

**W**We were very flattered last month to host a delegation from a leading library that wanted to learn about our collaborative management system, which is based on Mark Samuel's Accountability Management Model. The delegation included the city's human resources manager and members of the library's management team.

A team of our own library managers reviewed our journey over the past five years. It has been a journey of learning and discovery as we brought the system to 14 departments and more than 100 employees.

Under this system, employees of each department develop a vision of "what it would like look like" if the department was operating at a high level of excellence. The vision is then translated into 20 or 30 statements which more specifically describe quality processes and methodology. They then rate their team on each of the statements. Two or three areas are chosen for development and become the focus of staff committees which report back to the departmental team.

The heart of the system is personal accountability. Each staff member takes responsibility for his or her own behaviors and attitudes. Each employee is challenged to move away from the traditional water cooler behaviors of blame and denial and, instead, take responsibility for building a positive organizational culture. To that end, employees develop an interaction agreement, which is in essence an agreement to treat one another with respect and integrity.

The Library District has now integrated these concepts throughout our organization. Each department is constantly working on one or two improvement projects. The personal accountability component provides the framework to resolve conflicts and is used by managers when coaching employees. Each department conducts an annual review to ensure that the vision and operational statements are still inspiring, and that employees remain committed to the interaction agreements.

As we conducted the workshop for the delegation, we were all surprised by the depth of our passion for our management system. Who would have thought that "Accountability" would evoke such a sense of accomplishment and commitment. Yet, there we all were, Accountability groupies!

At the end of the eight hour workshop, we were actually grateful to our colleagues for the opportunity to discuss our management model. It was an chance to recall our many mistakes and successes along the way, and to comprehend how very far we have traveled in a relatively short period.

If you would like to learn more about the Accountability Management Model, you can visit Mark Samuel's Web site at:  
<http://www.impaqcorp.com/homepage.html>.

*Michael Gaston, Deschutes Public Library Director*

## **The Deschutes Public Library**

**Bend Public Library**  
601 NW Wall Street  
Bend, Oregon 97701  
617-7040

**Outreach Services**  
507 NW Wall Street  
Bend, Oregon 97701  
312-1035

**La Pine Public Library**  
16425 1st Street  
La Pine, Oregon 97739  
312-1090

**Redmond Public Library**  
827 SW Deschutes Avenue  
Redmond, Oregon 97756  
312-1050

**Sisters Public Library**  
110 N Cedar Street  
Sisters, Oregon 97759  
312-1070

**Sunriver Area Public Library**  
56855 Venture Lane  
Sunriver, Oregon 97707  
312-1080

