Chapter 8
Succession Planning and the Library:
The Strategic Plan

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ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on the strategic planning aspects of succession planning in libraries. The idea of succession planning needs to be included in the long-range plan. Strategic planning grows from a strong mission and vision and, in this case, implementing succession planning as a value. By employing some foresight in the development of policy, an environment supporting succession planning is created. Becoming part of the process and gaining a support network with resources are important aspects of this discussion. Assessment of the current situation and considering the structure of the library also come into play. Creating a strategic plan that involves succession planning is the goal.

INTRODUCTION

Succession planning becomes a viable reality through strategic planning. The road to succession planning involves becoming part of the process and developing policy in order to cultivate leadership in libraries for the future. Libraries have different issues due to variations in their structures. Professional acknowledgement and commitment are required along with certain characteristics and resources. The current situation must be analyzed and goals created. Who are the decision makers in your organization? By putting the idea of succes-

sion planning into place, employees can reap benefits of being part of the future plan and protect posts from elimination. The structure would promote loyalty and recognition. The objectives of this chapter are to acquire an understanding of the strategic planning process, learn to incorporate succession planning into the strategic plan, and discuss useful ideas to promote succession planning.

BACKGROUND

In "From Surviving to Thriving," Stoffle and Cuillier look at planning for the future in academic libraries: "It is our responsibility as the librarians and staff of today to work together to build the successful libraries of the future." They want to "enable the creation of library as service rather than library as collection." They realize that they "did not have the resources to continue traditional collection and processing activities" and needed to plan for change. They believe "the most important resource that any library has is its personnel" and in planning and budgeting, they needed to "align our strategic goals with the university's strategic plan." While this article is directed toward academic libraries, it can be applied to all types of libraries. They state their goals, realize their strengths and weaknesses and acknowledge being part of a larger organization.

According to Nixon's article *Growing Your Own Leaders: Succession Planning in Libraries*, "The basic steps of succession planning are: 1. Analyze the demographics of your key positions, 2. Identify potential employees for lead positions, 3. Assess candidate's strengths and weaknesses, and 4.Develop a training

program to build competencies." These four concepts can aid in structuring your strategic plan. To get a general idea of the age of key positions, the date of their undergraduate degree can be used. Perspectives on retirement are changing and while an employee may be considered ready for retirement by their institution; the employee often has a different perspective. Identifying potential employees for leadership can be done by supervisors, usually during review. Mentoring can be used to encourage the employee and afford the supervisor a leadership opportunity. Strengths and weaknesses can be addressed through reviews. If there is not an extensive training program, continuing education can be promoted by sponsoring conference attendance and rewarding library association involvement.

In *Succession Planning in the Library,* 21st century skills and trends are covered. Understanding core competencies for different libraries will be a helpful tool for planning. Among other things, "competencies provide clear guidelines as to what it takes for your library to be successful." Some trends are aging, due to the Baby Boomer population, diversity, shortage of workers, and loss of skills. The economic collapse of 2008 has changed the way people view their retirement and their future. New college graduates are lacking opportunity while people are staying in their jobs longer. In order to achieve a balanced approach to staffing, the age and experience of the staff and what they offer must be taken into consideration. Many new librarians may be tech savvy but not very experienced in creating a collection or working a Reference

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