
Introduction

RICHARD RUBIN

PEOPLE RUN LIBRARIES; they provide the essential services, process the materials, prepare the budgets, and establish the policies and practices that shape the institution. This is not always recognized by a public that often perceives the library as a place for collections of books. Certainly, an important aspect of any library is an array of objects that contribute to library service: the media, physical facilities, and electronic technologies. But a human being is responsible for combining these elements into effective library service, and failures in library service are often failures to deal appropriately with human issues. Perhaps someday the wholly electronic library will make people unnecessary. But today the proliferation of library technologies has highlighted rather than diminished the vital role that people play in the changing library environment. The purpose of the 29th Allerton Conference was to identify and discuss some of these issues, and to provide a forum for exchange of ideas on critical issues in personnel management.

Managing personnel is an especially difficult task because the reasons people act as they do are varied and often opaque. The library manager, whose training emphasizes librarianship more than management, is forced to operate in this difficult environment with few guidelines. What motivates staff members? Martin Maehr, from the University of Illinois, addresses this issue in the general context of worker motivation. Similarly, Charles Martell explores the necessary conditions for high achievement in the library workplace. In each of these articles, the emphasis is on library workers as people. The articles are a recognition of the importance of human needs and the implicit potential of greater productivity in their fulfillment.

As the library environment becomes more and more complex, greater demands for flexibility are placed on a library manager and staff. Confronting this problem, Shay Baker offers some fruitful observations on managing resistance to change. Failure to deal with the human aspects of the workplace can have serious and negative consequences; one of these consequences is stress. Charles Bunge, professor of Library and Information Science, explores the role of stress in the workplace.

Although understanding the psychosocial aspects of a library worker is vital, the mechanics of personnel management also constitute a major concern for library managers. Kathleen Heim explores the topic of entry-level recruitment of employees in libraries based on the complex labor pool. It has become clear in today's litigious labor climate that what you do may be less important than how you do it. To this end, Anne Lipow examines the subject of training library staff. It is also necessary to deal effectively with the employee who has decided to leave for one reason or another. James Neal reviews key considerations in conducting the exit interview.

Organizational issues involving personnel must also be explored. Without doubt, collective bargaining has become a prominent issue in the minds of many managers. Norman Holman offers a perspective on bargaining in a public library. Of equal importance are issues concerning wage and salary administration. In an era of "comparable worth," the manner in which we value our jobs and compensate our employees is subject to considerable scrutiny and legal liability. Frederick Duda reviews some of the major points for academic librarians, while Christopher Bowen reviews a technique for wage and salary setting in a public library. The subject of job evaluation naturally leads to the subject of evaluating people in their jobs—performance evaluation. In this regard, Lucy Cohen offers suggestions for creating and conducting performance reviews.

Given the number of issues explored at the 29th Allerton Conference, obtaining perspective on many of the challenges of personnel is difficult. In a synthesis and summary of the Conference, Peggy Sullivan offers some guidance through a maze of issues that confront a personnel manager. Attempting to deal with the myriad issues of personnel management in one place, at one time, is, of course, doomed to superficiality in regard to any one topic. But this discourse is essential if managers are to confront, control, and deal with a fundamental force in libraries—the human being.