

## Dr. Arend Flemming: Product-oriented management in public libraries

### Abstract

Germany and other countries have been making a concerted effort to reform public administration since the early 90s. Reasons include steadily diminishing financial resources, the rising demands made by the local community on the quality of the services provided, the need for more flexible, service-oriented management and changing staff attitudes to their work. In Germany this has led to the development of new management models based on a definition of services, i.e. product descriptions.

Arend Flemming, Director of Dresden Public Library, looks at how libraries can be integrated into the reform process. He analyses various solutions and shows how library management can be adapted from a budget (input)-based approach to a product (output)-oriented system. The preconditions for this are product-based indicators and a controlling system.

Flemming's outcome is a model product plan based on quantitative, qualitative and financial indicators. He explains how the plan can be integrated into internal and external library management. A product plan like this can be used to improve the library's position in the local authority budget process. Key aims of public libraries are to safeguard the financing of their services and increase the flexibility and responsibility with which resources are deployed. The aim is not to replace the cultural and educational perspective. However, a business-oriented approach is a meaningful and necessary adjunct for successful library management.