Is librarianship prepared for the future? Very few library professionals will dispute the necessity of preparing tomorrow’s leaders today. Even fewer, however, understand how to do it. In the mid- to late-2000s, librarianship offered a promise: The Boomers are retiring in droves. Come join us. You will have a long, fruitful, and rewarding career waiting for you.

Nearly a decade later, we are learning the profession did not keep its promise. To be fair, there are multiple external factors that affected this proclamation. Increases in life expectancy, higher levels of formal education, shifts from pensions plans to contribution plans, alterations in legal and corporate policy, and even, unfortunately, economic fluctuations all played a part in the profession’s fidelity. People are living longer. People have new incentives to work longer in the form of a 401(k). The Boomers have not left yet.

Despite these external factors that contribute to the retention of the current workforce, there is a harsh reality that must be recognized in order for any plan for the future of the workforce to be successful: people are getting older. At some point in the near future, the Boomers will exit the workforce. In some circles, this phenomenon is referred to as “aging out” or “natural attrition.” The business community will approach this same phenomenon using “The Lottery Test” or “The Bus Test.” If a senior member of your leadership team won the lottery tomorrow, would you be prepared for her departure? This is an extreme, fictitious scenario, but it is illustrative of a specific truth: the majority of us are ill-prepared for the departure of any of our leaders, middle, upper, or senior.

What is to be done about this truth? Succession Planning and Implementation in Libraries: Practices and Resources provides invaluable answers to this question. Unlike previous works on succession planning in libraries, this book rejects the notion that succession planning applies to select individuals at specific ranks within an institution. Instead, it argues that the full thrust and success of any succession plan resides in its understanding that it includes all employees at all levels within an organization.

Succession planning can no longer be understood as a workshop or set of documents left behind for a generation of young professionals tasked with fulfilling the roles and responsibilities of their predecessors. Succession planning must now be understood at a cultural level. Previous generations of workers tended to stay with one employer for the majority of their career. Contemporary workers are much more mobile than their counterparts. This, in some ways, undercuts and sabotages succession-planning efforts.

Why groom a member of your own workforce to be a leader of tomorrow only to lose them to another job, another employer, another library? These are questions that address the current culture of librarianship’s emerging leaders. How do we keep them given that they are so mobile? How do we ensure the profession has the personnel it needs in order to satisfy its primary mission: support the education and development of the citizenry whenever and however possible.
The voices and viewpoints presented here are unique. The authors come from a variety of settings: academic libraries, consulting agencies, corporate libraries, and public and special libraries.

Each of these chapters provides clues to solving the riddle of successful implementation of succession-planning efforts in librarianship. Regardless of whether the chapter describes effective internal and external recruitment practices, succession plans as part of strategic plans, the importance of talent management, or the enduring value of annual appraisals, each one provides valuable insight into the challenges, nuances, and possibilities of a succession plan’s effect on the ability of each library to fulfill its obligation to its constituents.

Ms. Deards and Mr. Springs deserve more than congratulations for carefully preparing a manuscript for us to study. They deserve our attention, our reflection, and our action. They work not just for themselves but for the good of the profession as a whole. For that, I offer my gratitude and my adulation. Well done, my friends, and thank you.

*Megan Z. Perez*
*Sharp Hue Web Design, USA*

*Megan Perez* received his M.S.L.S from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill in 2007. He has worked at numerous academic libraries including Boston College, Cornell University, and the University of Arkansas. He has given presentations on knowledge transfer and succession planning for the NYPL and ACRL. Megan is the co-editor and co-author of *The New Graduate Experience* published in 2010 by ABC-CLIO.