

President's Update - March 10, 2016

I recently participated in a fantastic workshop from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE). The conference focused on development and fundraising for academic leaders, but the messages can be applied broadly.

The importance of developing a message to communicate with supporters was repeatedly discussed. The presenter credited Penny Hunt, an experienced advancement professional, for a “five finger” approach to organizing a message:

1. Where are we going?
2. Why does it matter?
3. Why are we the right ones to do it?
4. What will it take?
5. How can the listener help?

I share this with you because I see great potential for libraries and library professionals. All of us know that libraries depend on support from many people, including volunteers, community leaders, business partners and each other.

After we spend time getting to know the supporter, we are able to craft a message that appeals to their interests and our own needs. I appreciate having a simple framework that organizes our thoughts into a compelling statement of the opportunity.

I haven't had a chance to try to technique yet. Based on the discussion at the workshop, I can share this hypothetical example that could apply in public, school or academic libraries:

Finger 1: Our vision is that a library makerspace that allows everyone in the university community to have the opportunity to engage in interdisciplinary creative endeavors that add a new dimension to scholarship. We want to prepare students for the tools that will be available to them in their future scholarship, careers and creative endeavors.

Finger 2: Successful innovation depends on the ability to design, to create and to share ideas in multiple formats – digital, 2D and 3D. Students and others in the university community need access to the tools, training and support that allow them to learn and apply these new ways to communicate and test ideas.

Finger 3: Libraries, especially university libraries, have long been leaders in providing access to the next generation of information and technology. We led the adoption of Internet access and access to printing. We provide interdisciplinary support that is available for 90 hours per week to everyone in the university community, regardless of discipline, major or course enrollment. We are known for being approachable, supportive and nonjudgmental. We provide access to general and specialized information that supports the development of new ideas.

Finger 4: The library has a foundation for a makerspace. We have librarians and staff who are eager to develop the project. To open the space, we need support to buy new equipment, including a 3D scanner, 3D printer and three computers with multimedia and 3D design software. We also need support to hire and train student workers, who will get real-world skills while serving as peer tutors.

Finger 5: (Note that there are many options here depending on your audience. Here are a few possibilities.) With your expertise in multimedia development, would you be interested in providing training to our student tutors? OR Would you be interested in supporting our equipment needs?

I'd like to hear your ideas for how this framework could be used. I would love it if the two or three of you who managed to read this far would share either real or hypothetical examples. If you're inclined to share, please visit the [MLA Facebook page](#) and post a comment with at least Fingers 1, 2 and 3 for an idea that you have.

[Back to news](#)