

# **Total Quality Management in Information Services**

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# **Total Quality Management in Information Services**

**Guy St Clair**

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**Dedicated To Andrew Berner  
and to Miriam A. Drake,  
who has greatly influenced  
my thinking in matters relating  
quality management to information services**

# Introduction to the series

## **A broader management perspective for information services**

For several years - decades, it seems - librarians and other information services professionals have lamented the fact that there is not enough emphasis on management in their training. They learn their subjects, and librarians especially connect very early on in their training to the concepts of service and the organization of information. Management skills, however, are frequently neglected or given minimal attention, and many information services professionals find themselves working in the corporate environment, research and technology organizations, government information units, or community/public administration organizations where management skills are needed. Much of what they need they learn on the job; other approaches, such as continuing education programs, are utilized by those who have the initiative to recognize that they must do something to educate themselves to be managers. Some of it works and some of it does not.

Bowker-Saur's *Information Management Series*, for which I serve as Series Editor, seeks to address this need in the information services community. For this series (and indeed, since the entire field of information management is strongly predicted by many to be going in this direction), the concept of information services is being defined very broadly. The time has come, it seems to me, to recognize that the various constituent units of our society concerned with information have many of the same goals and objectives, and, not surprisingly, many of the same concerns. The practice of management is one of these, and for our purposes it does not matter if the reader is employed as an information manager, information provider, information specialist, or indeed, as an information counsellor (as these information workers have been described by one of the leaders of business and industry). In fact, it does not matter whether the reader is employed in information technology, telecommunications, traditional librarianship, records management, corporate or organizational archives, the information brokerage field, publishing, consulting, or any of the myriad branches of information

services (including service to the information community and the many vendors who make up that branch of the profession). These new titles on the management of information services have been chosen specifically for their value to all who are part of this community of information workers.

Although much work is being done in these various disciplines, little of it concentrates on management, and that which is done generally concentrates on one or another of the specific subgroups of the field. This series seeks to unite management concepts throughout information services, and whereas some of the titles will be directed to a specific group, most will be broad-based and will attempt to address issues of concern to all information services employees. For example, one book in the series deals with entrepreneurial librarianship, which would seem to be limited to the library profession but in fact offers information and guidance to anyone working in the information services field who is willing to incorporate entrepreneurial thinking into his or her work. Another title looks at corporate memory from the perspective of data and records management, and would seem to be limited to those who are practicing the discipline of records management. In fact, the book has been specifically structured to be of value to anyone who is working in the information services field, that 'umbrella' concept of information services described above.

As we attempt to bring general management practices into the realm of information services, it will be pointed out that the practice of management is addressed within the organizations or communities that employ information workers. This is true, and certainly in the corporate world (and, arguably, in the public and academic library communities as well), there are plenty of occasions for information services employees to participate in management training as provided in-house. There is nothing wrong with that approach and in many organizations it works very well, but the training does not proceed from an information services point of view, thus forcing the information worker to adapt, as best he or she can, the management practices of the organization to the management practices needed for the best provision of information services. The titles of the Bowker-Saur *Information Services Management Series* will enable the information worker to relate *information* management to *organizational* management, thus putting the information worker (especially the information executive) in a position of considerable strength in the organization or community where he or she is employed. By understanding management principles (admittedly, as frequently 'borrowed' from the general practice of management) and relating them to the way the information services unit is organized, not only does the information services employee position him or herself for the better provision of information services, but the entire information services unit is positioned as a respectable participant in organizational or community operations.



This last point perhaps needs some elaboration, for it should be made clear that the books in the series are not intended exclusively for the corporate or specialized information services field. It is our intention to provide useful management criteria for all kinds of information services, including those connected to public, academic or other publicly supported libraries. Our basic thesis is that quality management leads to quality services, regardless of whether the information services activity is privately or publicly funded, whether it is connected with a private research or public government agency, or indeed, whether it is a temporary information unit or whether it is part of a permanently funded and staffed operation. Writing for this series will be authors who, I am sure, will challenge some of the usual barriers to effective management practices in this or that type of library or information services unit, and certainly there will be librarians, records managers, archivists and others who will be able to relate some of their management practices in such a way that CIOs and computer services managers will benefit from the telling. In other words, our attempt here is to clear away the usual preconceptions about management within the various branches of information services, to do away with the concept of 'well-that-might-work-for-you-but-it-won't-work-for-me' kind of thinking. We can no longer afford to fight turf battles about whether or not management is 'appropriate' in one or other of the various subunits of information provision. What we must do, and what the *Information Services Management Series* expects to do, is to bring together the best of all of us, and to share our management expertise so that we all benefit.

*Guy St Clair*  
*Series Editor*



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## Foreword

'Core assessment planning', 'long-term operating infrastructure', 'strategic customer-oriented centralization initiatives' - it seems as if every new business book and every article in a professional journal touts a trendy, jargon-laden business concept or management technique. Professionals who care about their organizations, colleagues and clients cannot help becoming confused and overwhelmed, because professionals who care are always on the lookout for new tools that will help them do their jobs. So they must continually ask themselves, 'Which new management concepts are worthwhile investments of time? Which are merely the latest business fads?'

Guy St Clair has seized on a concept that represents a worthwhile investment for all management professionals. Of course, total quality management isn't a totally new concept. As the author points out in the introduction, TQM was 'the management war cry of the eighties'. And for some people it has become yesterday's news. But total quality management is a noteworthy methodology for many reasons, chief among them being that it focuses on customers' needs, which is precisely where the focus in management belongs. It doesn't matter whether a professional works in a corporate, academic or government environment: serving the customer is the manager's life work. This is a simple idea (the best ones usually are), and it has been said many times before. But it cannot be said too often because the focus on the customer is too easily lost amid the hectic pace and the competing demands for accountability in today's work environments.

Total quality management reasserts that the manager is primarily accountable to the customer. It then works backward from the customer's perspective to achieve a continuous improvement in processes that directly benefit an organization's clients.

Guy St Clair's thoughts on TQM make his book a worthwhile read for any management professional in any type of work environment. The author's greatest triumphs, however, are his practical suggestions on the

best ways to weave quality management techniques into the day-to-day practices of the information professional. He suggests, for example, that the best way to bring TQM to information services is to 'lessen the emphasis on process and put the emphasis on analysis'. This is a modification that engages the information professional's judgment and tradition of intellectualism.

The author provides a complete and clearly defined course on TQM for any type or size of information services organization. He leads the reader through the most important concepts and shows how they apply to the professional's goals. He then offers a step-by-step guide for developing, implementing and benchmarking a TQM plan.

As with the other titles in this series, *Total Quality Management in Information Services* demonstrates Guy St Clair's editorial excellence. As always, he shows a deft hand in the organization, depth and clarity of his material. The professional who invests time in it will be rewarded with new tools that will enhance not only his or her provision of services, but also the role of the information services organization within the larger organization or community it serves.

So, the next time you are confronted with such fashionable but overblown concepts as 'fundamental strategy propositions' or 'value-based marketing mechanisms', you can be assured that your time is better spent with the proven ideas and techniques embodied in the book in your hands.

*Joseph J. Fitzsimmons*  
*Retired President, CEO and Chairman of UMI,*  
*a Bell & Howell Company*

## **Introduction**

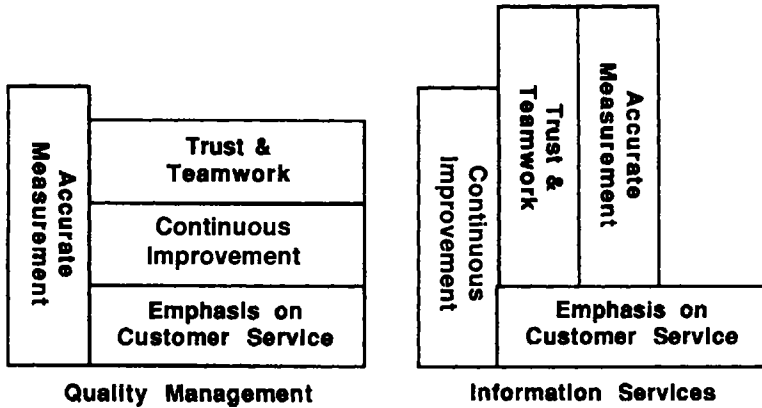
# **‘Total quality management means quality service’**

Few subjects generate as much controversy in the library and information services profession as quality management. Why this should be the case in a discipline in which quality management – as accepted by all practitioners – is the basis upon which it is built is something of a mystery. Such ‘essentials’ of quality management as an emphasis on customer service, accurate measurement, continuous improvement, work relationships based on trust and teamwork, when added to a desire for quality services and the support and enthusiasm of senior organizational management,\* would seem to be as fundamental to the successful management of an information services facility as they would be to the management of any entity. Surely any library, records management unit, archive, computer services department, or any of the other types of organizational entities concerned with the delivery of information services, products or consultations, could benefit from the practice of quality management principles.

However, there is much resistance in the information services field to the use of the ‘quality’ approach to management. Why we cannot come to grips with this difficult phenomenon is a subject which might be worth pursuing in a more scientific and empirical manner one day. For the present, though, we can be satisfied with a more modest approach. If we want to attempt to understand why information services practitioners shy away from engaging in formal quality management activities, we must remember that in practically all organizations in which information services units have been developed and established, the management and delivery of information is usually relegated to a less-than-essential role in

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\*It should be noted that these four ‘essentials’, as identified by Michael Barrier in a famous essay (1992), and the others, which I identified and first wrote about in my book on customer service, will be repeatedly referred to in this work, to the extent that they might be considered to be a sort of running theme or pattern in this book.



**THE SHAPES MAY BE DIFFERENT,  
BUT THE BUILDING BLOCKS ARE THE SAME**

the organizational framework. Having been so positioned (or perceived as being so positioned), the information services unit is thus not taken very 'seriously' in the management operations of the organization or community (if we are speaking of public information-delivery facilities, such as a public library, say, or a governing authority's vital statistics department). The further result is that the *management* of that unit is not taken very 'seriously', and we have a situation in which all stakeholders in that unit's operation – senior organizational managers who have authority over its operations, the customers who come to it for information products, services, and consultations, and even its own managers and employees – have difficulty seeing the management of the unit in quality terms. In fact, for many of these stakeholders the very fact that the information unit is a service facility and not a production department means that it exists in a sort of operational 'free zone', not expected to bring in any sort of return on the organizational or community investment and certainly not to be managed with any emphasis on management criteria that look towards a return on investment. Consequently, these information services units are undermanaged, often to the extent that any management or performance evaluation is casual and extremely 'loose' (in terms of what is expected of other departments and units), and the notion of bringing anything as sophisticated as quality management into the operation is not only not of interest, it is rejected out of hand as being 'inappropriate', 'not related to what we do', or – typically – 'too business-oriented' for a library or information services function.

Of course such a description is a vast oversimplification, but pieces of it come forward in practically every discussion one has with information services managers. Regardless of the type of operation under discussion, there is almost always a 'reason' why quality management principles



won't 'fit', and while much of the argument in favor of adhering to quality principles will be listened to respectfully, there is usually resistance. In their useful compilation of articles on quality management in the library community (especially with respect to academic libraries), Susan Jurow and Susan B. Barnard (1993) identified four barriers which prevent the adoption of total quality management in libraries, and reference to their analysis is appropriate here:

1. **Vocabulary.** Librarians are uncomfortable with the use of terms and concepts affiliated with business and the marketplace. Librarians are not engaged in "business" and, in the minds of many librarians, the linking of "business" concepts and methodologies with the "scholarly" and erudite environment of the profession of librarianship demeans librarianship.
2. **Commitment.** Not limited to librarianship, a lack of commitment often dooms a quality process. The energy, resources, and, particularly, the time required for the successful realization of results from a quality initiative are simply not always available, and the managers of some libraries are of the opinion that they cannot "afford" to invest in the organization and implementation of a quality program.
3. **Process.** Librarians are "impatient with process and eager for closure", so there is often a disinclination to invest in a process – such as TQM – that concentrates more on systematic analysis and less on the "quick fix". Librarians are accustomed to solving problems – their clients' and their own – quickly. A quality initiative with its promise of success far down the road is distinctly unappealing.
4. **Professionalism.** Often based more on ignorance or cultural inexperience as much as anything else, librarians as professionals have difficulty with some components of the quality management "culture". Professionals are "mystified by, if not fearful of, the consequences of what they think could mean turning over their services and practices, which are based on tradition, standards, and respected bodies of knowledge, to the uninformed whims of customers." (Jurow and Barnard, 1993, pp. 5–6).

To stop here, though, implies that this is an 'either/or' situation, and that the information services manager must either attempt to apply total quality management (and/or its many variations) in the information setting and relinquish professionalism, or avoid the move to quality management and retain professionalism. What a simplistic approach! The picture should not be painted so bleakly, for there is much in quality management that fits with the goals and objectives of sophisticated library and information services management. In fact, one place to begin (which hopefully will come through as another of the themes of this book) is to look at the best practices of library and information services management and match them to the best features of TQM. For example, if an impediment to the adoption of TQM for librarians is say, their preference for the 'quick fix' and their avoidance of process and analysis, perhaps the

best way to bring TQM to librarianship is to lessen the emphasis on process and put it on analysis, incorporating into the analysis the professional judgment and intellectual consideration that librarians' 'tradition, standards, and respected bodies of knowledge' have imbued them with. It may not be pure TQM, but a distinctive characteristic of any quality approach to management is that no one formula is going to work in every situation. If this is so, then what is wrong with adapting TQM to information services management, rather than the other way round? The answer is of course that there is nothing wrong with this approach, and it is what must be done if TQM is to be successfully applied in the information environment.

### **Why total quality management in information services?**

One reason why this book has been written is frankly and candidly proselytical: it is a direct and blatant attempt to persuade those who have management responsibility for the delivery of information services and products in their organizations and communities to look to the inclusion of quality management practices in their work. It truly does not matter what kind of operation it is, whether it is a library, records management unit, or other type of information delivery function, and the size of the operation is similarly irrelevant. It is my strong belief that the accepted principles of quality management can be as effective in a one-person operation as they are in a multistaffed information facility: the difference is merely one of focus (and the smaller the operation, the greater the chances of success, simply because the staff responsible for direct delivery of information services are closer to the customer, but this point can and will be argued). Regardless of the size of the operation or the type of information facility, quality management principles can and should be part of the management structure.

Nevertheless, there are other reasons for initiating a quality program, and it doesn't matter whether the program is self-directed (that is, originates within the information unit itself) or mandated from a higher administrative authority. The primary reason, of course, has to be information delivery from the customer's point of view. In all service delivery operations today we hear much about 'the authority of the customer', but most of us who are involved in actually delivering those services have some difficulty giving that concept its due. We are uncomfortable with having someone else – even if it is the customer for whom our operation exists – drive the delivery of that service. But in information services we simply cannot step back from the authority of the customer because, with very few exceptions, the services we provide and the information we deliver can be obtained elsewhere. The world today is one of competition, and for every information function (except for unique

materials and the information contained within them) the customer who comes to us could go somewhere else if he or she chose to.

Yet there is more to it than simply meeting the needs of customers. Of course, this is why the information services unit exists in the first place, but another piece of the picture that must be considered, particularly from a managerial point of view, is the place of the unit in the organizational structure. Again, the framework of the structure of the organization doesn't matter: its senior managers may have decided to operate under a traditional hierarchical management framework, or have gone for the more modern flattened management structure, or even moved into the almost avant garde web management structure that is beginning to be seen in some organizations. Regardless of the parent company or authority's management structure, the information services unit requires a role of some prominence and a quality management program ensures that position. Why? Because it sends a message to the decision makers (and the resource-allocation authorities, if they are not one and the same) that the information unit is one in which the business of management is taken seriously. This is, of course, very much a matter of perception, but in the eyes of the people who matter, who have influence in the organization or the community. Once these people are convinced, the role of the unit is considerably enhanced.

However, competition for the customer's business and enhancing our unit's role in the organization or community are not really the reasons we look to quality management: we do it because it's the right thing to do. Regardless of the arrangement under which the information unit is supported, as information services managers we have a responsibility to provide the best information delivery that we can. It is part of the contract - sometimes only implicit and not specifically articulated - that we and our staffs have with the governing authority with senior management responsibility for the support of the information services unit. And, of course, with the information customers themselves, who are presumably part of the organization or community for which that authority also has senior management responsibility.

As is discussed in Chapter Three, information services management is founded on the principles of planning, organizing, leading and controlling. We do these things because we are part of a greater system, to which it is assumed we are going to give the *best* that we can give in terms of products, services or other outputs, from the system over which we ourselves have managerial authority. But we cannot give our best if there is no firm definition of what 'the best' is. We thus find ourselves seeking measurement tools, calling forth all kinds of schemes and mechanisms so that we can tell those who need to know that we are doing a good job.

In librarianship, for example, we have traditionally relied on usage statistics to judge how good our services are; but, as the current debate about effectiveness measures surely indicates, in this new era in which we

are blessed with enabling technology that we can use to create information marketing systems, we do ourselves and our organizations a major disservice if we do not use these tools to identify and quantify just how effective our services are. Such worthwhile programs as specifically profiled selective dissemination of information (SDI) systems, routinized customer follow-up systems and the like, can provide data that can be manipulated and reformatted and analyzed to provide us with much information about the quality of the services we are providing. These and other mechanisms, whether they are loosely organized 'quality assurance' programs built on some external framework, or a formalized TQM system built according to the tenets of the most famous of the quality systems, or a codified system built to match the ISO 9000 standards now required for quality certification in some countries, can be used to demonstrate to senior management, community leaders, customers and staff that the information services operation is being operated as well as it can be. This is not a bad position for any manager to be in.

### **Is it relevant?**

There are, of course, those who contend that quality management schemes are no longer appropriate. As with many management trends, quality management initiatives (and particularly TQM) are often denigrated and derided.

Yes, TQM was the management war cry of the 1980s, and in some environments it has become an object of scorn in the 1990s. As the new century approaches, TQM is for many just one more management attempt to impose standardization on industries and services that get along just fine without it. For these skeptics, the less said about total quality management, quality assurance, 'quality circles' and the like, the better. These and similar attempts to codify quality, they would have us believe, are *passé*. They are no longer part of the scene for librarians and other information services managers, even for those who attempted to incorporate them into their management programs, and they probably never were.

These skeptics, however, couldn't be more wrong. If there were ever a time when management standards are needed for libraries and other information-related operations, it is now, and if there is a better set of guidelines than those that make up the quality management framework, I haven't learned about it yet. Certainly nothing we've tried in library/information services management rings as true, or offers so much potential for success, as the quality focus. Yes, the management world at large has ventured beyond TQM and moved into such replications as benchmarking, the 'fifth discipline' of the learning organization, and process re-engineering, but each of these methodologies, especially when

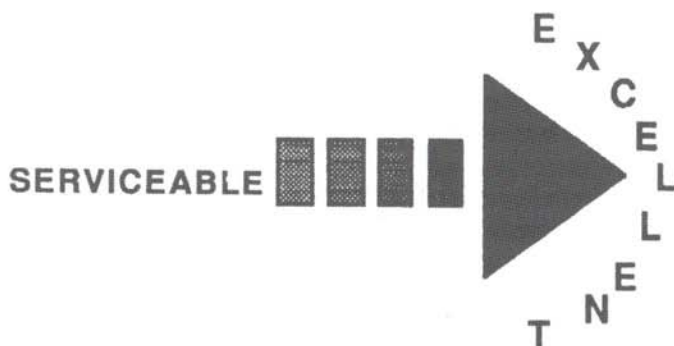
applied to the delivery of information through a library or other information services operation, is basically a piece of or closely related to what TQM has been doing all along. And, yes, there are the deliciously rewarding anecdotal methods we use for effectiveness measures (simply because we have no other methods, at least not yet, for that tricky task), but here again there is a built-in weakness to the approach, because there is no factual and objective underpinning from which the conclusions have been drawn. It is nice to hear how 'important' the information unit is, and the anecdotal presentations make us all feel good, but just *why* is it so important? What effect does that information services unit have on the organization or community of which it is a part?

Quality management helps provide the answers. The more we think about the *function* of librarianship or other information services management, and the more we study quality management and its goals, the more apparent it becomes that it is the pursuit of quality that leads to success in information delivery. Just the very seeking after quality predisposes those with managerial responsibility towards the achievement of organizational or community objectives, with respect to library and information services management.

This assertion can be demonstrated by describing the basics of quality management in information management alluded to earlier. Library and information services managers might argue some of the specifics, but from the point of view of the library/information services operation's role in the organization or community, the value of these particular fundamental attributes cannot be refuted: the emphasis on the customer in the information delivery transaction; continuous improvement and the continuous seeking after new and better ways of doing what has to be done; measurement (including both quantitative measures and, as noted above, effectiveness measures); and the value of trust and teamwork within the organizational or community framework.

Beyond these, however, in the library/information services community two other quality management characteristics point the way:

1. **Desire for quality.** In order for libraries and other information services operations to offer quality products, services and consultations to their identified customers, there must be an honest desire on the part of the service providers to provide that quality. As librarianship and most other information services disciplines seem to be predicated on the 'service ethos', so to speak, it seems slightly churlish to bring the subject up. But there are many people working in libraries or other information units who do not particularly like what they are doing, who are not particularly concerned about the level of service they provide, and who do not like their customers and patrons very much. Until these staff members have been converted to a true service ethos, and are not simply paying lip service to it because it is expected, a quality management effort is a futile exercise. Information



services managers must recognize that not all their staff will be as committed to quality information delivery as they are, and they must earnestly devise and implement initiatives to match expected quality with delivered quality.

2. **Enthusiasm and support of senior management.** Regardless of the type of library or other information unit, no quality effort can even begin to succeed without the commitment of senior management. Sadly, however, this characteristic for success is closely related to that mentioned above, for many library/information services managers have been promoted from within and may be the same uncommitted information workers who advance up the managerial hierarchy by virtue of their bureaucratic tenacity, and not because of their excellence as professional information delivery staff. These are the managers who are quick to dismiss TQM and similar activities as 'too much trouble', who, when required to institute quality programs, malign them as a 'waste of time' but condescendingly go along with them, because they have been mandated. Such a quality management program will end in dismal failure at all levels.

From a more positive perspective, however, it should be noted that there are those library/information services managers who have embarked on quality programs with great success because they recognized that such an undertaking would result in a better service for the users and easier management for them. There are many communities, organizations and businesses providing true quality management in the delivery of information services because their managers had the interest and the vision to understand just how good the operation could be, and they recognized that a quality management program would enable them to achieve that vision of goodness. Whether the impetus came from above or from the manager himself or herself, it was seized upon as an opportunity and not seen as yet another try at good management to be struggled with

without enthusiasm. In fact, those information services managers who took the initiative and proceeded with a quality program could not have done it without the support and enthusiasm of their own managers, and they made it their business to have that support and enthusiasm in place before they committed themselves to the process.

For those information services managers who are still struggling, still seeking the best methodology for moving their operations from the mere serviceable to the excellent, it is worth looking at quality management programs. The concept is not dead yet (just walking through the 'Management' section of any large bookstore will demonstrate that), and if we take the best characteristics of quality management and link them to benchmarking, business process re-engineering, systems thinking and other management methodologies, we are likely to come up with a customized practice that can lead to real benefits for the organizations and communities of which our information operations are a part. So, in response to those who think that TQM as a management tool is dead, I refer them to the many organizations where quality management makes a difference. It is a management tool that is very much alive and will remain so, simply because, when given its due (and supported by all information stakeholders), quality management *works*.

How well it works has come to my attention through much observation and study, but as much as anything else through the many interactions I have with people who talk to me about these things. The development of the ideas put forward in this book has come about over many years and through the influence of many different people. It is appropriate to acknowledge some of these colleagues and friends who are so encouraging in the work I do.

Andrew Berner, my business associate and close friend, understands my thinking and spends many hours in delightful conversation with me about these matters. In addition, I am indebted to Andrew for the graphics that illustrate these books. Miriam A. Drake is a professional manager in the information services discipline whom I respect greatly, and our many conversations on the subject of quality management, growing out of her own successful experiences, continue to provide me with much stimulation and intelligent provocation. Mimi Drake collaborated with me on an important chapter for this book and contributed the case study of the quality initiative implemented at her institution. Like Andrew Berner, Mimi Drake is a good friend as well as an esteemed professional colleague, and to the two of them I dedicate this book and thank them for their work with me over these many years.

As I developed these ideas about quality management in the information services community, I also had good conversations with and received much support from several other people. Beth Duston, my good friend and strategic partner in many projects, knows and understands my thinking about quality management and supports me as I attempt to

encourage information services practitioners to incorporate these methodologies into their work. David R. Bender, Joseph J. Fitzsimmons, Robert E. Frye, Kenneth Megill, Mary Park, Thomas Pellizzi, Ruth Seidman and Ann Wolpert have all provided useful and stimulating conversation. Barbara M. Spiegelman kindly spoke with me about her work at Westinghouse, and I was then permitted to incorporate many of her ideas into this text; I appreciate her willingness to share her experience with me. The members of the Information Futures Institute, at the semiannual meetings coordinated by my good friend Bernard Vavrek, are continually discussing these subjects in a broader context and I am grateful to them for their fellowship and exhilarating conversation. Ann Lawes, Evelin Morgenstern, and Marisa Urgo have spent many hours talking with me about these subjects and I greatly respect their opinions and their ideas. Finally, both my sons are in fields of work wherein they are expected to understand management principles and use them, and I find myself often in conversation with Gil and Austin St Clair in these matters, conversations which are rewarding for all three of us. I can state sincerely and without exaggeration that all of these people have much influence in my life as I work on these subjects, and I thank them for their continued interest in this work, and for sharing their thoughts with me.

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A technical point should be made. Although direct quotations from the literature are given, there are many occasions where I refer to people who have been interviewed in two of the publications produced by our company. *InfoManage: The International Management Newsletter for the Information Services Professional* has a monthly feature called 'The Information Interview', in which a prominent leader in the information services field describes his or her work and some facet of that work which is relevant to the subject under discussion. *The One-Person Library: A Newsletter for Librarians and Managers* also includes occasional 'profiles'. For both of these newsletters, I am responsible for interviewing these people and for writing the articles. Therefore, for many references to particular people, or discussions of their ideas, there are no formal citations, as the information was gleaned in the interview or profile. Obviously, however, if the interview or profile is quoted directly, it is so cited. In both cases I am grateful to these people for allowing me to interview them, and for contributing both to our newsletters and to this book by sharing with me their insights about the management of information services.



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## **Part 1**

# **Quality and Information Services**



## Chapter One

# The information services environment

Within the library and information services discipline there has long been tension between the professional staff who deliver the information products, services and consultations, and others in the general management community. For many information services practitioners, management as a scientific discipline was too often connected with business and the pursuit of wealth, and was rejected as compromising the 'pure' and untainted delivery of information. For these people the noble pursuit of information for its own sake, with no questions asked of the customer, seemed almost ideal. During the last half of the twentieth century this attitude has been taken to its extreme, most notably in the public library field, where the librarians - as the arbiters of information delivery - would show the users how to find the information, even teach them, as part of their educational role, how to use the different tools and resources that would enable them to find the information, but would take no responsibility for the quality of the information delivered and most certainly would not enquire about how it was to be used.

Despite the fact that the very act of enquiring makes the information interview a more productive one, and enables the professional to make a wiser choice about what types of materials and information to direct the customer to, issues relating to privacy and the individual customer's 'right to know' became far more important than the librarian's need for complete information about the information quest. And although this situation would seem to suggest that the authority of the customer was indeed being given full consideration in the information transaction, it actually meant that the librarian was doing two things. First, the librarian was putting himself or herself in a position to pass judgment on what information the user should receive (becoming, as it were, a 'moral' arbiter, a critical and judgmental mediator, in the information delivery transaction). More seriously, the information services worker was relieving himself or herself of professional accountability: if he or she didn't know how the information would be used, the librarian could not