

**ADDRESS BY HON. D. GOKHOOL,
MINISTER OF INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND
RESEARCH**

WORKSHOP ON THE THEME:

**“KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT
AND MARKETING”**

SATURDAY 18 JULY 2009

AT 10 00 HRS

Mon Choisy Hotel (ex Coralia)

Royal Road, Mont Choisy

**Dr The Hon Vasant Kumar Bunwaree, Minister of
Education, Culture and H.R.**

**Mrs Belinda Ramnauth, Chairperson of the association of
Professional Librarians**

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very pleased to be here to talk to you today. I am also pleased that your association has organized a workshop to reflect on the theme 'knowledge management and marketing'. It is a most appropriate theme for libraries have to centre stage in the community not only of the future but of the present as well.

For me centre stage means being a central, essential and permanent feature of the knowledge society we are creating and in which we are going to live. A place where people, things and importantly books, information and literature are the focus of interest, a place of influence, a place which is at the heart of the a knowledge society.

A knowledge society will allow anyone irrespective of background, and age, to have free access to the vast store of

information and inspiration they contain. We all know that knowledge will enrich people's minds and spirits, raise educational standards and encourage their creativity and innovation.

Libraries will not only increase and sustain the nation's literacy, enrich and transform people's lives but will also serve many ambitions such as :

- crossing digital divides
- crossing cultural divides, and
- crossing learning divides

In attaining these ambitions you face many challenges. Knowledge management involves different and interdependent processes - creating knowledge, knowledge storage and retrieval, knowledge transfer and application. At any point in time members will and libraries can become involved in multiple knowledge management process chains. So it is a dynamic phenomenon and requires a complex resource requirements, tools and approaches. For example IT tools can play a variety of roles in support of knowledge management.

So we expect libraries to lead the way by undertaking innovative projects that break new ground by broadening the experience and unlock the creative talent of all young people. Libraries, can have

a huge impact on children and young people, in terms of developing their skills and appreciation, and helping them to learn. So we want every child to have the chance to develop their artistic and creative skills.

We want children, adults and family learners to understand that reading – for pleasure and for purpose – can change their lives for the better, now and for the future. Government in our schools has encouraged the setting up of class libraries. We have introduced computers in all our primary schools with many having multi-media laboratories. At secondary schools internet is free. The Tertiary Education commission is working on project to make all students in the two public universities have access to electronic journals. Now there must be a national campaign to drive up library membership.

Challenges of the Future

How can we ensure libraries are properly used and enjoyed?

People have greater demands on their time and less time for reading. On the other hand increasing numbers of people have their own computers, so they don't need to go to the library as often as they did in the early days. Again, ladies and gentlemen, this is not a bad thing.

We all share the commitment and passion to promote reading, literacy and learning in people of all ages remains as strong as ever. The goalposts may move from time to time as priorities adapt to new situations, but the object of the game remains the same: using the written word to empower, educate and delight ordinary people.

But we also need to help of people of working age who need to improve their basic skills in literacy and numeracy if they are to contribute effectively both at work and with their families.

So libraries and librarians will need to come with new marketing strategies

- Modernise your library buildings and make your services more enticing and more customer-focused, especially for children and young people. We have to get more people to libraries and spend time in libraries and borrowing books from libraries. And you should involve local people in designing and deciding what service to provide; and
- Work more closely with people in your communities – getting out of the library into schools, community centres- to

get the message about literacy and learning more widely heard and understood

- Market libraries' benefits – of free access, great free resources and helpful staff become better known, especially for those who have got out of the library-going 'habit'.

The digital age has also brought to light the changing nature of your profession., which I'd like to touch on before I conclude.

The advent of digitisation and moves towards the virtual library has impacted on librarians. You now need to master sophisticated IT and information management skills as well as the traditional librarianship techniques.

Whereas you used to deal in tangibles, you now deal in virtuals, teaching about the importance of social networking, skills in Web 2.0 and 3.0, electronic preservation and migrating information to new formats.

I appreciate that public libraries, will need keeping up with these trends

and plan ahead.

There is growing trend for libraries to be used by a much greater cross section of our societies and for such a wide range of reasons.

In other countries we are seeing many more people coming

through the doors of libraries; whether it's to research their family history, get books, DVDs, magazines or link up with friends on the Internet.

So which of you if I may ask is going to be first to provide:

- 7-day opening and in the evening ? Not necessarily literally, but open in the evenings and all week-end when people have time to get to the library
- a web-based lending service with home delivery?
- libraries in shopping centres where thousands of people pass every day? Certainly centre-stage and customer-focused
- Combining with other customer-focused public services so that people take that first important step and come through your front door
- having other forms of reading in libraries to attract young people - comics, , film dvds?

Network between libraries and home computers.

In brief how to respond to new technology and keep relevant to the Google Generation?

How prioritise investment in new services if you want to secure a long-term future.

And it ought to be possible to share services and support functions such as inter-library lending, IT systems and delivery systems and thereby spend more effectively.

Conclusion

Well, your challenge is to build on what you're doing at the moment, speed up the pace of innovation, involving your communities and giving people flexible and high quality services.

Our collective challenge is to prove library services deliver against national agendas and deserve a place centre stage in the community of the future.

We can ensure that the capital's libraries are a vital and vibrant part our society.. that they play a leading role in the cast, with a prominent position on stage and that they become part of our knowledge infrastructure