Reviews

Succession Planning in the Library: Developing Leaders, Managing Change
Singer, Paula M. with Griffith, Gail (2010)
American Library Association, Chicago
(pbk)
ISBN 9780838910368

In the early nineteen-sixties, I spent at least a year under the dynastic rule of a metropolitan union library service. Like all junior (female) employees in this regime, I wore the obligatory uniform (tailored dove grey with pink trim at the collar, breast pocket and belt) and underwent rigorous training including regular bouts of surveillance and personal assessment, along with an intense initiation into the culture and ideology of 'service' in the public library. The closest parallel to succession planning in this corporation was a strict edict that forbade staff members to share the same vehicle when travelling to meetings at 'Library Headquarters' – in case our premature deaths, due to an accident, leave the library service unduly short of staff. All of this was a far cry from the modern concept of succession planning as advocated in this handbook for leadership and the management of change in public libraries.

Singer and Griffith encapsulate their idea of succession planning in a concept that exceeds the simple necessity of replacement planning. Their more forward-looking viewpoint seeks to encourage leadership and management of change through ongoing, systematic planning designed to ensure the continuity of key positions. This is achieved by actively grooming employees for greater responsibility and future promotion in their particular fields of competence, so that replacement planning stimulates opportunities for current staff by "having the right people in the right place at the right times to do the right things". As the authors claim, this concept is rooted in appreciation of the fact that the library's most important asset is its people.

Of seven chapters, the first three concentrate on the scope of employment positions below that of library director, explaining the how and why of putting such a program into place and assisting the reader to identify those competencies and positions that are key to the successful running of the library. The following two chapters address the art of recruiting and retaining existing staff for these positions, while the last two are directed towards governing boards, advising them in the matter of planning for new leadership, and providing helpful, illustrative anecdotes and case-studies. For the benefit of administrative and managerial purposes, the text includes numerous models of graphic figures and tables, as well as a generous range of exemplar formats for organisational documentation. These may serve as useful templates in succession planning programs undertaken by others. Following the last chapter, a list of resources, includes 'General Publications' and 'Library Director/CEO Succession Planning' as well as 'Internet Resources'. A comprehensive index concludes the text.

Although this handbook is not specifically directed at school library managers, and the task of succession planning may not always be part of the school librarian's brief, I believe the suggested concept of capitalising human resources, by valuing current staff members and investing in their professional development, carries a useful message. This is particularly the case in present times, when diminishing numbers of professionally-trained school librarians emerge from the ranks of graduate library courses. With this in mind, some of the strategies offered in this book may work towards regenerating already existing human resources.

Reviewed by Dr Susan Boyce
Synergy **Board Member**

Urban Teens in the Library: Research and Practice
Agosto, Denise E. & Hughes-Hassell, Sandra (Editors) (2010)
Chicago, IL: American Library Association (ALA)
208 pages
ISBN 978-0-838910-15-3
Available from: www. alastore.ala.org

Urban Teens in the Library: Research and Practice presents model programs to show how librarians can use "current research about 'urban teens', their information habits and preferences and their use of libraries to improve public and school library services". As expected, the first chapter presents various definitions of 'urban teens' related to population size, race and ethnicity which have a strong influence on the growth of urban popular culture. By working with urban teens, libraries can provide new and exciting spaces, resources, programs and services. The main contention is that young people need to be involved in planning and promoting library services.

This clearly presented and organised book is logically divided into three sections. Part one explores the demographic and social characteristics of this urban teen group together with its multiple definitions. A research focus in Part Two presents the results of seven carefully constructed research studies involving urban teens. Each chapter in Part Two presents recommendations for effective practices for teenagers in libraries. These include: catering for everyday life information needs and preferences; developing a leisure reading program which is relevant and responsive to teenagers' lives; online social networking; and websites for health information. Part three concentrates on best practice from four model programs in US public libraries.

All recommendations in Part Two rely on listening to teen input and comments to increase the reach and influence of libraries. An ideal teen library has a special separate teen room where young adults can listen to music, socialise and play computer games. A traditional view of libraries is replaced with the vision of libraries as full-service community centres for urban teens, who are involved in the planning and implementing of services designed for them. Indeed, the studies and programs outlined in Urban Teens in the Library: Research and Practice indicate that the best library and information services are based on an understanding of the needs, development, ideas and opinions of teens in conjunction with their cultural and contextual backgrounds.

Chapter Six, on online social networking sites and library services, examines the research on teens' use of Friendster, MySpace and Facebook, the widespread use of social networking, the reasons or motivations involved in online discussion, benefits and drawbacks, libraries responses to the online social networking trend and teaching teens safe online practices. The conclusion to this chapter is that libraries need to engage web 2.0 technologies with a library website, library blog, MySpace page or Facebook profile for student interaction and involvement in the provision of library and information services. Web pages can be used to provide health information to young adults where the web pages have links to online health-related resources and information.

Later chapters include sections on building teen literacy and advice for creating a literary magazine, published in multiple formats. Students may choose to make a comprehensive public list of things that are important to them. This expression of identities allows teens to develop their self-esteem, to express a positive view of their future and to exercise building a positive identity. The final chapter discusses digital services and the avid teen use of online gaming, video sharing, photo sharing, blogging, text messaging, instant messaging, social networking and podcasts. Social media sites, as an extension of social networking sites, allow individuals to share content they have created (videos on YouTube and photos on Flickr). These offer opportunities in libraries for sharing author interviews, video competitions via YouTube with the videos embedded in blogs and library websites and photo galleries in Flickr.

What's next in digital library services to teens? The editors conclude that it is impossible to predict with any certainty the future path for digital services. Although Denise Agosto and Sandra Hughes-Hassell may not know what is next, they recommend following the principles of effective digital services, especially 'Know your audience' and 'Know your technology' to lead the way. This is an excellent book on the provision of library services for young adults and includes comprehensive analyses of both print and digital services, including social networking sites.

Reviewed by Dr. Robin Zeidler
Director of Library Services
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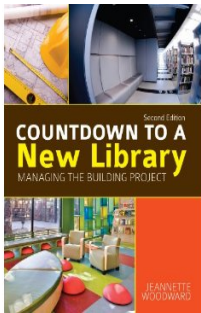**Countdown to a New Library: Managing the Building Project**
Second Edition
Woodward, Jeanette (2010)
Chicago, IL: American Library Association (ALA)
272 pages
ISBN 9780838910122
Available from: www.alastore.ala.org

The first edition to *Countdown to a New Library*, published in 2000, established the process of managing the planning and completion of a new or renovated library building. In this new 2010 edition, Jeanette Woodward skilfully develops some of the extraordinary changes that have occurred both in society and in building design and construction. She considers, for example, alternative energy sources for library design to replace petroleum and other fossil fuels. The idea of using recycled materials in the construction of functional and sustainable buildings is developed. A third major change since the first edition is the US economic crisis and the fact that many existing library buildings in the US are in a fair or poor condition only. There are plans for major new library space and renovations, which hopefully will be realised due to the US economic stimulus bill.

The second edition, which is attractively presented and logically ordered, aims to provide support, encouragement and sound advice to librarians who are coping with the various challenges of designing and building a new library. Jeanette Woodward has overseen numerous library building projects and is amply experienced and qualified to guide other librarians through the planning and construction process. In fact, the book acts as a very practical crash course on library design. It is enhanced by appealing photos of new or renovated libraries, insider stories or 'Tips and Tales from the Trenches', together with helpful checklists and worksheets. The new edition includes updated references, standards, materials and resources.

Countdown to a New Library begins by discussing ways library staff can prepare and function effectively in the midst of a building project. Chapter Two outlines the roles of architects, contractors and engineers, in addition to project delivery systems, contracts and liability considerations. Discussions of recent US library developments and future prospects introduce Chapter Three before referring to site and allocation of space needs. The 'nuts and bolts' of a major construction process are covered in Chapter Four, which includes much more detail on resource sustainability in the second edition. Pleasingly, the topic of energy efficiency occupies a larger part of Chapter Five.

Since technology appears to be the most contentious area for designing a 21st century library, it has its own chapter devoted to planning for a high-tech future. This is a very worthwhile and commendable chapter. It is

inevitable that technology will change rapidly, yet the pathways and spaces allocated to the technological infrastructure will remain for the life of the building. Libraries need to be designed for considerable changes to technology and high-tech spaces, including security.

Later chapters explore building threats – such as natural disasters – together with finishing décor and interior design, ergonomics, computer workstations, shelving considerations and the "all-important job of surviving and prospering while everything around you is in chaos". The final two chapters address these concerns as well as planning signage, moving the staff, network, collection and library programs.

Countdown to a New Library is an excellent book for any librarian involved in library design. The presentation and organisation are clear, detailed and thorough. Notes and resources at the end of each chapter assist the reader with further study as required. I thoroughly recommend this book for library staff involved in the planning and design of any type of new or renovated library.

Reviewed by Dr. Robin Zeidler
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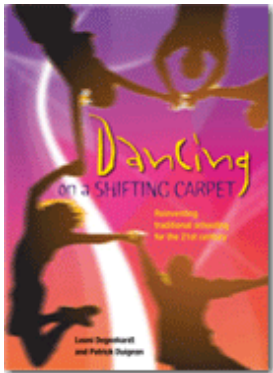*Synergy* **Board Member**

Dancing on a Shifting Carpet: Reinventing Traditional Schooling for the 21st Century
Degenhardt, Leonie and Duignan, Patrick (2010)
 ACER Press, Camberwell
(pbk)
ISBN 9780864318459

Much has been written about the need to re-invent traditional schooling and its parallel theme of organisational leadership. But while publication of philosophical and theoretical analyses, as well as case-study exemplars, associated with these themes is ongoing, the fact remains that each school community is a unique social organism generated by the diversity of cultural, geographical and historical influences that shape their formation. Even within the cultural hegemony of Australia, and under the rigorous regime of a national curriculum, this is still the case, so that efforts to achieve transformational change require attention to the distinctive circumstances of each school.

From this perspective, Degenhardt's account of her research further contributes to the body of work available in this field. Based on a recent (2000-2008) case study of change in an Australian independent secondary Catholic girls' school, the particular relevance of her study lies in the breadth of its scope and its comprehensive substantiality. The focus of the research project is not limited to specific strands of curriculum or schooling but is framed by a broadly creative, if not ambitious, imperative to reinvent the future of schooling by means of deconstruction, reformation and, most importantly, 'reculturing' (p.39). Informed by multiple scholarly perspectives, its design responds to current educational thinking at the international level while simultaneously resolving to also honour, at the local level, the school's cherished legacy of values. These are based on the educational philosophy practised long ago by Mary Ward, and later institutionalised by the 400-year-old Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Author Degenhardt, school principal, assisted by Duignan, professor in the field of educational leadership, collaborate in their respective roles of researcher and supervisor, to take the reader through the carefully planned and, sometimes contested, steps of this doctoral research study. Their account is frank and highly engaging as it describes the preparatory groundwork necessary for a study design in which the researcher also happens to be the school principal – whose vision of innovative organisational change drives the study. Within this interesting situation, the uneasy notion of the 'insider/ principal/researcher' provokes uncomfortable questions surrounding the politics of uneven power relations, which threaten to jeopardise the ethical integrity of the research, but which are openly explored, collaboratively problematised and ultimately resolved. This instance of creative tenacity is symptomatic of Degenhardt's skilful attention to the development of appropriate methodology and strategies designed to sustain the integrity of the research, while also protecting the interests of all stakeholders in the school community. It also illustrates how the process of navigating complex research dilemmas can yield innovative solutions. Of particular interest in this case is the development of Degenhardt's model for 'insider' research, which she refers to as PIRM: Powerful Insider Research Model, an initiative which may interest others involved in similar leadership studies.

The organisation of ten content-dense chapters into three clear parts makes this account an easily digestible, but highly interesting, read for those engaged in the topic and also for those interested in research methodology and situated research studies. Comprehensive lists of References and Index add further value to the text.

Reviewed by Dr Susan Boyce
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