

## Letters

To the Editor:

I should like to comment on H. W. Axford's editorial, "An Overlooked Cost of Achieving a Participatory Environment" (*CRL*, Jan. 1974, p.5-6). Mr. Axford points out that one of the costs to librarians in order for them to achieve "full faculty status and a larger role in the decisions which affect their professional lives" will be a raising of "the aspirations of many within the profession."

What are the aspirations? Presumably, librarians aspire to full faculty status, which implies, among other things, that they are willing to be judged by the same criteria as other faculty. But my observations suggest that many librarians have another aspiration: they want to be supervisors. These two aspirations are not necessarily incompatible but they can result in contradictory behavior patterns.

There is, I believe, a conflict of identities within many librarians, an internal conflict which results in ambivalent behavior by many individuals who are acting at the same time according to distinct and potentially antithetical models of conduct.

One model I call the industrial-business or boss-employee model. The boss-employee model of relationships poses a hierarchical relationship by which the boss is at the top issuing, through a "chain of communication," a series of dicta by which actions are to be conducted or "business" is to be carried on. All decisions are made by the boss and these decisions are to be carried out without question by the employee. This results in a dependency psychology among employees. They do not act; they only react. They rarely innovate or suggest innovations; they only follow boss-established precedents and conserve what has been. Their standards of conduct and job performance are not internal but are imposed

from without. They are judged by the boss according to qualitative but more often, quantitative criteria of productivity or other contributions to the good of the corporation or business. In their public and corporate lives they must be concerned with the public image of the firm, even though at times the private realities may conflict with the public image. The viability of the firm demands this kind of loyalty to the firm. For meeting the boss and marketplace definitions of satisfactory performance of duties they are rewarded or penalized. If they feel the rewards are too slight or their penalties too severe they may have recourse to union organization which, presumably, insures a more equitable distribution of rewards and protects the employee against penalties. To insure their economic well-being, then, they enter into an adversary relationship with the boss who, hopefully, will be more charitable with rewards and less prone to impose penalties.

I think the above boss-employee model outlined is a fair description of what actually applies in the corporate and business world. At its best, it works and produces a tensely harmonious and mutually rewarding relationship between boss and employee; at its worst, it breaks down, invoking a disruptive, adversary relationship between boss and employee.

I submit that the boss-employee model has been internalized by many librarians and has become a model for conduct so deeply internalized that the fact that it is a model can be determined only in its effects. Paradoxically, the individual guiding himself by this model acts at the same time or, at least, pays lip service to another model of behavior, the professional model. This professional model has been or ought to have been arrived at, first, by rigorous formal education, an education which as it

progresses or advances imposes common and eventually internalized criteria of personal and professional integrity, honesty when confronted with often unsettling truths or with data that challenges established conclusions, and an education which, hopefully, results in a professional who can meet his professional responsibilities with a minimum of or no supervision. He is autonomous; knowing what he has to do, he does it. Under ideal conditions, the neophyte professional enters his profession with an internalized, professional code of conduct. In his profession, his colleagues are not potential threats or competitors for the beneficence of the "boss"; rather, he and his colleagues are peers, mutually respectful each of the other as professionals, and the "boss" is simply another professional with a special demanding charge of supervising other professionals and the professional activity according to commonly recognized and accepted professional standards. If there is any "dependency" psychology resulting from the professional model, it is the dependency of the professional upon the professionally recognized standards of behavior, not upon criteria imposed by the boss according to the boss-employee model.

Many librarians have internalized both the boss-employee model and the professional model of standards, relationships, and conduct. These internalized models in one person can issue in ambivalent attitudes and conflicting conduct.

To achieve full faculty status, librarians will have to pay the cost. Part of that cost will be a rigorous self-examination by each librarian. "What," the librarian must ask himself, "do I really want to be? Employee or Professional?"

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To the Editor:

Mr. Edward Johnson's article "Applying 'Management by Objectives' to the University Library" (*CRL*, Nov. 1973) caught my attention, since the Oakland University Library, following University-wide MBO policy, is in the process of instituting such a program in all departments and faculty

committees. I have also devoted a great deal of time in investigating this topic as it was the basis of my MLS project and I am currently doing further research on it in my MBA studies.

The importance of sound objectives has been recognized for some time. Peter Drucker, writing in 1954, utilized objectives as the basis for a management system. Since then MBO has been embodied successfully and unsuccessfully in many organizations. Librarians, having witnessed the popularity of MBO for the past twenty years, are beginning to jump on the bandwagon, often without due regard to whether this program can be viable in their organizations. Administrators would do well in investigating the pitfalls of MBO before "experimenting" with it as Mr. Johnson suggests. MBO is not a panacea one can simply experiment with. It has to grow and develop over a period of time. The writing of meaningful objectives requires a great deal of thought and time. F. D. Barrett, president of Management Concepts, Ltd., states that management must realize that: "The time required to realize the full impact of MBO is not a matter of months but a few years."

The popularity of MBO is largely due to logical appeal, not proven correlation to managerial effectiveness in most cases. Dale D. McConkey, who is a Management faculty member at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, has been engaged in a study of MBO and its relationship to managerial effectiveness and hopes to publish the results this year. Librarians should become familiar with the reasons for failure of MBO that are cited by him in an article in *Business Horizons* (August 1973).

Twenty years of MBO practice have shown that this process is effective in organizations whose management is characterized by an open style that encourages participation but does not foster permissiveness. MBO is least effective in autocratic situations or bureaucratic organizations complicated by red tape, strict procedures and several levels of outside controls. (The latter power structure is unfortunately often the case with academic libraries.)

The key word in Management by Objectives is "Management" and not "Objectives." It is a method of managing and a

poorly implemented MBO can freeze a poor organizational design so that things will never improve.

Since Mr. Johnson only cites the reclassification project as an example of MBO, it is unclear whether his entire library actually exercises this process. What his article describes under the broad guise of MBO is going through the motions of setting objectives and performance procedures in one specific narrow area. It does not necessarily follow that the true MBO concept will effectively take hold throughout the organization. I want to caution colleagues who may be unfamiliar with the MBO process that a great deal more work is involved in instituting such a program and the procedures outlined by Mr. Johnson are deceptively easy and do not include many hours of hidden costs.

Success of MBO depends on a complete understanding of the program. Mr. Johnson's very limited citation of one source, although an excellent one, does not lead to a thorough investigation of the topic. I beg to differ with Mr. Johnson's concluding statement that "the attainment of a specific goal might prove less important than the capacity to measure, quantitatively and qualitatively, the factors contributing to the success or failure of an operation through management by objectives." The most important consideration in MBO is getting results or achieving objectives. I would hate to think that MBO is nothing but a sophisticated measuring tool for factors involved in failure! In fact, MBO was originated to contain the tendency of overemphasizing the measuring process at the expense of results.

Results-centered MBO is a natural for managing task-oriented departments such as Classifying and Cataloging but it is difficult to implement this system in such areas as Public Services, Education, and Reference. The output of the latter three is difficult to measure. Getting MBO to work in these areas is a matter of using a participative style of leadership and designing an appraisal system based on output. For an organization with the right kind of management philosophy, MBO holds promise of a bright future but "canned MBO" by itself can lead to planned failure.

Librarians might be further ahead inves-

tigating the newly emerging contingency or situational management theories which show indications of being more relevant to service and educational organizations. It is predicted that by 1980 this will be the path that leads management out of the existing jungle of theories. By 1980 task-oriented MBO might be as much on the wane for service institutions as McGregor's Theory X, and librarians might be wiser to act in conjunction with the future rather than reacting to past practices of businesses, but this is a discussion outside the scope of this letter.

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To the Editor:

Having played an adversary role in my last interaction with Beverly Lynch in this journal, I am pleased to be able to give general support to the thrust of her recent paper, "The Academic Library and Its Environment" (*CRL*, March 1974). Librarians are in great need of internalizing the concepts of the open system theory and applying them to library operations.

Her paper includes two matters which I feel compelled to criticize, however. One is her definition of an open system and the other is her description of the nature of my dissertation research.

Her paper infers a basic understanding of the open system except for the deletion of one critical element. She describes the open system in terms of acquisition of resources and energy from the environment, their transformation into products, and the export of the finished products or services back into the environment. The thrust of her argument seems to be that recognition of the organization's place within its environmental setting constitutes the basic character of an open system. Actually, the input-process-output sequence characterizes general systems theory. To get from there to the open system requires the addition of the concept that the output is exchanged in the environment for the inputs needed for reenergizing the system and that the value of the output is determined in the environment. This part of the cycle is easier to follow in the sale of automobiles than in

library service, which sometimes leads librarians to act in ways that harm themselves and their libraries.

My second criticism has to do with her characterization of my dissertation research as limited to the relationship between decision making process and staff satisfaction. I built my research model on the open system theory, which recognizes several organizational subsystems including maintenance and production. In doing so, I attempted to evaluate performance manifestations of these subsystems. Staff satisfaction is part of the maintenance subsystem and is internal to the organization, as indicated by Mrs. Lynch. But I also measured faculty evaluation of the library as a production measurement. Moreover, it measures the value of the library from the perception of a vital environmental unit. The pattern of statistical interrelationships was such that I inferred a possible indirect effect of managerial style and its decision making process on the quality of the library. Staff job satisfaction was related to both of these and in such a pattern as to suggest that participative management creates high job satisfaction among the staff, which in turn is associated with a pattern of performance that the faculty perceives as of high quality.

This is a simplistic statement of my research, however, which included the measurement of many other factors that were thought to have potential effect on library quality. Three of them came from outside of the library and therefore reflect the environmental forces Mrs. Lynch feels should be dealt with. These are (1) library autonomy, which is a measure of freedom delegated to the library to make decisions important to its operation, (2) the number of doctoral degrees granted by the university to which the library is attached, as a measure of graduate education and research which the library must respond to, and (3) perquisites granted to professional librarians, which almost always are determined beyond the library. Each of these had interesting relationships with intralibrary factors. For example, the number of doctoral degrees granted is highly related to the physical decentralization of the library collection which in turn is an important pre-

dictor of professional staff size. Autonomy appeared to be a rather important concept, but there was some evidence that it comes in two diverse packages. This matter was not explored in depth in the dissertation but has been examined further for a publication now under way. There appear to be two patterns by which decision making is delegated to university libraries, and they tend to be mutually exclusive. The overall autonomy granted a library might be less important than the delegation of control over key matters.

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To the Editor:

O fortunate Worcester—Heart of the Commonwealth—is number one in library resources. Extrapolating from Table I of Robert B. Downs' article "Library Resources in the United States" (*CRL*, March 1974), which lists "Library Centers of Not Over 50 Miles Radius (Airline) . . ." we have:

Boston	30,467,291
Lowell	2,020,728
Springfield	5,729,951
Worcester	3,809,191
Providence	7,262,748
Storrs	1,173,821

for a combined total of 50,463,730 volumes. This puts Worcester 3,337,812 volumes ahead of erstwhile first-place New York City.

Can one say more, except perhaps to recall Mark Twain's observation (variously attributed to Disraeli, Labouchère, Hewitt, or Frost) "There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics." This *caveat* applies of course to the above manipulation of figures, and not to Mr. Downs' compilation.

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