

## Lessons from corporate America



Recently, a group of the best and brightest CEOs in America were asked what they learned from the economic crisis in the last twelve months. The answers were really interesting and definitely applicable to library land. For example:

- Like never before, actions now speak louder than words. Planning is not the measure of success; the customer's experience dictates success!
- Scared employees don't work. Staff members who are afraid they will lose their job get frozen by fear, and productivity plummets. We need to keep our staff informed, but not terrorized; it's a fine, but essential, balance.
- Teamwork is crucial when making tough decisions. Wise leaders know they don't have all the answers.
- As CEO, you are not running for Mr. or Ms. Congeniality. It's relatively easy to be a great leader when everything is going well: the money is flowing, the staff is working well, and the board is focused. The real test comes during tough times: when money is tight, staff is not performing, and the board is distracted.
- As tempting as it may be, now is not the time to cut back on marketing. It *is* the time to reach out to new customers via staff blogs and embeddable widgets (specific bits of code placed on the website to add functionality and improve the digital users' experience, e.g. a clock, a Facebook badge). These small, customer-friendly additions can attract new customers!
- Innovation will drive profits and reap a larger market share of new library customers who will **not** come through our front doors, but will access us electronically...if we are out there!

In 2010, the successful library leader must learn to focus on actions, empower staff, work with the team, and actively improve the customer experience. It's a tall order, but we in library land have never been faint of heart!

Have a great week; the tulips are blooming in my garden!

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