Demonstrating Library Value in a Period of Retrenchment

Presentation for the ARLIS/NA Conference
Boston, 2010
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Groups/Venues addressing value

1. ALA LLAMA MAES Advocating in tough economic times
2. ARL Assessment forum Assessment Support for Budget Reduction Planning
3. ALA ULS Campus Administration & Leadership Discussion Group Advocating in a Tough Economy Toolkit
4. ACRL Value Project
5. ACRL advocacy toolkit
6. 2008 Library Assessment Conference workshop
7. ALA Library Snapshot Day
8. 2010 ARL Value and Impact Workshop
Approaches

- What users want
- What users like
- Worth
- What users value
- Presenting your case to the PTB
- Plan Bs
What do our users want?

Information Control – an area surveyed with LibQual+
- Making electronic resources accessible from my home or office \(6.60 \ 8.16\)
- The printed library materials I need for my work \(6.82 \ 7.81\)
- The electronic information resources I need \(6.68 \ 8.06\)
- Modern equipment that lets me easily access needed information \(6.94 \ 8.22\)
- Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own \(6.75 \ 8.14\)
- Making information easily accessible for independent use \(6.93 \ 8.00\)
What do our users like?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features List</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whiteboard</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Blocks</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallery</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plasma Screen</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moveable Furniture</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Books Section</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What are we worth?

Using the Calculator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input Your Use</th>
<th>Library Service</th>
<th>Value of Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books borrowed</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journals used in library</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference questions asked</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database searches</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-journals downloaded</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of computer use</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What are we worth: two additional calculation methods

- Contingent valuation – what is the patron willing to pay?
- Return on Investment (ROI) – how much does the patron save: money, time
Non-monetary value perspectives

- Value-added: the library’s unique contributions
- Value of space
- Value to the scholarly community
- Value as a social and/or educational benefit
Presenting Your Case – Advocacy

- Align with an interest group
- Select a spokesperson
- Have a vision
- Have the data
Presenting your case-- methods

- Statistics
  - Peer data
  - Statistic topics
- Stories
- Testimonials
- Images
Presenting your case – choosing your stats

Peer data
- Getting the data
- Who to compare with

Statistic topics
- User population
- Hours
- Visits
- Use of resources
Presenting your case – stats options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Books</th>
<th>Periodicals</th>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Reserves</th>
<th>Total 08-09</th>
<th>Total 07-08</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c/o</td>
<td>12,645</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>1,304</td>
<td>1,076</td>
<td>15,183</td>
<td>14,878</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>internal</td>
<td>9,766</td>
<td>3,113</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12,879</td>
<td>12,709</td>
<td>1%</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Books</th>
<th>Periodicals</th>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Reserves</th>
<th>Total Jul-Dec 09</th>
<th>Total Jul-Dec 08</th>
<th>% change</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c/o</td>
<td>7,485</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>8,424</td>
<td>7,495</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>internal</td>
<td>6,245</td>
<td>11,210</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17,455</td>
<td>6,533</td>
<td>167%</td>
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</table>
Presenting your case – stories

- **Sources**
  - Comments in surveys
  - Flip charts
  - Student input in class, on tours, in surveys

- **Uses**
  - Annual reports
  - Share student anecdotes with students
  - Blogs
Plan B – yours

- Question from ACRL’s 2009 *Strategic Thinking Guide for Academic Librarians in the New Economy*

  - “How can libraries creatively redesign functions and services to realize cost savings and support student success and faculty productivity?”
Plan B – yours!

- Be strategic
  - Support library and institution goals
  - Support strengths
  - Be deliberate, not ad hoc
  - Avoid the easy “across the board” approach
Plan B – yours

- Collections: streamline the approval plan so only the cream comes to the library.

- Collections: if the institution cuts a program, cut purchases in supporting that program

- Services: right-size by eliminating services not being used (example: cut Link+ in the ASL to lessen work load)

- Services: combine functions (example: circ and reference)

- Services: what hours are *really* being used?

- Communication: cut back on multiple formats, after determining which of the several modes have the most impact

- Instruction: Train the trainers (example: train faculty to do info lit instruction, or set up a peer instruction system)
Plan B – theirs

Close the
branch/department/service
Conclusion

- Be ready
- Be strategic
- Document worth and value
- Make sure the right people see your “case”
Sources