As the baby boomer generation has begun to retire, more and more attention has been given to the question of who will be tomorrow’s leaders (Kiyonaga, 2004). While initially these vacancies may be filled by those currently in middle management positions, inevitably these record numbers of retirements will lead to an accelerated need for new leaders of the library profession. At the same time, the definitions of what it means to be a library or a librarian are being examined and questioned both by those within the profession, and by their users and society as a whole. Two additional challenges are: the increasing emphasis of those upcoming generations on the importance of work-life balance, also known as having it all; and the significant increase in the frequency of employees changing jobs over the course of their careers (Bienkowska, 2012; Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007; Kransdorff, 1996; Masias, Bosserman, Brown-Taylor, Cantwell, Gladney, Harding, et al., 2007). Tomorrow’s leaders value working hard but have no wish to do so to the detriment of their personal relationships. In this increasingly connected world, family and friends have become more visibly important when individuals rate their satisfaction with life and their work (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007). Due to the economic turbulence of the last two decades, many individuals have been forced to change jobs in order to maintain their standard of living, to advance within their field, to change careers in order to pursue a more financially viable occupation, and due to institutional closures and natural disasters. Regular cost of living raises are a thing of the past with many businesses either forgoing raises entirely, except for those related to promotion, or handing out small merit-based increases in lieu of cost of living raises. Inflation, in recent years, has steadily increased, reducing the buying power of individuals who have not received raises that have kept up with the rising cost of living. This reduction in buying power has caused individuals to desire higher rates of compensation, leading them to more frequently seek out positions with higher pay, or positions with comparable compensation in areas that have significantly lower costs of living (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007). These factors have contributed to the increase in mobility of employees moving from institution to institution (Kransdorff, 1996). At the same time, technology has rapidly advanced, and economies around the globe have become even more interconnected, creating an environment of rapid change for both institutions and individuals (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007; Kransdorff, 1996). This situation emphasizes the need to implement succession planning for the profession of librarianship as a whole, not just institutional level.

Librarians work in settings as diverse as the institutions that they serve. The exact technical skills and knowledge base needed to thrive in each institution is similarly divergent. This complexity begs the question: How can librarians identify leaders for the future when the landscape is so varied and the needs of those we serve are in a state of dynamic change?
CHALLENGES OF RESEARCHING SUCCESSION PLANNING

There are several challenges to researching succession planning and to writing about succession planning in a way that allows for the development of practices that are transferable across institutions. These challenges are:

- There exists only a relatively small body of research and case studies, across the disciplines, on the topic of succession planning.
- Organizations may have no formal written plan to examine in correlation with employee advancement.
- Organizations that have written plans may or may not be following those plans due to lack of funding, lack of time, or lack of interest.

The lack of available research to reference on succession planning in libraries has been one of the largest challenges to successfully researching and implementing succession planning strategies. While succession planning is highly touted in academic and management circles, at the time this publication was conceived, in early 2010, there were only two books that had been published about succession planning in libraries; one functioned primarily as a handbook; the other focused on how a public library board could choose the best library director (Detroit Suburban Librarians’ Roundtable Succession Planning Committee, 2005; Singer, Goodrich, & Goldberg, 2004; Singer & Griffith, 2010). The editors were able to identify 38 related articles, some of which were not scholarly in nature, that were in some way related to succession planning. Upon examination, 2 of the publications were reviews for the aforementioned books. The majority of existing literature on succession planning lies, unsurprisingly, in the business literature (Eastman, 1995; Ip & Jacobs, 2006; Miller, 2003; Motwani, Levenburg, Schwarz, & Blankson, 2006). Part of the difficulty in gathering information that can be applied in multiple library settings lies with the original definition of succession planning as being related to grooming an individual to take on a position of authority within one specific institution at which they already work. Research within the business community has demonstrated that inadequate succession planning efforts can lead to uneasy transition in power, which can lead to poor performance by both the designated new leader and their organization (Miller, 1993).

Additional challenges arise when considering the implementation of succession planning. In particular, the questions surrounding leadership can be obstacles to embracing the need to plan for the future of the organization. Identifying leadership potential is often a challenge for organizations regardless of size and type (Dries & Pepermans, 2012). While evaluative frameworks can assist in this process, there is an inherent difficulty in using current standards to predict future performance (Briscoe & Hall, 1999). Unfortunately, it can be a similarly difficult challenge for current employees to self-identify as leaders, especially for those who have never had any leadership experience to inform that type of self-assessment (Chan & Drasgow, 2001). Though myriad factors can contribute to this challenge, current leaders and mentors within an organization must look to reach out to engage these potential future leaders (Mosley, 2005). Librarians new to the profession should not be overlooked in leadership engagement activities as certain opportunities, including participation in decision-making processes on task forces and committees and a clear workplace strategy for developing and training leaders, may aid in the retention and eventual advancement of these workers (DeLong, 2009). These challenges can be addressed through continuous assessment, evaluation, and realignment of the organization, its goals, and of the individuals who make up the organization, as an execution of an ever-evolving succession plan.
Creating Effective Succession Plans

Analysis of multiple succession planning studies listed the following as part of the best practices identified in succession planning case study research: tie succession plans to strategic planning; involve related departments and coworkers in the planning process; clear and open communication; use talent management, including cross-training, to identify multiple candidates for promotion; identify multiple positions for potential promotion of candidates; execution of plans, not just creating and ignoring, is key; and setting and reassessing goals, and progress towards those goals (Garman & Glawe, 2004). It was also emphasized that the succession planning process must be “ongoing at all time”; the need for leaders whose departure is planned to have an exit strategy, and the need for assessment at every step in the process in order to identify issues before they turn into long-term problems (Garman & Glawe, 2004). Acculturation plays an important role in the retention and training of future leaders (Webster & Young, 2009; Kransdorff, 1996). Acculturation is an important factor in employee satisfaction; it is also necessary for developing the political awareness needed by future leaders (Webster & Young, 2009; Kransdorff, 1996). Talent management has been suggested to promote succession planning at all levels. There is a risk in training employees intensively, namely that they will take those skills elsewhere (Hills, 2009). However, there is also a risk that if employees are not provided with training to maintain and increase their skill sets that they will either leave in search of a challenge leading to more frequent turnover or they will stagnate as the profession advances due to lack of training (Hills, 2009). Research by Stoll and Temperley (2009) indicates that constant learning is needed due to the constant state of change libraries are currently experiencing. Additionally, political and self-awareness, and the ability to project a positive affect are necessary, teachable skills for the leaders of tomorrow’s libraries (Webster & Young, 2009). The goal of these related but diverse efforts is to support the development of leaders who can transition between multiple types of institutions in today’s rapidly changing environment (Webster & Young, 2009). It is clear that tomorrow’s leaders must be continuous learners, flexible, and open to change and new ideas. The challenge lies in devising and implementing succession-planning procedures that enable organizations to identify, recruit, retain, and train future leaders, while allowing for the fact that these individuals may leave; and at the same time, not stunting their growth by holding back out of fear that their coveted future leader might choose to be that leader at another institution. If each library organization maintains high standards for their succession plans, the greater profession will only be enhanced if these new leaders change organizations. Perhaps that most important factor to success is that once a succession plan has been created, it is put to use; it is only through the implementation, regular assessment, and realignment of these plans that they can be truly effective.

Organization of the Book

This book is organized into nine chapters. Below is a brief description of each of the chapters.

Chapter 1 examines the future of the library profession as a whole, instead of concentrating on any specific type of librarianship. The chapter acts as an introduction to the next generations of library workers, the issues that are important to them, and the questions that should be addressed when engaging in succession planning for the profession and individual institutions.
Chapter 2 examines the use of recruitment strategies as a crucial first step in long-term succession planning. Empirical industrial/organizational psychology research is examined to identify key concepts and practices that can be used to develop effective recruiting strategies for libraries and the library profession, a necessary precursor to successful succession planning.

Chapter 3 reviews the role of mentoring at Association of Research Libraries (ARL) institutions as it relates to retention, promotion, and advancement. Analysis of 18 ARL institutions’ mentoring documentation indicated that orientation and promotion are their main objective with few being geared toward helping employees advance to higher positions within the organization.

Chapter 4 investigates the day-to-day influence of the American Library Association’s Code of Ethics on the actions of academic librarians across all kinds of college and university libraries in North America. The results offer insight into the challenges of succession planning in relationship to ensuring that tomorrow’s leaders act in an ethical manner.

Chapter 5 looks beyond librarianship to the professions of business, medicine, sociology, and law in order to determine the categories that define professionalism across disciplines. Each category’s relationship to successful leadership and professionalism were examined. The chapter presents academic librarians’ view on professionalism and its relationship with successful succession planning for the profession of librarianship.

Chapter 6 establishes the relationship between talent management and succession planning. It reviews current models of talent management, and proposes the “decision-science” framework is best suited for future planning in libraries. Lastly, it presents techniques that libraries can use to develop their own talent management strategies.

Chapter 7 presents an analysis of strategic planning practices in special libraries and information centers. It argues that successful strategic planning and execution is dependent on honing the skills of today’s workforce while growing the leaders of tomorrow. A case study of the Illinois Fire Service Institute is used to illustrate the beneficial application of strategic planning as a step to developing future leaders.

Chapter 8 presents the notion that one of the goals of strategic planning should be to incorporate succession planning as a core value in addition to the traditional focus on an institution’s mission and vision. It presents strategies for assessing an institution and creating a strategic plan that supports long-term succession planning goals.

Chapter 9 concludes with a case study of the leadership development and succession planning efforts at the University of the West Indies Libraries. It argues that leadership development, combined with annual appraisal and assessments, enables the guidance of employees’ careers so that when opportunities for leadership arise they are prepared; it is an integral part of the succession planning process.

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REFERENCES


