

Changing Stakeholder Perceptions About Library Value

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Today's Presentation

- Introductions
- Your Current State of Practice
- Metrics and the Monster We've Created
- The Unintended Consequences of Evaluation
- The Importance of Meaningful Metrics
- The Critical Role of Stakeholder Engagement
- Q & A

Introductions

Evaluation in your workplace:
the good, the bad and the ugly

Why Measure?

- To inform the strategic plan
- To see changes over time
- To inform our practice
- To demonstrate value
 - Quantitative → Financial
 - Qualitative → Social, Educational, Cultural

What Libraries Are Measuring Now

The Usual Suspects

- Circulation
- Membership
- Program Attendance

These metrics are still required for reporting to municipal/state/institutional funders.

New Measures

- Economic Impact
 - Value per Open Hour
 - Value per Cardholder
 - Value per Citizen
- Social Impact
 - Student Experience
 - Job Skills
 - Early Childhood Literacy
 - Civic Engagement
 - Digital Learning
 - Economic Development
 - Lifelong Learning
 - Summer Reading

The Monster We Created

- We deliver “traditional” metrics to stakeholders:
 - Membership, Circulation, Program Attendance
- These metrics lack context (chasing the metrics)
- These metrics do not reflect the evolution of library success

ROI is Not the Whole Story

- ROI studies only look at proxies of economic value
- Not all proxies are appropriate for all communities
- Yes, we punch above our weight: **So What?**
- Social Impact is our real value, and where we need to put our efforts

Unintended Consequences

- Working to the indicators
 - When the metrics become more important than the service
- Gaming
- Stakeholders and policy makers make decisions based on metrics, not service realities

Identifying Meaningful Metrics

- The metrics your library chooses is dependent upon the conditions in your community:
 - Homelessness
 - Unemployment
 - Indigenous Communities
 - New citizens
 - Seniors
 - Young Families
- Keep it simple, start slowly; don't take on too much

Engaging Stakeholders

- Include stakeholders at every level of the organization:
 - Staff; Directors; Sr. Administrators; Community
- Engage your stakeholders as the library moves towards meaningful metrics
 - Data informs everyone's practice, not just those at the top
- Understand stakeholder motivations and what they value
- Change is hard -- take it slowly
- Patience

Your turn:

Q & A

Thank you for Listening

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