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## Your voice

Dear Editor,

Re: Customer Service (*inCite* April 2010)

I trust that many ALIA members will agree with me that the use of the word "customer" is one of the ugliest, and most inappropriate, imports into our professional lexicon. It is very disappointing to see that the Association has given it the imprimatur it has with the April *inCite*.

Drug dealers, McDonalds, and secondhand car dealers have customers; libraries have clients, patrons, users, readers, or inquirers.

The term customer should be restricted to the private goods sector, where every transaction requires a seller, a buyer, and a mutually acceptable profit-loaded cost for each discrete, market valued item; a market exchange process, the giving of "custom".

There is no scope in this letter to develop this thesis in detail. In summary the term "customer" should have no place at all in our professional lexicon. It cheapens and degrades our ethos and image when we should be striving for increased status and respect. Our distinguished and historic profession has, mindlessly, adopted the mores of the bottom end of the private sector.

This topic deserves far more careful consideration by us all. I believe that it is quite a fundamental professional image issue and I hope that many others will take up this cause.

Yours sincerely,  
Warwick Dunstan  
(received by post)

We welcome letters from members on any issue of relevance to the library and information sector. It is important to note that the opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor are those of the authors and not necessarily the official policy of the Australian Library and Information Association.

Deadline for letters is available on the website and they should be no longer than 250 words. Please include your name and postal address as anonymous correspondence will not be reproduced.

## Professional development

### Quality ALIA face-to-face training



[www.alia.org.au/education/pd](http://www.alia.org.au/education/pd)

ALIA has organised quality face-to-face training nationally in three essential areas of library profession competencies. Support this initiative by attending yourself or by sending your staff. **These workshops have been priced at \$375 to allow all ALIA member libraries to send staff for training.** The full day workshop includes catering and a booklet, and is excellent value.

The three workshops on offer in 2010 are

- **Managing challenging clients**  
This is more than customer service; this course provides tested and proven skills for all frontline staff working in university, public, and special libraries.
- **Leading others through change**  
Change is a constant; help your staff embrace change positively and productively with Adam's course.
- **Fundamentals of supervision**  
Management skills are crucial to staff advancement. Sooner or later the ability to supervise staff will be tested. Those just starting out can gain an edge; employers shouldn't leave staff supervision to chance.

Adam Le Good is a very highly regarded presenter and has developed and conducted a wide variety of management and personal development programs for both public and private sector organisations since 1988. He uses practical applications of management principles and theory and a humorous and theatrical style, to ensure that trainees enjoy their learning experience and are able to translate their newly acquired skills

to the workplace. His knowledge of adult learning principles, group dynamics, learning styles, and human behaviour ensures that the training will appeal to a broad range of participants. Adam is also a member of the Australian Institute of Training and Development.

All courses are specifically designed for those working in the Library and information field and cover a wide range of experiences and practice.

Dates	Programs	Locations	Venue*
Wed 7 July	Managing Challenging Clients	Melbourne	RMIT
Wed 14 July	Fundamentals of Supervision	Melbourne	RMIT
Mon 16 August	Managing Challenging Clients	Perth	TBA
Tues 17 August	Fundamentals of Supervision	Perth	TBA
Wed 18 August	Leading Others through Change	Perth	TBA
Mon 8 November	Managing Challenging Clients	Sydney	UTS
Tues 9 November	Fundamentals of Supervision	Sydney	UTS
Wed 10 November	Leading Others through Change	Sydney	UTS
Wed 24 November	Leading Others through Change	Melbourne	RMIT