
LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS IN DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract: *It can be clearly ascertained that the role of library professionals in the Digital Environment is becoming very prominent in the libraries. This revolution of Digital environment allows the library leaders to reinvent their typical role in this changing environment. Digitization of libraries has redefined the shape and role of the library in the new era.*

Libraries can actually fulfill the need of the readers what they want. In this digital environment, we see that retrieval of information is not restricted to limited resources although it is moving to the digitized resources also. Thus, it becomes essential for library professionals to be expert in their field to provide the information to the users through digitized resources also.

This paper will help us to learn the changing roles of libraries and librarians in the society. This change is mandatory to be taken place in different libraries such as colleges, universities, public libraries, schools, research organization etc. This paper will enable us to learn about objectives, role and challenges faced by library professionals in this digital era.

Keywords: *Library Professionals , Digital Environment*

1. Introduction:

Library Professionals or Leaders are the people working in different kind of libraries such as schools, colleges, universities, public libraries, research libraries etc. They are playing a vital role in their field. Thus, library leadership in a professional organization offers library leaders an opportunity to reinvent their work in this changing digital environment of information. Nowadays, library leaders are playing a distinguished role in disseminating information to the users. They are becoming techno-savvy and providing categorized information to the users.

Library leadership has identified 14 definitive competencies that can be applied across roles, career stages and library types. These competencies support libraries in following ways:-

Digital Libraries are the libraries where a piece of information is stored in digital form. The concept of digitized library is emerging fast in the world. These libraries are

working efficiently likewise traditional libraries were running. The traditional libraries were user-centric and every piece of information was stored in print form mainly. But digital libraries organize, distribute and preserve information resources in more integrated form with the use of more components and technology.

1. Library Leadership and its foundational competencies:

- Communication skills
- Change Management
- Team Building
- Collaboration and Partnership
- Emotional Intelligence
- Problem Solving
- Evidence-based decision making
- Conflict resolution
- Budget Creation and Presentation
- Forward Thinking
- Ethics
- Project Management
- Marketing and advocacy

2. Different Foundation Competencies:

Communication Skills:

Library Leaders are well versed with written, verbal & non-verbal communication skills to interact with other employees.

Change Management:

Leaders provide an environment to innovate, collaborate by continuous two-way communication, flexibility and willingness to learn from faults made and by providing training necessary to make the change happen. This will ensure a library to be transformed from traditional library to digital library.

Team Building:

Leaders cooperate and encourage the team. He/She builds up strong communication skills which helps them to interact with the users more efficiently.

Collaboration and Partnership:

Library Leaders encourages the team to work for common-goal and supports the dedication of the team also. He/she becomes responsible to improve the status of the library.

Emotional Intelligence:

Leaders are effective in understanding and improving the way they manage the people's emotions, apply concepts such as self awareness, self motivation, and empathy to interact users.

Problem Solving:

Leaders take initiative to resolve conflicts and adopt some precautionary measures to avoid problems. Then only he can make tremendous changes in the library.

Evidence-based decision making:

Leaders determine whether a policy or a program will work at their organization to meet the need of the users. This decision making policy will help the organization to improve the library and its facilities.

Conflict resolution:

Library Leaders support differences of opinion and help individuals to resolve conflicts in such a manner which could be proved productive for the organization.

Budget Creation and Presentation:

Library Leaders are responsible for formulating budget of the library which should fulfill the need of the library to meet the need of the users.

Forward Thinking:

Leaders maintain an understanding of latest trends and developments in the library, use that understanding to position their library to take advantage of opportunities as they arise, moving the library forward from position of strength.

Critical Thinking:

Leaders apply critical thinking – which implies a high level of understanding, the ability to break a problem into its constituent's parts, and the skills to effectively analyze and assess the issues to their libraries challenges to identify and implement solutions.

Ethics:

Library Leaders use ethics in the process of deciding what should be done, reflecting the course of action for providing support to library for its growth.

Project Manager:

Library Leaders use ethics in the process of deciding what should be done, reflecting the course of action for providing support to library for its growth.

Project Management:

Library Leaders take steps to execute, monitor the project to improve library facilities.

Marketing and advocacy:

Library Leaders create key activities and goals of the organization and aggressively seeks out opportunities to communicate the goals with both internal and external constituencies of the library.

3. Objectives of Library Leadership in digital environment:

Ascertain the role of library leaders in digital environment:

It is important to understand the role of library leaders in this digital environment. We find that technology revolution is taking its shape and in this changing environment, library leaders need to be alert always so that they can provide an updated access to the users.

Important to become a proficient Library Leader:

Library Leaders should have a great capability to understand the need of its organization. This attitude can help them in realizing how they can be proved helpful towards the staff and users of the library effectively.

Analyze the skills of library leaders in digital environment:

Library leaders should have the knowledge how much it is important to keep themselves updated with the latest resources for disseminating information. Unless they know the changes happening around, they cannot easily satisfy the need of the community.

Important to know the strengths and weakness of library leaders:

The organizations should also understand that rapid change is happening in technology, so it is also important for the organizations to know about the strength and weakness of their library leaders. The organization should provide or allow they library leaders to equip themselves with the latest technologies needed to carry out their work much more efficiently.

Analyze the need of the users and how to satisfy their need:

The Library leaders should be capable to understand the need of their users. They should try to know the exact need of their users so that can help them by providing the required information. Nowadays, we see that we cannot satisfy the users by dictating the text required. But, we need to actually meet them where they are.

Sharpen analytical skills

The library leaders should be equipped themselves with the latest resources of disseminating information. This can surely help them to know the need of their disseminating information. This can surely help them to know the need of their patron and translate their

need into services which meets their needs.

Feedback from users:

It is also important to know about the feedback from users about the interior of the library and its services. This feedback will help library leaders to become a successful leader in their professional life. Finally, it will help them to evaluate the experiences of their users. Through this they can make some important changes in the library to strengthen their profession.

Bridge the gaps between user and information:

We see the patrons visit the library from different parts of the society. We see much diversity in community; therefore it becomes important for library leaders to know about varieties of the technology to meet their demand about seeking information.

Focus on digital Strategy:

We can realize that digital revolution can take place only if, we library leaders take some necessary steps. Although it is difficult for an organization to look into every factor to run the organization more efficiently. But here, we also need to be alert about the changes taking place in technologies in regards to the library. We can recommend to the management for the same as well.

Challenges for library Leaders in Digital Environment:

Develop a Digital Strategy:

This is the biggest challenge for a library leader to develop a comprehensive digital strategy. This strategy should be shared broadly and repeatedly across the organization. Many great librarians understand that library should be accessible digitally these days in all aspects. But we find that local libraries are not merely a collection of books. Although, we clearly see that nowadays, libraries are a set of services which connects the users to all information everywhere.

Initiating digital literacy across the organization:

This is also one of the biggest challenge before the librarians as many people think that digitization of resources reduces the burden of the librarians. But it is not true. As the print material can be easily stored and preserved in libraries. But for a digitized library, a librarian should know that which web sites are rich in knowledge and authentic. Which publishers are providing information on particular subject. It is the major responsibility of a librarian to identify, acquire and preserve these digital resources.

Redefine value of libraries:

Earlier libraries used to focus on cataloguing books and journals so that books could

be easily accessed by its users. But in digital environments, users are interested to find information through online search engines. Therefore, access to information is based on what actually users need, it is not what a library owns. The budget of libraries has also risen dramatically, but a few librarians have truly analyzed the electronic resources. This redefining has helped librarians to improve status of libraries in terms of staffing, space or organizational structure.

Meeting with the need of Users:

In this changing environment, library leaders need to know the need of the users. A library leader should take a feedback from users. This will surely help him to analyze the need of the users. Therefore, if a library leader expects that the users will feel comfortable, then he should listen to his users and fulfill their need whether it is time constraint or layout of the library.

A new vision for libraries:

A digital library is a library where we see that technology empowers learning of all patrons and removes some limitations to success. This environment will connect the users with new resources of technology and disseminating information. Thus, digital learning tool is surely going to engage them up and encourages them to access library more frequently.

Conclusion:

Joshua Rothman has mentioned in an issue of “**The New Yorker**” in 2016 coming generation should understand the need of Library Leadership as well. In this transition phase, we see many changes occurring in the society. Thus, organizations are the ones which reflect the digital era. We see many hierarchical differences. Different skill sets and different responsibilities.

In the digital era, library leadership requires recalibration as well. The libraries should also designate library leaders as they are responsible for articulating the mission and vision of digital library. The librarians are generally trained to facilitate the local community but it is now becoming the need to change the mind of the management of the organization also. The libraries should have the positions of Heads/Leaders also who should be guided to give a new look to the library. Libraries are now stepping towards the digitization and are highly prized and preserve valuable collection. This collection may be in the form of audio/video collection, digitized collection of books and journals. So library leaders should be trained to impart knowledge to the users through accessing various search engines. They are enabled to bridge the gap between user and digitized information. In this digital era, we need to invest in those services which allow the users to access libraries more efficiently instead of maintaining catalogues. The users now want to search information through various search engines, blog posts, multimedia resources, web-pages etc.

Therefore, we can say that digital libraries are the future of academic and research institutions. And Library Leaders are entitled to have more knowledge and skills to

disseminate information as and when required. So, the librarians also be given training of library management – a project based training. Library Leaders should develop interpersonal skills, communication skills and team-work

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