Human Resources

First a library plans and establishes its goals and objectives. As a result, an organizational structure is put into place to allow the organization to reach its goals. Establishing the structure would be meaningless unless there were qualified people to fill the positions in the structure. The human resources functions encompass all the tasks associated with obtaining and retaining the human resources of an organization. These tasks include recruitment, selection, training, evaluation, compensation, and development of employees.

Until recently, all of these functions dealing with human resources were termed *personnel management,* but in recent years that term has been displaced by another: *human resources management.* Although the two terms are still sometimes used synonymously, human resources management has been the favored term since 1989, when the American Society for Personnel Administration (ASPA) voted to change its name to the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM). The name change was symbolic of the expanding role that human resources, another term for the organization's employees, play in the modern workplace. Employees are no longer looked upon just as costs to the organization; instead they are resources, just as the budget and the physical plant are resources. All resources are important, but good human resources are the greatest asset an organization can have.

The "Human Resources" section of this textbook provides an overview of the major activities associated with the employees who work in libraries and information centers. Chapter 10 describes the different types of staff found in a typical library, discusses the organizational framework of various types of positions that must be established before an organization can hire a staff, and provides an overview of the process of recruiting and hiring staff to fill those positions. Chapter 11 focuses on the functions that relate directly to individuals holding jobs within an organization. These employee functions

Staffing the Library

i **Overview**

Terry is just about to graduate with an MLIS degree and is looking for a first position in a library. Terry is entering the profession at a propitious time. Today's libraries are stimulating organizations in which new graduates usually assume positions that provide a good measure of responsibility, autonomy, and creativity. New librarians also are entering a profession in which there is a looming shortage of LIS graduates and a pressing need to recruit new librarians and develop new leaders in order to replace those about to retire. Terry begins to read the professional job advertisements in print and online and applies for a number of openings that appear promising. The libraries that have these open positions have done preparatory work before advertising. Each has had to look at its vacant position and decide whether it should be restructured or left the same. The position description has been updated or rewritten in preparation for the new hire, and the library has designed a recruitment plan to attract good applicants. If all goes well, there will be a good match between Terry's aspirations and the needs of one of those libraries, and Terry will be offered a position as a professional librarian.

One of the most important functions that managers do is structuring the human resources aspect of the organization. There are many elements in this human resources function, but one of the most basic is that of structuring the positions within an organization and then finding capable individuals to fill those jobs.

> This chapter will provide an introduction to the human resources function of management. It will give an overview of the type of workers employed by libraries and how their positions are structured. Finally, it will look at the process of recruiting and hiring employees to fill positions in libraries.

Although, in the past, employees often were considered to be interchangeable, easily replaced components of their organizations, a different view predominates today. Employees are now seen as resources, just as the funding to operate the organization and the building in which it is housed are resources. All resources are important, but good human resources are the greatest assets an organization can have.

The human resources function of management has been transformed by this new attitude toward employees. Now that human resources (usually abbreviated as HR) are recognized as one of the most valuable assets of organizations, individuals who hold positions as HR specialists are considered to be a strategic part of the management team, instead of merely paper-pushing, clerical workers. Today's HR specialists spend a large part of their time matching organizational problems to human resources solutions and, by doing so, demonstrating the impact that HR has on the bottom line of the organization.[1]

Large libraries usually have specially trained individuals who work exclusively on the HR aspects of management. These individuals, usually called human resources or personnel directors, are responsible for overseeing the HR function. In libraries, human resources/personnel directors are often individuals who have MLIS degrees with additional course work and experience in HR management. Many libraries and information agencies, however, are too small to have one person serve as a full-time HR or personnel specialist. Instead, the director usually performs those top-level HR functions that relate to the entire organization, or many of the HR functions are done by the library's parent organization (for instance, the appropriate county or city government office for a public library).

But, in every library, even in those large enough to have an HR department, all managers, from directors down to first-line supervisors, are involved in HR functions. Because the largest allocation of the budget goes toward personnel costs, library managers must be able to handle people if they want their organization to be effective and efficient. Although the degree of responsibility for HR increases as a manager moves up the hierarchy, the principles of good HR management should be widely understood throughout the organization.

Often, one of the most challenging and sometimes frustrating aspects of every manager's job is dealing with people-related problems. Because no organization is static, the people in it and the problems associated with them change. There are times when no sooner is one personnel problem solved than another develops. It is much more difficult to deal with people than with inanimate objects, because each person is different. Some managers proceed on the mistaken notion that everyone can be treated identically, but techniques that have worked well with one employee frequently will not be effective when dealing with another. So, although it is relatively easy to learn the basic principles of HR management, dealing with employees is a never-ending challenge.

THE INCREASING COMPLEXITY OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Managing HR has become more complex in the last few decades for a number of reasons. One of these reasons is the increasing diversity of the workforce. As the workforce becomes less homogenous, a manager has to learn to deal with people from many different backgrounds. *Diversity* is a broad term encompassing not only race, ethnicity, and gender, but also characteristics such as age and physical ability. This diversity enriches the organization, but it also can present problems unless managers understand the needs of these new workers and accept the challenge of managing a heterogeneous workforce.

Another reason for the increasing complexity of HR management centers around the expectations of most contemporary workers, especially well-educated employees who expect to have jobs that are meaningful and that provide opportunities for promotion and career advancement. No longer are most employees content to remain in dead-end jobs in which they have no input in the decisions that affect them and their jobs. The library profession is thus seeking ways to empower library employees by decentralizing decision making and increasing employees' control over their work environment.

Yet another factor that is changing the nature of managing people in libraries and information centers is technology. In the past two decades, technology has restructured many library jobs, created others, and eliminated still others. Technology brings many benefits for library employees and users; at the same time, it complicates the jobs of managers and employees. Some employees find it difficult to adapt to an environment in which technology is constantly changing. Also, in some organizations, technology is used to monitor the amount of work that employees perform, which produces stress for many employees. In addition to psychic stress, technology also can produce physical problems, often caused by the repetitive motions involved in using keyboards for long periods of time. Managers have had to become more knowledgeable about the potential and pitfalls of technology and its impact on employees.[2]

Jobs not only are being restructured because of technology, but, as discussed in the previous section, many of the hierarchical organizational patterns also are being modified. Instead of a group of workers reporting to one supervisor, in many types of organizations the workforce is now structured into teams, which, to some extent, manage themselves. Team organization brings benefits to workers, but it also presents new challenges to managers.

In addition, many organizations have downsized, and in many cases, fewer employees are employed doing more work than had been done previously. Other organizations are relying more heavily on part-time or temporary workers or have outsourced processes that used to be performed internally. Both organizations that are in the process of downsizing and those that have a large number of temporary employees provide additional complexities to HR managers.

Finally, the job of the manager has become more complicated because of the growing number of external regulations, especially those from state and federal governments. The purpose of these regulations is to make organizations

safer and more equitable. External regulations are not new; laws relating to pay, safety, and labor relations have been in place for decades. However, the number of regulations with which organizations must comply has increased, and managers dealing with people need to be knowledgeable about the various, often complex, regulations that pertain to their employees.

All of these factors will be discussed in greater depth in the three chapters of this section, which provide an overview of the HR functions in libraries and information centers. This chapter provides a description of the different types of staff found in a typical library, presents information about the organizational framework that must be established before an organization can hire a staff, and then discusses recruiting and hiring. Chapter 11 focuses on the HR functions that relate directly to individuals holding jobs within an organization. These functions include training, evaluating, compensating, and disciplining employees. Finally, chapter 12 examines some of the external issues, especially legal issues and unionization, that have had a major impact on HR in libraries.

TYPES OF STAFF

Like other types of organizations, libraries employ a diverse group of employees with various levels of education and responsibility. As libraries have incorporated more technology into their processes, the staff employed by them necessarily has become more varied. Professional librarians almost always constitute the smallest group of library employees. Usually, to be considered a professional librarian, an individual must have earned a master's degree in library or information science (MLIS). Sometimes these professionals also hold a second master's degree in a subject field or a doctorate. The professional staff works at those tasks that are predominantly intellectual and nonroutine, those requiring "a special background and education on the basis of which library needs are identified, problems are analyzed, goals are set, and original and creative solutions are formulated for them, integrating theory into practice, and planning, organizing, communicating, and administering successful programs of service to users of the library's materials and services."[3] Professional librarians serve in leadership roles, directing the total organization and the various departments and subunits. They also provide the expertise needed to fulfill the information needs of the library's patrons.

The support staff consists of workers with a varied set of skills, from paraprofessional to clerical. The support staff is usually the largest group of full-time employees in a library, and their activities cover a wide range of essential duties, including the tasks of entering, coding, and verifying bibliographic data; maintaining book funds; ordering; circulating materials; claiming serials; filing; and copy cataloging. This support staff handles the routine operations in most departments. The educational background of these workers varies widely. Some may have only a high school diploma, but many have a bachelor's degree, and some have graduate degrees of various kinds. And, in the past few decades especially, libraries have needed both librarians and support staff with a strong technology background. Many libraries and information centers now employ specialists to work specifically

with technology—for instance, to manage the library's local area network or to maintain Web pages. These technology specialists also have a variety of types of degrees and training.

In addition, libraries usually employ a large number of part-time employees. Part-time employees, such as pages in public libraries and student assistants in academic libraries, work at easily learned, repetitive tasks, such as retrieving items from the stacks or shelving returned books. Because these workers typically remain at their jobs for only a limited period of time, they require a great deal of training and supervision in proportion to the number of hours they work.

As mentioned previously, libraries are labor-intensive organizations, and, traditionally, the largest part of their budgets has been devoted to staff. In the past, the traditional rule of thumb for dividing library budgets was 60 percent for personnel, 30 percent for materials, and 10 percent for other expenses. This budget ratio is rapidly being discarded. Many libraries are now confronted with no-growth or shrinking budgets, whereas costs for library technology and library materials are climbing rapidly. A number of libraries have tried to reduce the size of their staff in order to cut their HR costs. Like private corporations, libraries have become "leaner and meaner" organizations. Some feel that, for libraries to remain viable, still larger changes must be made. For instance, one library director has advocated that research libraries "reverse the current standard in budget ratios. The new look should be 33 percent for staff, 50 percent for materials/access, and 17 percent for 'other.'"[4] A change of this magnitude will be difficult to implement without an accompanying reduction in service and a loss of employee morale.

Nonetheless, libraries and information centers, like other organizations, must strive to improve their productivity. Many of them are turning to part-time and contract workers in an attempt to achieve more flexibility and to save money. A recent survey showed that about 17 percent of 2005 MLIS graduates are working in part-time professional positions.[5] Other libraries and information centers are using part-time and contract workers to perform such services as janitorial and groundskeeping functions.

A number of libraries have decided to outsource certain functions, including such core tasks as cataloging, to outside agencies. The term *outsourcing* refers to purchasing from an outside source certain services or goods that an organization previously provided or produced for itself. A recent study found no evidence that outsourcing has a negative impact on library services or management.[6]

All of these new methods of getting work done with different types of workers have the possibility of presenting problems to a manager. There is often a potential clash of attitudes about values and service between the permanent staff and these more temporary workers.[7] Long-term contract workers, hired as a cost-cutting measure to do basically the same job as regular employees but without receiving benefits, often resent the dual standard of compensation. A library has less control over employees who are doing outsourced work than it does over employees who work within the organization itself. Libraries, like other organizations, must become more productive, but managers need to realize that these economizing measures can make both the manager's work and the employees' lives more difficult.

Despite all of these attempts to reduce the number of employees,[8] there has not been a significant reduction in the percentage of library budgets devoted to staff. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in 2004 public libraries still devoted more than 65 percent of their budgets to staff.[9] Academic libraries reported that a lower percentage of their budget, 50.1 percent, was spent on salaries and wages.[10] When information technology was first introduced into libraries, it was predicted that the number of employees would decline as a result. This has not proved to be true. Like other types of organizations, libraries have invested large amounts of funding in information technology but have still not seen an increase in productivity.[11] To date, this new technology has done more to change the nature of the jobs in libraries than it has to cut the number of people needed to provide effective library service. Ironically, in many cases, technology actually has increased the demands for library services and has therefore resulted in the need to add staff to meet these demands.

? What Do You Think?

Bill Gates has stated that "Job categories change constantly in an evolving economy. Once all telephone calls were made through an operator.... Today there are comparatively few telephone operators, even though the volume of calls is greater than ever. Automation has taken over."

What are some jobs in libraries that have been affected by technology and automation?

How have the HR policies and procedures of libraries been changed by the increasing importance of technology in libraries of all types?

Bill Gates, *The Road Ahead,* with Nathan Myhrvold and Peter Rinearson (New York: Viking, 1995), 253.

One of the most difficult issues that library administrators continue to face is matching the appropriate level of work to the appropriate type of employee. For many years, professional librarians spent at least part of their working day engaged in tasks that did not require a professional background. This was especially true in small libraries, because, in many, the only employee was a professional librarian. During the 1930s and early 1940s, it was not uncommon to find libraries in which 50 percent or more of the total staff was classified as professional librarians. In the past few decades, the tasks that professional librarians perform have become more clearly demarcated from those done by other staff members, and, in many cases, tasks that previously had been done by professionals have been transferred to the support staff. These transfers have been made possible by the increase in the number of staff members in most libraries, as well as by the introduction of new technologies. Allen Veaner has described this shift in task-oriented work from the

professional staff to the support staff as a "technological imperative." Once a technology is applied to carry out a routine job, that work is driven downward in the work hierarchy, away from professionals whose work then expands to include new and more challenging responsibilities. This change has provided professional enrichment opportunities for librarians and similarly has enriched the jobs of support staff.[12]

Although some small libraries still have only one professional librarian and perhaps a clerical worker, in most larger libraries today the ratio is usually one professional librarian to three support staff members. In some libraries, the proportion of professional to support staff is even smaller. As library technology advances, it may be feasible to turn over still more functions to support staff, and the ratio of professional to nonprofessional workers may decrease even further.

THE LIS EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE UTILIZATION POLICY

The most comprehensive attempt to clarify desirable staffing patterns in libraries is the American Library Association's revised Library and Information Studies Education and Human Resource Utilization policy.[13] This document demonstrates: (1) that skills other than those of librarianship are needed in libraries and (2) that nonlibrarians must have equal recognition in both the professional and the support ranks of libraries.

Skills other than those of librarianship have an important contribution to make to the achievement of superior library service. There should be equal recognition in the library for those individuals whose expertise contributes to its effective performance. To accomplish this goal, the document recommends that libraries establish a dual career lattice that allows both librarians and nonlibrary specialists to advance in their chosen careers.

In addition to recognizing the importance of specialists, the LIS Education and HR Utilization policy recommends that librarians be permitted to advance within an organization without becoming administrators. In many libraries, promotion and advancement are possible only when an employee assumes greater supervisory responsibility. However, there is a great need for administrators to recognize and to reward financially the important role that nonadministrative librarians play. The LIS Education and HR Utilization policy states:

> [There are] many areas of special knowledge within librarianship which are equally important [as administration] and to which equal recognition in prestige and salary should be given. Highly qualified persons with specialist responsibilities in some aspects of librarianship—archives, bibliography, reference, for example—should be eligible for advanced status and financial rewards without being forced to abandon for administrative responsibilities their areas of major competence.[14]

Although the original version of the LIS Education and HR Utilization policy was produced more than thirty-five years ago, most libraries and information

centers have yet to deal successfully with some of its recommendations. Many libraries, despite the influx of nonlibrarian specialists, have not yet adopted dual career lattices to allow nonlibrarians to advance, nor do they have procedures for allowing employees to advance in salary and rank without becoming administrators.

The strict demarcation that was once observed in most libraries between support staff and professional librarians has been eroded as virtually all

Figure 10.1—Dual Career Lattices
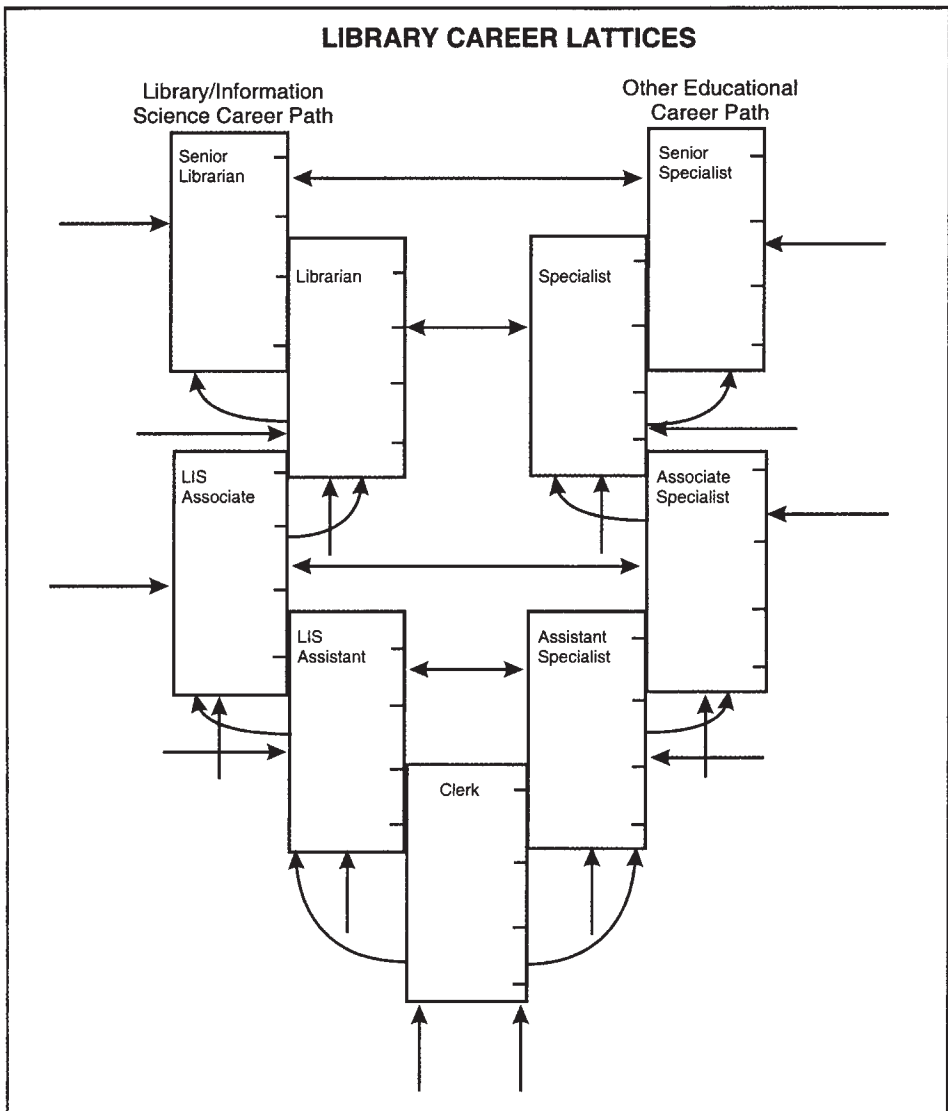
Source: From "Library and Information Studies Education and Human Resource Utilization" (Chicago: American Library Association, 2002), 5. Reprinted by permission of the American Library Association.

employees of libraries have become knowledge workers.[15] Support staff members are being increasingly used in "new and reconfigured roles, in many cases performing tasks previously considered to be the exclusive province of librarians."[16] This overlap sometimes causes tension, and even resentment, among support staff as they, "see themselves performing the tasks they have watched librarians perform for years, as well as the challenging new tasks created by automation, but for less money and lower status."[17]

Both professional librarians and support staff have new names that reflect this increasing diversity. For instance, librarians are not just called librarians anymore. Increasingly, their titles provide a framework for the technological role that they play within the library. Professional journals and electronic mailing lists reflect these new roles; they are filled with openings for technology consultant, technology training coordinator, head of the Digital Information Literacy Office, information systems librarian, head of computer services, Web master, cybrarian, and Internet services librarian.[18]

In a similar way, the old clerical functions of library support staff have been transformed. The types of support workers employed in libraries and information agencies have increased in number, reflecting the changing and varied responsibilities of the support staff in today's libraries.[19] Some of the many job classifications of support personnel can be seen in table 10.1.

The library profession has not yet come up with a uniform model that addresses these types of staffing patterns. Libraries and librarians need to look at the necessary qualifications for all levels of library work and then hire a workforce that has qualifications matching those needs. It seems inevitable that the staffing patterns of libraries will continue to shift in the twenty-first century and that the realities of budgeting will force libraries to look for economical ways to provide the staffing they need.

Charles Handy has suggested that the organizations of the future will be "shamrock" organizations, made up of three different groups of workers, "groups with different expectations, managed differently, paid differently, organized differently."[20] The first leaf of the shamrock is composed of the core workers, those employees who are essential and permanent. This core group

TABLE 10.1 Types of Support Staff

Delivery Worker	Applications Systems Analyst	Human Resources Specialist
Development Associate	Systems Specialist	LA Specialist/ Coordinator
TV Repair Supervisor	Public Information Officer	Photographer
Curatorial Assistant	Business Coordinator	Fiscal Officer
Learning Disabilities Specialist	Graphic Design Specialist	Adult Literacy Specialist
Bookmobile Driver	Marketing Specialist	Volunteer Resources
Gallery Manager	Electronic Technician	Network Specialist

is becoming smaller in all types of organizations. Work increasingly is being done by workers in the two other leaves: the contract workers and the part-time and temporary workers. Although these other groups of workers always have existed, what is different today is the relative size of the three groups. Although the core workers are decreasing in number, the other two groups are increasing in size because their use allows greater flexibility if budget cuts need to be made.[21] Like other types of organizations, many libraries are relying on a smaller core group and are therefore using more part-time workers or are outsourcing tasks that used to be performed by core workers.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR STAFFING

As described in the previous section, organizations are formed and jobs are created when the overall task of the organization is too large for any one individual. Libraries, like all organizations, are networks of interacting components. Jobs are the individual building blocks upon which the organization is built.

Although the terms *job, position,* and *occupation* are often used interchangeably, each actually has a distinct definition in human resources terminology. A position is a collection of tasks and responsibilities that constitute the total work assignment of one person. Thus, there are as many different positions in an organization as there are people employed there. The Slavic language cataloger in a large academic library holds a position, as does the bookmobile driver in a public library. A job, on the other hand, is a group of positions that generally involve the same responsibilities, knowledge, duties, and skills. Many employees, all performing slightly different work, may be classified under the same job title. A library may employ many catalogers, all of whom have different responsibilities but whose duties are similar enough to be classified in the same job group. An occupation is defined as a general class of job found in a number of different organizations; for example, librarianship is considered to be an occupation.

A job always should be a planned entity consisting of assigned tasks that require similar or related skills, knowledge, or ability. Ideally, jobs should never be created haphazardly at the whim of an employee or to suit the special knowledge or ability of a particular individual. Instead, jobs should be designed carefully to ensure maximum organizational effectiveness. It is the responsibility of the library administration to identify the tasks that are to be included in a job. The tasks should be similar or related. All the tasks to be accomplished by a specific job should require approximately the same level of education. One task should not be so excessively complex that extensive education is required, whereas another be so simple that it could be performed by an individual with much less education. Further, the tasks assigned to any one job should require comparable experience. Some tasks can be performed only after extensive experience, whereas others can be executed by novices. And finally, tasks assigned to a job should require comparable responsibility. Some tasks have end responsibility, which means that there is no review of the task after it has been completed. The action of the individual in a job having end responsibility is final. Such end responsibility is frequently found in reference

services, book selection, and top administration. Other jobs require little or no end responsibility. Revisers in a catalog department may have end responsibility, whereas the catalogers whose work is revised have no end responsibility. To summarize, a well-defined job has assigned to it tasks that are (1) comparable in the amount of education required, (2) comparable in the amount of experience required, and (3) comparable in the degree of responsibility required.

It was long a principle of job design that all the tasks that constituted a job should, if possible, be related to the accomplishment of a single function, process, or program or should be related to the same subject field or type of material. In large institutions, this was easily accomplished; in small institutions, however, workers often had to work in multiple areas. Although the assignment of a single function, process, or program to a job makes sense in terms of efficiency, it still can be carried too far. There is now a much greater interest in jobs that allow workers to practice multiple skills. This new interest reflects a growing belief that to make a job too narrow may, in many cases, be detrimental to both workers and managers. To increase the flexibility within organizations, jobs are now being designed to take advantage of multiple skills. More organizations are encouraging cross-training; that is, having employees learn the techniques associated with jobs that are not their own. This is so that, if the need arose, there would be additional employees who would know how to get a specific job done. Workers are being encouraged to work both with and across multiple functions and units.

This flexibility and broadening of job responsibilities is a change in the way that jobs traditionally have been structured. The allotment of narrow, specialized portions of a large task to specific workers is known as division of labor. Adam Smith, in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), first wrote about the benefits of division of labor.[22] When each job consists primarily of a few simple, repetitive tasks, the skill level and training required for performing that job are low.

In the United States, during most of the twentieth century, both the scientific management principles popularized by Frederick W. Taylor and the Detroit style of mass production introduced by Henry Ford heavily influenced the thinking of individuals who designed jobs. There was widespread acceptance of the principle of dividing tasks into small component units and then having each worker responsible for just a small portion of the overall task. This type of job design promoted efficiency and ease of training. More recently, however, there has been a realization that this approach to job design often leads to worker dissatisfaction and alienation. Workers who perform one small task over and over begin to feel like cogs in a machine. Now, many industries are trying to provide job enrichment by redesigning jobs so that they comprise a wider variety of tasks and more responsibility. In addition, all organizations, including libraries, are rethinking the design of their jobs in an attempt to find better ways of accomplishing the objectives of the organization.

Although few library jobs were ever as narrow and confining as those on an assembly line, the principle of job enrichment is especially important in organizations like libraries and information centers. The educational level of most of the employees in a library is typically quite high, and well-educated workers usually seek jobs that are intellectually challenging. A job should not be so restrictive that assigned tasks are quickly mastered and soon become monotonous and boring. Instead, the scope of a job should be large enough

to challenge and encourage employees to increase their skills, knowledge, and abilities. Some jobs in libraries must be performed according to prescribed procedures to maintain uniformity or because of standardized methodologies. These jobs are generally low in the hierarchy. Nevertheless, even at this level, the employee should be given every opportunity to be creative, to exercise initiative, and to vary the routines of the job, as long as the established standards are maintained.

Technology has had the greatest impact on lower-level jobs, in which work is routine, and it has had less on higher-level jobs, in which decision making is concentrated. Still, just adding technology to a job function does not in itself make the job more interesting. Instead, sometimes information technology can lead to deskilling when the computer takes decision making away from an employee. One study of paraprofessional technical services positions found that the introduction of technology had changed the positions over time primarily by changing the tools with which the work was done. It had done little to add autonomy, authority, and decision making to the positions.[23]
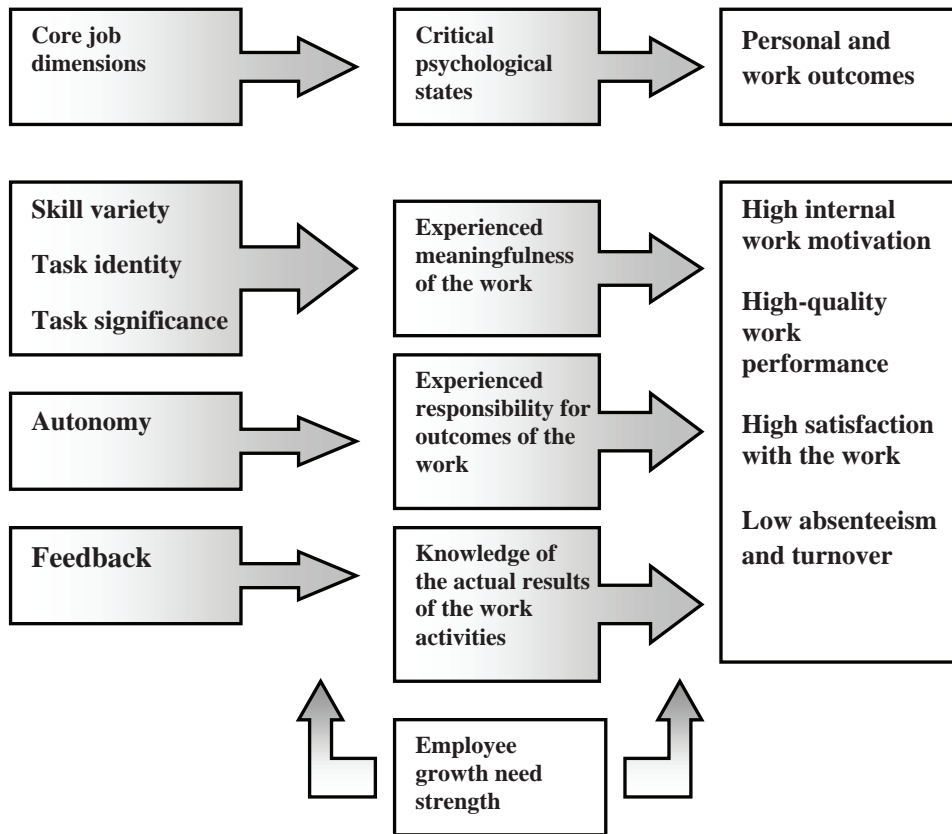
Although the buzzword now in all types of organizations is "empowerment," it must be remembered that there are some workers who do not want to be empowered. A basic rule of HR management is to match the individual to the job. Following that principle, workers who do not want autonomy and empowerment should not be placed in positions in which they will need to work without supervision and direction. Nonetheless, the talents of a great number of workers are underutilized at the present time, and it benefits both the worker and the organization to create jobs that allow these employees to work to their full potential. If libraries want their employees to be innovative and responsible, they must provide jobs that give the employees an opportunity to develop these attributes.

J. R. Hackman and G. R. Oldham have proposed a model of job enrichment that identifies five core job dimensions that are essential to job enrichment. These dimensions are:

- Skill variety—the extent to which a job requires a number of different activities using a number of skills and talents.
- Task identity: the extent to which a job requires completing a whole piece of work from beginning to end.
- Task significance: the worker's view of the importance of the job.
- Autonomy: the extent to which employees have the freedom to plan, schedule, and carry out their jobs as desired.
- Feedback: the extent to which a job allows the employee to have information about the effectiveness of their performance.

As figure 10.2 illustrates, these core job characteristics lead to critical psychological states that allow the worker to experience the meaningfulness of the work, responsibility for the outcome of the work, and knowledge of the actual results of the work. These psychological states affect an employee's feeling of motivation, quality of work performed, and satisfaction with work and lead to low absenteeism and turnover.[24]

Just as organizations are changing, so are the jobs within organizations. Managers need to look at the jobs in their organization and see if they are

Figure 10.2—Hackman and Oldham's Core Job Characteristics

Core job dimensions	→	Critical psychological states	→	Personal and work outcomes

| Skill variety

Task identity

Task significance | → | Experienced meaningfulness of the work | → | High internal work motivation

High-quality work performance

High satisfaction with the work

Low absenteeism and turnover |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Autonomy | → | Experienced responsibility for outcomes of the work | → | |
| Feedback | → | Knowledge of the actual results of the work activities | → | |

Employee growth need strength

Source: Adapted from J. R. Hackman and G. R. Oldman, *Work Redesign* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1980).

designed in a way that balances the need for efficiency with the need for a more enriched job to ensure employee motivation.

Job Descriptions

After a job has been established, the next step is to write a job description that specifies the duties associated with that job; the relationship of the job to other units of the institution; and the personal characteristics, such as education, skill, and experience, required to perform the job. Today, most government agencies and private companies require job descriptions for all employees. Job descriptions vary from organization to organization but generally contain the following elements:

1. Job identification. This section of the description typically includes the job title, line number, and department.
2. Job summary. This section of the job description provides details of the job's major responsibilities and provides a justification for its existence.

3. Job activities and procedures. This section includes a description of the tasks performed by the incumbent of the job, sometimes including the percentage of the job that is devoted to each of its tasks. There should be a clear delineation of what the duties and responsibilities of the job are, although some flexibility is often inserted by the use of a phrase such as, "and other duties on occasion as assigned." The enumeration of the job's activities and procedures is the most important part of the job description. This enumeration identifies for the employee the exact tasks for which he or she will be responsible. It also indicates to the supervisor those tasks that require training, supervision, or task evaluation. Without this section of the job description, neither the employee nor the supervisor knows what the employee is expected to do.
4. Relationship of the job to the total institution. This section states the title of the person to whom the incumbent reports, the number of employees or the organizational unit supervised by this job, and the internal and external relationships required by the job.
5. Job requirements. Job requirements are established by each organization and identify the minimum acceptable qualifications required for an employee to perform the job. Requirements often include amount of education; amount of experience; and special skills, knowledge, or abilities. All job requirements should be necessary for the successful performance of the job. For some jobs, requirements are set unrealistically high, which artificially restricts the pool of possible applicants. Sometimes, job specifications reflect the characteristics the organization would like the employee to have and not what is actually necessary to perform the job effectively. Job specifications (e.g., an educational requirement such as a college degree) that are not essential for successful job performance are invalid and may violate Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Job descriptions fulfill several important administrative and HR needs. A job description may be used in recruiting new employees. Not only does the recruiter know exactly the capabilities for which to search, but the candidate also knows exactly what would be expected if the job were accepted. For this reason, the job description always should be made available to applicants for their study and review. After an individual has been hired, the job description becomes the basis for determining training needs and for identifying tasks that require special effort before the employee can perform them well. Later, the job description becomes the basis for the employee's formal performance appraisal. Job descriptions also are used to evaluate a job's worth, in order to aid in developing a compensation structure. Figure 10.3 shows a job description from an academic library. Other job descriptions can be seen on this book's Web site (http://www.lu.com/management).

Job Analysis

In principle, a job should be stable over time. Once it has been defined and the characteristics necessary to perform it have been specified, the job should

Figure 10.3—Job Description from an Academic Library

DUKE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

Collection Development Librarian, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library

The Collection Development Librarian, along with other staff, contributes to the growth, organization, interpretation, and conservation of RBMSCL collections in a broad range of subject areas.

Responsibilities

• Identifies, selects, solicits, and acquires by purchase and gift a broad range of materials, including books, newspapers, maps, manuscripts, ephemera, broadsides, photographs, and electronic media; works in close consultation with faculty, subject librarians, library staff, donors, and dealers.

• Develops, maintains, and implements collecting policies in areas of responsibility. In consultation with faculty, subject librarians, and other library staff, determines priorities for collecting activities and coordinates development of special collections with other Duke Libraries' collections.

• Manages and expends funds, including restricted and endowed acquisition funds in areas of responsibility.

• Provides specialized reference assistance to students, faculty, and visiting scholars, both on-site and remotely; participates in weekend RBMSCL reference rotation.

• Working with RBMSCL research services staff and with the Perkins Library System instruction and outreach programs, provides library instruction and other outreach services related to RBMSCL resources.

• Plans and prepares exhibits, publications, online guides, public programs, and other activities or products that promote the Library's collections.

• Serves as appropriate on Perkins Library System groups relating to collecting and on other Perkins and RBMSCL committees and task forces.

• Performs other relevant duties as needed.

Qualifications: Required: Master's degree from an ALA-accredited program or an advanced degree in a relevant discipline. At least one year of rare book and manuscript collecting and librarianship experience; strong reading knowledge in one or more modern European languages; excellent interpersonal, oral and written communication skills; creativity, flexibility, initiative, and interest in non-traditional as well as traditional collecting areas; ability to work independently and as a member of a team; working knowledge of MS Office applications; demonstrated commitment to providing outstanding customer service. **Preferred:** Advanced degree in a subject relevant to RBMSCL collections. Ideal candidate will have 1-3 years professional librarian experience, equivalent to an Assistant Librarian rank. Diverse experience in successfully acquiring rare books and manuscripts for an academic library; reading knowledge of two or more European languages, especially German, French and/or Italian; knowledge of archival practices, book history and bibliography; experience in the antiquarian book and manuscript trade; experience producing exhibits, publications, guides, and web sites; familiarity with the ExLibris integrated library system.

not be appreciably changed by the incumbents holding the job or by different situations. In reality, though, jobs are dynamic and often change considerably over time. New machinery or equipment may be introduced. Departments or even entire libraries may be reorganized. Changing technology may alter the skill requirements of a job. In libraries, for instance, the job of cataloger has changed greatly since the introduction of bibliographic utilities. Thus, it is important to

remember that job descriptions and specifications must be kept up-to-date to ensure that they still describe the activities and characteristics of that job.

Because all jobs change over time and because employees, by emphasizing or deemphasizing certain portions of their jobs, can produce drastic changes in their jobs, all organizations should occasionally perform a job analysis. This analysis allows the institution to gather information about what is actually being done by employees holding specific jobs. A variety of methods may be employed for a job analysis. Some of the most common include direct observation of the job, interviews, written questionnaires, and requesting employees to record what they do on a job in a daily log or diary. Each of these methods has its advantages and disadvantages. It is beneficial to acquire data using more than one of these methods in order to make sure that sufficient information is gathered. The results of a job analysis can be useful in writing new job descriptions, in specifying the skills and abilities needed by workers holding the job, and in determining the appropriate compensation for that job. A job analysis also can indicate when a job needs to be redesigned. Although employees sometimes feel threatened by a job analysis, in most cases, the data provided by the analysis allow an organization to manage its HR effectively and to provide better training, performance evaluation, and promotion and compensation opportunities.

Because a complete job analysis of all positions is not only time-consuming but also demands extensive expertise, complete analyses are not performed regularly in libraries. When they are, library administrators often call in special HR or management consultants to help accomplish the analysis. Another approach found in some libraries is to use the HR department of the parent institution to perform the analysis. For example, the HR department of a municipal or county government or of a college or university might assist in designing and carrying out the job analysis program.

To keep jobs up-to-date between complete analyses, supervisors should report any significant changes in the makeup of tasks in their units. Also, some institutions conduct periodic audits of the jobs in every department. The audit involves checking the tasks that actually are being performed against the ones specified in the job description. When discrepancies are found, either changes are made in the work habits of the employee, if certain essential tasks are not being carried out, or changes are made in the job description, so that it reflects the changes that have occurred in the job for legitimate reasons (e.g., the introduction of new equipment or technology).

Job Evaluation

After jobs have been designed and accurate job descriptions written, all the jobs within the organization are arranged in a hierarchical order. An attempt is made to enumerate the requirements of each job and its contribution to the organization and then to classify it according to importance. Skill, education, experience, and the amount of end responsibility are common criteria used in making this evaluation. A number of methods can be used to assign jobs to ranked categories.

Some organizations use the point method. These organizations develop a quantitative point scale that identifies the factors involved in a job, and they

then assign weights to these factors. The higher the number of points, the higher the job is in the hierarchy. Other organizations use a factor system, in which job rank is calculated by comparing jobs with one another and also by subdividing them into factors that have dollar values attached to them. The factor method is similar to the point method but with a monetary scale in place of a point scale.

Two nonquantitative systems are widely used for evaluating jobs. Simple ranking systems compare actual positions to one another to create a ranked hierarchy. Similarly, a job classification system defines classes of jobs on the basis of duties, skills, abilities, responsibilities, and other job-related qualities. The jobs are grouped into classes arranged in a hierarchy. Regardless of the system used, it is always the job that is classified, not the employee holding the job.

The hierarchically arranged jobs are divided into groups, which vary from library to library. Usually, all professional librarian positions fall into one group; library associates or paraprofessionals into another; and library technicians, clerks, and custodians into still others. Within each group, there will be hierarchical levels based upon the experience, education, and responsibility associated with each job. A job title is assigned to each level, usually modified by the use of a numeral. Jobs requiring the same level of education, experience, and responsibility are given the same title, although the tasks associated with each may be different. Both an experienced reference librarian and an experienced cataloger could be classified as Librarian III. Figure 10.4 shows a hierarchy of professional library positions.

Figure 10.4—A Hierarchy of Professional Positions

Job Title	Education	Experience	End Responsibility
Librarian IV	MLIS from an accredited LIS school plus an Advanced Certificate	10 years with 3 years in supervisory position	Final responsibility for the operation of the institution
Librarian III	MLIS from an accredited LIS school plus subject specialization	5 years of professional experience	Under general supervision and according to policies, end responsibility for a department
Librarian II	MLIS from an accredited LIS school	2 years of professional experience	Under general supervision and according to policies, responsible for a unit of a department
Librarian I	MLIS from an accredited LIS school	0 years of professional experience	Under general supervision and according to policies, performs assigned task

The same procedure is used for all other job groups. A hierarchy of clerical-level jobs is shown in figure 10.5. There is no standard for the number of levels in each group. In larger institutions there may be many, in smaller ones only a few.

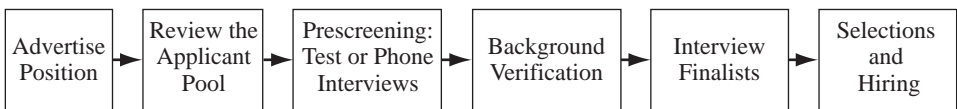**Figure 10.5—A Hierarchy of Support-Level Positions**

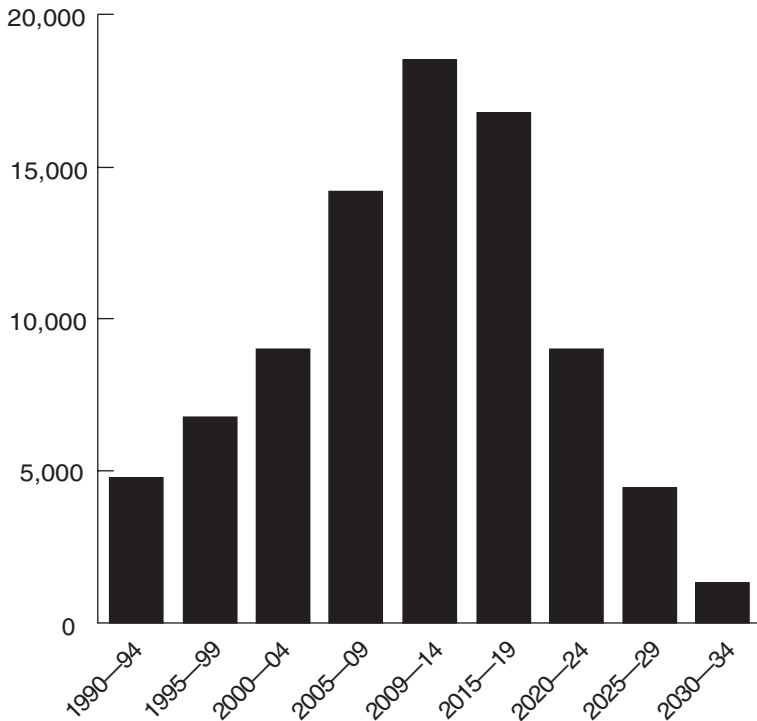| Job Title	Education	Experience	End Responsibility
Clerk III	High school plus business school graduate	3 years of experience	Under general supervision, end responsibility for payroll
Clerk II	High school plus some business school	2 years of experience	Under general supervision, end responsibility for verifying invoices
Clerk I	High school diploma	0 years of experience	Under close supervision, perform assigned tasks

RECRUITMENT AND HIRING

Once a library has its positions established, they need to be filled. Filling these jobs is a multistep process, which is illustrated in figure 10.6. The first step is recruiting applicants to apply for the jobs. Recruitment involves seeking and attracting a pool of applicants from which qualified candidates for a vacant position can be chosen.

Recruiting has become an especially important consideration because some libraries are finding it difficult to attract enough qualified applicants to fill vacant librarian positions. This need to attract new professionals is especially critical for libraries because of the demographics of the library workforce. Research has shown that, overall, librarians are significantly older than most other professionals. For instance, a study that examined the age of librarians in the large Association of Research Libraries (ARL) institutions showed that, relative to comparable professions, librarianship contains one-third the number of individuals aged 35 and younger and almost 75 percent more individuals aged 45 and older.[25] Another recent study that looked at age distribution of librarians showed that a very large percentage of librarians will reach the age of 65, the traditional age of retirement, between 2005 and 2014.[26] The numbers can be seen in figure 10.7.

Figure 10.6—The Stages in Recruiting and Hiring

Advertise Position → Review the Applicant Pool → Prescreening: Test or Phone Interviews → Background Verification → Interview Finalists → Selections and Hiring

Figure 10.7—U.S. Librarians Reaching Age 65, 1990–2034

Source: Reprinted by permission of the American Library Association.

Filling Vacant Positions

When librarians begin to design a search to fill a vacant position, they first need to consider the labor market from which candidates will be drawn. In most libraries, support staff positions are filled from the local labor market. Openings are advertised only in local publications, and almost all of these positions are filled by individuals already living in the area. On the other hand, in many libraries, professional vacancies are filled from the national labor market. Almost all libraries and information centers recruit top administrators nationally. In these cases, libraries and information centers advertise in national periodicals, such as *American Libraries, Library Journal,* or *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* in the hope of attracting a large number of well-qualified applicants.

The Internet is changing the way that open positions are being advertised. The classified sections of many newspapers and specialized publications are available on their Web sites. For instance, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*'s position openings can be seen at http://chronicle.com/jobs/, and the ALA's *American Libraries* position openings can be seen online at http://joblist.ala.org/. There are also sites specifically devoted to employment advertisements (such as Monster.com at http://www.monster.com/), where job seekers can

search job openings by category and find useful tips to aid in their job search. Many individual libraries publicize open positions on their own Web sites. Others post positions to be filled on specific Listservs that are apt to be read by people with the appropriate background and interest for the job vacancy. Advertising using the Internet is advantageous to both the organization with the open position and the job seeker, because it usually permits access to information about positions to be distributed to individuals who might not see the printed ad, especially if it were in a regional newspaper that the job seeker did not usually read.[27] The cost is generally lower as well.

Attracting a Diverse Workforce

Diversity among staff is becoming increasingly more valued in all types of institutions. Because libraries serve a multicultural clientele, most libraries try to hire a culturally diverse staff. Despite attempts to increase the number of minorities in the profession, however, they are still underrepresented. Recent statistics show that in academic and public libraries fewer than 15 percent of the librarians belong to racial or ethnic minorities, and the percentages are far below the representations of these groups in society.[28] In an attempt to increase the number of minorities in libraries, both libraries and LIS schools have tried a number of approaches. Some libraries have introduced under-graduate internship programs designed to bring more minorities into the profession. Others have established minority residency programs to attract new MLS graduates. In addition, many libraries have instituted diversity plans to coordinate their efforts to produce a more diverse workforce. LIS schools have attempted to diversify their enrollment by more active minority recruitment efforts and by offering special scholarships. The American Library Association has instituted a new Spectrum Initiative to provide scholarships to African American, Latino/Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Native American/Alaskan Native students for graduate programs in library and information studies.

? What Do You Think?

In the twenty-first century, "nearly one out of two Americans will be a member of what today is considered a minority group. America will be many faces and many races with no one majority group in the workforce. The question is not whether there will be change but how we manage that change so that all may benefit."

What advantages does a diverse workforce bring to an organization? What are some of the challenges of managing such a workforce?

U.S. Department of Labor, *Futurework: Trends and Challenges for Work in the 21st Century* (Washington, DC: Department of Labor, 1999), 10;

excerpt also available in U.S. Department of Labor, "Futurework: Trends and Challenges for Work in the 21st Century," *Occupational Outlook Quarterly* (Summer 2000): 31–37, http://www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/2000/Summer/art04.pdf.

Librarianship must compete with more lucrative professions in hiring a diverse workforce, and it has not succeeded in attracting as diverse a workforce as would be desirable. Nonetheless, at each hiring opportunity, managers should make an effort to attract qualified minority applicants in an attempt to increase diversity.

Internal and External Applicants

Applicants for a job often include both internal candidates—individuals already employed by the organization who are seeking job transfers or promotions—and external candidates—individuals from outside the organization. There are advantages and disadvantages associated with both the external and internal recruiting of personnel. The first advantage of recruiting external candidates is the larger pool of talent that can be tapped. The second advantage is that new employees bring fresh insights and perspectives to the organization. The major disadvantage of external recruiting is that filling a position with an external candidate generally takes longer and is more expensive than filling it with an internal candidate. It also takes longer for an employee hired from the outside to become oriented to the new organization.

The biggest advantage of filling positions with internal candidates is that it usually fosters high morale. Employees in organizations that have a policy of promotion from within have an additional incentive for good performance because of the possibility of a promotion when openings occur. Another advantage of recruiting from within is that management can more accurately appraise the suitability of the candidate. The internal candidate is a known factor, whereas the external candidate is less well known; therefore, there is less risk in the selection and placement of an internal candidate. However, if the position is an attractive one and there are many internal candidates, the ones not chosen may react very negatively. For that reason, it is extremely important to build procedural fairness into this, as well as every other, search, so that the unsuccessful candidates will feel that the process was a fair and objective one.[29]

There are, however, inherent problems and limitations in always relying on internal promotion. Probably the most dangerous is organizational inbreeding. When internal candidates are promoted, they tend to perpetuate what they have seen done in the past, and the organization therefore may not be exposed to new ideas and innovation. In general, the best policy is probably filling the majority of vacancies from within when there are fully qualified individuals to assume these positions. But it is also wise to fill at least some high-level positions by outsiders to inject new ideas into the organization.

On the whole, Ethel Shea reflected, the first week had gone quite well. Just last Friday afternoon she had been one of four assistant librarians in the technical services department of the Calhoun Public Library. Now she sat at the corner desk as head of the department, and her three former coassistants and the six clerks reported to her. Soon she would be interviewing applicants for her old job.

Shea recalled her fear and apprehension when the chief librarian (now her immediate supervisor) had offered her the promotion. Certainly she wanted the job, but would the other three assistants accept her? Would there be resentments? Could she assume the managerial role and still maintain the congenial but guarded camaraderie that passes for friendship among professional rivals? In particular, would she be able to handle Steve Cannon?

(See http://www.lu.com/management for the rest of this case study.)

Internal promotions often present some problems both to the person who received the promotion and to their former peers. What steps can be taken to minimize such problems?

Matching the Applicant to the Position

Selection refers to the process of actually choosing the individual who will be most likely to perform the job successfully. The fundamental goal of selection is to achieve a good fit between the qualifications of the applicant and the requirements of the position. The successful matching of an applicant to a position is very important, because failures are costly not only to the persons hired but also to the organization. If the match is bad, corrective measures, such as training, transfer, demotion, or termination of employment, often are required.

The time spent selecting the right person for a position is time well spent. Oftentimes, organizations do not realize the large investment of scarce resources that may be committed to each new employee. One study that looked at the investment a library would make in a new entry-level librarian who would stay in the job for 25 years estimated that the investment would be in excess of $1 million, not including the costs of office furnishings, training, travel expenses, moving costs, or even the cost of recruitment itself.[30] Offering the position to the wrong applicant can be an expensive mistake, both in time and in money. An interesting calculator on the Internet allows an employer to calculate the cost of a bad hire (see http://www.adphire.com/badHireCalculator.html). Selecting the right candidate always has been important but is even more so now when there is often little staff turnover in many libraries. If the right candidate cannot be found the first time, it is better to readvertise the position and try again than to hire someone just to fill the position.

The Selection Process

Each organization should have a well-designed selection system. Typically, the selection process includes application forms, applicant testing, personal interviews, verification of past performance and background, and hiring.

Application Forms. Libraries often use standard application forms for vacant positions. In some cases, a cover letter and a résumé are substituted for the application form. A typical application form contains questions that identify the applicant, such as name, address, and telephone number; questions about an individual's education and work experience; and questions related to the specific requirements of the job or the organization. The employer receiving an application form must ensure that the applicant has the experience and the education needed for the job. The employer looks for steady progress in experience and for unexplained gaps in work history. Information on the application form allows tentative judgments to be made about an applicant's suitability for a position; it also screens out obviously unqualified candidates.

Applicant Testing. Some libraries use tests to see if an applicant possesses the skills needed for a specific job. These tests are most useful when the job requires certain skills that can be easily tested. For instance, an applicant for a clerical position might be given a keyboarding test to check that his or her speed and accuracy are satisfactory. The most useful tests are a sample of the work itself or a task that closely resembles the work and requires the same skills and aptitudes. If a test is used for selection, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) requires that the employer establish the validity and reliability of the test.

INTERVIEWING THE CANDIDATE

When the pool of candidates has been narrowed down, the most promising applicants are invited for an interview. Sometimes, libraries initially interview candidates by telephone to narrow the pool of candidates and then choose those who will be invited for a personal interview. The job interview is the single most important tool in the candidate selection process. Although few libraries use tests in selecting employees, almost all interview the candidate. In many libraries, multiple interviews are held, thus allowing wider participation in the selection process.

The purpose of the interview is to supplement information obtained through other sources. The interviewer uses this opportunity to find out more about the applicant's technical and professional knowledge, experience, and personal characteristics. The applicant finds the interview a useful way to learn more about the job itself, to clear up any uncertainties about the position or the organization, and to be introduced to the staff that he or she would work with if hired.

The sole focus of the interview should be job requirements, and questions should be designed to provide information about an individual's suitability for the job that is being filled. All questions asked during an interview should be

job related. The EEOC has forbidden the use of interview questions that are not related to job requirements. Candidates may not be asked questions about race, religion, gender, national origin, age, or handicaps. Specific questions that are prohibited are listed in table 10.2.

Interviewing is a skill that can be improved with practice. To start, interviewers should prepare for the interview. They should be familiar with the information provided by the candidate on the application form. An interviewer also should plan an outline of questions to be asked and specify the information that needs to be obtained. The same basic questions should be asked of all individuals being interviewed for a specific position. In addition, the interviewer should arrange a place for the interview that will be private and free of interruptions.

TABLE 10.2 Permitted and Prohibited Questions in Employment Interviews

Topic	Permitted Questions	Prohibited Questions
Marital Status	None	Are you married? Are you planning to get married? Do you have children? Do you plan to have children? What does your spouse do?
Sexual Orientation	None	Do you live alone?
National Origin	What is your name?	Where were you born?
Citizenship	Are you a citizen of the United States? If hired, can you prove eligibility to work in the United States?	Of what country are you a citizen? Are you a naturalized U.S. citizen?
Religion	None. If you wish to know if an applicant is available to work on Saturday or Sunday, ask about working on those days and ask the questions to each applicant.	Do you go to church? Synagogue?
Race	None	What is your race?
Criminal History	Have you ever been convicted of a crime?	Have you ever been arrested?
Age	If hired, will you be able to prove you are at least 18 years old?	How old are you?
Disability	Are you capable of performing the essential functions of this position with or without reasonable accommodation?	Are you disabled? Do you have any health problems?

During the actual interview, an interviewer should try to put the applicant at ease. A relaxed applicant will display a more normal behavior pattern than a tense applicant. The candidate should be encouraged to talk, but the interviewer must maintain control of the interview and remember that its objective is to gather information that will aid in the selection process. Too often, interviewers spend an excessive amount of time discussing the organization and the position and thus never obtain from the applicant the information needed to make a good hiring decision. The best interview is one in which the applicant does most of the talking.

Try This!

It is well known that first impressions are the most important aspect of an interview. Imagine that you are interviewing for a position that you wish to obtain. Develop a one-minute opening statement to be used in the interview with recruiters or at a job fair. The statement should provide a succinct overview of your strengths and your fit with the position available. Practice presenting this overview to a friend, and ask him or her to assess how effective it is in marketing you for the position.

The interviewer must listen carefully and note pertinent facts. He or she should refrain from excessive note taking, however, because it will inhibit the applicant. Questions should be phrased correctly. Open-ended questions elicit the best answers because they force a candidate to think through a situation. The interviewer should avoid leading questions; that is, questions that signal the desired answer. Instead of asking, "You wouldn't object to weekend work, would you?" say, "Tell me how you feel about working weekends." The interviewer should never be judgmental. By refraining from expressing disbelief or shock at a candidate's response, the interviewer encourages the person to reveal failures as well as successes. As soon as the interview is over, the interviewer should record his or her impressions about the applicant. If this is delayed, valuable information and impressions about the applicant will be forgotten.

Background Verification

At some point, either before or after the interview, the employer will want to verify the information provided by the candidate by contacting references and previous employers. Most jobs require that the applicant list references, which can be either personal, academic, or professional. Personal references are unreliable, because few applicants would list a person who would not give a highly favorable reference. If the applicant has a work history, previous employers are the most valuable source of information. An applicant should give written permission to have his or her references checked before the individuals listed are contacted.

Reference checking is frequently conducted by telephone. It is felt that individuals provide more frank and specific information on the telephone than in writing. Some organizations, however, divulge information about past employees only in writing, and the amount and type of information provided varies from organization to organization. Fear of lawsuits has made reference checking harder than in the past, as former employers have become hesitant about giving references for fear of possible lawsuits from their ex-employees. A few organizations are now willing to confirm only that an individual had been employed there. Usually, however, a prospective employer is able to verify the accuracy of the information that the applicant has provided, such as position held, last salary, supervisory responsibilities, and reasons for leaving. The prospective employer may also ask whether the previous employer would be willing to rehire the employee and why. Although previous or present supervisors usually provide accurate assessments, sometimes they may give a better recommendation than the applicant deserves, either because they would like to see that applicant leave his or her present place of employment or because they do not feel comfortable giving negative information about individuals. The reference checkers should probe and follow up if they feel that the person giving the reference is hesitant or not responding to the questions being asked.

The same set of basic questions should be asked of all references about all candidates. Only questions relating to an applicant's job performance should be asked. Even if references are checked on the telephone, the prospective employer also should ask to have a written reference, so that there will be written documentation if there are ever any questions about the hiring decision.

If an applicant does not list supervisors from recent jobs as references, a prospective employer might want to contact them anyway. Very few applicants falsify their credentials, but it is always wise to verify the information given. If a particular educational background is required, the applicant's school record should be confirmed. A few recruiters and employers are now using social networking sites such as Facebook or MySpace and search engines such as Google to check to see if there is publicly available information on the Internet about an applicant that might affect a hiring decision. The investigation into an applicant's background is sometimes overlooked by prospective employers. However, it costs little in either time or money and is worth the effort because it cuts the risks that an organization will make an unwise hire.

Making the Hiring Decision

The last step in the selection process is choosing the individual who will be hired to fill the vacant position. In some libraries, many people contribute to the final decision, especially for professional positions. Search committees, which are commonly used in academic and other types of libraries, are one way of allowing peer involvement in the selection process. The search committee usually recommends a ranked list of finalists for the position, and then an administrator usually makes the final choice.[31] In some libraries and information centers, the director always makes the final decision; in others, the immediate supervisor is allowed to choose, subject to the approval of higher management. If the appropriate information has been gathered and if

the steps in the selection process have been performed effectively, the likelihood of making a good decision is quite good; the applicant's qualifications will match the job requirements, and the fit should be successful.

If good hiring practices are not followed, an organization may be plagued by a high level of turnover in its staff. Even though a certain amount of turnover is healthy and allows an organization to bring in employees with new ideas and experiences, excessive turnover can be costly because an employee has to be replaced and a new one trained. A great deal of turnover can also threaten morale in an organization because the remaining employees feel that the organization is in a constant state of change. An excessive amount of turnover should be a warning to a library to examine carefully its hiring and recruitment practices.

CONCLUSION

After the steps that are delineated in this chapter are finished, a library's positions will be established, and there will be individuals hired for each of those spots. Hiring the staff is just the first step in working with HR in a library. Chapter 11 will look at some of the processes involved in training, evaluating, and compensating those employees.

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