

# Making the Good Hire

## Updating Hiring Practices for the Contemporary Multigenerational Workforce, Part One

Pixey Anne Mosley and Wendi Arant Kaspar

**W**ith the graying of the profession, both in the professional librarian ranks and among the long-term support staff, libraries face a growing challenge to recruit, hire, and retain quality employees to meet institutional needs. On the surface, this sounds like a relatively straightforward task. However, it is complicated by several significant, destabilizing factors. The first is that libraries continue to undergo tremendous amounts of operational change in the services they provide and the media through which those are delivered. The second factor relates to how the general population has changed in terms of skills, mobility, and work history, which among other things leads to increased turnover. A third factor is the potential for disconnects, misunderstandings, and miscommunications that occur within a diverse, multigenerational workforce with regard to entitlement, work commitment, and retention. Any or all of these issues can cause problems when trying to hire the best new librarians and staff.

This two-part article looks at each of these factors from a management perspective and offers some techniques for addressing them in the context of contemporary library environments. Part one discusses how libraries and the workforce have changed and suggests that managers may need to take a hard look at what they are doing with vacant positions, how they are making the decision to replace them, how they are defined and revised, and ways to use position postings as a marketing tool to appeal to a broad range of applicants. Part two (to appear in the Summer 2008 issue of *LA&M*) explains how job review criteria and interview processes need to be reevaluated to take into consideration the expectations associated with generational differences and other non-library parameters.

### Not Your Mother's Library

Although it is a truism that libraries have changed dramatically in the past twenty-five years and will continue to do so in the future, it is one that has a profound impact on

how libraries are managed. The sweeping scope of these changes becomes strikingly apparent by picturing how a specific operational area was structured twenty-five years ago and comparing it to the current environment. Some of the changes are obvious, such as the computers on every desk and work areas that support routine use of integrated library systems, e-mail, and office software packages. Other changes have taken place in such a transitory or gradual way that the impacts on the expectations for any given position have been more subtle. One example is the gradual transformation or elimination of many secretarial or clerical support positions due to efficiencies made possible by office technologies. Another is the restructuring of several frontline employees' duties due to changing management practices over the past several decades. In recent years, traditional hierarchical management styles where operational decisions are made top-down and communicated as a task-based instruction or directive down a chain-of-command have been increasingly replaced by more linear, contemporary management practices, such as Total Quality Management and other team-based styles, which encourage open workflow development, creative innovation, and transferring ownership of responsibilities from managers to staff members on the frontlines.<sup>1</sup>

Within the business literature, there is discussion about these changing roles of employees and leadership, with much emphasis on how they foster better customer service. Costen and Barrash examine at length the personality traits that are widely reported in the literature as being indicative of a customer service orientation, adding that ". . . being able to identify customer service-oriented individuals during the hiring process will greatly improve the organization's overall customer service." They provide a framework for measuring three of the "cardinal" traits: agreeableness, conscientiousness, and extroversion.<sup>2</sup> Yet, in many libraries, career ladder standards or benchmarks are still limited to library-specific tasks or in-house experiences, which are often used as the focus for making hiring decisions. Beile and Adams found that among recently posted position descriptions, "more than 57 percent required some previous library experience and for 23 percent, it was preferred or desired."<sup>3</sup> Breaking this pattern of thinking requires that managers closely scrutinize their vacant positions with thoughts toward what might the position

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**Pixey Anne Mosley** (pamosley@tamu.edu) is Head of Access Services and **Wendi Arant Kaspar** (warrant@tamu.edu) is Coordinator of Policy Sciences and Economics Library at Texas A&M University Libraries in College Station.

do, rather than what it previously did. In many cases, a position can be restructured to bring in new ideas, service innovations, or operational efficiencies.

There is also significant change in the makeup and expectations of the contemporary workforce. Many of these are generationally based. While there has been some initial penetration by Generation X'ers into the management ranks, most hiring decisions are made by managers and administrators from the Traditionalist or Baby Boomer generational perspectives. Mosley explained how mentoring and supervising across generations can be challenging because of their different workplace value systems.<sup>4</sup> There is a similar challenge in evaluating job applications and connecting interpersonally with Gen-X and Millennial applicants during interviews. Prior generations tended to invest more bowing to the greater good of the whole organization, and what they did in the workplace formed a large part of their self-identities and self-worth. They were more comfortable with hierarchical structures and working one's way up to more responsible positions through time-in-rank, experience, increased knowledge, and demonstrated loyalty. These generations communicate comfortably in a hierarchical "need to know" model.

The values and expectations of Gen-X and Millennial employees, who increasingly form the largest part of most job pools, are very different. These younger generations focus more on investing in themselves than in long-term institutional goals, and they generally do not tie their identities to specific job accomplishments or workplace titles. As described by Lancaster and Stillman, their focus is on experiential learning and growing in the job, and they want to be a part of decision making despite lack of seniority status.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, their communication styles are of directness, engaged dialog, and interacting equally with all. They tend to openly reject hierarchical command structures in favor of peer collaborative, independent, and self-reliant models. Another characteristic of Gen-X'ers and Millennials is their insistence on being able to maintain a work-life balance. Unlike Boomers and Traditionalists, who tended to put their work first through committed availability and long work hours, Gen-X'ers and Millennials have less interest in achieving success at the expense of family or personal leisure time. Traditionalist or Boomer managers who persist in thinking the younger generations will adapt to the older-style organizational culture are destined to be constantly disappointed and will find it harder to hire and retain a younger staff in their organizations. The new generations of library employees will walk away from positions that do not meet their needs or expectations.

## **Justifying and Defining a Position**

Acknowledging the changing organizational needs and workforce expectations is critical when refilling or reclassifying a vacated position, or when creating a new one.

Many libraries have eliminated or consolidated positions, either due to budget cutting or a desire to operate more efficiently via cross-training and multi-tasking.<sup>6</sup> In this environment, managers cannot assume that their vacancies will be automatically filled. Any resignation, especially retirements, should prompt reexamination of operational workflows, reassignment of responsibilities, and reevaluation operational needs.

Information acquired in the reexamination process should then be used as part of the justification for retaining or creating the position. The key is to explain how the redefined position represents an operation-critical role, without focusing on the individual who used to be in the position. This is especially true when the vacancy involves the retirement of a long-time, senior employee. Even with administrative support, it may not be possible to fill at the level that it had been previously. The likelihood of being able to fill the vacancy with someone of equal experience and knowledge is sometimes unrealistic. Most peers on the staff are not likely to be interested in the marginal incentives associated with taking on the new role in a lateral move. Filling a position from within with an internal candidate is also often likely to sustain the status quo, rather than initiate change and innovation. Finally, filling a position with a peer internal candidate may be only a short-term or interim solution, as they are more likely to have retirement in the foreseeable future.

At most institutions, when a vacancy occurs, managers will evaluate and reengineer the workflow processes for relevancy, redistribute responsibilities among other existing staff, or restructure the position with new responsibilities. In doing so, managers may find two options open to them. The first is to redefine the vacancy as an entry- (or lower) level, career-ladder position with appropriate responsibilities. However, an entry-level position that is limiting, unchallenging, or uninspiring will not attract Gen-X and Millennial applicants. The other option, especially for larger institutions, may be to consider a more significant restructuring, creating positions outside of the traditional library support titles to bring in employees with different sets of customer service, administrative, or educational experiences. One advantage of this practice is that it enables potential applicants to consider library work as different from the traditional stereotype by providing a broader understanding of how the service needs of customers can be met in nontraditional ways and by applying nontraditional job aptitudes.

To evaluate, redefine, and justify positions can be problematic, especially for managers who have been at an institution or in a particular role for a number of years, and are therefore intimately familiar with and invested in current practices. It is necessary for the manager to totally disassociate the individual who held the position from its responsibilities, and to take a holistic view at what the unit needs, with an eye to the future. It is also important to identify the scope of each duty and prioritize

its importance. The functional list of needs for the position will include existing tasks or responsibilities, in addition to others in the unit that have been neglected or done on an ad hoc basis. This list should be specific (without getting into minutia or assuming workflows will stay absolutely the same)—with descriptions such as notify library users of availability of materials, coordinate desk services, process the books to the hold shelf, review invoice payments, or download records from a vendor into the local catalog, and so on—but not be so detailed that the complete tasks involved in executing these procedures are described. In addition, it will be helpful to provide information on the skills needed to do these jobs; for example, frontline staff needs can be demonstrated through having skills in various categories, such as customer service, troubleshooting, communications, coordinating, training and supervision, cash handling, accounting skills, and so on. Expectations that the position will work with other staff members on specific tasks or interdepartmental projects should be stated.

Once the duties associated with the position are defined, these should be matched to an appropriate title. In some libraries there may be more flexibility in creating titles or positions than in others. However, in many libraries this process may be governed by an overriding institutional or civil service model, and library managers may be limited to previously defined positions and established pay ranges. Often these positions will have prescribed descriptions, benchmarks, qualifications, or requirements. Still, with many generic positions descriptions, the library position will not have to match every one of the elements according to rigid criteria, provided the primary needs are met. The last step is to identify any leftover tasks or partial responsibilities that can be delegated elsewhere in the unit or consolidated into the description of a new position.

The redeveloped position will then generally go through an approval process. Depending on the library's budgetary situation, this can vary from a rubber stamp to a rigorous scrutiny. Justifications that can be made in support of a unit, interdepartmental, or library-wide impact present a stronger case than those relevant only to limited internal operations. Similarly, responsibilities that can be tied to services, user priorities, institutional rules, or other criteria to which the library is committed carry more weight. It is also extremely important to consider funding for the expected salary range, especially if new money must be allocated from the main budget for the position. In this case, a manager might be expected to suggest some budgetary options, such as identifying other available monies from the unit budget, or converting two lower paid positions into a higher paid one. Any anticipated budgetary savings that result from reconfiguring the position should be communicated quite clearly. The idea is to make a compelling enough argument so that the approval decision is easy as possible for administrators or personnel officers, in terms of how it meets operational, functional, and customer service needs.

The key to presenting a successful justification that will not only be approved, but also attract a diverse pool of applicants is to avoid stating the position's importance based on strictly traditional or uniquely internal library practices. Also, descriptions must give knowledge of operations in order to judge a position's importance in context of organizational objectives and presenting consequences of failing to fill the position.

By contrast, the next set of descriptions are much more detailed, providing examples of the type of analysis that will validate the importance of the position. The actual written justification must be precise in providing department names, specific scope of operations, and the direct connection to current institutional objectives. These examples are based upon different types of positions that libraries might have or develop in response to current trends in society and higher education for accountability, assessment, and service.

- **To replace a business-focused position.** Since this position was created, it has become a critical operation for unit financial handling functions. The unit has become a more effective partner with the university business services staff and significantly improved quality control on financial issues. Unit operations have improved with regard to documentation, timeliness, and follow-through, and are better prepared in the event of an audit of cash handling and invoice payment practices.
- **To replace frontline night and weekend service desk library assistant position.** This position is critical in order to maintain the essential levels of service during the evening and weekend hours at the two service desks. Additionally, without the position there is a significant risk to the library users and students in not having staff member oversight and responsiveness in the event of a building emergency.
- **To replace an entry-level processing library assistant position.** This position is operationally critical to meet the published expectation of processing books from receipt to on-the-shelf in two days. Without the position, there is a high risk that books will appear to be available for users several days before they have actually completed internal processing, which was redefined last year with the increase in use of approval vendor preprocessing.
- **To create a new position based on a new user service.** The development of the new Media Learning Commons has created a need for a public service-focused employee with good teaching and interpersonal communication skills and extremely strong technical skills. The latter include familiarity with graphic editing, Web authoring software packages, and extensive experience with both Apple and Microsoft platforms and operating systems. There is currently no suitable employee on staff, and to develop a current staff mem-

ber to the needed level of technical expertise would delay service implementation by eighteen months.

- **To create a new position for unit training.** Because of the increasingly complex operations at the main service desk and turnover in student assistants and entry level frontline staff positions, a dedicated training position is needed to coordinate unit-wide cross training, monitor completed training, and update training materials for ongoing operational changes. The current model of distributed training has not proven capable of keeping up with student worker turnover and the increasing rate of operational change due to enhanced technology tools and resources.
- **To create an entry-level student services librarian.** With the increased importance of targeting services to undergraduate and graduate students because of the newly implemented library fee, a student services librarian would be a visible symbol of the commitment to improvement. The position would also serve as a clearinghouse and conduit to bring student concerns to the attention of library administration and communicate administrative engagement to appropriate student representatives.

These examples demonstrate how position definitions can be linked not only to maintenance of basic service levels, but also to supporting new or evolving institutional priorities. Further, by focusing on the latter, the institution can become better positioned for future initiatives. They also avoid library-specific jargon in favor of wording more broadly relevant to service industries.

## Posting a Staff Position

Managers can think of a carefully developed job posting with clearly stated expectations as an organizational marketing tool. This is often overlooked when posting entry-level or support staff positions. Writing the ad presents managers with an opportunity to consider what these positions can offer in terms of potential, both for an employee and for the institution. It is a fact that some repetitive, routine, or even boring tasks must be done in any library environment, but defining entry-level positions exclusively in context of these basic tasks can skew an applicant pool toward individuals whose perception of the library is one dimensional and whose primary motivation for working is a short-term paycheck. While these employees will meet the immediate minimal operational needs, they will typically not be motivated beyond that. Additionally, when these employees are faced with inevitable operational change, they may find learning new skills and adapting to new expectations extremely difficult, and may thus inhibit effective change. Similarly, a one-dimensional, task-oriented position will have no appeal for someone interested in a long-term future or a growth position that allows mental

stimulation or encourages investment in their workplace.

To attract a rich and diverse pool of applicants, all positions should be conceived in a way to clearly offer a wide variety of work experience and obvious opportunities for advancement. They should also offer opportunities for employees to engage in collaborative decision-making on process improvement and to work with peers on teams. As previously discussed, peer engagement is extremely important to Gen-X'ers and Millennials as a general characteristic, along with a tendency to question the necessity of "paying their dues" in positions that offer little authority or creativity. Once hired, they see themselves as equally invested in being a part of the organization and its decision-making processes as any of the senior employees. Similarly, with the emphasis they place on self-investment and personal success, they will also look for leadership opportunities or the ability to contribute to new services, workflows, or project initiatives.

Flexible, forward-looking incentives such as these have not traditionally been part of the job description for an entry-level support-staff member or new librarian. However, using this type of a "job characteristics model" for designing positions utilizes the job itself as a motivational tool, and will draw a bigger, better pool of applicants.<sup>7</sup> Traditional management styles tend to steer away from creating lengthy job descriptions, for fear that itemizing too many different areas of responsibility or too many preferred criteria would be overwhelming.<sup>8</sup> There was also an assumption, often unintentional, that the best suited applicant would already be familiar with libraries and understand the library jargon in job postings, so lengthy explanation would be unnecessary. In actuality, for contemporary employees, a detailed job description worded in non-library terms will attract a stronger pool of people who may not have experience specific to libraries but can understand the expectations and want to be engaged in their jobs in ways that reduce boredom and minimize compartmentalization.

When crafting a position description, be flexible. Do not automatically assume that someone must know a particular system or be an expert on precise workflows in order to perform the tasks. For example, in a technical services unit, the general need may be for a person who has the ability to track orders and purchases, not necessarily one with specific knowledge of YBP's Gobi or Blackwell's Collection Manager Protocol. Another less obvious example would be found in a job function listed as "process electronic reserves," which assumes knowledge and understanding of what electronic reserves are, when the underlying skills that are needed are the ability to perform the functional components of retrieving materials in the collection, scanning documents, and associating/activating those files. These functions require skills that might be demonstrated in different ways, other than just work in a library environment.

Some additional examples of traditionally worded postings include library-specific phrases such as the following:

- Train library staff and student workers on databases and the integrated library system.
- Work the Reference/Information Desk and assist patrons in using the OPAC.
- Process interlibrary loan requests.
- Process acquisitions shipments and patron purchase requests.
- Perform copy cataloging using OCLC and SirsiDynix system.
- Process supplements and pocket parts in legal and government reference.
- Check in serials, perform claims, and process serials to and from the bindery.
- Supervise the Circulation Desk.

All of these are brief and accurate but assume the reader knows library organizational jargon, structure, and operations, which creates a barrier to otherwise interested applicants.

More generic descriptions that focus on catching an applicant's eye with transferable skills and minimize library operational jargon include the following. Again, these examples are based upon typical library functions but are not specific to any library:

- **Desk support.** Oversee public desk services and user interactions, including training, scheduling, and supervising staff and student workers.
- **Document delivery.** Assist in processing requests received from library users for delivering scanned articles to their computer accounts. Pull books from the collection, scan pages, and route files through the proprietary software to the user's account.
- **Providing information assistance.** Conduct information interviews with library patrons and assist them in understanding the availability of library print and electronic resources. Give directional assistance in accessing needed resources. Interpret and explain library guidelines. Provide effective referrals to librarians or other library service desks as appropriate. Use the public online catalog to direct users to materials in the collection, and to services available on the library Web site.
- **Web editing.** Create and update department informational Web pages and intranet files using the content management system, word processing, and html editing software. Provide Web-based access to unit-specific operational information.
- **Ordering.** Place orders for books in an online ordering system. Check in books from shipments. Verify invoices and sort books for delivery to shelving.
- **Cataloging.** Locate catalog records for new library books in a centralized database (OCLC). Download library catalog records and edit for local information.
- **Operations supervision.** Supervise three night and weekend desk supervisors. Coordinate schedules and see that all unit customer service desks function in

an efficient manner at nights and on weekends.

- **Emergency response.** Respond and take appropriate action when security or fire alarms are set off or other building crises occur, facilitate a safe evacuation, implement administrative call list, and perform post-event building checks, as appropriate.
- **Departmental training.** Develop and oversee implementation of an effective training model for new staff and student employees in the department. Assist in developing and maintaining modules for consistent training. Convene and chair the Department Training Team. Monitor and document training progress (setting up training schedules and tracking completed training for staff and student employees).
- **Team collaboration.** Collaborate with other operational staff. Provide best service possible to library users through participatory decision-making and implementation of operations and guidelines, support quality of work-life initiatives, provide feedback and input to supervisory and operational teams.

It is important to recognize that any one position might integrate several of these features with different levels of emphasis.

Because of their professional expectations and experience, managers can have a tendency to assume that the skills needed for someone to be a successful library staff member are unique. While this may be true for professional-level librarian positions that require an accredited MLS (as supported by the American Library Association [ALA]), this is not necessarily the case for many support staff or non-librarian professional positions.<sup>9</sup> People with new viewpoints from other careers can encourage objective review of assumptions and thus help introduce innovation. For example, someone with graphic arts or computer design experience might be an asset in creating effective brochures, signage, or Web-based content and services. Improving service quality might be facilitated by someone with experience from the retail or commercial sector. Obviously, applicants would still need to be trained on library-specific elements of their jobs, but in the process they can also contribute by offering ideas on ways to improve customer service. Even some "menial" jobs, such as working at a gas station or in a fast food restaurant, actually offer relevant on-the-job experience in handling difficult customer situations, dealing with monotonous times as well as busy ones, coping with facility problems, working as part of a team, and exercising independent judgment appropriately. Similarly, someone that has had experience in a banking environment might be a valuable addition for a role that includes financial management, cash handling, or invoice reconciliation elements.

When describing duties, it is of course important to keep in mind whether there are physical or other skill requirements associated with the specific tasks. For example, work in an ordering department may require the ability to lift twenty pound loads; cataloging duty may require the

ability to use a computer with a keyboard and mouse or other type of pointing device; or a document delivery job may require the ability to walk, bend, crouch, and reach to pull books from the stacks or even drive a vehicle.

Most position postings also include a list of required and preferred characteristics. The definition of what is considered required or preferred will vary from library to library. Required often includes a specific education level and amount of some type of experience, and particular skills or certifications. Usually, required represents qualifications that an applicant must meet in order to be considered acceptable. In this environment, it may be appropriate to minimize required formal experiences and focus on using preferred criteria to allow for the most flexibility in hiring. By expanding the list of preferred characteristics or criteria, the manager has more options for balancing an individual's strengths and weaknesses and making tradeoffs to achieve the best fit.

Many institutions require that any criteria considered in the review process be included in the actual position posting, in the spirit of truth and accuracy in hiring.<sup>10</sup> This presents another important reason to question automatic inclusion of any required criteria. Historically, many academic libraries required a bachelor's degree for support staff positions, thereby eliminating many highly motivated, intelligent, and otherwise qualified candidates who may not have had the opportunity or financial ability to pursue a college degree. Finally, even while dispelling the traditional library stereotypes to attract a more robust pool, it is equally important not to oversell the position or establish unrealistic expectations on the part of the applicant. A person in an entry-level position is not going to be immediately assigned major managerial responsibilities, but neither should it be limited to forty hours of purely routine work.

Candidates for positions will carefully assess both required and preferred competencies. It is important to cast this in general descriptive language to capture the most expansive skill set to attract candidates. Avoid limiting criteria, such as past experience working at a library circulation or reference desk, having prior knowledge of the library catalog system, or knowledge of indexing or classification systems, any of which are still seen on staff postings from many institutions. Depending on the responsibilities of the position, any of the following might be included as required experience:

- experience in customer service-centered environment;
- supervisory or leadership experience;
- training or teaching experience;
- experience in an academic setting;
- experience with student workers;
- experience in working as part of a team or in a team-based environment;
- experience with any inventory management system, electronic document system, budget or accounts management programs, and so on;

- experience with working with database systems (such as Microsoft Access) or developing macros or shortcut programming;
- experience with Web design, handout or brochure development, or marketing; or
- experience with the Internet as a tool or with the chat environment or other social networking venues.

Additionally, preferred abilities or skills might be expressed as factors that are less dependent on time-in-rank experience, and more a gauge of general abilities. They can include things that would appeal to younger employees, such as:

- ability to exercise discretion in interpreting guidelines;
- ability to multitask;
- excellent phone, e-mail, and face-to-face interaction skills for conducting information interviews;
- ability to work within a culturally diverse environment;
- ability to conduct an interview and mediate a library user's needs;
- ability to exercise independent judgment;
- positive attitude toward diversity initiatives;
- ability to adjust to a changing environment; or
- effective online communication skills.

In all of these areas, candidates might variously interpret criteria that qualify and measure their own skills against these. For managers, this might mean having to review a larger pool, but it may also bring in an applicant who normally would not have sought a library position but who is exactly what the department needs.

Managers must carefully consider the relevance of these criteria with long-term institutional interests in mind. For example, the inclusion of "judgment skills" in an entry-level position might seem counterintuitive, especially where the position will be expected to follow established rules and policies under the guidance of a supervisor. The key is that if a manager is hiring for retention, eventually the employee will be expected to exercise independent decision-making. The manager does not want to discover that this person is incapable of making decisions and taking leadership roles after investing time and effort in hiring and training. Additionally, with budget cutting resulting in fewer staff, more responsibility may be placed on entry-level position holders, who may find themselves in the position of being the only staff members on duty to interpret a policy, make an exception to normal practice, or deal effectively with a political situation or a user's particularly urgent needs. It can be less important how an employee handles the 90 percent of routine transactions, if he or she cannot handle the 10 percent more problematic or complex situations. Usually, it is the last scenario that results in a complaint to the library director.

Many academic institutions and government organizations have formal initiatives to increase diversity representation in the workforce as part of a mission statement, vision or core values, or strategic plan. Diversity within the workforce is also supported strongly by ALA through such initiatives as the ten-year-old Spectrum Scholarship Program and other resolutions.<sup>11</sup> The more flexible the position description and its required or preferred criteria for hire, the more it opens the door for a diverse pool of applicants. By valuing experiences beyond those of standard office or white-collar environments, more non-traditional but still relevant experiences outside of academia can be cultivated—such as someone that has worked as a salesperson, a gas station attendant, or a teller in a bank. People with these backgrounds may bring excellent customer service experience and insights to the workforce.

### Factors for Professional Positions

These same issues should be kept in mind for entry-level professional librarian positions as well. In many libraries, the traditional reference librarian or original cataloger roles of the past have transformed into a wide variety of positions with new, multifaceted, specialized, collaborative, and complex roles in the organization. These changes, spurred by “the recent rapid proliferation of complex library services such as virtual reference and digital repositories,” have prompted the adoption of more business-oriented models of service design, such as project management.<sup>12</sup> Thus, in filling these positions today, even as most managers still seek the ALA-accredited library/information science master’s degree, there is also a growing need for applicants to demonstrate pertinent supplemental work and life experience. With growing expectations in many organizations for teamwork and effective leadership, the possession of a degree alone may be insufficient. Even recently graduated applicants can demonstrate many preferred skill sets from personal or school-affiliated activities, internships, practicums, or part-time jobs. Professional postings can ask applicants to address specific issues within the cover letter.

Many desired characteristics may not be reflected by education or experience. Among these are: innovative thinking, variety of work and organizational experience, learning attitudes, communication skills, maturity, realistic understanding of how to work within a bureaucracy, personal presentation, committee/teamwork experience, time management/project management experience, and others. Another desirable factor may be the ability of applicants to sell themselves effectively and put their own experiences in context of the stated preferred qualifications.

Just as with staff positions, librarian positions, even at an entry level, should offer a variety of responsibilities and growth opportunities, both on the job and within the organization. This requires that individuals have an opportunity to develop their roles and not be entirely confined

by written rules or traditional practice. A culture that is open to suggestions or ideas should be fostered, even as past practices are respected. Similarly, the organization needs to offer a culture of learning through practice and experimentation that will encourage risk-taking and allowing individuals to try new ideas, and even to fail without dire consequences. This is especially relevant for Gen-X and Millennial candidates, whose learning style has been more based on self-paced learning.

Alternative incentives will make a difference in attracting multigenerational professionals. Institutions can offer other benefits of family-friendly policies and a supportive environment, flexible work schedules, telecommuting options, funding and leave time for development opportunities and professional networking, technology to support research and connectedness, and other innovative benefits or accommodations. Rather than be kept in reserve for final negotiations, these benefits would be more effective recruitment tools if explicitly included in the position posting to better catch the attention of Gen-X and Millennial librarians.

### Conclusion to Part One

It is important to scrutinize vacant positions in terms of their appeal to someone from today’s workforce and what the library needs to further its initiatives. This means reexamining operational needs from the holistic perspective and designing job descriptions that give the successful candidate a variety of responsibilities and opportunities for growth. It also means moving away from brief, library-jargon-based postings to descriptions with broader terminology that would appeal to applicants from different backgrounds and types of experience. The objective is to convince them that the library is a rewarding place to work.

Part two of the series will look at some concrete ways to develop and interpret a review model for these nontraditional qualifications. It will examine how a manager can anticipate the potential for generational disconnects in the interview process, and how to avoid “standard” interview questions, instead employing interview techniques to identify the applicant that best fits the position. It also explores what Gen-X and Millennial applicants are looking for when they are interviewing the library.

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libraries depends upon the commitment of their communities. If these libraries received "greater support from their communities, it would simply pay off, not just in dollars or business but in the improvement of the reading habits of their communities." It is thus the responsibility of librarians to continuously remind the communities how valuable the library is in their lives.

In general, Rubin feels very positive about the future of libraries and believes they are headed in the right direction. Not all decisions will be made by librarians. "What drives our services, the forces that drive the shape of libraries will be external, heavily external." Librarians have always kept their users in mind when thinking about improving service. In order to keep up, they will have to be more knowledgeable about what users require in terms of information and materials. Anticipating the needs of the users and providing services will require being proactive, but Rubin believes we must be careful how we interpret that word. Libraries are not the catalyst for information need; they "emerge primarily from those forces." Proactive leaders are ones who "scan the environment" to identify needs and trends and then respond to them. "We should always be scanning to see how those changes are occurring and asking ourselves how we can complement those

changes." Therefore, we should not think being reactive is a negative response; it simply means complying with the information gleaned while observing the information environment. He added that this does not mean we are passive while waiting for others to take the lead. "It's those broader changes [found when scanning the environment] that really do affect how we can be successful, or whether others will compete with us and provide more effective service than we do."

Overall, Rubin believes the field of library and information science is strong and vital. "It's desperately needed in a world where information is organized for us or controlled by others. Librarians will play a critical role in making sure that people get what they need not just what is easily provided to them. I am very proud of it as it is. I think it's a wonderful profession. It's one of the few professions that I would call noble. It truly is a public good."

Sentiments like that reveal something of what it takes to be a ChangeMaster in this field. The word itself conjures images of bigger-than-life characters single handedly changing the face of library and information science. In reality, the true ChangeMasters are the ones who change lives everyday. I have met one of them. Dr. Rick Rubin is an unassuming ChangeMaster in a noble profession.