



## Ventura County Library: Our Director's Vision

We are:

- A library that truly meets the needs of the community.
- A library that has so much value that every person wants to visit and to use our resources.
- A library that has found many different ways to serve the public.
- A library that has defined excellence and lives it. Excellence in service to the public; excellence in our training; excellence in our relationships to the governments we serve.

How we serve the public:

- We are aware of what the public wants
- We are aware because of our involvement in the community. We serve on boards and commissions. We are members of service groups and committees.
- We meet with citizens and with city councils not just to tell them what we have but to listen to what they need.
- We are involved in our profession. We attend conferences; we serve on committees. We read professional journals and blogs. We know about innovations and trends. We constantly ask ourselves 'will this benefit our communities?'

We provide what the public wants:

- We are open to new ideas-even if we didn't originate them.
- We go where the public is. We regard library buildings as mere starting places to connect with the public. We find out where our communities are and then we find a way to be there. This requires imagination. It requires partnerships. It requires technological solutions. It requires not only that we act outside our comfort zone; it requires us to create new comfort zones.
- We are not limited by format. We are not limited by our history or tradition. We are not limited by our budget because we are able to bring our skills, experience, openness and desire to bear on problems. While some organizations rely on funding, we rely on our own excellence.
- In all matters, the first question we ask is "does it benefit our public?"

## What we provide:

- We provide collections that are up-to-date in multiple formats.
- We provide online resources that give our communities what they need where and when they need them.
- We provide programming to all demographics that is timely, useful and supports our mission.
- Every year our Summer Reading Program serves more children. In order to do this we make SRP part of our annual budget.
- We are the first choice when city or county government seeks answers.

## Staff:

- Line staff understands that they are the heart of our organization. After the public, they are the most important voice. Therefore they must have excellent tools to do their jobs.
- We hire the best available people. We have developed a process that ensures that all supervisors are skilled at selecting the best.
- We have created an organization that people are desperate to be part of.
- When we hire people we connect them to the organization. We have a buddy system.
- The orientation program is broad and creates both an understanding of our mission and a sense of belonging.
- The line staff and system-wide managers work together to create training that empowers staff to be excellent in their jobs. We constantly review the gap between what we are actually doing and our training and we tweak the training to reduce the gap. We have used technology and imagination to create training that can be done within the branch whenever possible. We use our intranet site with podcasts; we have webcams on a computer in every branch.
- We have multiple ways of communicating, not just top down but from the bottom up and laterally through the organization.
- Our policies are written, available on the intranet and understandable. Our staff can articulate them to the public. If they can't, we either fix the policy or do away with it.
- Staff understands their roles. They are given constant feedback and support to improve their skills. Their supervisors are trained and excellent in their roles. They know how to support, to coach, to evaluate and to discipline so that a fair and excellent work environment exists for all staff.
- A clear path exists for advancement.
- Our staff understands and is proud of the value that this library brings to the community.
- We laugh. A lot.

## System-wide Management

- Managers have a clear vision of themselves as servants to the community; to the organization and, to those who are providing public service (public service includes those staff stationed at Support Services).
- Managers know the tasks they ask line staff to perform and are able to do them
- Managers share a common vision of the organization which we can articulate.
- Our meetings, planning and day to day activities can be directly linked to that vision.

## PR/Marketing

- Our community knows what we do and it matters to them.
- Our best marketing is our excellent service.
- Our PR is responsive and timely. It is another service that we offer to the public because it makes them aware of us as a resource for them.
- We have a library of stock Powerpoints, talking points and written materials for staff to use in community outreach. These resources are on the intranet.
- We train branch managers, librarians and system-wide managers and others who are interested in PR techniques including speaking, running technology and making contacts.
- We seek out and recognize PR opportunities.
- Our community understands the value that public libraries add to the community.

## Technology

- We recognize that technology is one tool that we use to provide excellent public service.
- We have a technology plan that helps us to make choices between competing innovations and that allows us to be creative in our solutions to new problems.
- We understand that not all staff or public is comfortable with technology. We also recognize that the future is here and technology in libraries is a reality. Our goal, therefore, is to make technology easy to use.
- Staff and the public are offered training in new technology. That training may be formal or informal and the delivery methods are varied.

## Funding

- We will still be working within a limited budget. This fact allows us to be most creative in the way we approach problems. It also means that the Commission increasingly values shared resources.
- The foundation has begun funding a portion of our materials budget which increases user satisfaction which increases our public visibility which increases gifts to the foundation.
- Everyone in the organization understands the budget. Branch managers have budgets for supplies and staffing and they manage them.

## Relationships

- We recognize that creating partnerships makes us stronger and better and allows us to maximize our resources.
- We look for partnerships that further our mission or that allow us to do something that we are already doing more effectively or efficiently.
- We say yes as often as we say no.
- We know that partnerships are more than just the project at hand. They are another means to hear from our communities and to share who we are.
- Our relationships with individual cities are positive. They recognize that we provide excellent service to their communities.

## Facilities

- While we still do not have funding to create new buildings we constantly seek to do so anyway. We seek partnerships, grants and tax dollars.
- We have a facilities plan and we are funding regular maintenance and repair.
- Our minimal goal is that our buildings are welcoming, clean and attractive.
- Signage is positive and welcoming.
- Furniture is comfortable and inviting.
- We take environmental concerns into account with every decision we make about facilities.

## Planning

- We are in a continual state of implementing our plan. We weigh the choices we have available against our plan. We ask ourselves what choices best suit our mission.
- Our funding matches our plan. We fund what we have planned for; we defer what we have not.
- Our organizational structure reflects our goals. We are designed to be flexible and efficient.
- Each of us can articulate our role within the plan.