

From good to great managers

The case for a structured continuing education program in library management

CE program
in library
management

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to examine the perceptions of librarians toward continuing education (CE) in library management.

Design/methodology/approach – The study followed survey design to collect perceptions of librarians from around the USA. In total, 166 usable surveys were returned and the bulk of the analysis examined responses from non-directors ($n = 96$).

Findings – Non-director librarians identified knowledge areas important for success as a manager including human resources, leadership, and organizational behavior. The majority of respondents assessed their own level of management knowledge as average to above average. In all, 38 percent of respondents indicated their management knowledge came from workshops, webinars, and conferences. Respondents reported that the opportunity for a salary increase, as well as a personal desire to learn were motivators for seeking CE in management.

Practical implications – A CE program in management should extend the knowledge learned in the MLIS degree, address knowledge, skills, and individual development, be flexibly scheduled and reasonably priced, and offer clear benefits to the library and to the learner.

Originality/value – This research demonstrates the importance of building a CE program in management that complements other educational offerings in order to help librarians develop the knowledge and skills needed to lead libraries.

Keywords Library management, Continuing education

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Librarians, similar to other professionals in fields such as education, law, and medicine, face the constant challenge of keeping their knowledge and skills current in a field that is rapidly changing. Formal professional preparation in the form of a master's degree typically occurs early in one's work experience, setting the library professional forth on a journey with some, but certainly not all of the knowledge and skills needed for a successful career.

Preparing librarians to fulfill management responsibilities in their organizations is an ongoing challenge for library and information science (LIS) education. This preparation occurs on a number of fronts. A review of LIS schools accredited by the American Library Association shows that 44 out of 53 programs (83 percent) require at least one management course for degree completion. In total, 16 programs offer certificates of advanced study with a management specialization. Some schools offer a dual MLIS/MBA degree, which significantly extends the coverage of management topics.

Other opportunities to learn management knowledge and skills come through post-MLIS, continuing education (CE) opportunities. This type of education is typically offered by professional library associations such as the Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA) and occurs at the local, state, and national level.



Topics covered in this type of CE span the range of management sub-specialties including leadership, communication, project management, budgeting, supervising, and planning. Delivery methods for these courses range from webinars, to single day face-to-face workshops, to multi-day institutes.

Articles and blog postings abound that point librarians to CE opportunities (Keiser, 2012; La Chapelle and Wark, 2014), and a less formal marketplace for learning about management can be found in the number of books published specifically for librarians on management topics such as leadership, human resources management, and strategic planning.

Though there are a number of venues through which librarians may acquire or add to their knowledge and skills on managing, there are signs from around the field suggesting that librarians are insufficiently knowledgeable about management concepts. Schreiner and Pope (2011, p. 7) argue for a need for library school programs to provide a strong core background in management writing, "For anyone to assume that management is something that one can simply learn on the job at the expense of a well-run department or library seems impractical and detrimental to the profession." Their data show that 63.9 percent of participants retrospectively wished they had taken more management classes while in library school. Extending the conceptualization of "management" to include "leadership," even more examples emerge calling for a need for increased training. Jordan (2012) makes the case that leadership development for librarians should be based on a set of clearly defined, research-derived competencies. Pointing to the number of predicted retirements as a reaching a "critical" level, Mason and Wetherbee (2004) and Romaniuk and Haycock (2011) evaluate leadership training programs for librarians and call for expanded training opportunities to meet the new challenges libraries will be facing. Finally, in a New Media Consortium (2014) report on libraries, leadership issues, and specifically the need to embrace radical change, is identified as a "wicked challenge: those that are complex to define, much less, address" (p. 28). The report authors argue that library leaders need to apply radical thinking to new initiatives and business models and that that kind of thinking must extend throughout the organization. In short, for the field of librarianship to fully tackle the challenges of the twenty-first century, there is a strong need for highly skilled managers and leaders to create effective, dynamic organizations.

Jim Collins' best-selling book on management, *Good to Great*, explores how companies can develop from merely good organizations to high quality, great businesses (Collins, 2001). The idea of moving from *Good to Great* applies to individuals, too, and is perhaps an apt metaphor for the need for management education for librarians. But for LIS education providers to more effectively meet the professions' need for continuing management education, more direct research is needed. This study examined librarians' perceptions of the need for CE in library management, soliciting input on the depth of knowledge needed and the value of that knowledge in the workplace. Based on the results, we present a program model for library management CE.

Literature review

CE is an important part of librarianship for several reasons. Most obvious is the fact that the field of librarianship is constantly changing and evolving which requires the need to keep current of new knowledge, services, resources, trends, and practices.

But other reasons also exist that bolster the need for continuing to train library professionals. Norman (2012) makes the case that since libraries play a pivotal role in the public's learning, librarians too should be lifelong learners to best support the learning initiatives provided through library resources and services. She writes that to provide leadership to the community of learners a library serves, a library's organizational culture should be one that encourages and promotes continuous learning.

CE is also important to librarians because of the increased potential it brings for career mobility. In a study of UK librarians, researchers found that although the field of librarianship includes a body of knowledge and skills that are transferable across library sectors (e.g. public, academic, special, school), such as information seeking, communication and interpersonal skills, resource management, and marketing skills, a rigid career structure, inadequate training, and a lack of confidence among professionals were named as some barriers prohibiting cross-sector mobility for librarians (Dalton *et al.*, 2000).

The need for CE in libraries is also a concern internationally. Majid (2004) outlines the CE efforts in five southeast Asian countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand, noting that to meet the training needs of the profession, there is a need for better coordination of CE among LIS programs, library associations, national libraries, funding agencies, and employers. A group of academic librarians were the subjects of a study on the continuing professional development of librarians in Ireland (Corcoran and McGuinness, 2014). The findings showed that the librarians in this sample felt it was their personal responsibility to stay up to date in their profession, and that the motivation to do so came from a desire to gain respect from colleagues, to be able to perform their duties well, and a sense of personal satisfaction from doing so. Cossham and Fields (2006) explored CE opportunities for librarians in New Zealand where their findings showed that both individual employees and managers express a preference for short, focussed, practical courses across a range of library topics.

Indeed, the literature suggests CE is needed in a variety of areas. Long and Applegate (2008) studied the need for CE in information technology (IT). They investigate the importance of CE opportunities in IT particularly for librarians from a "bridge generation" who came of age professionally in a pre-Internet world and find the need to keep pace with technologies that have emerged since they were last in school. Pinkston (2009) reports on a summit focussed on identifying the CE needs of librarians in the state of Tennessee identifying three major areas of need: customer service, technology, and marketing.

Lovelace (2010) argues for CE in several areas including topics in business and management such as planning, knowledge management, human resources, group dynamics, and public relations. Though technological change may be less a part of these areas, the case can still be made that the exposure students receive to management topics such as these as a part of an MLS degree is insufficient to sustain them throughout their careers.

In a companion study to the research reported here, Matteson *et al.* (2013) studied library directors' perceptions of the need for CE in management. A majority of respondents (77 percent) reported that librarians needed to have strong knowledge of management topics such as leadership, human resources, organizational behavior, strategy, and finance, for promotion and hiring. Yet, the majority of respondents also indicated that applicants to mid-level or senior positions in their organizations

possessed only average (55 percent) or low (34 percent) levels of management knowledge.

What this review of the literature suggests is that CE is “an essential element of the professional life of a librarian” (Corcoran and McGuinness, 2014, p. 193). However, questions about how librarians perceive their own need for library management CE remain, and it is important to understand the opinions and concerns of the library practitioners on this topic to inform the design and delivery of CE opportunities.

Methods

This study design expands upon the Matteson *et al.* (2013) study of library directors, examining the perceptions, and opinions of LIS professionals who are not library directors or administrators regarding library management and CE. In an attempt to understand these individuals’ views on management CE, the following research question guided the study: what are the perceptions of LIS professionals outside of upper-level administration and management regarding their need for and motivations to pursue CE in management for librarians? The previous 11-item survey was adapted to include 12 items to solicit the views of respondents with additional items to determine the respondents’ demographic information. The initial 12 items asked respondents about their perceptions of management and management CE in four main areas:

- (1) knowledge areas in management;
- (2) perceived level of management knowledge;
- (3) importance of management knowledge to both organization and self; and
- (4) motivation to pursue management CE.

The researchers sought participation from librarians and staff in states with schools of LIS that offer management CE programs, and in states that border Ohio, reasoning that states with current management CE opportunities might contain higher levels of interest in a management CE survey, and neighboring states would be a target market for a management CE program delivered from Ohio. Executive directors of state-level library associations in Florida, California, Michigan, Texas, Minnesota, Illinois, and Kentucky were sent emails asking them to circulate the survey link to librarians statewide. Additionally, the link to the survey was sent to the Indiana and New York State Library Association listservs. Finally, the survey link was posted to the SCLA Google Group to cast a national net for responses.

In total, 166 surveys were completed by library professionals in positions of all levels. The response rate cannot be calculated because no set number of surveys were delivered to potential respondents. The researchers filtered the results by the respondents’ responses to the question – What is your current job title? Surveys with no response to this question were discarded. From the remaining 166 surveys, the researchers filtered out surveys completed by individuals whose job titles identified them as senior leaders, including library director (but not assistant director), dean, or head of the library. Altogether, 70 surveys fit these categories and were retained for the purposes of comparing the perspectives of directors with those of non-directors on questions regarding management knowledge areas necessary for successful library management as discussed in the findings.

The remaining 96 surveys from non-directors formed the focus of the data analysis. Job positions of respondents in this group included librarians in the major functional

areas of the field (IT, public services, and technical services), lower-level administrators, branch managers, and specialized positions. Table I displays the demographic breakdown of the respondents. While not definitive, the range of demographics embodied by this group of respondents represents a wide cross-section of the LIS professional population nationwide.

The respondents also represented a range of experience levels with 24 percent graduating between 2008 and 2013, 17 percent graduating between 2003 and 2007, 11 percent graduating between 1998 and 2002, 6 percent graduating between 1993 and 1997, and 32 percent graduating in 1996 or earlier. Additionally, 7 percent had not earned an MLIS/MLS degree, and 2 percent were currently enrolled in an MLIS/MLS program. Further, these LIS professionals had varying levels of experience in their current job with 19 percent holding the position for less than one year, 36 percent for 1-5 years, 21 percent for 6-10 years, and 22 percent for more than ten years.

Of all respondents' positions, 61 percent were considered to be management level in their organization and the majority of those management-level respondents expressed interest in moving into more senior management positions in their organization or another organization – 39 percent were very interested, 41 percent were somewhat interested, and 20 percent were not interested. Similarly, the majority of the 39 percent of respondents in non-management positions also expressed interest in moving into management positions in their organization or another organization – 30 percent were

Characteristic	Non-directors
Gender	75% women 25% men
Age	5%-18-25 10%-26-35 29%-36-45 24%-46-55 29%-56-65 2%-over 65
States	23.9%-New York 19.7%-Indiana 12.5%-Michigan 11.4%-Kentucky 11.4%-New Jersey Fewer than 2% from Arizona, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, Wisconsin, and locations outside the USA
Type of library	53%-Public library 27%-Academic library 13%-Other (including government or medical libraries, consortia, and library consultants) 4%-Special library 3%-School library
Size of institution	23%-1-10 employees 39%-11-50 employees 17%-51-100 employees 22%-more than 100 employees

Table I.
Respondents'
demographic
characteristics

very interested, 46 percent were somewhat interested, and 24 percent were not interested.

Findings

Knowledge areas in management

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of 12 management knowledge areas to library managers on a scale of 1-3 with 1 being essential, 2 being somewhat important, and 3 being not that important. These 12 topics and scale were borrowed from the previous study, for which they were originally created based on surveys of the curricula for Master's Degree in Business Administration (MBA) chosen due to their geographic proximity to the original survey sample (Ohio) or their national reputation. Table I presents both directors' and non-directors' ratings of the management knowledge areas ranked from most important to least important based on their mean scores.

Both directors' and non-directors' ranked human resources, leadership, and organizational behavior as the most important knowledge areas for library managers to possess, and the variation in their rankings was slight, with all means at 1.1 or below. Following this top three, both groups ranked the remaining knowledge areas (strategy, finance, accounting, entrepreneurship, statistics, information systems management, marketing, operations, and economics) in generally the same order, exhibiting only slight variation in the numeric mean rank. Operations and economics were the only knowledge areas to receive mean scores over 1.5, and economics was the only topic to average a rating of 2 (but only by directors). Similar to the first study, both groups contained few individuals ranking any of the knowledge areas as "not that important," with economics being the only knowledge area to receive this rating by more than 10 percent of respondents (14 percent of non-directors and 23 percent of directors). Further, 95 percent of all respondents ranked the other knowledge areas as somewhat important or essential to library managers, with the exception being 94 percent of directors ranking operations as somewhat important or essential.

In addition to rating the given categories, respondents were also asked to identify any other areas of management they felt were important and rank them on the same scale as the previous question. The researchers coded the responses and identified unique categories not covered by the given topics. The directors suggested six additional areas that were not previously listed, including advocacy (generally defined as promoting or arguing for libraries), politics (including political savvy and being involved with politicians and in the political process), facilities, change, labor relations, and community relations. Non-directors' suggested areas overlapped with directors' in their mention of politics, community relations, advocacy, and facilities, but they also had the unique response of customer service.

Overall, the respondents' ratings suggest that they agreed on the most important knowledge areas for successful library managers as being the human-centered areas of human resources, leadership, and organizational behavior with financial and strategic knowledge following in significance. Although the respondents' ratings do show a hierarchy of importance with regard to topical focus, all areas of management knowledge were ranked as being at least somewhat important, with the majority being essential. Taken as a whole, both the ranked and respondent-generated management knowledge areas suggest that these respondents believe successful library managers must possess a range of management knowledge to perform their job well.

Perceived level of management knowledge

Respondents rated their own level of management knowledge on a four-point scale: low, average, above average, and exemplary. Both the directors and non-directors responses were analyzed to assess how self-perceptions of management knowledge varied by position.

The responses of directors and non-directors exhibited some variation. The non-directors were mostly split in their self-perceived knowledge of management topics with 46 percent assessing their knowledge as average and 44 percent assessing their knowledge as above average. Only 3 percent rated their own management knowledge as exemplary and 7 percent rated their management knowledge as low. The directors' ratings of their own management knowledge were more heavily weighted to the higher values with 61 percent assessing their knowledge as above average and 14 percent ranking their knowledge as exemplary. Only 23 percent of this group of respondents rated their management knowledge as average, and only 1 percent (one respondent) viewed their own management knowledge as low.

To explore how respondents acquired management knowledge, respondents were asked in an open-ended question to identify the educational experiences that contributed to their management knowledge. After coding the responses to this question, we identified many common sources of knowledge between the two groups. Because many respondents attributed their management knowledge to multiple sources, the total number of responses for both groups exceeds the number of respondents (142 sources were identified by non-directors and 115 were identified by directors). For both groups, CE in the form of workshops, webinars, conferences, and professional certifications was the main resource for management knowledge (38 percent of non-directors' responses and 34 percent of directors' responses). Management courses completed during library school (24 percent for non-directors and 17 percent for directors) and workplace experience (18 percent for both groups) accounted for the following two most-cited sources of knowledge, although in opposite order for the two groups. Completion of an additional, management-focussed degree, mentoring/networking, and self-directed learning rounded out the sources of knowledge. Interestingly, 4 percent of the directors responded that no educational experiences contributed to their knowledge of management topics.

The variance in the directors' and non-directors' self-perceived levels of management knowledge suggests that non-directors do increase their knowledge (either in actuality or in perception) as they progress into upper levels of management. Examining the identified sources of these knowledge areas reveals that directors' believe they have derived their knowledge from different places than non-directors. This could be because they had different opportunities to develop their management knowledge as their careers progressed, or this could be the result of libraries hiring individuals who already possess higher levels of management knowledge (as gained through additional degrees or years of management experience) into leadership roles.

Importance of management knowledge to organization and self

We asked how important it was for respondents' professional development and how important they thought it was to their employers to have an above average knowledge in management. Of the 96 respondents, no one indicated that management skills were not important for professional development, and only 11 percent thought it would be

“nice, but not a major factor in a hiring or promotion decision.” The remaining 89 percent were split between the 22 percent who thought management skills were “a significant factor in a hiring or promotion decision,” and the 67 percent who marked them as “very important.”

When judging the importance of management knowledge for their professional development, respondents emphasized career advancement and marketability as important considerations when looking at CE in management. One respondent who rated above-average knowledge as “very important” simply said, “I plan to be a manager in the next five years.” Several others also said they were hoping to move into management positions, or were hoping to be marketable to other organizations. Another respondent said, “If I can demonstrate competence in these [management] areas, it gives me much more flexibility in the types of work I can apply for and do and makes me a better employee wherever I end up.” Yet another respondent put this concept more directly, saying, “The more I know and understand the more marketable I am.”

Another common theme among responses was a sense of responsibility to the public. One respondent noted “being encouraged to apply” for an open director position but felt additional management skills would be necessary for the job. One respondent who compared the library to a business said, “We are responsible for tax payer [sic] money and must be accountable to our patrons and must be able to provide the best services in an ever-changing environment.” The idea of libraries as businesses was repeated throughout the responses, and one person felt it necessary “to know business techniques.”

When looking at the importance of management skills to their employer, the results were more mixed. In all, 25 percent of respondents still thought it was “very important” to their employer that they had above-average management skills, while 32 percent thought it was “a significant factor in a hiring or promotion decision.” In total, 32 percent of respondents thought management skills were “nice, but was not a major factor in a hiring or promotion decision,” and only 10 percent felt they were “not important” to their employers.

Of those who felt management skills were “not important” or were “not a major factor in a hiring or promotion decision” to their employer, most of the reasons given fell into three common categories - a critique of the field of libraries in general, displeasure at individual managers or employers, and a general disinterest or sense that management was not part of that individual’s job description. One respondent said that, “the view [at my library] is that almost anyone can “run a library” and that all information resources are online and somehow manage themselves.” Another said that “even after thirty years of professional life, I find that libraries still undervalue actual managerial skills.” Others complained about “promotions [...] based on seniority rather than ability to do the job” and “[a] strong and ingrained “good old boy system” that encourages nepotism and discourages competence.” Others said the lack of emphasis on management knowledge was simply because their job was entry level, part time, or did not put them on a management track.

The 55 percent of respondents who felt that management skills were “a significant factor in a hiring or promotion decision” or “very important” to their employers felt that above-average knowledge in management improved their personal skills and helped them do their jobs better. One respondent said that management skills were a significant factor because “a big picture knowledge of the organization and all

factors impacting it is crucial for decision making.” Others pointed out that “People who already have the management training and background get promoted to the next levels of administration” and that management skill “differentiates me from the rest.” Those in smaller libraries seemed to feel that management was especially important, such as one respondent who said “we are a very small staff with a lot to accomplish, and I need to act as a manager quite often on projects.” Many of the responses from those who felt management was important are reflected one simple response: “Running a library is like running a corporation. It is a business.” One respondent said, “The role of the librarian is constantly changing, and as new responsibilities require more time of the director, she must delegate tasks to competent staff. Many of these tasks are management-related.” Another pointed out that “other managers are required to demonstrate those types of skills and it should apply to library management as well.”

Motivation to pursue management CE

When asked what factors would motivate the respondents to pursue CE in management, a salary increase and a “personal enjoyment of learning” both ranked the highest, at 81 percent each. The least motivating factor, increased influence, was still thought of as motivating by 55 percent of respondents. After salary and enjoyment of learning, respondents ranked leadership opportunities as the next most important, at 80 percent, and promotion and increased responsibility at 68 and 66 percent, respectively. The write-in answers focussed mainly on career advancement and marketability, which is consistent with what respondents found important about library management education.

Looking at what factors would motivate librarians to pursue a specific CE program, the most important factor was the content of the program. For this question, respondents were asked to rank the importance of each category on a scale of 1-100. As seen in Table II, not only did content have the highest average score, it also had the lowest standard deviation meaning that respondents were largely in agreement about its importance. Some categories with lower averages, such as the type of degree conferred, had very high standard deviations, which shows that respondents disagreed on their level of importance (Table III).

The write-in answers dealt overwhelmingly with the quality or experience of the instructor. Regarding program delivery format, the majority of respondents preferred a hybrid model combining both online and face-to-face delivery formats. Those respondents expressing a preference for face-to-face or online were split 21 to 24 percent, respectively.

One of the more important factors as shown by respondents was the cost of the program. Of the 96 respondents, 77 percent said their organization provides financial support to staff for CE. The type of financial support varied but included tuition reimbursement, conferences, professional association membership fees, or a set sum of money in the budget for CE that staff members could apply for to cover various expenses. Responses that offered dollar amounts ranged from \$50 to \$2,500. Some respondents mentioned that their organization provides time off, and a few mentioned travel costs. Most of the responses emphasized short programs such as workshops, webinars, conferences, and training sessions. A handful of respondents mentioned applying for financial support from the friends of the library rather than (or in addition to) the library organization itself.

Table II.
Importance of
management
knowledge areas

Knowledge area	Non-director mean ^a	Non-director SD ^b	Knowledge area	Director mean	Director SD
Human resources	1.05	0.22	Human resources	1.01	0.12
Leadership	1.05	0.22	Leadership	1.04	0.2
Organizational behavior	1.08	0.31	Organizational behavior	1.1	0.3
Strategy	1.19	0.39	Accounting	1.17	0.38
Finance	1.22	0.42	Strategy	1.19	0.39
Accounting	1.32	0.49	Finance	1.2	0.44
Entrepreneurship	1.36	0.56	Marketing	1.33	0.5
Statistics	1.42	0.54	Statistics	1.36	0.57
Information systems management	1.44	0.5	Information systems management	1.37	0.52
Marketing	1.47	0.52	Entrepreneurship	1.4	0.49
Operations	1.63	0.57	Operations	1.63	0.59
Economics	1.82	0.65	Economics	2.04	0.65

Notes: ^aValues were calculated from a three-point scale with 1 most important; ^bSD, standard deviation

Discussion

When examining the findings from this study, several major points emerge. With regard to management knowledge, librarians must be versed in a range of topics including human-centered issues, financial and strategic approaches, and engagement with individuals outside of the library itself. Many of the topics taught in existing MBA programs address these knowledge areas; however, the unique situation of libraries as publically serving and funded entities necessitates that managers' knowledge extend beyond these traditional concepts. This suggests that a CE program that integrates business and management knowledge within the contextual framework of the library as a specific type of organization may best satisfy librarians' knowledge needs.

The non-directors' perceptions of their own level of management knowledge, and in comparison to the perceptions of directors, suggests that there is a need for this type of program. More than half of the respondents of the non-directors group self-reported average or low levels of management knowledge. Because these individuals also indicated that management skills were important for both the organization and for their own professional development, and also reported a desire to advance their careers into more senior management positions from those currently held, it is clear that these individuals must find ways to gain the knowledge necessary to become successful managers.

The motivation for non-directors to seek CE comes from both a desire to learn more, as well as a goal of obtaining a promotion, opportunities for more leadership, and an increase salary and responsibility. However, respondents had preferences for the kind of program that would be attractive to them. The content of the program was most important, followed by practical considerations such as compatibility with schedule, cost, location, length of program, delivery format, and credential conferred.

All this suggests that at least in theory, directors and non-directors alike would agree there is a gap in librarian's management knowledge and filling that gap through CE would bring value to the library and to the employee. The results of this study present a clear opportunity for LIS educators to build a program of CE in library management that would develop the knowledge and skills of librarians, creating a stronger workforce better prepared for current and future challenges. The question becomes: what would such a program require?

CE program model

The results from the directors and non-directors studies combined with a scan of the CE landscape in LIS more generally can be used to inform the design of a CE program

Factor	Average value	SD
Content of program	93.60	9.82
Compatibility with schedule	88.41	16.99
Location of program	78.26	20.40
Cost of program	74.07	21.39
Length of program	64.56	22.65
Program delivery format	64.41	27.99
Type of certificate	51.60	31.72
Other	27.80	36.36

Table III.
Importance of
factors in choosing a
continuing education
program

in library management. To fulfill the purpose of providing high quality and high value CE in library management a program should:

- extend learning beyond a single course in an MLS program;
- cover specific sub-topics in management;
- integrate knowledge, practice, and individual development;
- apply pedagogical best practices;
- be flexibly scheduled and reasonably priced;
- be beneficial to library employees and to libraries; and
- compliment CE offerings from professional library associations.

This list of program requirements can be grouped into three overarching criteria: the content of the program, the delivery of the program, and the value of the program.

Content

While many respondents indicated that the source of their management knowledge came from a course taken in the MLS program, several indicated that a single course in management was inadequate. A management course as a part of the MLS degree is important to lay a foundation for students, but is insufficient preparation for advancement as a manager. For one reason, a student takes a management course potentially years before they advance to a managerial-level position, resulting in a timing gap at the point of need. Also, a semester-length course does not allow the amount of time needed to cover the broad range of management topics in any meaningful depth.

The data clearly point to particular topics in management that directors and non-directors feel are important (human resources, organizational behavior, leadership, strategy, etc.). There is merit in presenting these topics within the context of the library industry, which is unique in some critical ways to other industries. The mission of libraries, their funding structure, their relationship with their mission givers and funders, their service model, and the strong shared professional values of the field create a distinctive type of organization that may benefit from borrowing managerial knowledge and practice from other industries, but should also focus on the characteristics inherent in their own processes and structures.

In addition to these concerns regarding the content of a CE program, attention should be paid to the type of content delivered. Management ability is frequently thought of in terms of one's knowledge, skills, and abilities, and that schema provides a useful model of content delivery for CE in management. A CE program should cover: the knowledge of management including theory and research on management, for which there is a tremendous body of science produced largely in the fields of industrial and organizational psychology and management; the skills related to management with opportunities to practice important behaviors such as decision-making, problem-solving, interpersonal skills, and leadership skills; and the individual abilities needed for effective management, conceptualized here as the personal set of dispositions, attitudes, or orientations that outstanding managers possess. Combining these three knowledge types – know what, know how, and know thyself – into a single program takes a holistic approach to manager development. Such an approach should allay concerns raised by some respondents about the need for CE in management to

address practical concerns and a perception that employers value increased skills over knowledge:

Just taking a course alone without real experience in libraries would be too academic and not practical.

We need more leaders in the library world but the CE should be more practical than theoretical.

My employer is more concerned about demonstrable skills, as evidenced by prior work experience, than by coursework.

A program that emphasizes knowledge, skills, and individual abilities addresses the needs of managers on all fronts, resulting in well-rounded, successful library managers.

Delivery

CE by definition targets professionals in the workforce who have already earned academic credentials and who have some amount of work experience. Programs developed for this audience should be tailored to learners with these characteristics. The executive model of education, typically found as an option in most business schools, offers some possible program models (De Dea Roglio and Light, 2009). Such programs emphasize functional learning where assignments and exercises directly support stated learning outcomes and feed meaningfully into workplace situations. Teamwork is another characteristic of this format where professionals interact with and learn from each other's real-world experiences. Instructors function as guides to learning, making use of role playing, case study, reflection, and discussion to engage learners. Courses in this format should be scheduled bearing in mind the demands on full-time employees that already exist. A hybrid delivery model that combines synchronous face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous interactions is a way to maximize the benefits of interactive learning while still accommodating learners' individual schedules.

Value

The design of any CE program should ultimately be concerned with the value of the program for the individual learner and for the larger professional community. Thus, a CE program should be in touch with the needs of the community and should compliment existing CE options. In researching this topic, it is apparent that there is a gap in the middle of the management CE continuum for librarians. The profession has a robust range of short-term CE offerings, exemplified in webinars, conference sessions, and workshops, but programs of that length do not always contribute to in-depth learning. As an example a respondent wrote, "I have attended a number of decent workshop/seminars but few have had a long-term impact on my thinking." At the other end of the scale, library professionals could pursue an advanced degree option such as an MBA, a Masters in Public Administration, or a PhD in management, but those options are extremely time consuming and potentially quite expensive. What is less prevalent as a CE option is a program that systematically offers the desired topical areas of management, addresses knowledge, skills, and individual abilities, in a delivery format that accommodates busy professionals, at an affordable price, over a reasonable amount of time. Building such a program presents a number of challenges, but the profession deserves no less.

Conclusion

Libraries need great, not good managers. A systematic, carefully planned CE program can develop better managers in libraries. In sum, the respondents from the study provide reasons why CE in management is important:

It is critical to know how to hire good, qualified candidates, how to build a collaborative and productive team, and how to retain good employees. To develop effective services for customers and processes behind them, it's important to know how to collaborate, brainstorm, evaluate ideas, manage projects, and measure and evaluate results.

Times change, needs change. It's important to know how things are changing because of the economy, technology, government, generations. A GOOD manager has to know how things are changing and why, and how to seek solutions for positive growth and change.

Learning never stops for any professional, [it is] vital to continue to stay relevant in our evolving profession.

All librarians should be encouraged to pursue CE in library management for a fuller "big picture" view of the library environment and its challenges.

LIS educational institutions have an opportunity to fulfill this need by designing CE in library management that both meets the needs and preferences of librarians and adds value to library organizations by developing highly effective managers.

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Further reading

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