» "The only thing that you absolutely have to know is the location of the library."
-ALBERT EINSTEIN

Strategic Library™

Issue 7 // July 15, 2014

Libraries and Storytelling

» StoryCorps' take on interview collection.*

BY ELIZABETH PÉREZ

Libraries are epicenters of information sharing and civic engagement for people of all backgrounds and ages. It is no wonder, then, that situating an interview collection program in a public library setting has the potential to have a profound effect on how library patrons see themselves, each other, and their communities. As an organization whose mission is to provide people of all backgrounds and beliefs with the opportunity to record, share, and preserve the stories of our lives, StoryCorps recognizes that engagement with public libraries offers a critical opportunity to provide valuable support to these important institutions.

After engaging the perspectives of an advisory council of public librarians and others, StoryCorps debuted *StoryCorps @ your library* (SCL) in 2012. This two-year pilot program was created in partnership with the Public Programs Office at the American Library Association (http://www.ala.org/programming) and funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (http://www.imls.gov). SCL provides libraries with the necessary tools to engage their patrons by creating or expanding public programming that features members of their communities not often heard or represented in the library's collection.

THE STORYCORPS INTERVIEW MODEL

StoryCorps interviews differ from traditional oral history interviews. In general, a StoryCorps interview is forty minutes and takes place with a trained facilitator. Rather than setting up interviews with historians, StoryCorps encourages participants to interview loved ones about the things that matter most to them. Pairing

The StoryCorps Interview Model allows participants to focus on their conversation and story while the facilitator guides the interview and handles the equipment.

interviews in this format with rich cultural programming allows public libraries to attract diverse audiences and engage with local organizations. It also provides an opportunity for library patrons to record their own oral narratives and become part of their local library's audio archive.

The ten pilot libraries selected for SCL were granted a portable set of professional recording equipment, comprehensive on-site training with StoryCorps staff, and technical and archiving support during their story collection period. The goal of each pilot library's collection theme varied. A number made the growth of new demographic communities the focus of their interview collection efforts. Others inserted an oral history component into existing programs such as One City, One Book. One library used SCL to celebrate its centennial.

At the end of the first year, the pilot libraries results reflected their unique goals: some captured stories of migration and natural disasters while others focused on specific groups of people such as Native Americans or veterans.

PARTICIPATING LIBRARIES

In 2013, four of the ten pilot libraries were small or rural institutions. Through SCL, these institutions developed their first audio archives and created programs that invited patrons to not only learn about the stories collected from others, but also to record their own. These small or rural libraries faced unique challenges, but they also saw the affect of their programs almost immediately in their communities.

When asked if the SCL programming attracted new audiences, Stacey Stoll, the Adult Services Manager at Octavia Fellin Public Library in Gallup, New Mexico, a rural library, offered this view:

"We feel that some of the programs did attract newer and more diverse audiences. The turnout was much higher for these programs than expected. Some patrons commented that they did not know the library had programs like these, or they found out from family or friends about the program. So we had people show up that rarely use the library. Now that they know what the library does, they stated that they will use the library more."

"Our Native American Heritage," the title of Octavia Fellin Public Library SCL's project, focused on the rich history, traditions, and stories of the Native American community in Gallup, New Mexico. After a successful launch of their SCL program, the library was faced with the challenge of recruiting more members of the community to tell their stories. After preliminary promotional efforts were largely unsuccessful, Stoll and her library team switched tactics and focused on hosting events at the library. This change served the institution in two ways: the librarians were able to continue promoting "Our Native American Heritage" to the Gallup community, but they were also able to recruit new storytellers and interviewers.

Important figures in the community were invited to share their traditions and stories at these events. For example, one event focused on a "Navajo Rug Weaving Demonstration." Lois A. Becenti, a Diné lifetime weaver, was invited to present the history, fundamentals and techniques of rug weaving in traditional Navajo style and show how to improve weaving practices.

The Tampa-Hillsborough (FL) County Public Library System, another pilot library, also engaged the community while recording interviews. Its program, "Our Lives, Our Legacies: The Hillsborough Black Experience," highlighted the rich and diverse stories of African descendants in Tampa and surrounding locales.

The library held several listening events where community members, potential storytellers and speakers were invited to learn about the communities the library wished to serve through its program. One focused on the Afro-Cuban community and its history in the Tampa-Hillsborough area. The library promoted the program through several outlets, including tra-

Participants from "Our Lives, Our Legacies: The Hillsborough Black Experience" were invited back to celebrate the closing of the interview collection program at Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System in Tampa, FL.

Patricia and John discuss coping with vision impairment and their experiences in social work at Chicago Public Library in Chicago, IL.

ditional print media, social media, and television news broadcasts.

In January 2014, the library staffed a tabletop display about the program at the Tampa Bay Black Heritage Festival, a popular community heritage festival. Festival attendees were encouraged to learn about "Our Lives, Our Legacies: The Hillsborough Black Experience" and sign up to schedule an interview. Some even got the chance to record their story immediately in a nearby RV provided by the festival's organizers.

YOUR COMMUNITY: THEIR STORIES

Libraries interested in pursuing and developing a program similar to SCL must initially set clear goals that will support the development of their vision. Some essential questions to ask include the following:

- Who will be served by the project? Why this audience?
- Would the library like to help create awareness about a specific community issue?
- What will the program accomplish?
- Can interview collection be folded into existing programming?
- How long will the program be?
- How many stories will be captured?
- What are the measurable goals of the project?

Once the library is clear about what it hopes to achieve by creating an oral history collection, finding key staff and community members to support the development of the program is essential. Encouraging volunteers to play a role in the process can be helpful, and participating in the program's oversight can be seen as a form of professional development. Pilot libraries participating in SCL learned the importance of collaborating with local organizations; such linkages create larger audiences and increase the possibility of reaching underserved communities. During the pilot year, many libraries promoted and marketed their programs heavily throughout the duration of the story collection period. In so doing, libraries were able to maintain program momentum, generate a constant wave of new storytellers who visited the library to share their stories, and keep their library patrons up to date on innovative programming within the library.

In addition to encouraging patrons to record interviews and attend related programs, the SCL pilot libraries have also used the program to create an accessible audio archive. Other institutions seeking to replicate a program similar to SCL should be sure to have an idea of where the stories will live. Creating a plan for preservation at the beginning of the interview collection process ensures that the stories will be accessible in an easy and secure way in the future.

USE WHAT YOU HAVE

The basic components needed to record an interview are a digital recorder, a microphone, and headphones. These basic components along with more sophisticated recording equipment can be purchased at local electronics stores or online. Not every institution may have funds available to

Please enjoy these broadcast pieces:

- Judge Olly Neal and his daughter Karama
- Sharon Holley and her husband Kenneth

What is StoryCorps?

StoryCorps is an independent nonprofit whose mission is to provide people of all backgrounds and beliefs with the opportunity to record, share, and preserve the stories of our lives.

Since 2003, StoryCorps has collected and archived more than 45,000 interviews with nearly 90,000 participants. Each conversation is recorded on a free CD to share, and is preserved at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. StoryCorps is one of the largest oral history projects of its kind, and millions listen to our weekly broadcasts on NPR's *Morning Edition* and on our Listen pages.

We undertake our mission with four goals in mind:

- **To remind one another of our shared humanity**
- **To strengthen and build the connections among people**
- **To teach the value of listening and**
- **To weave into the fabric of our culture the understanding that every life matters.**

At the same time, we create an invaluable archive of American voices and wisdom for future generations.
In the coming years we will build StoryCorps into an enduring institution that will touch the lives of every American family.

StoryCorps is a project of the American Library Association's Public Programs Office, which promotes cultural and community programming as an essential part of library service. More information can be found at www.ala.org/programming.

purchase professional equipment, so innovation and flexibility are key ingredients if resources needed to start the collection program are limited. Nevertheless, the most important factor to keep in mind is to ensure that the library staff and community members support the project as volunteers and feel comfortable and confident when using the equipment.

If staff time is stretched and staff members simply cannot commit to supporting another program, that support can often be found within the community. Perhaps previous partnerships with a local high school or civic organization can turn into collaborations for recruiting potential storytellers or volunteer facilitators. The focus needs to be on seeking out available resources to supplement the interview collection program.

For example, to launch its city-wide program, the Chicago Public Library partnered with an English professor at DePaul University, who led a community-interactive independent study course during which students recorded interviews and recruited participants. Throughout the semester, students reflected on their experience as facilitators by writing essays and participating in online discussions. Students visited difference branch libraries to record their stories and worked with branch managers to recruit library patrons to participate. The interviews collected will be added to the library's digital archive.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Pilot libraries participating in SCL are currently wrapping up their programs. Many are hosting listening events using audio collected. Others are inviting participants back to the library for an evening reception as a way to express thanks for their efforts.

When asked how SCL has affected programming at Smithville (TX) Public Library Director, Judith Bergeron, said:

"StoryCorps @ your library has been an amazing program for our community, emphasizing how libraries can change lives. Whether it is long-time residents who come in to share their stories, or people who are fairly new to Smithville, it is so rewarding to see the positive effect that sharing their stories has had on our participants and our patrons. StoryCorps stories have allowed us to create some innovative programs to share these unique memories...Several have wanted to come in to tell another one, and many are telling their friends about it—after all, everyone has a story to share."

The StoryCorp staff is currently working to update the *StoryCorp @ your library* program based on the lessons learned from the pilot project. In particular, we plan to enhance and expand our existing D.I.Y Toolkit, deliver more training to local libraries, and focus specifically on supporting the particular needs of rural and small libraries.

For more information about bringing StoryCorps to your library, please contact scl@storycorps.org. ■

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RESOURCES

StoryCorps @ your Library: A Toolkit for Success http://cdn.storycorps.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/SCL-DIY-guide.pdf

Oral History in the Digital Age http://ohda.matrix.msu.edu

Programming Librarian: http://www.programminglibrarian.org

» Once the library is clear about what it hopes to achieve by creating an oral history collection, finding key staff and community members to support the development of the program is essential.

The Science of Browsing

» What Paco Underhill can teach librarians about increasing circulation in ten minutes or less.

BY WENDY BARTLETT

In 1993, a hard working journalist named Erik Larson (yes, that Erik Larson) co-wrote a piece for the Smithsonian about a company where staffers used anthropological observational methods combined with merchandising know-how to help their clients accelerate their retail sales. That fledgling company was Envirosell, the brainchild of Paco Underhill.

Three years later, a science writer for the *New Yorker* named Malcolm Gladwell (yes, that Malcolm Gladwell) turned up at Envirosell's door. It was Gladwell's article, "The Science of Shopping," that made Paco Underhill a household name in retail circles. Suddenly everyone was talking about his fabulous results. Underhill was achieving great things for clients like Revlon, Sam's Club, Johnson and Johnson, and countless others by simply observing customer behavior and changing the shopping environment in a way that would take advantage of shoppers' natural habits to increase sales.

Since the late 1990s, librarians have looked to retailers, specifically book retailers, to get ideas for making their libraries more attractive and easier for shoppers to use. In many cases, what the library world gained was more attractive displays or better shelving units.

But there is much more to the story. And while there is no substitute for sitting down with Underhill's revised edition of *Why We Buy* to learn the real science behind it, some highlights can provide practical and immediate positive outcomes that librarians can put in to place almost immediately.

BE THE CUSTOMER

Underhill chronicles over and over again how the simple act of experiencing what your customers are experiencing can be a powerful tool for change. Many CEOs who hired Underhill made strong assertions about their business and their customers' behavior that had no bearing on reality. Most, as they rose through the ranks, had not been on a sales floor in decades. Some, who were hired from related industries, had never waited on a single customer but were convinced that they understood what customers wanted and what made them tick.

For example, many of the clothing retailers with whom Underhill worked had stores with changing rooms that were very poorly lit, dirty, and without any place to put hangers and purses (let alone children!). Underhill simply gave the president of that company a tour of his own dressing rooms, and the changes were instituted immediately. Not surprisingly, sales rose accordingly.

Librarians are often guilty of the same thing in their branches. Sometimes falling circulation isn't about products and services; sometimes it is the atmosphere.

Are the library's restrooms clean, for instance? Can we blame Mom, Dad, or Grandpa for not coming to story time if they are reluctant to take a little one into less-than-sparkling restrooms? Does the Men's restroom also have a changing table?

The lack of story time participation might not be occurring because the scheduled time is inconvenient or the new librarian is inexperienced. Attendance may be falling

off because the library (or park or community center) across town is simply better maintained and has safer parking, more lighting, and cleaner restrooms that promise a better overall experience for children and adults.

Comfort and safety is a key factor for all customers, but it is critical for those under ten and over seventy—two demographic groups libraries purport to care about and serve with targeted services and funding. Until we fix problems and ensure their comfort, we're wasting money on programs and materials.

The classic example is the library where librarians (buyers in a retail setting) never set foot in a branch (or store). Library collections do not live in the administration building or technical services department. They live in the branches, and librarians should be in at least one branch a week—looking, listening, and learning, and if at all possible, waiting on customers.

COMMIT TO THE FRONT DOOR

Another simple fix? Librarians need to use their own front door. In many libraries, staff enters through a separate rear or side door. Staffers come in, put their coats away, put the coffee on, and go out to their reference and circulation desks or offices.

Only in the very best merchandised branches does anyone bother to make sure the displays up front are full and beautiful before the doors swing open. Rarer yet is a library staff trained to check those displays (and restrooms) once every hour or so like retailers and restaurants do.

Would you buy anything at Target if the endcaps were half empty and the restrooms were messy? Librarians will build a display and not refill it for days or even weeks.

Walking in the front door and then touring the circulation area, restrooms, and the rest of the public areas of the branch should be a very simple yet galvanizing task on any managers' to-do list. After one tour, the manager can ask staff to make sure what customers see is inviting and clean.

ABUNDANCY

A key concept in retail marketing is "abundancy." When customers who are looking for value enter a store and see only a few items on display, their subconscious impression is that these items shouldn't be touched. They equate scarcity with exclusivity and expense.

Consider this example: If you're selling sweaters at Barneys, you only display a few select ones. Their customers want to absorb the subliminal message that says they are unique, wealthy, and wonderful and that they alone are worthy of those sweaters.

When I bought my dad a sweater for Fathers' Day, however, I headed to Macy's for two reasons: there are plenty of sweaters, and they narrow the selection for me. These reasons sound contradictory but are not, and Underhill understands this apparent contradiction completely, as do smart retailers.

As a shopper, I want abundance, which first sends the message that a lot of people like these sweaters, so they must be good. Abundance also tells me that there are plenty of men's sweaters and, therefore, they aren't super exclusive or expensive.

Second, although there are forty sweaters on the table, Macy's arranges them in blue, tan, green, and yellow piles of cardigans with other piles of crew necks in the same colors. I want the selection narrowed because I don't like to shop, I know nothing about men's sweaters, and I want to get in and out of there. Macy's knows that, so the sweater table looks abundant, but is easy to shop. Abundancy is the oldest clothing retailer trick in the book.

THE POWER OF ENDCAPS

So how do we translate the abundancy concept to libraries? The single most effective strategy for increasing circulation in libraries is endcap merchandising. Librarians who look to the old big box bookstore model frequently miss this, or do it poorly—because big box bookstores weren't very good at it either!

Librarians bemoan the lack of customers in the stacks. There are many reasons for this—including what Underhill calls "the butt-brush factor," which is a catchy name for the fact that no one likes someone behind them when they're browsing.

Stacks look like they can only comfortably accommodate one person, and customers avoid them like the plague. They are also tall, often poorly lit, and have poor sight lines, meaning you can't really see what's in them from the front of the branch. All these obstacles discourage browsing.

I have been in libraries where the stacks were lower, the lighting turned up, and the aisles were wider, which helped somewhat. But the real secret to pulling customers toward the stacks is well-merchandised endcaps.

Take a stroll through Target. Target uses their endcaps more effectively than any other national retailer. What's their secret? Merchandise that is seasonal, on sale, or just attractive and interesting gets moved to the endcaps. Most significantly, those endcaps change constantly. Target clearly knows that some of their shoppers are in the store more than once a week, and the fast-changing endcaps are an effort to draw those people in and convert their visits to multi-item sales.

It's summer. How many of your branches have a really full and beautiful endcap full of grilling cookbooks right now?

Signage on stacks can also cause a lot of angst. Dewey or don't we? Do we put 641.5 over those grilling cookbooks, or worse, create a sign with a grill in clip art?

Go to Target. Do they have signs on endcaps? No. Because if I see grilling implements on an endcap in Target, I can correctly assume that more cooking and patio items are in that aisle. Library endcaps are the same. If you put lots of biographies at the end of the biography stack, trust me, library patrons will get it.

THE SHALLOW LOOP

I was fascinated to learn that Paco Underhill was the guy responsible for those mini-DIY postal stations that are in the front lobby of many post offices these days. In retailing, the customer's ability to get in and get out quickly is absolutely critical.

One reason big box bookstores died is that Amazon was more convenient. Bookstores became known as a place to go and relax and spend hours. A decade later, nobody had hours to spend. They wanted a book, and they wanted it yesterday.

It is never a mistake to think about convenience in any aspect of a merchandising conversation. People are busy, which Underhill observed when he studied the United States Postal Service (USPS). People would glance in the door, see long lines, and leave. By providing a "shallow loop," a retail term meaning a few footsteps near the door where customers could grab what they needed and leave, Underhill gained a great deal of business back for the USPS. Now customers can go weigh their own package, self serve their own stamps, and leave without ever going deeper into the building or waiting in a long line.

We've had great success at Cuyahoga County Public Library with shallow loops. Rather than trying to change the customers' behavior and expect them to continue to use the stacks, we've brought new materials, merchandised in bookstore-like fashion, to the front of the branch along with self-checks and self-pickup of holds. Customers can zoom in and out in minutes.

We construct the rest of the customer experience in the branch in such a way as to entice these "smash and grab" customers to come back and stay longer at some point, but we're really okay if they just use the shallow loop. The main thing is that we've kept them coming in and haven't lost them to a competitor, be that a retailer, another library, or Amazon.

SEEING IS BELIEVING

Someday I would love to have the money to pay Paco Underhill and Envirosell to visit our library branches and help us see what else we've missed. But until I win the lottery, we've contented ourselves with paying attention to his theories and his common sense (and cheap) suggestions.

If you're looking to improve the customer experience at your library, just remember that the most transformational act you can perform is to experience your library as a customer. Use the front door. Go to story time. Drop in on a staff-led book group. Wander your stacks.

What you see, both as a customer and an observer of other customers, will lead you to pose fascinating questions and to delve for creative and inexpensive solutions that will translate into higher circulation—and happier customers. ■

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» When customers who are looking for value enter a store and see only a few items on display, their subconscious impression is that these items shouldn't be touched. They equate scarcity with exclusivity and expense.

Serving People with Alzheimer's and Dementia

» Excellent 21st Century libraries must reach underserved and isolated populations.

BY MARY BETH RIEDNER, KAREN MAKI, AND MIRIAM ANDERSON LYTLE

How are libraries going to prepare to serve the coming tidal wave of Baby Boomers diagnosed with Alzheimer's and related dementias? Can they offer anything of value to people with these diseases?

Libraries seem to have eagerly accepted their role in helping their patrons maintain brain health, based on the proliferation of programs being offered across the country.[1] However, despite all such efforts, the Alzheimer's Association predicts that there will be about 13.8 million Americans with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias by 2050.[2] In addition, more than 15.5 million family members and friends provided unpaid care to this population in 2013.[3]

The Alzheimer's Association warns that "For many baby boomers, Alzheimer's was a disease they saw in their parents or grandparents. Not anymore. Alzheimer's disease is now their disease, their crisis, their epidemic."[4]

To meet this challenge, Karen Maki, Deputy Director of the Gail Borden Public Library District (GBPLD) in Elgin, IL, established three strategic objectives:

- Grow a model program to serve this growing population.
- Create a sustainable nationwide movement of libraries serving people with dementia.
- Foster recognition of the value of libraries among Alzheimer's care professionals.

GROW A MODEL PROGRAM

The Gail Borden Public Library (GBPL) received a two-year American Library Association Carnegie-Whitney grant in 2013. The grant funds are being used to initiate a two-part project called Tales & Travel Memories, which is intended to stimulate memories and conversation through library reading and music resources.

Tales & Travel Memories is modeled on a series of 24 programs developed by retired

Academic Librarian Mary Beth Riedner, whose husband was diagnosed with young-onset dementia in 2007. Mary Beth volunteered to conduct these programs over two years with a group of residents at a local memory care facility. Her programs were designed to be in compliance with the International Federation of Library Associations' *Guidelines for Library Services to Persons with Dementia*.[5]

In the first part of the GBPL project, twelve nonfiction Excursion Guides—or bibliographies listing resources in multiple formats—were developed as tools to help librarians use resources to provide mental stimulation, entertainment, and meaningful activities for persons in the early- and mid-stages of dementia.

The second part of the project put these bibliographies into action, beginning with programs offered at local memory care facilities. Each program centers on a different country or U.S. state. A short folk tale, legend, or myth that focuses on the country or region is selected, and the residents take turns reading a paragraph or two out loud. Many can still read fluently and put expression into the dialogue.

Five interesting facts about the area, previously compiled by library staff, are then read out loud by the residents. Next, highly illustrated books about the country or region, including selected titles from the library's children's collection, are distributed. The residents browse through the books turning every page, commenting on the pictures, and responding to comments and questions from the library facilitators. In no time at all, a pleasant hour has passed.

Outreach. Marketing the program was not difficult. After identifying local facilities that offer dementia care in the Elgin area, their activity or programming directors were contacted by phone and e-mail. Since activity directors are always searching for innovative programming ideas for their residents, this level of contact was usually sufficient to set up an initial meeting.

At this meeting, a librarian shared sample materials and described in more

Find Out More

- Visit the "Tales & Travel Memories" website, hosted by the Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences at Dominican University, River Forest, IL, to share ideas and download free logos, passports, and bibliographies. http://gslis.dom.edu/about/tales-and-travel-memories
- View a video of the Tales & Travel program in action filmed by a local high school broadcasting class and narrated by Bill Kurtis at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9e8vocHPg4.
- Access informational programs presented by the authors at the 2013 Illinois Library Conference and the 2014 Public Library Association conference http://www.placonference.org/programs/ (search using the keyword "dementia.")
- Join the recently formed Interest Group for Alzheimer's and Related Dementias (IGARD) which is a part of the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA), a division of the American Library Association (ALA).

detail how the program is conducted. The librarian then asked for an estimate of how many residents might be interested in attending to know how many copies of the stories and facts would be needed on the day of the program.

The librarian also asked to see, if possible, where the program would be held. The preferred set-up is to hold the program in a separate area with tables that can be joined together so that the residents can sit around them and see each other. Tables are also important so that the residents can place the books on them and easily flip through the pages.

With just this preliminary interaction, the activity directors were often eager to schedule a program right away.

Staffing: Based on the library's current staffing levels, GBPLD administrators decided to try out the program at three facilities. However, the Tales & Travel Memories program can be started with a minimal staff supported by volunteers. Retired teachers, librarians, nurses, or even high school or college students are a great volunteer resource for this type of programming.

The number of library staff required on the actual day of the program depends on the number of residents attending and whether the activity director or other facility staff will be present. Asking that at least one facility staff member remain in the room during the first few programs makes the residents feel comfortable and helps with any unexpected issues that may arise, such as participants forgetting their glasses.

Collecting Materials: Perhaps the most time-consuming part of producing a program involves finding an appropriate folk tale, legend, or myth for the read-aloud portion of the program. It is important to respect the dignity of the residents and not present them with materials that look childish. In practice, however, the folk tale collection in the children's department is the best resource for the stories, including selected picture books and other stories with basic vocabularies.

The key to presenting these stories to the residents in a dignified way is to retype them in a large print format with 1½ line spacing, which makes them easier to read. Each participant should also be given a copy that they can re-read at his or her convenience and share with visiting family members.

What makes a story appropriate? Length is one of the first factors to consider. The stories should be no more than four to five typewritten pages in the reformatted style. Folk tales often are based on universal themes—love, cleverness, the world around us—that appeal to all ages. Stories with violence, which frequently appear in folk tales, should be avoided. Dialogue and humor make the stories more fun to read out loud. Residents sometimes "ham it up" and read their parts with dramatic flair. Even short biographies of historical figures have proven to be successful.

Books for browsing can be chosen from both the library's adult and the children's collections. The most important requirement is that the books be richly illustrated with color photographs. Coffee table books and selected travel guides can be found in the adult collection. Books on cooking, history, art, or architecture of the chosen country or region are appealing choices. Several children's publishers produce series of books on the countries of the world at a middle school level that work well with residents. Titles should be selected based on their ample white space and large type font.

"I didn't know that!" and "That's amazing!" are often heard when the Five Facts about a country are read aloud. Readily found in some children's books, the facts should also be retyped on a separate sheet of paper. Once again, they should appear in a large font with 1½ line spacing, and a copy should be provided for each person. Residents especially enjoy extreme statistics.

CDs with music from the chosen country are occasionally pulled from the collection. Slides or photographs can also be used to supplement the programs. Members of the library staff sometimes bring personal items or souvenirs, such as a hand-knit fisherman's sweater from Ireland or a basket woven by Native Americans, to share with the residents. With prior permission from the care facility, small samples of food from the region can be passed around to make the program even more multisensory.

Assessing the Program: Some public libraries focus on head count as if programs and services are all about numbers. This philosophy suggests that serving small groups—such as eight, ten, or 15 people—is fruitless or a poor use of staff time. However, promoters of library services by the numbers have not personally experienced the human effects of meaningful, purposeful, and profound programming, or how the quality of a person's life can be transformed.

Librarians can educate the staff at local memory care facilities and day care centers about how residents can benefit from books and reading, for example. After observing the first session of a Tales & Travel program, a worker at one care facility said, "I didn't know they could read!" At another facility, the activity director was surprised that the program kept the participants engaged for a full hour.

CREATE A NATIONWIDE MOVEMENT

The Gail Borden Public Library is not stopping with the creation of its Tales & Travel Memories model. The next strategic step, according to Deputy Director Maki, is to spread the idea of direct service to persons diagnosed with memory diseases to libraries of all kinds across the country.

This network can include public librarians and staff as well as academic librarians, faculty and students in library and information science and gerontology programs, and

medical and consumer health librarians in hospitals or agencies such as the Veterans Administration—anyone who can potentially serve those with dementia (see sidebar).

FOSTER RECOGNITION

As librarians venture out of their comfort zones to meet the needs of people diagnosed with dementia, they also need to proactively promote the value of libraries to the professional care community. Both private and public health care agencies and organizations need to more deeply recognize the value of libraries and understand what libraries can offer to support both caregivers and people with dementia.

The Alzheimer's Association has 76 local chapters throughout the United States with additional offices scattered throughout each chapter. GBPLD worked actively with representatives from two local chapters—one in Illinois and one in Indiana. While both valued libraries, especially as sites to offer programs about their organization and its services, they seemed pleasantly surprised at the success of the Tales & Travel Memories project. They had not previously recognized that libraries could offer outreach programs to directly serve and improve the lives of people in memory care centers.

Another major contact resource exists in the network of federal and state government agencies that were mandated by the Older Americans Act. In addition to the Federal Administration on Aging, there are 56 State Units on Aging (SUA), and 629 local Area Agencies on Aging (AAA). Each state also has an agency that licenses nursing homes.

By creating contacts with the Alzheimer's Association and with local AAAs, libraries can demonstrate their effectiveness in improving the quality of life for people with dementia. Together, these private and public organizations can provide mutual support. The Alzheimer's Association could provide library volunteers with information or training on communicating and working effectively with people with dementia. AAA's can link libraries with memory care centers and other organizations that need the services the library can provide.

People with Alzheimer's and related dementias may not use the library in the same way that they did in the past, but many library resources are still valuable for improving the quality of their lives. They may not be able to live alone, pay their bills, or drive, but they can still certainly enjoy the present moment. Sharing library materials with them can bring joy and entertainment into their lives. Libraries would do well to ensure that their mission to serve everyone in their communities includes these people who are all too often forgotten.

> **The most important requirement is that the books be richly illustrated with color photographs.**

Won't you join the Gail Borden Library to raise awareness among librarians of the need to provide services for people with dementia? ■

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: Mary Beth Riedner is a retired academic librarian. She currently volunteers at the Gail Borden Public Library District in Elgin, Illinois, with Deputy Director Karen Maki and Miriam Anderson Lytle, Division Chief of Community Service & Program Development.

Together with the Alzheimer's Association, they have presented "5 Million and Counting" at the Public Library Association Conference and the Illinois Library Association Conference. They have spoken at other venues and host webinars.

Anyone interested in a presentation or webinar should contact mlytle@gailborden.info.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] The following library websites provide examples of brain health programs:
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- DeKalb County Public Library, Decatur, GA: http://www.dekalblibrary.org
- Verona Public Library, WI: http://www.veronapubliclibrary.org/maintaining-brain-health

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National Institute on Aging. http://www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers/scientific-images

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Managing the Talent: From Start to Star

» The six stages of a successful library human resources system.*

BY JAMES LARUE

Public libraries do many things right. In the support of emergent literacy, individual inquiry, and exploration, we have no equal. We bridge the digital divide by providing access to technology and considerable training in its use. We are community hubs, places of human connection.

And yet, like many other institutions, we also continue to do things the same way even when it's clear that they don't work.

Hiring practices are one of them.

Throughout our organizations, there is often a lack of strategic and systematic thinking. Instead, we keep using job descriptions and interview processes that look backward, not forward. We keep believing we can somehow hire the wrong people then train them into success, into becoming what they are not and may have no interesting in becoming.

But there's hope. A successful talent management system, based on effective human resources practices, can be accomplished in six stages.

KNOW WHAT YOU WANT

Some traits and skills are desirable to almost any employer...let's call them universal characteristics. We want people who are smart, emotionally intelligent, curious, and self-motivated. In libraries, we want people who are motivated by the desire to serve. A sense of humor is always welcome. We want passion and competence.

Other characteristics are applicable to a specific institution, perhaps as a result of shift in planning. For instance, many libraries are moving from an exclusive focus on what goes on in the building to what's going on in the larger community. So, in addition to hiring a reference librarian who has all of the universal characteristics, we might also want them to possess a real interest in engaging with community groups: arts councils, civic organizations, Chamber of Commerce sectors, even politicians.

When a library is pursuing new directions, it should clearly identify the shift in employee skills needed to move that direction forward. When circulation was the primary cost center of libraries, we hired people who were detail-oriented, who could

carefully get the many finicky rules of the policies, procedures, and ILS just right.

But in a world where we're moving to self-checkout, the successful staff member will need to be different. Those organizations that consistently identify the skills they need, and commit to developing competence aligned with their strategic vision, are organizations that get things done.

RECRUIT RECRUIT RECRUIT.

In a traditional hiring scenario, a hiring agency posts an ad then hopes to get lucky. In today's world, the library director needs to be sure that the job ad reflects the specific skills needed and is not just a dusted-off version of an old position.

More importantly, recruiting should be going on all the time. When a supervisor sees an unusually competent barista, why not (a) tell that barista how impressive she is, and (b) encourage her to consider working at the library, where her skills would really have a chance to flower?

In rural areas, directors often complain that they can't find the talent, or can't offer enough money to interest or keep viable candidates. But that's because those directors only look for talent when a job is open, or think that money is what motivates a high performing staff.

Yes, we should ceaselessly advocate for good wages. But people don't work only for money. They work for people they like, doing work they believe in. They work for people whose values match theirs.

MATCH YOUR HIRING PROCESS TO YOUR PLANS.

Here's the fundamental premise: the best predictor of future behavior is current behavior. The trick is to select candidates for positions where they cannot just describe their skills, but demonstrate them.

The ability to match skills and talent requires a deep understanding of what you're looking for. If it's approachability, emotional intelligence, and technical savvy, ask the candidate to go through a role-playing exercise where he has to help a befuddled senior citizen (a local actor?) set up an email account. If you're looking for a children's librarian who has storytelling pizzazz, have candidates lead an actual story time.

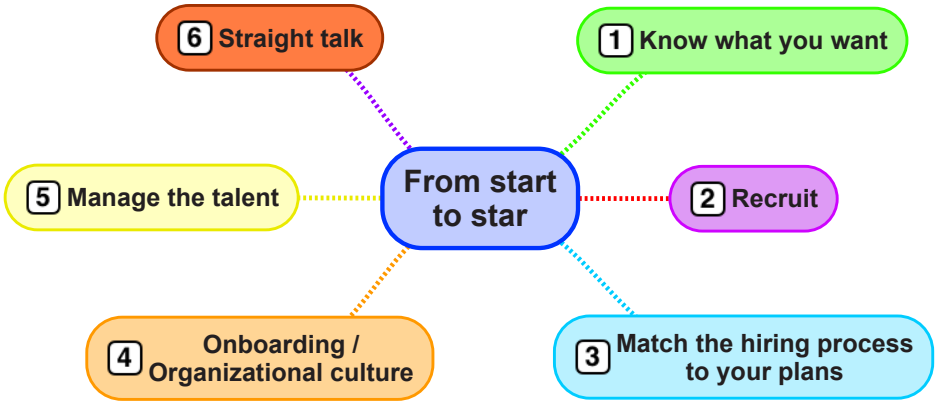
More than one person should observe the behavior, then their observations can be pooled once the exercise is done. A note of caution: people make judgments about each other very quickly. Their observations might focus on a judgment, not the behavior. For instance, an observer might say that someone is "timid" when the person is just "soft-spoken."

A seasoned facilitator knows how to tease out the behavior from the observation. Thoughtful facilitation can quickly shift the focus to what is truly a behavior: tone of voice, physical demeanor (eye contact, smiling, nodding), and process management (who speaks first, who shifts the conversation).

When the behavioral exercise actually fits the job, and when observations match actual behavior against job requirements, the most qualified candidate quickly becomes clear.

In addition to a live role-playing, many libraries are also using behavioral questions on the application form: "Tell us about a time when you ... (really made a mistake, had a conflict with a supervisor, had to plan a community event), and what steps you followed to address it."

Some people can embellish the truth, of course, but having them describe a personal scenario is a far richer revealer of behavioral clues than "Where do you see yourself in three years?"



These six stages form a successful library human resources system.

ALL ABOARD!

Libraries have three kinds of culture. There's the culture we claim (in our job ads). There's the culture we present (in our actual policies, manuals, and forms). And there's the culture we live by: the norms we set, enforce, and practice. It may be that, as a profession, we don't pay enough attention to organizational culture. But then we shouldn't be surprised when our strategic planning fails. As a colleague once said, "Organizational culture eats strategic planning for breakfast."

It is the responsibility of the library's leadership to set goals not only for what gets done, but also for how things will get done. What kind of culture actually fits the plan? How does one achieve it?

The answer lies in knowing what you want, hiring people who behave that way, orienting new employees to the culture intelligently, and then gently but firmly enforcing the norms.

What does good employee orientation look like? First, it should include a systematic and thoughtfully- paced introduction to how things get done in the library. This is not a one day, information-packed walk-through. It might be a week of mentor-driven rotation among tasks and duties. It could include written policies and procedures, working alongside a mentor, and opportunities to reflect and talk about the input with library supervisors.

Conversations should address the library's current culture and how it might evolve. If staff has been resistant to change and the new hire is expected to help make that shift, the candidates need to know what they are getting into and that they will be supported. Most library workers want to be good at their jobs; a solid orientation builds confidence and competence.

MANAGE THE TALENT

Most of any supervisor's time, of course, isn't spent hiring. It's spent managing employees who have already been hired. Two broad approaches can lead to success in fostering a positive working environment.

First, decisions (of direction and culture) must be made clear. Staff should be aware of larger institutional goals, and be able to connect those goals with their own passions. Achieving this level of understanding can be done through both formal and informal conversations.

The annual evaluation process can be a good time to assign institutional goals to each employee. If, for instance, community outreach is a strategic direction, the delivery and evaluation of a program to local daycare centers could be a goal for an enthusiastic storyteller. In this way, all staff members have a stake in the plan and a chance to apply their own strengths to the implementation.

A second and more systematic approach to diagnosing and heading off problems with staff focuses on the evaluation of three dimensions of performance. A thriving employee has the "ability" to do the job (has the skills and knowledge), is "engaged" in the work place (is enthusiastic, involved, interested), and shows "ambition" (wants to grow and stretch). This is almost the definition of "flow"... doing something you're good at and pushing the boundaries.

These factors can be a useful lens when performance problems start to crop up. If the problem is "ability," the answer may well be training and study, with a focus not just on attending a training session, but on applying the new knowledge in a specific project.

If the problem is "engagement," the issue becomes more about discovering a person's deep values and exploring ways to link the most important ones to the job.

If the problem is "ambition," perhaps the employee needs encouragement and opportunity to connect personal aspirations with organizational accomplishments.

Rather than simply complaining about the performance of their subordinates, supervisors have a responsibility to assess their staff's connection to the job and step in to address any problems early. It is far cheaper to retain good staff than to replace them. But retention requires attention—and action.

DON'T PUT OFF THOSE CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS.

When a change is announced, staff usually splits into thirds. One third has been waiting for the change all their lives, and enthusiastically embraces it. Another third is uncertain and hesitant, but can and will accommodate the new direction with a little handholding. And the final third will fight it to the grave, and often in the most passive-aggressive way.

One of the greatest problems we have in our libraries today is the failure of supervisors to have a simple, direct, and above all, brief conversation with this last third. And because of our failure to initiate this talk, we give people permission to hold our organization hostage, to unilaterally veto the decisions of the governing board and director, and even to sabotage the institution. We've spent 20 years avoiding a 20 second conversation.

What should that conversation look like? It all begins with the supervisor who must prepare before talking to a subordinate.

Supervisors must first examine their own actions: Did I ever say just what it is that I want? Can I describe the problem in 25 words or less? Is the issue not based on judgment, but behavior? What is the employee doing or not doing that contradicts the job requirement?

Next, supervisors should schedule a meeting with the employee to communicate in 20 seconds the following information:

> "We need someone who will do the following..." (Specific behavior: communicate openly with co-workers, provide responsive and courteous service.)
>
> "Right now that's not you." (Specific behavior: you failed to show up at the service desk and did not inform anyone, you sat at the desk for 10 minutes refusing to make eye contact with the teenager standing in front of you). It's important here to be as fact-based as possible. This is not about accusations, but a simple recitation of observed behavior.
>
> "Please make an appointment with me in a week to tell me what you've decided."

Supervisors often complain about staff failing to do things they've never been told to—or helped to—do. But if the supervisor has communicated the goals effectively, then staff members have a choice to make: change your behavior, or change your job.

It is possible, of course, that the staff member will not change his behavior. That may, in fact, be the most common outcome. At that point, the supervisor may have to initiate whatever formal process is in place to put the employee on an improvement plan, document success or failure, and establish consequences.

But the process begins with the simple etiquette of clear communication: "Here's what the job is, and my job is to see that it gets done. That's what both of us are paid for."

At times, the staff member will simply say: "You're right. I don't agree with this direction. And if that's the case, I should go somewhere where I do fit in." When they leave, the door is now open for you to find a replacement, someone who does support your institution's direction.

Ultimately, that's how big changes happen: clarity (of direction and expectations), support (to help staff grow and contribute), and accountability.

That's how to make everyone a star. ■

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This article is based on a presentation, "Managing the Talent," prepared for the Public Library Association 2013 Conference and developed by James LaRue and Sharon Morris, Director of Library Development and Innovation for the Colorado State Library.

» What does good employee orientation look like? First, it should include a systematic and thoughtfully- paced introduction to how things get done in the library. This is not a one day, information-packed walk-through.

The Strategic Academic Library

» How the Fairleigh Dickinson University Frank Giovatto Library embraced a new strategic vision that included the entire campus community.

BY KATHLEEN STEIN-SMITH, PH.D.

The campus library is the academic hub of its community. Students flock to the library before, after, and between classes to read, study, do research, check e-mail, meet with study groups, have a snack in the Library Café...or to catch 40 winks.

The brick and mortar library is typically open long hours, seven days a week, with the online library available 24/7, 365 days a year. The campus library offers extensive print and online collections developed to support campus and institutional curriculum. Meeting that mandate means providing extended library hours to students preparing for final exams as they confront a challenging schedule of classes and class assignments along with commuting, jobs, and family responsibilities.

The effective campus library needs to address the needs of its campus community; for example, providing a computer station to a student who may be more comfortable working on a desktop. For others who are more digitally savvy, technologies needed by students are also available, including laptop computers, iPads and other handhelds, and up-to-date wireless.

Reference librarians are always available to assist with research questions and to offer library instruction to develop information literacy and research skills among students at all levels across the disciplines through critical thinking.

The campus library also must respond to the real and perceived needs of other campus stakeholders, including faculty, staff, and alumni. While each constituency views the library through its own lens and has its own set of user needs and expectations, the library needs to respond effectively to the user needs and expectations of all.

THE STRATEGIC LIBRARY

But a campus library of the future must do more than react to its constituencies. An academic library is a part of an institution of higher learning. As such, its mission must be proactive, clearly defined by and aligned with the institutional mission, and its priority is to support university programs and initiatives and all university constituencies in its collections and services. As such, the library also figures into the campus strategic plan, and its activities must align with objectives in that plan.

In a sense, the strategic library operates on two levels: provide the collections and services that any library at a peer institution would need; and constantly re-examine collections, services, library hours, and even its facility in light of the dynamic and constantly changing campus and institutional environment.

The strategic library responds to the real and perceived needs of its community and develops additional opportunities for community interaction and involvement to

not only embed the library more deeply in its community, but also to bring a diverse community together to meet the needs of individuals holistically.

Planned and executed with data and with empathy, the synergistic effect of reaching these goals is an ongoing cycle of continuous self-improvement and expansion of the centrality of the library in its community.

It is only through a culture of teamwork and professionalism dedicated to customer service, with consistent institutional support and advocacy, that the library can be proactive and successfully achieve these goals.

The Frank Giovatto Library's reading room. Photo Credit: William R. Kennedy

TRANSITIONING TOWARD A STRATEGIC LIBRARY

The library at Fairleigh Dickinson University (FDU) revamped its mission over five years with the goal of becoming a more engaged strategic library. The Weiner Library Rejuvenation Program, launched in 2009, was a multi-pronged campaign to bring the library back to the heart of the campus.

With the proliferation of online information and a rapidly changing information environment, the library had been far from the attention of many for years. Although some improvements had been made each year, the main campus library lacked new books and was generally unappealing to students in appearance and comfort.

In 2009, a change in library administration and the decision to install an elevator provided the impetus for change. The library's new leadership envisioned a strategic campaign for the library that incorporated two parallel components: ongoing improvements to the library facility and collection, and a series of themed initiatives.

Following the removal of much of the circulating collection to offsite storage, the library staff re-reconnected with the library's history and lived through the first ever major renovation of the library, which remained open throughout the year-long renovation.

By the time the renovation was complete, in early 2010, the library leadership was committed to keep the momentum for change moving forward. An enthusiastic Faculty Library Committee planned an official grand re-opening and fundraiser for the library, scheduled during National Library Week. Almost $5,000 was raised for the library at this inaugural event.

At the same time, a donation to the university caused the name of the library to be changed to the Frank Giovatto Library in April 2010. With two such high-profile events in the same week, the library had successfully managed to regain the attention and interest of many in the university community.

The challenge would be to keep the momentum going.

To increase engagement and involvement with the library across campus constituencies, the library reached out to the community through its Faculty Library Committee, Alumni Advisory Board, Student Advisory Board, a weekly e-newsletter, an active Facebook page (**https://www.facebook.com/Giovattolibrary**), and a regular column in "Equinox," the student newspaper.

During the summer of 2010, a schedule of programs and events for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and Friends of the Library was developed to appeal to a broad range of interests and to bring the community back into the library. These programs included talks by faculty and librarians and Library Research Clinics. Programming was designed to include participants from as many constituent groups as possible and to offer events with as broad an appeal as possible. Programming was generally unfunded, relying on presenters from the campus community.

A Library Café was created in response to student requests, and comfortable furniture for students was purchased. Long-forgotten windows, which had been boarded over and hidden by sheetrock, were uncovered and walls were re-painted. Improvements to library services also continued, including the installation of a new wireless system and upgrades to the library's general education classrooms.

A Founder's Room was developed and dedicated in April 2011 during National Library Week in conjunction with a second Faculty Library Committee fundraiser, which added approximately $2,000 to the library finances. After collaborating with alumni on the development of the Founder's Room, the Giovatto Library Alumni Advisory Board was born.

Despite these successes, the challenge remained two-fold: retaining and building interest among stakeholders on a busy campus, and retaining and building financial support for the library at the campus and at the university level during the economic recession.

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

In October 2011, a year-long celebration of the 50th anniversary of the library began, with a 49th birthday party as the kick-off event. Signature events that year included a 50th Anniversary Spring Open House during National Library Week (but without a fundraiser to avoid weighing too heavily on faculty and staff supporters' purse strings).

In October 2012, a 50th Anniversary Celebration featured former New Jersey Governor Richard Codey (an FDU alumnus) as the keynote speaker. The newly-renovated Giovatto Library Theatre & Auditorium was filled to capacity.

In celebration of the library's history, a timeline (**http://view.fdu.edu/default.aspx?id=9605**) and virtual tour (**http://view.fdu.edu/default.aspx?id=9323**) were added to the library's web page.

Support For the Library's Projects

Building on the concept that Fairleigh Dickinson University's Frank Giovatto Library represents and serves the entire campus, the financial needs of the library were brought to the attention of the Campus Provost, to which the library reports, and with his support and advocacy, to the university level for funding consideration. As only relatively modest items and purchases in the ongoing rejuvenation/renovation program could be funded from the library budget, funding for larger projects such as the elevator, ITV room, lighting upgrade in the Reference Reading Room, and renovation of the Giovatto Library Theatre & Auditorium were funded by the university as capital expenses.

The Boston by Steinway piano was purchased for student use at the library by the Office of the Provost, Metropolitan Campus. Facilities funded some painting and other repair work, and Public Safety funded the installation of security cameras throughout the building and a building-wide PA system, in addition to staffing late-night study hall hours at the library during finals week. Other projects, such as the outdoor reading terrace, Library Cafe, upgraded information commons area, and comfortable seating, have been funded on an ongoing basis by the library.

None of the successes in the Giovatto Library Rejuvenation Program would have been possible without the support of the FDU Office of the Provost, Metropolitan Campus, and faculty and alumni groups as well as the collaboration of Facilities, Public Safety, University Systems and Security, and other departments across the campus. The results reflect the professionalism and teamwork of the Giovatto Library staff and the support of the Metropolitan Campus students, faculty, and staff.

INCREASING FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

By 2012, the initial goals of making the library more appealing to students and of raising the profile of the library within the campus community had been achieved. The next phase of the campaign needed to reach out in a specific and targeted manner to faculty.

Faculty speakers had been invited to discuss their publications and research interests informally to groups at the library and were frequent speakers at library staff development programs. These programs became even more important in light of the current campaign.

Since faculty drive the academic enterprise, it was critical that the library collection include materials, both print and online, that professors deem beneficial and essential for their students (and themselves). In addition, faculty schedules often preclude frequent visits to the library, and new—and even not-so-new—faculty members may not be fully aware of the library's collections, services, and programs.

To reach out to faculty, a library survey was distributed to all campus faculty in March 2013. In response to their requests via the survey, the library purchased additional ebooks for the collection.

The signature event for the 2013 National Library Week was a Celebration of Faculty Scholarship and Creativity, intended to recognize and honor faculty authors and artists. The event featured an outside guest speaker and a detailed program with brief faculty author biographies.

Improvements to the library continued, with the installation of an ITV room for library and campus use. Additional improvements included a much-needed upgrade to the library Instruction Room and to the student small group study rooms. A Boston by Steinway piano was purchased for informal use by students in the library as well as for recitals by students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

The summer of 2013 offered another opportunity for the library to showcase the intellectual and historical heritage of the university, this time in memory of former FDU President J. Michael Adams, who had been President since 1999 but had passed away in 2012.

In September 2013, the Library was selected as the venue for a TEDx Talk, "Why We Care--Global Challenges and Realities." The roster of FDU speakers included alumni, faculty, trustees, and provosts. The well-attended event drew a capacity crowd of more than 150 in attendance with even more standing on the sidelines. A description of the event can be found at http://view.fdu.edu/default.aspx?id=5312 and on the TEDx talks on YouTube.

The library also received its first national recognition when it was featured on the cover of the November 2013 issue of Choice Magazine.

THE CAMPAIGN CONTINUES

NJ350, the observance of New Jersey's 350th anniversary in 2014, has provided an opportunity for the library to feature faculty speakers. So far this year, a NJ350 faculty panel on New Jersey authors and a faculty speaker on the 1967 Plainfield race riot have been presented, with additional speakers anticipated for the fall.

It was decided to broaden the authors and artists theme and include authors and artists from all segments of the campus community—alumni, staff, and students—as well as faculty.

The 2014 Celebration of FDU Authors and Artists was again held during National Library Week. The event included a faculty speaker, tables for student and university publications, readings by the University Players, and a presentation on a recently-introduced alumni author portal.

ONGOING INNOVATION

The Frank Giovatto Library will need to continue to be even more strategic and agile in a challenging higher education environment. It will also need to consciously embrace a philosophical paradigm shift from being reactive to proactive.

Responsiveness to the needs of specific campus constituencies and a concerted effort to effectively address any gaps in library services to the campus community are an ongoing and continuous process.

A holistic approach to education and to the life of the mind beyond the classroom walls will drive library programs, ranging from reader's advisory services for independent self-directed learners and information literacy instruction in a variety of formats and venues. Other initiatives include a Library Recital program offering performance opportunities to members of the campus community, a Library Gallery, and Library Language Tables.

THE STRATEGIC LIBRARY OF THE FUTURE

Libraries, the crossroads of the information highway, will need to be informed by the relevant literature on innovation, strategy, change management, and social marketing

Students use the library for study groups as well as for research. Photo Credit: Jessie Ribustello.

if library strategy is to be effectively conceived, developed, and implemented.

The strategic library has the opportunity to bring innovation to its community on two levels, providing added value to those students and others who are already library users, and attracting members of the campus community who have not been regular library users through the introduction of new collections, services, programs, and events. In this sense, the strategic library employs both sustaining and "disruptive innovation," a term made popular by Harvard Business School Professor Clayton M. Christensen. According to Christensen, "the first group of customers to look for, interestingly, is people who are not consuming."[1] In a library context, the theory encourages the introduction of collections, services, and programs to attract non-users to the library, perhaps for the first time.

The strategic academic library, in its outreach to underserved segments of the community—students, faculty, and staff who are not active library users—should consider adopting a "blue ocean strategy," a concept by W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne that encourages tomorrow's leading companies (libraries) to succeed by systematically creating "blue oceans of uncontested market space ripe for growth."[2]

In terms of implementing change, "establishing a sense of urgency," the first of John Kotter's 8 Steps, is another essential strategy for the library of tomorrow. In *Leading Change,* Kotter writes that "by far the biggest mistake that people make when trying to change organizations is to plunge ahead without establishing a high enough sense of urgency."[3]

Communication and promotion of the library and what it has to offer to its campus community is an ongoing necessity and, to be effective, must include what are commonly known as the 4 Ps of marketing: price, product, promotion, and place. However, in the context of the library, it is not a question of marketing a commercial product for sale, but rather a social good.

In their book, *Social Marketing: Influencing Behaviors for Good,* authors Lee and Kotler write that "social marketing is about (a) influencing behaviors, (b) utilizing a systematic planning process that applies marketing principles and techniques, (c) focusing on priority target audience segments, and (d) delivering a positive benefit for society."[4]

The 4 Ps become more tangible for libraries in this context. The product is not only a new book or DVD, but also a friendly librarian or staff member offering assistance. Price might refer to barriers to library use, including a lack of awareness about its role in student academic success. Promotion includes the library's presence at campus events and social media outlets. Place refers to the accessibility, comfort, and appeal of the library setting.

Despite these new priorities, however, the fundamentals for the library of the future have not changed. To be sustainable, the academic library will need to add value to the campus experience of all university stakeholders by responding to real and perceived needs and by offering an array of programs and events on topics of interest to the campus community. Events should feature members from a broad cross-section of the campus community in an attractive, comfortable, and welcoming environment for all.

Each library, especially each strategic academic library, may follow a different path in responding to its community. But a clear vision and the ability to effectively communicate and execute that vision are essential. ■

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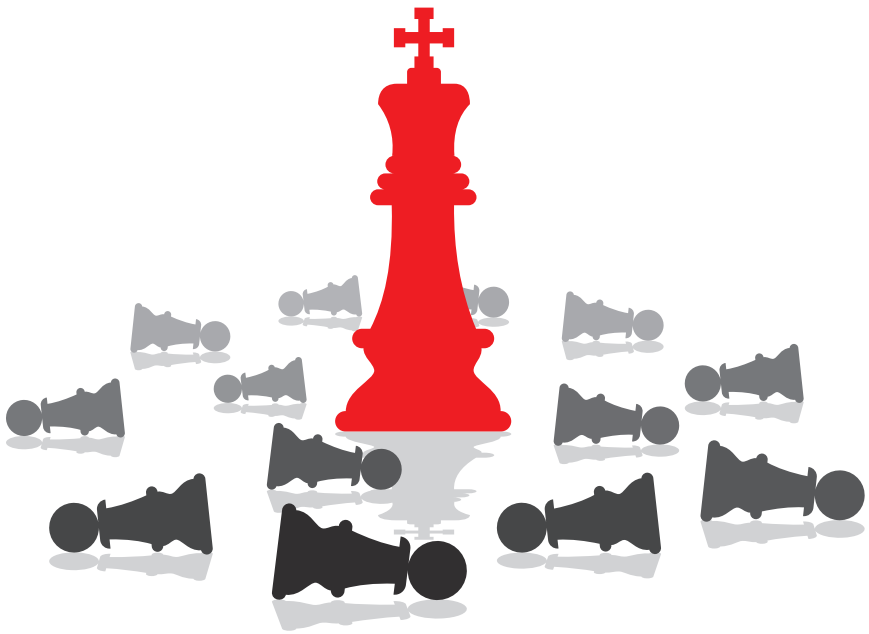
John Kotter: *The 8-Step Process for Leading Change.* http://www.kotterinternational.com/our-principles/changesteps

Library as Place: Rethinking Roles, Rethinking Space http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub129/pub129.pdf

Getting Around to Being Strategic

» Developing strategic priorities for a library's IT—or any—department can happen in just one day.*

BY MARGARET BROWN-SICA AND RICE MAJORS



Whether you are an IT director, IT manager, or just a one-person IT department for your library, it's easy to allow the operational aspects of technology to occupy all of your time. You have mission critical parts of your job, whether that means keeping servers, websites, and/or workstations up and running.

Even with the best intentions, what can get lost—what is all too easy to put aside again and again—is taking some time to be strategic about your job, your function (IT), and your department (if you have one). One of the mental challenges of getting around to this can be that being strategic can seem like something that will take a lot of time. There is, after all, a lot that goes into (or can go into) being strategic.

Let's challenge that assumption for a moment: what if you could be strategic in only one day a year? Everyone can presumably set aside one eight-hour day to be strategic.

What follows is an example of how you might organize eight hours—collectively imagined as a single day, although you are much more likely to spread eight hours over several partial-days. If you "never" have time to be strategic, or just don't know where to begin, let's look at how you might invest eight hours as a starting place for being strategic.

HOUR ONE: MEET WITH YOUR LEADERSHIP

The IT strategy must align with the broader strategic mission of your library organization. So, the first step is to meet with the library director or the library's board to review strategic documents at the organizational level.

In some cases, it may even be appropriate to review strategic documents at higher levels (like a campus goal for the next 20 years that creates an emphasis on distance education). If a strategic plan does not exist as a formal document, review the vision of the organization with the leadership so that agreement exists about what the larger organization is doing and what is important.

Discuss with leadership how IT fits into this vision. Some questions you might want to start with are: Do existing IT initiatives fit into the vision of what the library is and will be? Are there new initiatives (services, programs, and/or changes in perspectives of service expectation) planned or desired that will have IT implications?

The final important topic to discuss with leadership is the budget. Discuss and make sure everyone agrees on what is realistic in terms of financial support of any IT programs—existing or proposed. If the larger budget is not available for you to review, make sure you at least have a clear idea of how large your own budget is and what control you have over allocating it.

HOUR TWO: HOST AN OPEN FORUM

Gathering information from stakeholders (typically internal to the library) will be essential to your process, both to assess how existing initiatives are progressing (and how successful IT support is perceived to be) as well as to flush out ideas for new initiatives.

There are several ways to gather input, and you'll want to select one or more methods based on your organization's size and communication culture. One idea is to host an open forum where library employees can bring their ideas and feedback. Another idea would be to use a short, simple survey to ask for broad input on possible projects or on how things are going.

For some libraries, gathering input directly from patrons may be a realistic option—and may even be considered the most important source of data and thus central to the strategic process. The methodologies of gathering data are similar, but it may be worth reviewing data on patron

trends (see Hour Four) before asking for direct patron input.

One important thing is that the scope of gathering data should match the scope of the rest of this process. To keep your strategic process manageable, you will want to gather data in ways that you can realistically use the data to inform your way forward.

HOUR THREE: TALK TO THE LARGER IT DEPARTMENT

A library almost always has an affiliated larger IT group, such as an Information Technology Department in higher education, a city or county IT group for a public library, or the main corporate IT department for a business library. No matter the size of your library or the size of this outside IT group, your relationship with these people makes a big difference in what you can accomplish.

Make a list of your goals and potential projects, including the skills and technology necessary to achieve each one. Note which skills you have in the library and how much time is needed for each project. Think about which aspects of the projects and which skill sets are most closely related to the mission of your library.

If there is an IT function that is not specific to a library environment, which is the best IT unit to provide that function? More to the point, are there areas where the larger IT department can help with, or take over, your initiatives? Would this result in a change of service expectations? There are examples of larger IT departments absorbing initiatives like providing SharePoint, e-mail and calendaring, a dedicated server room and desktop support for patrol and employee workstations.

For many organizations, the hardest part about this kind of transition would be the change in control. Partnering with another IT department to provide a service will require having less direct control, and therefore more trust. Since these are business relationships, sometimes a written articulation of service expectations and communication protocols is perfectly appropriate and may ease the transition. This may be a memorandum of understanding or a service level expectation, and may be based on similar documents that the larger IT department has with its other clients. Viewing this transition as a relationship challenge rather than a technology challenge can help you assess the best way to move forward.

Other things to think about are whether there is enough work for a particular skill set in the library to ensure that this skill set is used and kept up to date. Do you have a training budget and is it sufficient to develop or maintain the currency of that skill set? Identify skills that you don't want to or cannot maintain. Look at the larger IT department's organizational chart or their service catalog to see what they provide. Assess their plans for the next year or few years and look for possible areas of collaboration. Are there areas where your initiatives and theirs are interdependent, or are redundant?

Plan your meeting before you go. Take a list of library technology projects for which the library could use help from the IT department. Specify what kind of skills would be helpful. List identified areas of potential collaboration. This doesn't have to be a one-way street—the library may be able to beta test technology pilot programs for the IT department or take on other projects that would be useful to them. Email your document to the contact before or after the meeting and bring copies with you. Take notes at your meeting and send the minutes to your director and the IT contact to document the meeting. Identify next steps and plans. See if it is possible to set up a regular meeting or if someone from the outside IT department could come to library technology department meetings. Consider offering to set up a financial arrangement if that would be beneficial to both organizations. If the IT department cannot supply support, ask for suggestions for outsourcing or hiring a consultant.

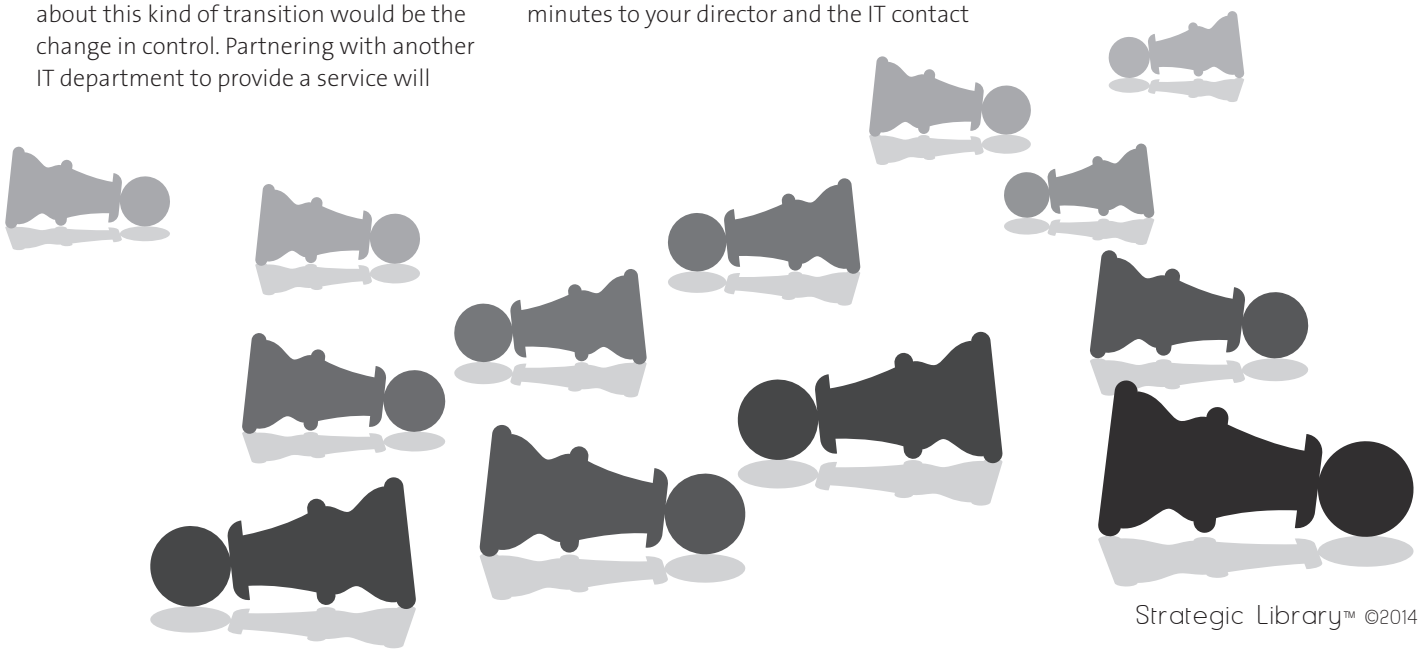
As appropriate, Hour Three's activities can be repeated with others such as professional groups, other IT groups, or other departments that might have skills that would help you reach your goals.

HOUR FOUR: REVIEW DATA ON PATRON TRENDS

As one of the key strategists for your library's IT direction, it is important that you keep up with library and technology trends; if you don't know about new technologies you cannot evaluate their utility. An hour used to review current information and take steps to stay informed in the future is time well spent toward identifying which trends are relevant to your mission and which are not.

Identify several journals, blogs, or other information sources that address your current interests. For journals, set up alerts or have the table of contents delivered to you when a new issue comes out. Some databases provide notifications for new materials from pre-defined searches. Subscribe to blogs and Twitter feeds.

You can find lists of library and information science journals in subject specific journal databases such as LISTA, on Wikipedia[1] or the Directory of Open Access



Journals.[2] One way to find blogs is to consult the Salem Press directory of library blogs.[3] In addition to the directory, Salem Press gives out awards once a year for the best library blogs.[4]

It is important to keep up with technology in general, not just what has already been adopted by libraries. Even if you aren't aware of a library adopting some new technology it doesn't mean that it might not be of help to your library. To find some good technology people to follow on Twitter, you can search for your area of interest (such as "library technology" or "e-books") under the browse area or identify a list of respected people in your area of interest. When you find someone you think is knowledgeable who tweets, check to see who that person follows on Twitter. Try following a few of those people and discontinue those who do not tweet what is relevant to you.

Other valuable information sources are professional organizations such as Educause[5] (professional organization for technology in higher education), Coalition for Networked Information[6] (an organization with ties to ALA and Educause that focuses on libraries and technology) and LITA[7] (a division of ALA that focuses on libraries and technology).

Reports of particular note for academic libraries are: the ECAR (Educause) Study of Undergraduate Technology[8] and the Educause Horizon Report[9] (emerging technology) and reports from ITHAKA S + R.[10] Other examples of potential sources of reports are those from the Pew Research Center regarding technology and internet usage,[11] OCLC's WebJunction site,[12] The Edge Initiative,[13] and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.[14] You can put a Google alert on pages where new reports will be announced, or put the date when some reports are expected on your calendar so that you check back at that time to read the report.

Conferences are a great way to keep up to date, but many of us don't have the time or funding to attend very many. Even if you can't attend a conference, you can often use the information presented. Identify conferences you would attend if you could. Set a reminder for a few weeks after the conference and review materials posted from the sessions. In addition to conferences, you may want to investigate online information from organizations such as the Coalition for Networked Information which regularly posts reports from member libraries on projects.

The most valuable information sources will vary according to your current interests and projects and will change with time. You will never have time to read everything, and doing so would not be efficient. Review what information you consume on a regular basis. Does it provide enough information to deserve your time? Does it cover the right topics? It is helpful to make sure that you are following technology trends outside libraries.

HOUR FIVE: TALK TO LIBRARY IT FOLKS

This hour is the time to develop and assess directions and projects. This is your chance to review the successes and challenges of the last year, assess the time and skills needed for various projects that have been proposed, and identify possible areas of greater efficiency. It is important to do an exercise like this at least once a year.

In a small library, this review might involve only one person, but for many libraries participation could be much broader such as people from the library IT department. The group may include other employees in the library who work on IT but aren't in the IT department or even someone from the main IT department for your city, university, or corporation to add a broader perspective on your projects as they line up with bigger priorities.

Before the meeting, have members of the group review specific trends. Ideally these trends or subjects will be aligned with the person's areas of expertise or responsibility. Within each trend, participants should evaluate existing services, note what services can be improved or eliminated, evaluate the projects from the past year, and give a brief summary of how the project went. Each person should also list potential projects with information about the resources and skills necessary to complete those projects and what affect each would have on library services. The participants should use any kind of data available such as web analytics or help desk tickets in their evaluations. These evaluations should be posted to an Intranet or shared document area (such as in Google Docs) before the meeting.

Identify what worked well and not so well for previous projects and current services. Use this information to improve work for the next year. Have each person in the group give feedback about how the existing and potential projects should be prioritized.

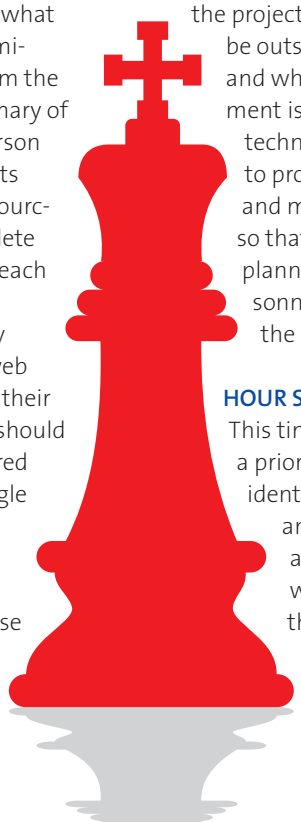
When this exercise is finished it should result in a list of potential products with information about impact, and required skills and resources.

HOUR SIX: THINK

Consider where easy wins might be possible. You have assessed the most important projects in terms of return on investment. Consider options for outsourcing some tasks or parts of projects. Make a list of possible projects for the next year.

Make a matrix with room for rating each project in terms of the variables that are important to your organization. Examples might include alignment with library mission and strategic plan, direct financial cost, human time cost, and importance to users. Rate each project, reflecting the viewpoints of the entire organization and your users. You can consider your time and budget in different ways such as making sure different areas of the library each have at least one IT project in the next year or allocating a certain percentage of time and money to Research and Development—in other words, to new projects. It is important not to spend all of your resources on maintenance activities or you will never develop new services.

Some of your projects will naturally rise to the top, especially those that will get the biggest result for the amount of resources allocated. Add details to these projects in terms of which skills are needed, how long the project should take, whether it should be outsourced or handled in house, and what level of financial commitment is necessary. Match human, technology, and financial resources to projects. Keep a list of obstacles and missing skills or technologies so that you can refer to them when planning training, hiring new personnel, or making adjustments in the organization.



HOUR SEVEN: PRIORITIZE

This time should naturally lead into a prioritization process. You should identify what your process will be and who will be included in it, and then be up front and clear with stakeholders about how the process will work so there are no surprises.

Typically, prioritization

of services and projects should be done in collaboration with existing decision-making structures, including the director, other IT stakeholders, and department heads. How this prioritization might work will vary considerably by organization and who should and wants to participate. It is important to realize that the ultimate value of your entire process will be somewhat limited if you cannot get your existing decision-making structures to participate in a prioritization process.

How simple or elaborate your resulting matrix of approved and potential projects may be will similarly vary by the size and nature of your organization.

HOUR EIGHT: COMMUNICATE

Once decisions have been made, the next step is to communicate with stakeholders about how services and projects have been prioritized. Again, it is best to imagine how this communication will take place relatively early in the process so that you have an idea of what you are building toward and thus what aspects of your prioritization matrix might be easily reused to ensure clear communication.

Communication can take many forms, and may actually take different forms for different groups of stakeholders. In some cases, a passive communication may be appropriate: posting a priority list or matrix to a website or collaboration tool so that interested parties can access it when they like. In other cases, and especially with stakeholders who are more engaged or whose work may be directly affected by new or eliminated projects, more active communication may be better: sending a personal e-mail, holding individual meetings, or holding group sessions (with a board of directors or the IT department) to give participants a chance to ask questions and dialogue about the priorities.

AFTER EIGHT HOURS

This planning process should yield valuable tools and information for prioritizing, evaluating, and communicating IT work in the library, allowing the library technology department to move beyond daily maintenance and work strategically.

While these suggestions are structured around eight hours of planning, in reality this process should be ongoing and may not involve all of these steps in the order described here. The specifics of your library's situation will inform how you may adapt this framework to your own needs. ■

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*This article was first published in *Library Leadership & Management,* Volume 28, number 2.

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