

Chapter 2

Effective Recruitment Practices as Part of a Larger Plan

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores recruitment. Recruitment is intrinsic to succession planning and management. Succession planning relies on external recruitment to bring appropriate individuals into the organization. In addition, because of succession planning's focus on developing and advancing individuals within the organization, internal recruitment is a key process. Recruitment is often subsumed within discussions of personnel selection, but it is a distinct stage in the employer-employee relationship. There is a substantial and growing body of empirical research on recruitment in the industrial/organizational psychology literature. It is important for libraries to learn from the body of empirical research on effective recruiting. The growing complexity and mutability of professional work in libraries is making it more difficult for libraries to attract and engage appropriate individuals for employment. Effective recruiting practice is becoming increasingly important for libraries, and it is a precursor to effective succession planning.

INTRODUCTION

Staffing and personnel selection are often identified as key aspects of organizational success, but less attention has been focused on the crucial activity of attracting and recruit-

ing employees as a distinct process in itself. Recruitment processes are the initial stages of the continuum of the employee-employer relationship. Recruitment should be seen as a distinct process, but also as one piece of the larger human resources system of an organization. As part of that system, recruitment is

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the precursor of effective succession processes and planning. Recruitment is an essential part of ensuring that there are appropriate professionals to retain, develop, and advance in the organization.

It is important to distinguish recruiting for the profession of librarianship from recruiting by individual library organizations. Recruiting into the profession and into the appropriate graduate programs may ultimately be important to succession issues in the profession at a macroscopic level, but that is mostly beyond the scope of this chapter. The focus here is largely on recruiting by individual library organizations, although there is a clear linkage between recruitment into the profession and the pools of potential candidates that these organizations will be able to consider for employment.

In part, this chapter considers recruitment as a distinct process with its own activities, phases, and desired outcomes. Libraries face a number of challenges in recruiting. Some of these challenges are unique to the field while others are shared with a wide range of other organizations. Since library organizations need to be effective and successful in this process, success in recruitment requires that we deepen our understanding of it. In addition to examining recruitment as a distinct process, this chapter considers recruitment in the context of succession planning and the linkages between recruitment and succession planning. In examining recruitment and succession planning for library organizations, a systems thinking perspective is helpful. It has been suggested that “the tasks of human resources cannot be thought about independent

of one another” (Watson & Abzug, 2005, p. 626) and in many ways succession planning provides a structure for considering the interconnected parts of an organization’s human resources processes. Succession of individuals within the organization is inherently tied to other parts of the organizational systems for human resources. Recruitment, selection, and training and professional development, all precede succession in the organization. Failures in these initial phases will impair success in executing a plan for succession.

BACKGROUND

Overview

In recent years there has been growing attention to recruiting librarians, but much of this attention has been focused on recruiting into the profession of librarianship. The strong job market of the late 1990’s raised concerns about the ability of library organizations to fill positions as potential recruits found work in other related fields offering better pay. This resulted in efforts to publicize opportunities in the profession and to recruit into the library science masters degree programs. Perceived librarian shortages and concerns about attracting qualified individuals into the field have been the subject of much of the recruiting material in the library literature. As previously noted, the history and concerns of recruiting for the profession are distinguished from recruiting activities by individual librarian organizations and are considered separately.

More recently, library recruiting activities, and much of the library literature about

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