THE PURPOSE-BASED LIBRARY

Finding Your Path to Survival, Success, and Growth

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Missouri

Foreword

Literacy for All

AS A YOUNG CHILD GROWING UP IN A FAMILY OF SEVEN CHIL-dren, some of my fondest memories are of trips to the library. It happened every week. We would all pile into the car, and that's when my imagination immediately began to run wild with possibilities. What would be happening at the library today? Storytime? Puppet show? Arts and crafts? What interesting books would I find this time tucked away in the shelves? What intriguing places would I visit, what people would I meet, would I learn how to sew or draw, garden, cook a pizza, or write a poem? In a middle-class family of seven children, there are very, very few choices, but at the library the options were endless, exciting, and always an adventure. I could choose anything I wanted to learn or any destination I wanted to travel and meet people from the past or the present. A trip to the library, for me, my brothers and sisters, and yes, even my mom, was a window to the world. A chance to learn, grow, and expand our horizons.

Those days, simple as they sound, have turned out to be the foundation of my education and love of reading.

So when I hear the reports and rumblings of how libraries are fighting extinction and working on ways to stay relevant, it feels heartbreaking, like someone is attacking a cherished friend, a family member, a partner in crime.

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Yet, the powerful emergence of technology has forced library leaders to look more closely at how they are serving their clients in a way that continues to be exciting and energizing and bring value to the community. Today, as director of the nonprofit organization Literacy Kansas City, my mission is to help people ages 16 and older learn to read. In this position I now see reading and the vital and critical role of libraries from a much different perspective. The services, programs, and access that libraries can provide through community partnerships are now for many people the *only* resource they may have. At Literacy Kansas City we see every day the struggles that come with illiteracy. Millions of people—one in five in the nation—can't read above a fourth-grade level. As one nonprofit, we can't reach this population alone, but we can make a difference, reach them in their neighborhoods where they feel most comfortable and familiar, and change lives—with the help of libraries. Libraries provide the infrastructure, resources, outreach, technology, and the open, welcoming arms that people who can't read so desperately need. The libraries of today, through creative collaboration with nonprofit organizations like Literacy Kansas City, provide a whole new model for community learning. In our partnerships with the local libraries we are able to reach families, teens, and adults where they live. At neighborhood libraries Literacy Kansas City provides computer-based digital and literacy skills classes enabling both adult and teen students to learn how to read while using a computer. We teach reading, writing, financial, and digital life skills, as well as facilitate tutoring and family reading programs. Other nonprofits need the libraries to help deliver their services to other clients, like English language learners and senior citizens, and provide workforce readiness skills classes as well as GED courses. Strong partnerships allow libraries and nonprofits to focus on and provide the services they need at a particular branch or community—one area may not need a heavy dose of digital life skills classes for senior citizens but they may desperately need a program for adult literacy classes. Not only does this allow libraries and nonprofits to work in concert to serve the needs of their clients where they are, but it's more efficient, as resources and staff are shared and services aren't being duplicated. The programs fit the needs of the people and, with collaboration and partnerships, libraries become the nerve centers and hubs that help build stronger, smarter communities and, where needed, provide a way out of illiteracy and poverty for their citizens.

Today, I see our library leaders not struggling with, but adapting to this time of change and working on ways to face it head on. John Huber and Steve Potter provide a framework for libraries to continue to lead into the 21st century by being lean, flexible, and adaptable and on a never-ending quest to serve the needs of the community in a valuable way. They are creating a vision that shows how libraries are now more vital than ever when it comes to uniting and lifting a community up and infusing a lifelong love of learning into every citizen.

JOHN J. HUBER

Introduction

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us . . . .

—Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*

ONE MIGHT ARGUE THAT REDUCED BUDGETS, AGGRESSIVE competition, the rapid pace of technology, management outsourcing, unfriendly publishers, skeptical city managers, and ever-increasing customer expectations have created "the worst of times" for libraries. In this book we propose that libraries are poised to create "the best of times." Before we explore this potential, let us first examine the state of our current times. During my travels across North America I have seen firsthand the challenges libraries face. Here are a few news clippings that document the struggles.

Toronto

Last year [2011] the Toronto Public Library was asked by Mayor Rob Ford to cut its $170 million operating budget by 10 percent, or $17

million. The mayor said the city needed to make drastic budget cuts due to financial concerns. At one point, the library faced a possible 7 percent cut to operating hours, branch closures, more job cuts, and a 27 percent cut to the collections budget.[1]

Texas

Two years ago, when Texas was confronting a $27 billion budget short-fall, state lawmakers chain-sawed the 2012–13 funding for the Texas State Library and Archives Commission by 64 percent. Now that cut may be creating an even more dire financial problem for libraries. Since the state isn't meeting its mandated share of funding, the federal government is threatening to cut nearly 70 percent of its annual funding for Texas public libraries, saying the state has failed to pull its own weight. "It does kind of hit us with a double whammy," said Mark Smith, director of the commission, which provides support for 560 libraries statewide.[2]

California

New California Gov. Jerry Brown, facing tremendous budget problems, has proposed a statewide budget that eliminates state spending on public libraries entirely. Those cuts amount to around $30 million.[3]

Kansas

Kansas has sharply reduced state support for schools, libraries, and other community services in recent years, forcing towns and cities to cut programs that Kansans depend upon or raise more money locally to sustain them. While the cuts by the state were initially prompted by the Great Recession, the substantial income tax cuts Kansas lawmakers enacted in 2012 and 2013 are draining even more resources and making it nearly impossible to replace vital aid to Kansas communities. State support for libraries has been cut by over 30 percent, forcing reductions in operating hours, cutbacks in book purchases, or the establishment of waiting lists for summer reading programs. In some areas, libraries are the only resource many people have for filling out online job applications and furthering their education.[4]

New York

For the first time, the 62 branches in the borough [of Queens] have stopped buying new books in order to save costs. "This is by far the worst we've ever seen it," said Thomas Galante, the chief executive officer for the Queens Library. Overall, city libraries are facing nearly

$100 million in budget cuts, which they say would lead to an estimated 1,500 layoffs. The proposed steep reductions would cripple the system, advocates say.[5]

Colorado

The [Denver Public] Library Commission recommends pursuing branch closures to maintain minimum service standards, and with a $2.5 million reduction in the budget, this would mean 7–12 branches would close indefinitely.[6]

Nationwide

A private company [Library Systems & Services (LSSI)] in Maryland has taken over public libraries in ailing cities in California, Oregon, Tennessee, and Texas, growing into the country's fifth-largest library system. [7]

In the face of these setbacks, libraries and their supporters are not sitting on their hands and just giving up. They have responded. As Paul Harvey used to say, "Here is the rest of the story."

Toronto

More than 30,000 people signed a petition protesting the library cuts and several thousand people spoke out against cuts at the December library board meeting and through e-mails sent to the City Council.[8]

Texas

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) successfully appealed an October 2013 decision by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), restoring $6.5 million in federal matching funds designated to support library activities across the Lone Star State.[9]

Colorado

On Monday, August 20, City Council voted 11–1 to refer a measure to the November ballot asking voters to [circumvent mandated cuts in city property tax established by the Tax Payer's Bill of Rights (TABOR)]. This measure, [named for TABOR's sponsor, Douglas Bruce, and] commonly known as "de-Brucing" would allow Denver to retain what it already collects under current tax rates, taking Denver out from under a state-mandated spending cap formula in TABOR. By removing the TABOR spending limits, the city will have an additional $68 million dollars to improve police and fire protection, repair city streets and restore Library hours.[10]

These victories are a few good signs, but as we all know, Pandora's box has been opened. Budget issues will keep libraries in the spotlight, and library relevancy will continue to be an accepted topic at social gatherings. When I tell people I am a library consultant, I often hear the following responses.

> "Why do we need to provide books and DVDs to people who can afford to buy them?"
>
> "Why do we need reference librarians when we have Google?"
>
> "I buy my e-books from Amazon because my library cannot keep up."
>
> "Bookstores are going out of business, are libraries next?"
>
> "Do we really need libraries anymore?"

The answer? We need libraries now more than ever.

As they say in my home state of Oklahoma, this is not my first rodeo. During the 1980s and 1990s, I served as a service and process improvement consultant for a manufacturing industry fighting to survive. It was my job to help my clients survive global outsourcing, labor cuts, union/management labor battles, and big-box-driven price deflation. Many asked at the time whether US manufacturing could survive. The answer is many companies did and many did not. From my experience, those who survived fully embraced a concept called "lean manufacturing," or "lean." Lean preaches a philosophy that those within an organization must squeeze out all the waste in their operation. If they do not, their competitors will by default.

I have been a pioneer in the lean manufacturing movement since 1981, and in 2001, I had the unique opportunity to introduce the concept of lean to the Tulsa City-County library, my local library. Since that game-changing day, our 13-year partnership has developed some groundbreaking ideas on how to remove waste from library service delivery chains. I have since had the privilege of introducing lean to libraries across North America. The results have been dramatic:

> Holds delivery performance improved to same day/next day delivery while reducing costs by 20 to 33 percent for Pikes Peak Library District, Tulsa City-County Library, Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County (OH), Southern Maryland Regional Library Association, Western Maryland Library Association, and Austin (TX) Public Library.
>
> New book receipt-to-shelf lead time was reduced by 50 to 75 percent with a 10 to 33 percent reduction in cost for Pikes Peak Library District, Kansas City (MO) Public Library, Tulsa City-County Library, Pueblo (CO) City/County Library District, and Houston (TX) Public Library.
>
> Holds processing clerical support cost was reduced by 25 to 33 percent at Johnson County (KS) Library, Kansas City Public Library, Tulsa City-

> County Library, Ottawa Public Library, Fort Worth Library, Fairfax County (VA) Public Library, and Austin Public Library.

> A process innovation implemented at Missouri's Mid-Continent Public Library (MCPL), the "holds label solution," reduced clerical activities by the equivalent of 17 full-time employees (FTEs). MCPL was able to staff an entire new library branch with the savings.

> Tote box use was eliminated in the delivery process, cutting 98 percent of required heavy lifting, at Tulsa City-County Library, Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning, and Anoka County (MN) Library System.

These experiences and many more inspired me to share my Lean Library methodology and our success stories by writing my first book, *Lean Library Management: Eleven Strategies for Reducing Costs and Improving Customer Services*. In simple terms, common management thinking states that if budgets are reduced, customer service suffers. Lean states that if you streamline and improve customer services and therefore eliminate wasteful activities, costs will go down. I believe, and all the libraries listed above believe, that they must embrace Lean Library Management to survive. My experience in both the manufacturing and library worlds supports this premise.

In chapter 1, we further explore Lean Library survival by examining a case study of Carrollton (TX) Public Library (CPL). CPL was at risk of being outsourced to the LSSI management group, and by embracing the concepts of Lean, CPL's independence survived.

After I wrote *Lean Library Management*, I had a nagging feeling that the lean survival message, while critical, represents only part of the competitive solution for libraries. The truth, as you know, is that libraries are more than just book distributors; libraries influence their community as a whole by providing critical and value-added services. I fear that under the pressure of decreased budgets, increased competition, and skeptical city managers, libraries will soon be reduced to only core distribution services. I fear libraries will be forced to lose sight of their real purpose. This would be a huge mistake, not only from a social fabric viewpoint but also from a business competition viewpoint. Library services that go beyond book distribution differentiate you from your competition, and therefore provide you a distinct competitive advantage. Properly embraced, measured, and marketed, these unique services can take your library beyond survival to a competitive path of success and growth. The only way for libraries to survive the intense competition of Barnes & Noble, Amazon, Netflix, and Google (what I call the BANG group) is to become as lean as possible while also offering value-added services beyond what the BANG group, or for that matter anyone else, can provide.

Libraries find themselves at a critical juncture. Do libraries continue to separate themselves from their customers through customer self-service

models in order to compete with the likes of the BANG group? Or do libraries look within themselves to embrace their true purpose and use this purpose to create a more effective competitive business model? Can libraries realign their staff and their skills along this new model? Can they embrace change?

Over dinner one night Steven Potter, director of the Mid-Continent Public Library, and I discussed these questions and examined the path libraries are currently traveling, and we shared our visions for a different path. It turns out we had very similar ideas, which motivated us to collaborate on this book. We believe:

- Survival depends on quicker, faster, better lean core services.
- Success depends on community/library partnerships and value-added metrics.
- Growth depends on libraries communicating, reflecting, and pursuing their true purpose.

In this book, we will cover each of these topics.

In part I we address survival and the concept of Lean Library Management. We present a case study in chapter 1 where one library took action to control their fate and survived another day.

Part II presents our vision beyond survival toward success and growth. In chapter 2 we discuss the need to rethink our traditional metrics of circulation and budgets and embrace metrics that better reflect your library's real purpose. Chapter 3 examines the paradox between libraries pursuing their true mission and purpose versus the current direction of customer self-driven services. We also discuss the considerable footprint libraries have in this country and the leverage this implies. Chapter 4 introduces the community pyramid that will drive our purpose-based library. Chapter 5 seeks to define what a community is and explores its relationship with its local library. In chapters 6 through 16, we examine the community pyramid, delving into the current state of each pyramid's step and the role libraries can play to prioritize and impact the health and well-being of each step.

Part III goes beyond survival and success and presents our vision for growth. In chapter 17 we discuss the retention and realignment of library resources to better reflect the purpose-based library. Chapter 18 presents a new vision for a value-added market strategy. In chapter 19 we discuss how the purpose-based library can be more effective in attracting philanthropic resources. Chapter 20 outlines how the purpose-based library should align their physical presentation with their true purpose. In chapter 21 we propose libraries embrace the concept of supporting self-published authors through library publishing services and the need for consolidated buying groups.

Part IV covers sustainability. In chapter 22 we discuss the need for the members within a community to sustain their pyramid.

Each chapter is written from my voice (John Huber). And at the end of each chapter, the book presents Potter's Perspective, Points, and Ponderings, where Steve provides his unique thoughts on the topic presented.

Steve and I appreciate your interest in these topics. This book is certainly not the last word, but we are compelled to start or join the conversation, as we believe libraries must not only survive, but look to a future of success and growth. We believe the path we present will usher in a new era for libraries, an era when libraries can say, "It is the best of times."

NOTES

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PART I
Survival

For those who have attended one of my workshops or have read my first book, you are familiar with a story I tell called "My Honeymoon Kitchen." For those who know the story, bear with me, as there are a few updates.

I graduated college with an industrial engineering and management degree and was hired by Accenture Consulting (formerly Andersen Consulting). My wife, Kathy, worked at the American Association of Petroleum Geologists assisting the group to plan their annual conventions.

One day I came home from work a bit late, sat down at the kitchen table, and watched Kathy cook our evening meal, spaghetti with meat sauce. I watched her go to the refrigerator for onions, to the utensil drawer for a knife, to the cabinet for a pan, back to the refrigerator for hamburger meat, to the pantry for spaghetti sauce, back to the utensil drawer for a spoon, back to the pantry for salt, back to the cabinet for a saucepan, back to the pantry for pepper—well, you get the idea.

I voiced my thoughts, "You know, honey, if you just planned out ahead of time what you need, you could get everything together ahead of time and save yourself a lot of time."

When I get to this point in my story, you can see the daggers in the eyes of all my female participants. Well, I did save my wife a lot of time cooking, as she told me I would be cooking dinner for now on. (That lasted about two weeks until she got tired of Hamburger Helper.)

You have to forgive me, for as an industrial engineer, I cannot go anywhere without seeing improvement opportunities. I see it in fast-food restaurants, retail stores, workers on the highway, and yes, my manufacturing, distribution, and library clients.

The real lesson I learned from my honeymoon kitchen is that people don't like other people coming into their kitchen and telling them what to do. For the past 35 years of my consulting career, I have carried that lesson with me constantly. I understand that your library is your kitchen, and Steve and I are not here to tell you how to run your kitchen. However, these are serious times for libraries and it is important that each of you take a new look at your kitchen and challenge yourself to see the opportunities that exist, and believe me, they exist. Our objective is to provide you ideas and case studies on survival and a vision beyond survival toward success and growth. By reading this book, you have invited us into your kitchen, and we thank you for the invite. We will try to be good guests.

I have an update to my honeymoon kitchen story. I was talking with a librarian about what I do as a consultant, and she asked me if I had ever heard of Frank and Lillian Gilbreth. Well, I certainly had heard of Frank Gilbreth, as his efficiency work and time study methodology is taught to all industrial engineers. What I did not know was the story of Lillian Gilbreth. Frank and Lillian had 12 children, and Lillian was Frank's partner in his management-consulting firm, Gilbreth, Inc. The original movie *Cheaper by the Dozen* (not the one with Steve Martin) was based on Frank and Lillian's book by the same title. The movie tells the story of how they efficiently organized their kids, themselves, and their daily tasks to survive the day. Ironically, Lillian even wrote many books and articles on the topics of kitchen efficiency. So, perhaps I was channeling Lillian those many years ago.

I do differ a bit from the Gilbreths. While they focused on the efficiency of a task, I focus on the overall speed and quality of a service event. I believe your survival depends on first and foremost streamlining your service delivery chains, a topic we will address in detail in the following chapter.

1
Lean Library Management

COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION IS AT THE HEART OF EVERY library and is the focus of this book. However, before libraries can embrace the strategy we propose, they must survive the current environment of budget cuts and staff reductions. In this chapter you will learn how to survive. You will be introduced to the transformational power of Lean Library Management. You will discover that lean is simple in concept, powerful in practice. You will see through an actual case study that transforming your library to a lean culture can be managed, controlled, and implemented through a standard lean transformational methodology.

Lean Library Management: Eleven Strategies for Reducing Costs and Improving Customer Services, my previous book, presents a step-by-step strategy for how to integrate the concepts of lean into your library—in other words, how to become quicker, faster, better. Many of you have embraced my book, and I thank you for the great feedback and encouragement.

To understand lean, imagine you are about to embark on a great river adventure. In front of you are two boats from which you must choose. One boat is very large and bulky. It looks safe, but it looks as if it is in need of repair. The other boat is smaller and sleeker in design. You have never seen anything like this boat. You have limited funds and a limited crew. Despite your limitations, the river adventure you are about to embark upon will present unpredictable

currents, hidden rocks, flooding, and white waters. You know this adventure will require a strong, responsive boat with a small but experienced crew. You quickly realize that the larger boat, while providing a sense of security, will ride low in the water, will be slow and sluggish in response to changing conditions, and may very well get stuck in the mud in low-water conditions. The choice is clear: the smaller boat better fits the size of your crew; is easier to navigate; is more responsive to the changing currents, hidden rocks, and shallow waters; and most important, is more agile.

You have the same choice with your library. Do you choose a large, bulky, unresponsive library, or do you choose a more streamlined, responsive library, one that is strong in its core services and capable of redirecting its path at a moment's notice? The truth is that you have no choice. The current economic conditions, reduced budgets, reduced staff, and more limited services have forced you into the smaller boat—or worse, the larger boat with a skeleton crew. However, even if the economic conditions were different, you would still be better served by choosing the more streamlined boat because it provides better services to your customers and has a better chance to respond to changing conditions.

Many believe tighter budgets (smaller boat and crew) lead to poorer customer service. Lean teaches us the exact opposite. If you improve and streamline your customer service, you become quicker, faster, better. Improve service, and you reduce costs. By embracing lean and streamlining your processes, you will be traveling in the smaller, more responsive boat on a straight, smooth, fast-flowing river.

I will not duplicate the presentation of my lean strategies in this book, however I would encourage you to seek out *Lean Library Management* to further explore lean concepts, as they are critical to your short-term survival. To illustrate this point, we will review a case study of a library whose future was in doubt and that embraced the concepts of lean to survive another day.

CARROLLTON PUBLIC LIBRARY—CASE STUDY

Carrollton Public Library, a two-branch library system located about 20 miles north of Dallas, supports a collection of about 186,000, circulates about 750,000 items annually, and has a staff of 37.5 FTEs, while serving a population of about 121,000 residents.

In 2011, I conducted a series of lean workshops for the (former) Northeast Texas Library System (NETLS). Many representatives from the Dallas community libraries attended, including from Carrollton Public. The workshops provided the participants an introductory understanding of the power of Lean Library Management, including the following best practice service improvement concepts:

- Lean is like a smooth flowing river I call the River Lean. The River Lean has smooth banks and steady flowing water with clear sailing ahead. Most organizations travel Snake River on a large, heavy boat attempting to navigate twists and turns (poor flow), destructive hidden rocks (inefficiencies), and periods of dry and muddy river beds (imbalances), followed by intense flooding (peak loads). Lean pursues a smaller, fast-traveling boat on a smooth flowing river.
- Lean sees your library as a series of service delivery chains (SDCs), not segmented departments or staff.
- Lean teaches us that measurements drive and feed your service performance; therefore, what you do not measure must not be important.
- Lean knows that waste exists in every service process a library supports.
- Lean shows us that service improvement leads to dramatic cost reduction.

Two major factors drove CPL to attend this workshop. First, when it comes to reducing wasteful costs, Carrollton's city council is a very serious group. As far back as 2002, the city implemented what they call a "managed competition" program whereby each of the city's service groups is targeted for a competitive review. Of the 11 service groups reviewed thus far, four had been outsourced. CPL was next on the managed competition list. One can only be impressed with Carrollton's managed competition program. In the words of Tom Guilfoy, director of managed competition for the City of Carrollton, "Carrollton's 10-year-old 'managed competition' program has resulted in $30 million in various one-time and ongoing savings over the years (out of a general fund budget of $74 million)."

Second, to make things even more exciting, just five miles up the road the Farmers Branch City Council and mayor sparked controversy when they turned over the management reins of their one-branch community library to LSSI, a for-profit management group. Carrollton knew that to survive they had to not only reduce costs but also improve customer service.

In the words of Lynette Jones, CPL public services supervisor, "Staff had witnessed other city departments work through the process and either win (be declared Substantially Competitive) or lose (get outsourced to a private vendor), and everyone knew that we were playing for high stakes (life and civilization as we know it)."

After the NETLS workshop, CPL's leadership team approached me and requested a follow-up workshop focused on their library. We conducted the workshop a few weeks later, and it was a great success. We reviewed their service delivery chains via the videos they had developed, exposed many wasteful

activities, and built great momentum and enthusiasm toward eliminating this waste. After the workshop, CPL prepared for their managed competition review, starting by establishing their driving objectives:

- To be declared substantially competitive (i.e., avoid being outsourced).
- To look at every procedure and process, analyze them, and find ways to improve.
- To leverage technology in the most cost-effective way possible.

In the words of Cherri Gross, former CPL director, "We began our Managed Competition process by conducting a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats), assigning an EOT (Employee Operations Team), and then using Mr. Huber's methodology to evaluate each one of our service delivery chains. Smaller teams were assigned a service delivery chain, and an action plan was developed. The Library Management Team prioritized the services in the action plan."

Let us briefly explore this best practice concept of SDCs. SDCs represent the series of process events (from beginning to end) that provide an end product or service to your customer. As summarized in my book *Lean Library Management*,

TABLE 1.1

Targeted service delivery chains

Customer Holds SDC	Signs and Verbiage SDC
Customer Service Desk SDC	Grant Acquisition SDC
New Book SDC	Computer Assistance SDC
Self-Check SDC	Circulation SDC
Security SDC	Weeding/Disposal of Withdrawn SDC
Staffing/Scheduling SDC	Phone SDC
Customer Notification SDC	Donations SDC
Materials Returns Check-in SDC	Volunteer SDC
Lost and Paid SDC	Customer and Staff Emergency SDC
Fax SDC	New Books in Transit SDC
Easy Books SDC	Story Time SDC
Scanning and Printing SDC	E-book SDC
Magazine SDC	Coffee Shop SDC
Newspaper SDC	Teen Services SDC
Computer Class SDC	Adult Programming SDC

While libraries are organized and managed within departments or functions, this does not truly reflect the actual flow of services you provide. In fact, department walls can actually inhibit your ability to provide low-cost, high levels of service. The survival of any business lies in its ability to effectively service their customers and to do it in the shortest time at the lowest costs possible. When the separate processes that link together to create this service are separated and managed separately by different groups, the forest can easily be lost among the trees. Library Lean teaches us to ignore the department walls and organizational chart and recognize and document what the true service delivery chain is.[1]

Table 1.1 provides a list of SDCs CPL defined, measured, and attacked.

Performing their SDC analysis over a period of about a year, the assigned teams incorporated J. Huber & Associates lean methodology as summarized in table 1.2.

CPL identified their core services (SDCs), prioritized them, and attacked each one with the objective to improve customer service and eliminate waste. The following sections summarize their SDC accomplishments.

TABLE 1.2

Lean methodology

Sequence	Action Item
I	Identify your SDCs as well as your SDCs' performance objectives.
II	Prioritize your improvement focus and assign cross-functional teams to these priority SDCs. (Carrollton decided to attack them all!)
III	Flowchart/Diagram your SDC so that everyone on the team understands how the overall process works.
IV	Measure how the SDC is performing in terms of service, costs, safety, and quality.
V	Conduct benchmarking and competitor analysis to challenge "in the box" thinking.
VI	Challenge every step of the process to improve service lead times (speeding up the flow of the "river").
VII	Video key process links to examine the waste. Attack waste through brainstorming sessions.
VIII	Prioritize your improvement ideas.
IX	Perform a cost-benefit analysis of your new design concepts.
X	Pilot your ideas to assure success.
XI	Implement performance metrics to assure the SDCs meet your performance objectives.
XII	Attack all performance gaps again and again.

Customer Holds Service Delivery Chain

CPL's Holds SDC team embraced one of my lean concepts I call the "First Touch Rule," which states, if you can perform a task the first time you touch it, do it, because it will eliminate tasks throughout the rest of the process. My Holds Label Solution does just that by combining the pick list, in-transit slip, and the holds slip into one removable label. In other words, the staff person pulling the hold uses the label to find the book on the shelf and then applies that label onto the spine of the book the first time the book is touched. This eliminates the in-transit slip and holds slip activities later in the process. CPL embraced the "First Touch" concept, and as a result, the team freed up 256 clerical hours per year while reducing the time to get the book to the holds shelf by 25 percent.

New Book Service Delivery Chain

CPL's most dramatic impact on service as well as cost came from the New Book SDC team. The New Book SDC team reduced new book delivery times by 95 percent (from two to three months to one week) and reduced staffing by 50 percent (from six staff employees to three) by implementing cost-effective vendor delivery of cataloging and processing services, reducing manual invoice data entry through electronic ordering/invoice consolidation and implementing vendor-generated bar codes and list prices in records.

Customer Service Desk Service Delivery Chain

The Customer Service Desk SDC team soon discovered there was much more to their service chain than just one overall flow. To fully define customer service, the team identified additional SDC flows as shown in table 1.3.

Using the Library Lean best practice tools of flowcharting, videotaping, and brainstorming, the team discovered their current two-desk approach (one for circulation support and one for information/reference support) created a great deal of waste, including duplication of tasks, separation of staff during peak load times, customer confusion, and congestion in the main traffic areas.

TABLE 1.3

Customer service desk SDCs

Detail Service Flows	
Study Room SDC	Check-in SDC
Library Card SDC	Paying Fines SDC
Holds Pickup SDC	Print Cards SDC
Guest Pass SDC	Computer Access Request SDC

The videos revealed many opportunities for improvement. The team identified many service benefits by consolidating the two desks into one:

- eliminated customer confusion while providing a better service experience
- improved peak load service response by better utilizing cross-trained and consolidated staff
- improved staff productivity by eliminating duplicative steps
- improved productivity of staff off-line duties

The one-desk concept improved productivity by 33 percent while eliminating extra walking time and congestion for both the customer and the staff.

Children's Services Delivery Chain

The Children's SDC team identified the need to evaluate their current strategies against a for-profit competitor. This is, after all, what the managed competition program is all about. The group researched local bookstores to see how they support children's services. The team found that the bookstores had advanced sign-up, shorter programs than the library, programs in Spanish, craft and coloring, use of Nooks, Kids Clubs, and paid book performers.

And they did not stop there; the team moved forward by benchmarking themselves against the local school district's curriculum. As a result the Children's SDC team created new and innovative programs more aligned with customer and community needs. CPL believes this will result in better storytimes that will have a lasting impact on the children and their parents.

The following provides additional highlights of other CPL SDC team accomplishments:

The Grant Acquisition SDC Team formed by library staff and Parks/Recreation staff banded together to form the Leisure Services Grant Team. The library applied for five different grants in fiscal year 2011/2012 and received funding from two of those sources.

The e-book SDC Team added 515 targeted e-book offerings.

The Reference SDC Team targeted and added 24 homework and medical virtual reference books to enhance 24/7 research assistance.

The Computer Class SDC Team added 88 volunteer-based computer lab and training programs for Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint as well as resume writing and job hunting.

On March 6, 2012, CPL was declared substantially competitive. In the words of Carrollton City Manager Leonard Martin, "Anyone can do more with more. It takes a leader and manager to do more with less. And that's where our (library) people are."

CPL not only survived as a management team, but they have become a much stronger library. By strengthening their core services, they are now riding on a smaller, sleeker, and more responsive boat on a river that has fewer twists and turns, fewer hidden rocks, and reduced flooding. They have an experienced and motivated crew and are much better positioned to handle the unpredictable waters they may face in the future.

Libraries across the country, such as Pikes Peak Library District, Mid-Continent Public Library, Cincinnati Public Library, Kansas City Public Library, Fort Worth Public Library, Tulsa City-County Public Library, Public Library of Youngstown/Mahoney County, Humboldt County (CA) Library, Carrollton Public, Austin Public Library, Fairfax County Library, and Sno-Isle (WA) Libraries to just name a few are embracing the Lean Library Methodology. Their objective is to become quicker, faster, better at their core services. As the Carrollton case study shows, libraries cannot take the status quo as a given.

City and county managers as well as the public are questioning the value libraries provide for the cost invested. For the purpose-based library to ultimately succeed and grow, it must first survive. Libraries must show to their communities that they are substantially competitive from a "for profit" viewpoint. They must embrace lean and streamline their core processes by eliminating waste, thus improving customer service, which naturally leads to reduced costs. Libraries must build a smaller, leaner ship to navigate the turbulent and unpredictable waters ahead. They must man their ship with a smaller crew, but a crew that is highly experienced and motivated to succeed.

POTTER'S PERSPECTIVE, POINTS, AND PONDERINGS

A BBC report stated, "Libraries have been failing the public by providing them with often old and incomplete collections. . . . visitor numbers have halved since 1984 and, if this trend continues, people will stop using UK libraries in the next 20 years."[2]

Perhaps Great Britain is the canary in the coal mine for North American libraries. The canary is telling us that libraries must change and adapt, for maintaining the status quo will only lead to irrelevance.

In the introduction, John presented our three-part vision of survival, success, and growth. Survival, the first of which, we address in this chapter. CPL met their managed competition challenge (a challenge we all share whether we want to admit it or not) by looking outside their own four walls for best practices and service principles.

At Mid-Continent, we have done the same, and John has been an important part of our journey. His experience with the manufacturing and

distribution industries as well as the library world well positions him to help us look outside ourselves and challenge the status quo. I invited John into our library to help us question the conventional wisdom around our service events. He challenged us to streamline our service flows, employ "first touch" principles, and consider all processes as being in a state of perpetual beta. Nothing is carved in stone. Everything has to be quicker, faster, and better. Our first project resulted in $600,000 in operational savings annually. Another way to look at it is that MCPL decreased the work at our branches by about 17 FTE. We translated these savings by moving those freed-up positions to staff a brand new library service outlet. Imagine opening a new library without any added labor costs. That's what lean and quicker, better, faster did for us and can do for you as well.

You may be thinking that no one is challenging your library like Carrollton Public Library. You may be right. Mid-Continent is autonomous and has its own dedicated funding. The chances that someone will come to our library board and mandate improvement are not very high. However, outside factors like decreasing assessed valuation can drive down library revenues. Sometimes you might want to implement something new. But, because resources are finite, to do something new you will have to stop doing something else. The latter has been more frequently the case at MCPL. Regardless of the motive, lean can be a very effective strategy.

Like our process improvements projects at Mid-Continent, John and I have collaborated throughout this book. Potter's Perspective, Points, and Ponderings are intended to ground our collaboration squarely in the reality of the library world. We did not want this book to be an academic exercise, but a real conversation of action.

In that light, the question posed in this chapter for your library is will you ride the wave of change or be swept under by the tide of change? As a first step of action, I highly recommend you read John's book, *Lean Library Management*, so you too can sail to a future of relevance by navigating a more streamlined and responsive boat.

NOTES

1. John J. Huber, *Lean Library Management: Eleven Strategies for Reducing Costs and Improving Customer Services* (New York: Neal-Schuman, 2011).
2. "UK Libraries Out of Use by 2020," BBC News, April 27, 2004, http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/uk_news/3661831.stm.

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About the Authors

JOHN J. HUBER formed the management consulting firm of J. Huber and Associates in 1986. Focused on the tools, principles, and concepts of lean, he has dedicated his career to helping organizations dramatically improve their customer service through improved process performance. As a pioneer in the TPS/lean revolution, he has traveled the country assisting more than 100 manufacturing, distribution, retail, and library organizations transform their operations. For the library world, he has developed breakthrough ideas including the holds label solution and the no-totes delivery solution for such clients as the New York Public Library, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, Tulsa City-County Library, Mid-Continent Public Library, and Austin Public Library. The author of *Lean Library Management: Eleven Strategies for Reducing Costs and Improving Customer Services* (Neal-Schuman, 2011), Huber has a bachelor's degree in industrial engineering and management from Oklahoma State University and has acquired three US patents.

STEVEN V. POTTER is the library director and CEO at Mid-Continent Public Library (MCPL) in Missouri, which in 2014 was awarded the prestigious National Medal for Museum and Library Service, and an adjunct professor at University of Missouri. Steven holds a BA in history, an MA in library science, and an MPA in public administration. The MCPL system serves more than 750,000 people, has one of the nation's largest summer reading programs, and is known for their array of innovative services. MCPL is home to the Midwest Genealogy Center, one of the nation's preeminent resources for family history, providing access to almost three-quarters of a million on-site materials. MCPL's Woodneath Library Center was opened in 2013 and includes the Story Center, which houses Woodneath Press, an on-site bookmaking printer; a digital storytelling technology lab; a recording booth; and an archive of oral, written, and digital stories produced at the center.

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