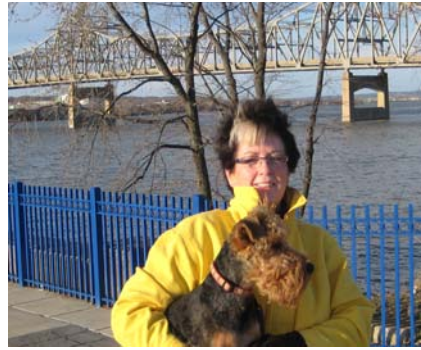


Good leaders are good listeners.... part 2

I think listening and common sense are so fundamental to good leadership, especially in a crisis, that I am still thinking about leaders and listening this week. So here is my second go at it!!



We exercise leadership best when we listen carefully. It shows humility (a very Canadian trait!) and mutual respect, which in turn opens our ears to change and better decision making. It's all interconnected. To practice good listening skills, I asked the following question to a group of library leaders (who also happen to be good listeners): "In the last few months, what are you hearing from you customers?" This is what they said:

- The corporate community is telling their libraries; in these recessionary times you need to be more fundamental to the corporate goals than ever before. It's all about focusing on the bottom line! Simply put, how can the library enhance the corporation's profit margin?
- Schools are telling their school media specialists; reach out to teachers and students, be essential and demonstrate student impact by being an active participant in the learning process. In these recessionary times, you need to teach students that it's ok to cut back and have less.
- The public is telling their libraries; assist the unemployed get jobs, help them cut costs but improve the quality of their lives and their children's. Provide technology, resources, and entertainment that they can no longer afford in their own homes.
- Librarians are telling their consortiums/systems; help us stay on the cutting edge of technology, help us cut costs but not reduce service; and show us cost effective ways to show good return on the taxpayer's investment.

There is no doubt that using common sense and being a good listener are skills that library leaders are using to good advantage. Listening to our customers will place us in a much better position to lead our libraries and our families through these recessionary times. Good listening and good leadership; it's all interconnected!

Have a great week.

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