

# Expanding the Library Walls

**Mary Ellen Bates**

**BatesInfo.com**

**October 2020**

#SLA2020 #OneSLA #SLADrivingForward



October 2020



# It started with a white paper...

"How can info pros most effectively make the case for ROI of information services?"

Interviewed innovative info pros

Results in CCC white paper ([tiny.cc/library-walls](https://tiny.cc/library-walls))

#SLA2020 #OneSLA #SLADrivingForward



October 2020



# Three key takeaways

It's not about doing more with less, it's about doing something more valuable

Make information discoverable, not just accessible

Take a proactive approach to justifying content spend

#SLA2020 #OneSLA #SLADrivingForward



October 2020



# Doing something more valuable

*"We're plugged into the bigger perspective, looking at where our resources have a direct impact."*

Virtually embed info pros for project teams

Coach staff to watch for stories about impact – "value moments"

#SLA2020 #OneSLA #SLADrivingForward



October 2020



# Doing something more valuable

*"Our vision is to address the world's most critical problems with science. How do you measure that?!?"*

Use bibliometric tools to ID impact of published authors within the org

Highlight authors' collaborations w/ other orgs

#SLA2020 #OneSLA #SLADrivingForward



October 2020



# Doing something more valuable

Integrate insights into metrics that the org cares about  
Become the standard for evaluating researchers' impact  
Tie into compensation, bonuses!

#SLA2020 #OneSLA #SLADrivingForward



October 2020



# Making info more discoverable

*"We bring the information-sharing perspective to our client groups."*

Lobbying for funding datasets beyond single project

Offer training, set up portals

ID alternative resources, impact of loss of resource

#SLA2020 #OneSLA #SLADrivingForward



October 2020



# Making info more discoverable

*"I see the library as a service rather than a place, and part of our service is helping clients get better value from our e-content."*

Licensing content in structured XML format

Semantic enrichment of text with structured metadata

Identifying or building APIs to aggregate, analyze data

#SLA2020 #OneSLA #SLADrivingForward



October 2020





# Making info more discoverable

*"We're the central connecting point for groups that otherwise get siloed. That makes our ROI tangible."*

Bring together dataset users across your org

Support new ways to collaborate

Ask them to help articulate the value of that dataset

#SLA2020 #OneSLA #SLADrivingForward



October 2020



# Making info more discoverable

Info pros take an institutional look at spending

We manage *our* department budget

We evaluate *org-wide* impact of our budget

How do we demonstrate that?

Show up at meetings, always have an anecdote (yes, brag),  
support new initiatives

#SLA2020 #OneSLA #SLADrivingForward



October 2020



# Proactively justifying content spend

*"We think about the whole life cycle of the information we buy."*

Who else in the organization needs this info?

What else does this info need to be more valuable?

How do your users describe the value of info services? (ASK them!)

# Proactively justifying content spend

*"Every year, I work with our sourcing people to evaluate one of our biggest platforms. They know I've already gotten rid of the nice-to-have resources"*

ID all user groups and use cases

Look at competitive offerings

Determine the best resource today

#SLA2020 #OneSLA #SLADrivingForward



October 2020



# It's a never-ending process

*"It's easy to get frustrated when you're always explaining the info center to another new executive."*

Have a fresh story in your (mental) back pocket

Mention library collaborations, embedded staff, silos broken down

You can never let up; constant engagement

#SLA2020 #OneSLA #SLADrivingForward



October 2020



# To build ROI communication strategy:

WHO

WHY

WHAT

HOW

WHEN

#SLA2020 #OneSLA #SLADrivingForward



October 2020



# To build ROI communication strategy:

## WHO are you talking with?

Engage all stakeholders involved in sourcing content

Stay in contact with allies & info gatekeepers

“ I focus on one key person from each group using a dataset, developing a relationship. I love hearing stories about how valuable the info center is. ”

# To build ROI communication strategy:

WHY is the information center valuable?

Review info center's operations  
ANNUALLY to ensure strategic alignment

Collect staff's "value moments" that highlight ROI

“

We stay informed of goals and direction of the company and try to find ways to bring value to what they decide for our mission, our vision and our value. ”



# To build ROI communication strategy:

WHAT impact does the info center have?

Use tools that measure impacts that matter

Create compelling data visualizations of ROI

“If our funding is threatened, we show the impact – the tools that won't work any more. It's not just a reduced expense; it's an increased burden.”

# To build ROI communication strategy:

HOW are you describing your services?

Talk about outcomes, not activities  
Solicit value statements from key users

“ I'm always reminding my staff to connect to the bigger perspective. Ask the client what impact this project will have. ”

# To build ROI communication strategy:

WHEN are you talking about your value?

Advocating for the info center is an ongoing activity

Encourage all staff members to have their own value statements ready

“ Never get comfortable; never get complacent. There are always new people in upper management that you have to educate. ”

# Mary Ellen Bates

mbates@batesinfo.com

+1 303 772 7095

www.BatesInfo.com

LinkedIn: maryellenbates

Facebook: maryellenbates

#SLA2020 #OneSLA #SLADrivingForward



October 2020

