sense of futility. It can lead to abrupt messages, like the characters speaking in Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot: Estragon: I can't go on like this./Vladimir: That's what you think."

LIBRARY COMMUNICATION: EVALUATING PERFORMANCE

No area of library leadership is as troublesome as staff evaluation and the evaluation of job performance. Yet staff evaluations involve communication, often the one opportunity to provide the criticism and praise which can result in better job performance. Jonathan A. Lindsey has written that "performance evaluation generates more anxiety in an organization than any other single event during the year."[33] Most library leaders seem torn about giving the right combination of praise and criticism. Consultant Ken Blanchard points out that "Giving an equal amount of praise and criticism may not be enough to save you from being thought of as a bad boss. In most groups, there's a need for four times as many positive interactions--that is, praisings--as negative interactions."[34]

Sheila D. Creth in Effective On-the-job Training: Developing Library Human Resources has developed an extensive review of library training, pointing out the need for a communication model which avoids sending conflicting

messages, one that recognizes that "non-verbal behavior
always carries the most powerful message between people."[35]
Praise and success are effective communication motivators in
libraries as well as in business. There was a time when MBO
(Management By Objectives) was accepted as the one operative
standard for determining staff evaluations as well as library
operations, but this method may have its communication
pitfalls because of its rigidity and therefore may not always
lead to success.[36] The effective leader provides an
opportunity for staff success (therefore, better evaluations)
by communicating positive reinforcement to create the desired
behavior.

A LIBRARY COMMUNICATION MODEL: LEARNING THROUGH AWARENESS

G. K. Chesterton wrote, "It isn't that they can't see
the solution. It is that they can't see the problem."   Does
this sound familiar in most libraries? Much can be learned
about communication models by looking at teaching models. For
example, the teaching research of Madeline Hunter,[37] a foremost
expert on teacher-learner behavior, offers a teaching model,
elements of which might form a library communication model:

1) The objective: Is the message to be conveyed to the
   receiver clear? Hunter notes that it is inexcusable
   to arrive at a staff meeting asking, "What are we
   going to talk about today?"

2) Input: What information is needed by the receiver
   (listener) in order to achieve the objective?. Is

special training required?

3) Modeling: The effective communicator models effective

communication. Mentoring, whether as "coach, model,

guide, teacher, sponsor, or advisor,"[38] is a valued skill.

4) Checking for Understanding: Is the receiver

understanding the message? Is there an indication by

nonverbal body signals that something is unclear?

5) Guided and Independent practice: Is there an

opportunity to practice communication, to act on

the message which produces results? Are receivers

encouraged to rely on past, present, (and future)

experience?

Many of Hunter's concepts are similar to Tom Peters's

concept of "Coaching"--those leaders who "encourage, excite,

teach, listen, facilitate"[39]--concepts so brilliantly

articulated in A Passion for Excellence.

Hunter is quick to point out that teaching is an art and

a science (and we do study Library Science, do we not?). Some

people "have a knack" for making communication an art.

Library leaders must believe that everyone on the library

staff is capable of effective communications. Most of all,

more time should be devoted to checking for understanding;

that is, taking the time to digest, question, reexamine, and

summarize material that is used. In this way, honest,

frequent feedback is provided. This avoids an elliptical

language such as that expressed by the March Hare and Alice

in Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland: -

'Then you should say what you mean,' the March

Hare went on. 'I do,' Alice hastily replied; 'at

least--at least I mean what I say--that's the same

thing, you know.'

Making one's meaning clear and precise is an essential skill

in effective communication.

COMMUNICATING ABOUT LIBRARY LEADERSHIP: THE THIRD WAVE

Peter Drucker has written about the events which have

caused dislocation and created discontinuity over the past

decade and which make this a turbulent time for decision

makers (and, therefore, communicators).[40] John Berry has

lamented, when several top posts in libraries were filled by

people not in the library field, about the inability of

librarianship to communicate "what a librarian is and does."[41]

Effective communication is responsiveness and responsibility.

Library leaders must offer a library language that addresses

market awareness, flexibility, inspiration, proactive

communication skills, and the power to build meaningful

connections through library networking. They must understand

that leadership and communication have strong links to

creativity. As Oscar Handlin points out, "Libraries...no

longer hold a monopoly on information; a flourishing industry

now makes such data available through numerous alternative

channels."[42]

That is why to succeed in conveying the library's true

mission, library leaders must speak not only eloquently but

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effectively for library values. Personal and professional
growth in library leadership communication consists of more
than a series of memos, a plethora of committee meetings, or
a batch of directives. In short, growing to greatness as a
library communicator is a never-ending process.

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