

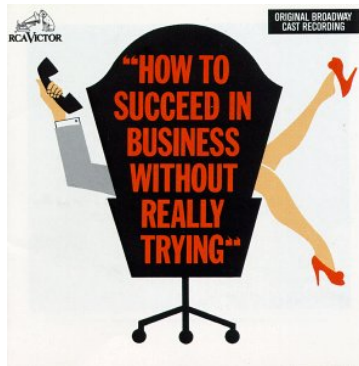
Library Advocacy: **The Economic Impact of Today's Public Library**

Association of Connecticut Library Boards
November 10, 2001

10 November 2011

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How To Succeed In **Library Advocacy (Without Really Trying)**



John E. Arnold

former Library Trustee, former Library Commissioner,
and current Finance Committee member

10 November 2011

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Obligatory Disclaimers

- My personal opinions and not the opinion of any Board or Committee
- Your mileage **will** vary.
- Every personal and community dynamic is unique.
 - Adopt what you think will work for you and your situation.
 - **Listen. Learn. Share. Repeat.**

Without Really Trying?

- Ok. Ok.
How about this?
 - Without making it seem like **work!**
- Play to your strengths!
 - and **develop new strengths**

The (Never Ending) Advocacy Process

- Simultaneously...
 - Living + Observing → **Learning**
 - Reflecting on learning → **Believing**
 - Sharing our beliefs → **Telling**
- Proposition:
 - Advocacy is when you believe so much, you want/need to tell your story



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Today's Economy. Today's Concerns.

- Cost of government
- Priorities of government

“While some advocates may insist that the programs they care most about constitute government’s ‘core’ mission, it is simply not credible to claim that 100% of government deserves that designation.”

Eric Kriss
(former) Sec. of Administration and Finance (Mass.)
Jan. 30, 2003

<http://www.mass.gov/eoaf/Managing03FiscalCrisis.html>

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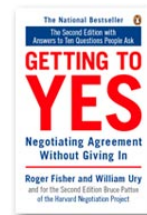
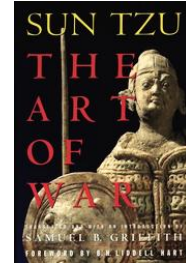
Know *Both* Sides

- “If you know both yourself and your enemy, you can come out of hundreds of battles without danger.”
Sun Tzu – The Art of War

- But, of course, **‘they’** are not the enemy. *They* may (or may not) be your friends or your neighbors.

They are voters and taxpayers.
And have their own point of view – that deserves respect.

- Your job... Persuasion... **Getting to Yes!**



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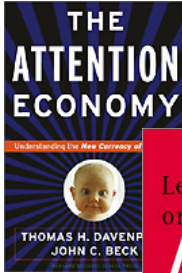
Your Library Budget's *Journey*

- Refining your skills
 - Making your story **real**
 - Crafting your **message**
- Re-assessing. Deciding.
 - **Practically** feasible?
 - **Financially** feasible?
 - **Politically** feasible?

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Paying Attention to Get Attention



Learning to manage your organization's scarcest asset

Attention!

By John C. Beck and Thomas H. Davenport

Sitting on your desk right now is a proposal from one of your department heads. It describes a project you would love to undertake. It would enhance your company's competitiveness. You have the money in your budget to approve it.

You're turning it down.

Why? Because apart from the money, it will cost your organization something else—something far more dear than dollars. It's clear that, in order to succeed, the project will demand *attention*.

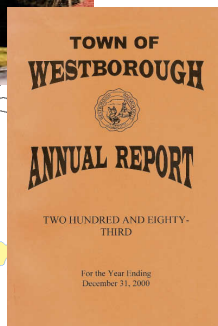
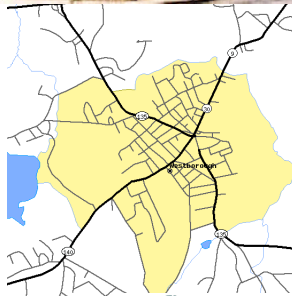
And that's something, unfortunately, you're flat out of. ▶▶

- *The Attention Economy*
 - Davenport & Beck
- As library advocates, we need to **get** people's attention
- But we need to **pay** attention, too!
 - What gets **your** attention?
- Learn from your own experiences

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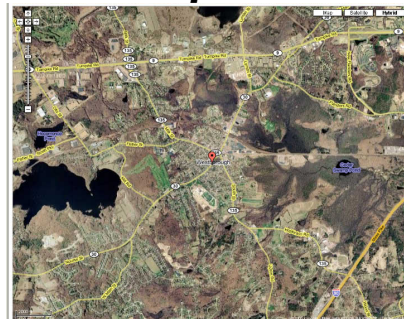
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Know Your Community



The Westborough News
TOWNONLINE.com

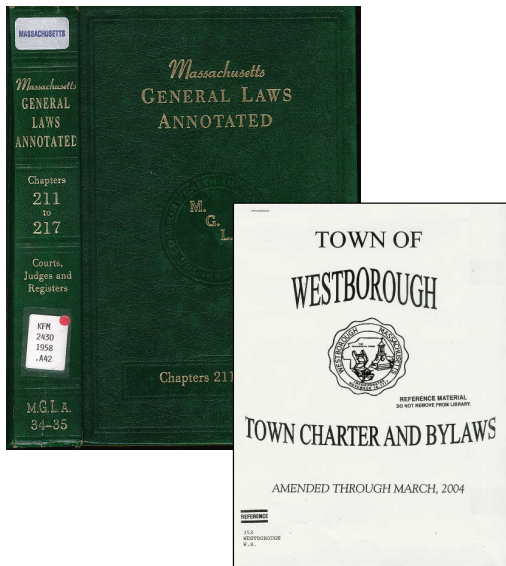
- Annual Report
- Map
- Newspapers
- *The People*



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Know 'The Rules' ...



- ... or know where to find them or who to ask
- City/Town
 - Charter
 - Bylaws
- State
 - Laws & Regulations

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Today's Economy. Today's Challenges.

- Align library services with 'core government'
- Demonstrate the library's **tangible value** at an **affordable price**
 - Luckily, we can build on an outstanding legacy of providing superior value

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What If... You Were The Other Side of the Table?

- Asking for taxpayers' money is serious business
 - Justifying, explaining, comparing, questioning, ...
 - Questions to ask yourself...
 - How much of your city/town budget is spent on its library?
 - How does library funding (or trustee influence) compare to
 - the school district? police? fire? recreation?

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A postcard from 'affluent suburbia'

pop. 18,272 (Local Raise & Appropriate FY2012)

- **School Budget:** \$ 39,982,853 46.2%
- **Library Budget:** \$ 865,624 1.0%

- **School Cost per student:** \$ 11,228
- **School Cost per resident:** \$ 2,188
- **Library Cost per resident:** \$ 47

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Reflecting on Learning → Believing

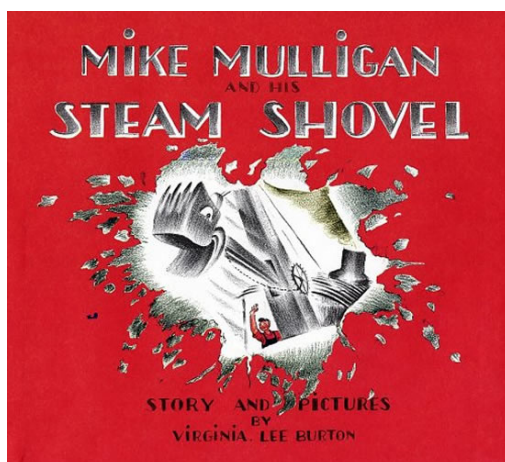


- Start with what we've learned...
- We think about it
 - Find **connections**
 - Derive **explanations**
 - Build mental **models**
 - Create **solutions**
- We decide what we **believe!**

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Solutions are Waiting to be Found



- Mike Mulligan and the Steam Shovel
 - Virginia Lee Burton
- Pros and Cons
- Per- and Con-
 - Persistent
 - Consistent

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Today's Society. What is 'value'?

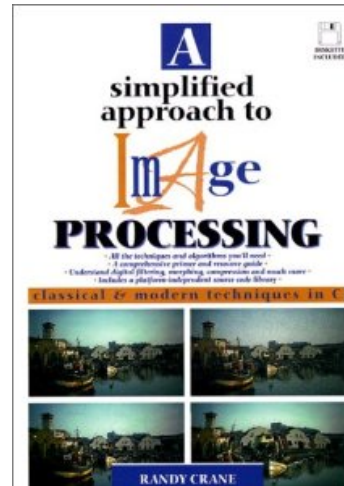
- Value: *What something is worth or
What do I get in exchange for...*
- is a moving target that must be constantly re-assessed.
- Paying attention amid constant change
 - **Customers:** 'our market'
 - **Competition:** for what we do, customers' time/attention
 - **Differentiation**
- Searching for
 - Sustainable, competitive advantage
 - Ways to create and measure **customer value**

'Back of the Envelope' Math

- Approx. **\$47 per person per year**
or **91.1¢ per person per week**
- How can your taxpayers relate to this?
 - ...less than one textbook (or magazine subscription)
 - ...the price of a hardcover book + a movie ticket
- What comparisons would help convince **your** city/town?

What about Library as 'test drive'?

- A Simplified Approach to Image Processing
 - Randy Crane
- Good luck finding it in a bookstore.
- But... my library could get it via Interlibrary Loan!

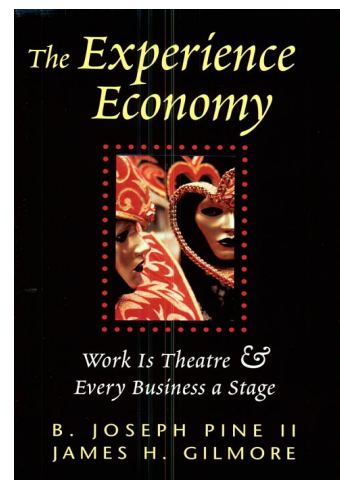


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Progression of Economic Value

- What's the library **experience** for your customers?
- How do you **transform** your customers?

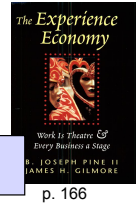
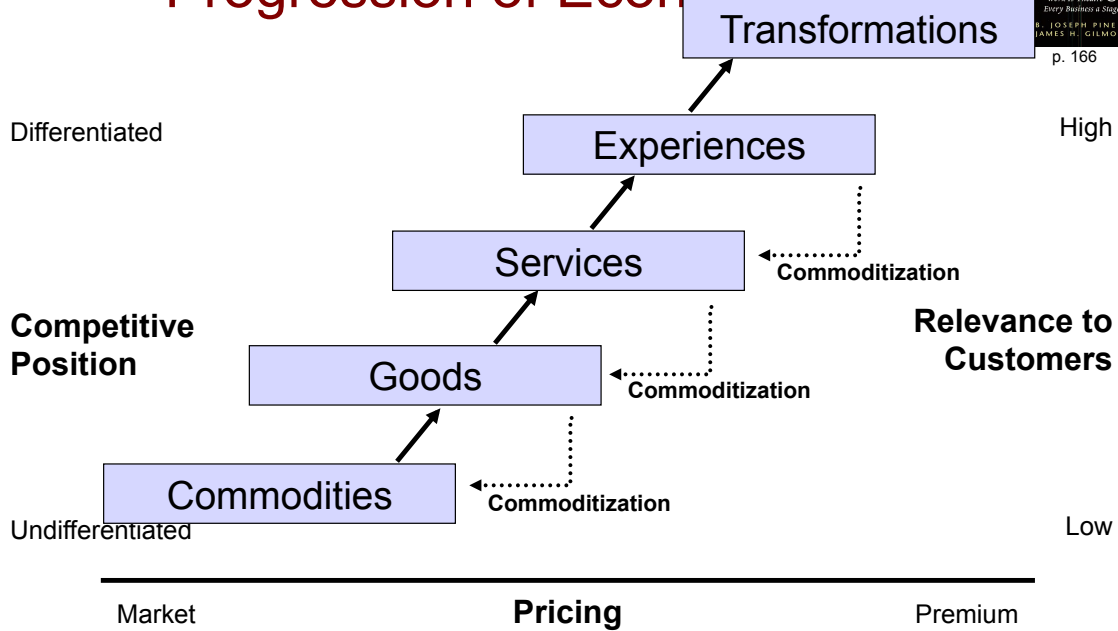


"The Experience Economy"
Pine, B. Joseph and Gilmore, James H.
Harvard Business School Press 1999
Boston, MA USA
ISBN: 0-87584-819-2

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Progression of Economic Value



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Library Experiences and Transformations

- Is your library
 - A great place for the books?
 - A great place for people? To read, learn, meet, grow?
 - A place that people *want* to visit?
- Why do your *current* customers use the library?
- What would it take to get *more/new* people to experience your library?

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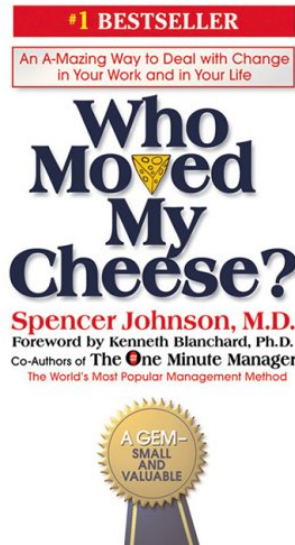
Some Ideas for Improving the Value of Your Library

- Minimizing *customer sacrifice* (p. 78)
 - What each customer **exactly wants**
 - What each customer **settles for**
Customer Sacrifice
 - How can you minimize your customer sacrifice?
 - Ability to meet and talk to other people?
 - Adequate desk space?
 - Snacks and drinks?
 - Convenient internet access?
 - A view out the window?
 - A feeling that they're welcome?
 - A feeling that the books are to be used, not protected?

Some Ideas for Improving the Value of Your Library

- Minimizing *customer sacrifice* (p. 78)
 - Turning the tables...
 - What does someone sacrifice by **not** using your library?
Do they **know** what they're missing?
 - Free and ready access to a variety of information sources?
 - Archival material?
 - Heat? Electricity? Wi-fi?

A Parable about *Change*

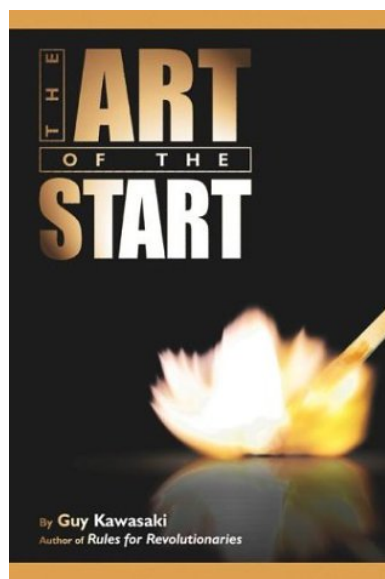


- *Who moved my cheese?*
 - Spencer Johnson
- A parable about change
 - Sniff, Scurry, Hem, and Haw
- ***“What would you do if you weren’t afraid?”***

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Get Started



- *The Art of the Start*
 - Guy Kawasaki
- Entrepreneur is ***“the state of mind of people who want to alter the future.”***
 - Not just for business!
- 5 things to accomplish
 - Make meaning
 - Make mantra
 - Get going
 - Define your model
 - Milestones, Assumptions, and Tasks (MAT)

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‘Making Meaning’ for your Library

- How is your library different from...?
- How does your library compete with...?
 - Amazon, Barnes & Noble
 - Google
 - Starbucks, Panera Bread

(If we don't know, we can't expect taxpayers to know!)

‘Making Meaning’ for your Library

- Libraries ***Transform*** People
 - At every stage of their lives!
 - Toddlers → Students → Adults
- Guiding people to their aspirations by enabling:
 - Literacy
 - Education
 - Economic Development
 - Knowledgeable, Informed Citizens

Sharing our Beliefs → Telling



- Our life becomes an expression of what we believe
 - Telling
 - Sharing
 - Persuading
 - Convincing
 - **Advocating**

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Taking Your Advocacy *'On The Road'*

- **Know your audience**
 - Their **role**?
 - Decisions? Recommendations?
 - Their **process**?
 - Where do they get their information?
 - Do you know what they have?
 - Can you make their job easier?
 - Maybe even turn them into library users!
 - Getting their **time** and **attention**
 - An 'elevator speech' for your budget/service objectives



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Telling Your *Own* Story...

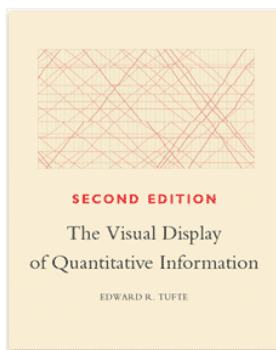
- Don't assume it's being told for you
- Make the most of your 'face time'
 - Talk about changes in the budget
 - You'll get asked about them anyway
 - Local success stories & expected outcomes
 - What's in it for the residents?
- Who's doing the talking? Who's are your storytellers?
 - Trustee? Director? Voter? Affected resident?



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Make your case **clearly**.

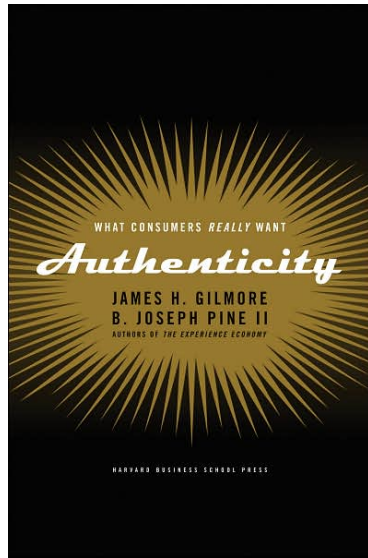


- **Find** the key points
- **Paint** the proverbial picture
 - Examples
 - Diagrams
- **Avoid** jargon!
- **Anticipate** questions
- **Give** direct answers
- **Minimize** surprises

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Be Yourself: Be *Authentic* !



- “Your success isn’t in doing what we do; it’s in discovering your own way. [...] That means commit yourself to being who you say you are.” (p. 152)
- Be sincere
- Be polite
- Follow through

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Starting *without* extra staff or funding

The silver lining in *The Experience Economy*:

- **“The best things in life are not things.”** (p. 20)
- **“The first requirement for workers in a transformation business is that they truly care.”** (p. 182)

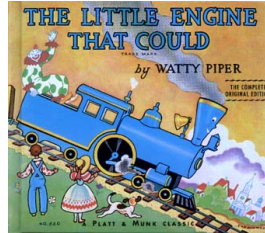
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The expert in anything was once a beginner.

I think I can.

I think I can.



- *The Little Engine That Could*
 - Watty Piper

I **know** you can!

I **know** you can!

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- **Show** that you care
- **Demonstrate** the benefit to the community
- **Convince** others why they should care, too.

Good luck!

john.arnold@linkagesystems.com

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