



Alliance Library System

Site Visits 2008:

In 2008, Alliance Library System's consultants began to move toward a new, unique, knowledge based consulting model. This type of consulting is based on knowing a client's needs and tailoring services to meet those needs. On all 2008 site visits, Alliance Library System's consultants asked member libraries a series of questions in order to provide better service .

Our Questions:

All member librarians were asked the following questions:

- What are you working on now?
 - My biggest need is?
 - What can we do for you?
- What are you/your staff going to be doing in 6 months to 1 year?
- What kind of training do you need to accomplish that activity?
 - How can we better serve you?

Your Answers*:

*These tables contain the most popular answers to our questions. There were many other answers given and included in our analysis. If you do not see your answers included in the tables below, it does not mean that Alliance disregarded your comments. Due to limited space and for illustrative purposes, only the top six answers to each question have been included in the charts below. For complete details please contact sbaschieri@alliancelibrarysystem.com.

What are you working on?

	# of Responses	
	Now	6 mo. - 1 yr.
Programs	64	35
Building/Space	52	28
Financial	46	24
Collection	43	8
Technology	30	20
Cataloging	25	14

What is your Biggest Need?

	# of Responses
Money	65
Building/Space	40
Training	33
Staff	25
Technology Upgrade	23
Time	21

What can we do for you?

	# of Responses
Answer Questions	34
RSA Training	23
Technology	19
Funding/Grants	18
Networking	14
Continuing Education	14

What kind of training do you need?

	# of Responses
Technology	43
RSA	39
Collection Development	16
OCLC Connexion	14
Personnel	12
Interlibrary Loan	12

What We Learned:

- Technology** was the #1 training request. Over 50 members reported that they were working on technology or planned to do so in the next year.
- Money** was clearly our libraries' biggest need and ranked high among answers to all six questions.
- Staff and HR Issues** were common responses to all questions. Our members requested help with hiring, training, orientation, and other personnel issues.
- Providing Service and Programming** was our libraries' number one priority and the most common answer to the questions "What are you working on now?" and "What will you/your staff be doing in 6 months to 1 year?"
- Answer Questions/ Keep Informed** was the most requested service that Alliance can provide to our members.

Our Response:

The Consulting and Continuing Education department analyzed our members' responses and the following are just a few examples of the steps we have taken to meet our libraries' needs:

- Technology Training Wheels** is a regularly updated, self-paced, pathfinder wiki for libraries that need help with Web 2.0 and Internet technologies like email, blogs and wikis, and browsers.
- Tough Times** was a series of workshops designed to help libraries facing budgetary constraints. These workshops, covering a range of topics from working with volunteers to planning a referendum, have been archived and remain available on demand.
- Personnel Management : A Human Resources Education Series** is an upcoming series of Wimba workshops covering the complex issues of hiring, firing, and training of library employees.
- Three **LSTA Grant proposals** were written by our consultants to provide member librarians training in using podcasting for marketing library services, becoming job information centers in their community and advocating for quality school library programs. If funded, these grants will provide upgraded equipment, technology training and enhanced patron services.
- Consultants have become actively involved in **regional group meetings** in order to talk about current topics, provide mini-training sessions, handle onsite questions, and stay connected with our members.

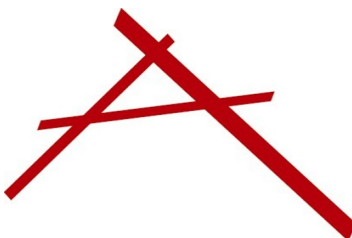
What's Next:

Consultants are starting site visits for 2009 and have a new set of questions to ask member libraries.

- Of all the things your library has done in the past year, what are some of the highlights?
 - What are your major projects this coming year?
- What are your biggest needs, and how are you addressing them?
 - What do you need or would you like to see offered?
- How responsive do you feel the system is to your input and why?

By establishing a relationship based on trust, our consultants strive to have a meaningful conversation with a member librarian. With open, honest answers to questions the Consulting and Continuing Education department hopes to provide members with the best service and support possible.

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