

# 1

## Context and challenges in leadership

### **Learning objectives**

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- ☑ appreciate the need for leadership within library and information services
- ☑ understand the relationship between management and leadership
- ☑ engage in the debate about the link between leadership and change
- ☑ engage in the debate surrounding the state of leadership within the library and information profession
- ☑ understand the underpinning philosophy of this book and how the different chapters and elements interconnect
- ☑ begin to consider the approaches and challenges to 'self leadership' and managing yourself.

### **Introduction**

This chapter provides orientation both to the book and to the concept and challenges of leadership. It will discuss issues such as the importance of leadership for information services of all types, provide an overview of the key theories surrounding the relationship between management and leadership,

and explore the link between leadership and the imperative for change within organizations. The chapter then discusses the challenges for leadership within library and information services across the sectors and globally, drawing on theory, literature and practice, with illustrative scenarios. The next section provides an insight into the underpinning philosophy of this book and our approach to considering leadership for 21st-century information services; this signposts themes in future chapters and interlinks topics in a holistic way. Finally, the chapter highlights the critical importance of ‘self-leadership’, which is a recurrent theme. We hope this will initiate or strengthen the self-reflection that is required by all leaders at whatever stage of their career and personal and professional development.

### **Why leadership?**

In *Managing Information Services* (Roberts and Rowley, 2004) we explored leadership briefly as one aspect of a chapter called ‘Management and leadership’. We rapidly realized that leadership as a concept – the theories, myths and practices surrounding it – was fundamental to the present and future development of library and information services across all sectors and all nations. Handy (1993, 96) asks provocatively and ironically, ‘Surely a group of intelligent, well-meaning individuals can tackle any problem without the need for a leader?’, yet history, research and our own experiences dispute this assumption!

This obsession with leadership pervades all aspects of our lives. Writers on the current state of leadership globally have identified a ‘crisis’ in leadership at the level of politics and society as well as within organizations (Bennis and Nanus, 1997; Taffinder, 1995). There is a cynicism and scepticism towards political and business leaders that appears to have accelerated as the world becomes more unstable and as change becomes increasingly rapid. As a consequence, ‘Try as they might to influence their economies or to engineer change in society, political leaders must know that their capacity to do so is very limited’ (Taffinder, 1995, 19), and so they must take on a different role from past leaders who lived and worked in a context of greater certainty.

Over the past decade, writers have bemoaned the ‘death of leadership’, asking ‘Has leadership failed? Or worse, is it simply absent?’ (Walsh, 1994,

24). As Bennis and Nanus (1997, 1) lament, ‘Everybody agrees that there is less of it than there used to be.’ Moreover, the vast number of theoretical books and self-help books on leadership and its development (and their popularity!) demonstrate that there is still a very real need for leadership in society and organizations. This becomes even more significant when we consider the ‘megatrends’ that we will experience during our personal and working lives. Naisbitt (Bennis and Nanus, 1997) presents these changes as a paradigm shift, represented in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1** Naisbitt’s megatrends (from Bennis and Nanus, 1997)

<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>
Industrial society	Information society
Forced technology	High tech/high touch
National economy	World economy
Short term	Long term
Centralization	Decentralization
Institutional help	Self-help
Representative democracy	Participatory democracy
Hierarchies	Networking
North	South
Either/Or	Multiple options

We can all identify with different aspects of these trends, for example the reality of working in a world economy with global repercussions rather than on a local scale. All of these trends can also be interpreted from a library and information services perspective and this will be further explored later in this chapter.

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**REFLECTION** Consider the trends in Table 1.1 and their impact on your life. Are there any that are particularly relevant to you?

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The literature gives us the impression that society needs leaders to help steer us through challenges and uncertainties, and to provide direction and meaning. If leadership is seen to be missing from 21st-century society, and if the current challenges are so great, what do we actually need and want from our leaders? Consideration of this question clarifies why leadership is so important and can be so powerful within organizations and contributes to the discussion of the

#### 4 LEADERSHIP: THE CHALLENGE FOR THE INFORMATION PROFESSION

nature of leadership and leaders. Kouzes and Posner (2003) investigated the expectations that ‘followers’ have of leaders and developed a table charting the characteristics of superior leaders. This is represented in Table 1.2.

**Table 1.2** Characteristics of superior leaders (Kouzes and Posner, 2003)

<b>Characteristics (in ranked order)</b>	<b>Percentage of managers selecting (from 2,615)</b>
Honest	83
Competent	67
Forward-looking	62
Inspiring	58
Intelligent	43
Fair-minded	40
Broad-minded	37
Straightforward	34
Imaginative	34
Dependable	33
Supportive	32
Courageous	27
Caring	26
Co-operative	25
Mature	23
Ambitious	21
Determined	20
Self-controlled	13
Loyal	11
Independent	10

From Table 1.2 the characteristics of superior leaders can be identified as honesty, competency, and being forward thinking (visionary) and inspiring – a mix of personal attributes and values, and specific skills. Another view of what ‘followers’ want from their leaders from Goffee and Jones (2001) can be summarized as: significance (to feel valued), community (to feel part of something) and excitement (to feel challenged). Both views emphasize that leadership is a very personal thing and is based on relationships between people.

Finally, to the questions ‘Why leadership?’ and ‘What do people want from leaders?’ we should also add, ‘What is effective leadership?’ To illustrate the importance of effectiveness we need only look at where leadership has transformed an organization or inspired a group of people to do extraordinary things and conversely where it has had a negative impact. At this stage, we would simply point out that effective leaders are involved in:

- ◆ creating, sharing and communicating vision
- ◆ shaping culture
- ◆ developing the potential of others
- ◆ connecting with people and building successful relationships
- ◆ taking a holistic and wider perspective.

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**REFLECTION** Think about a positive experience you have had of a boss or colleague providing leadership. What did they do that had such a positive impact?

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## **The relationship between leadership and management**

It is important to contextualize approaches to leadership and its development within the current theory and thinking on leadership and management, particularly as there is often confusion between the two. The study of leadership is a relatively recent discipline and writers have discussed and argued extensively over the distinction between leadership and management. Most agree that there *is* a distinction, summarized by us (Roberts and Rowley, 2004) as:

Managers – internally focused, will complete the task; operators, problem-solvers

Leaders – externally focused, have vision; strategists, catalysts, looking to the future

Management – concerned with what people with responsibility for others actually *do*

Leadership – ability of people to *influence* others towards achievement of goals

Such distinctions are felt by some people to be unhelpful, as they can be viewed as portraying leadership as positive and management as negative. In addition, some authors view the two concepts and roles as mutually exclusive – one person cannot be both as they have incompatible values. However, Yukl (2002) argues convincingly that, although management and leadership are distinct processes, and people can lead without being a manager and can manage without being a leader, they are interlinked, as leadership is an essential management role that pervades other roles. Writers also stress the value of effective management and feel strongly that it should not be denigrated as a function. It is useful to consider the *scope of leadership processes*, which highlight the extent of influence that leadership can have. This can be summarized (Yukl, 2002, 7) in terms of a leader's sphere of influence over:

- ◆ the interpretation of external events by members
- ◆ the choice of objectives and strategies to pursue
- ◆ the motivation of members to achieve the objectives
- ◆ the mutual trust and co-operation of members
- ◆ the organization of work activities
- ◆ the development of member skills and confidence
- ◆ the learning and sharing of new knowledge by members
- ◆ the enlistment of support and co-operation from outsiders.

It is important to stress that leadership is complex. To get to grips with it and reflect on our own leadership abilities and potential – and those of others – we must not simply look at the characteristics and actions of the individual but consider it within the context of organizations and in particular what organizations require in terms of leadership at different stages in their development. For example, during a financial crisis, an organization may require directional and strong leadership; but during a period of rapid change and growth, a leader may need to encourage participation and empowerment among their staff. As Taffinder (1995, 38) summarizes, 'It means that it is part of the wider environment of business.' This is explored in considerable detail throughout this book with specific contextual examples provided, particularly in Chapter 3, 'Leadership in context'.

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**REFLECTION** Can you think of different instances and contexts when leaders behaved in different ways? Can you see why they took different approaches?

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## **Conceptions of 21st-century leadership**

The whole of this book centres around exploring conceptions of leadership and how they can be applied within the 21st-century information management context. As Chapter 2 illustrates, there are multiple theories of leadership traits and styles that can be adopted, adapted or rejected. In this contextualizing chapter, it is important to stress that leadership is ‘slippery’, meaning different things to different people, and must be viewed flexibly. This sense of *adaptive* leadership pervades the book and is itself a feature of current notions on leadership.

It may be useful to consider briefly at this point *How do we conceive of 21st-century leadership?* There remain tensions in modern concepts of leadership with the ‘new leader’ still seen as a visionary, charismatic individual, seemingly at odds with the concept of the ‘superleader’ who aims to develop leadership at all levels of the organization. Authors are certainly now more critical of the ‘larger than life’ leader who leads from the front, seeing effective leadership as a process created by an individual (the ‘learning leader’) rather than dependent on their personal qualities (Hooper and Potter, 2001). There is a definite de-emphasis of control in new leadership models, revealing a shift towards participative management and distributed leadership where staff at all levels are empowered in their roles.

## **Leadership and change**

Many authors make the intrinsic link between leadership and change; this is evident in the generic leadership literature and more specifically in information services literature – ‘There is no doubt that all activity towards change and transformation of services always refers to the importance of good and strong leadership’ (Gent and Kempster, 2002, 53). Moreover, it is recognized that the ‘task of leading such services has changed beyond recognition’ (Corrall, introduction to Parsons, 2004), with constant change the norm rather than the exception.

Chapter 4 explores in detail the role of leadership in promoting change,

innovation and creativity within a dynamic environment. At this stage we would like to stress that we agree with Hooper and Potter (2001, 6), who see leadership as all about ‘the increasing challenge of change’. Consequently effective leaders have to ‘thrive on chaos’ and move from the ‘comfortable’ to the ‘uncomfortable.’ Kouzes and Posner (2003) also support this view, arguing that an effective leader must challenge the status quo, seek out opportunities and constantly look to engender a climate that embraces change.

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**REFLECTION** How easy is it to ‘thrive on chaos’? How could you prepare yourself for this?

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### **Leadership in library and information services**

As highlighted in the introduction to this book, both public and academic library sectors are concerned with leadership, and particularly succession planning for the future. There is also a suggestion in the literature that senior library staff are not necessarily always ready for leadership. In the public library sector, research undertaken by Mullins (2005) into the perceptions of senior managers indicates an apparent lack of understanding of the distinction between management and leadership. Moreover, he concludes that leadership qualities are scarce, with senior managers focusing too much on ‘library’ skills and not enough on leadership. Both Mullins (2005) and O’Connor (2007) suggest that the library and information profession has been too ‘narrow’, too focused on ‘the ordinary and the mundane’, and that staff need to consider the intelligences that they require to pursue their work and lives, and to succeed as leaders. Consequently, if there is to be significant change in perceptions on library leadership and the attributes and behaviours needed for the future, we will require a ‘mental shift’.

A project undertaken in UK higher education institutions, led by Birmingham University, explored recruitment, training and succession planning issues for heads of information services. Challenges identified included obstacles to recruitment, skills gaps, training and development needs, the increased pace of change for managers and the increase in hybrid roles that encompassed diverse services, not simply libraries. The key management skills found to be lacking were:

- ◆ strategic management and leadership
- ◆ ability to manage change
- ◆ customer focus-orientation.

It should also be stressed that leadership is a concern right across library organizations, required in all levels and functions, as ‘the development of leadership throughout the organization is the only way to succeed’ (Gent and Kempster, 2002). Eastell (2003) also highlights this non-hierarchical approach in a public library context, ‘It’s much less about finding the next head of library service and far more about finding ways of offering library staff at all levels the opportunity to demonstrate and develop their leadership skills.’

Succession planning for leadership is also a key concern as highlighted by Noon (2004). There is an implicit sense in some authors’ work that library and information professionals are reluctant to become leaders, not seeing this as their domain but rather preferring to focus on ‘professional’ library issues. O’Connor (2007) has even made the contentious suggestion that perhaps professional librarians are not the best people to act as leaders within their profession because they potentially lack a wider, strategic view and the necessary skills and perspective. There are examples of individuals from outside the library profession being recruited to leadership positions, for example corporate IT directors who have been recruited to lead converged IT and library services in the academic sector.

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**REFLECTION** What would be the advantages and disadvantages of having leaders who did not have a library and information background?

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This brief review of the literature appears to indicate that the nurturing of leadership potential within the library and information profession is a key priority globally, nationally and locally. Consequently, we can conclude that the leadership shortage and the lack of confidence in leaders in library and information services is very real.

## The challenges for leaders in information services

As highlighted earlier in this chapter, we are in the midst of a period of rapid and disruptive change. These broad societal trends are evident in the changes and challenges facing library and information services. The information landscape is changing beyond all recognition as a result of these broader trends, which require a change in thinking in terms of the role of libraries. Eric von Hippel (2006) captures one aspect of this – the shift of power to the user:

When I say that innovation is being democratised, I mean that users of products and services – both firms and individuals – are increasingly able to innovate for themselves . . . Users that innovate can develop exactly what they want, rather than relying on manufacturers to act as their (often very imperfect) agents. Moreover, individual users do not have to develop everything they need on their own: they can benefit from innovations developed and freely shared by others.

Taking von Hippel’s vision – and the views of other forecasters – libraries must consider what this shift of power, control and authority means for them.

An additional challenge is the sense of an unknown and fragmented future. As O’Connor states, ‘The future is often not continuous with or in a linear relationship to the present or the past. We do not have only one future; we have many and we are, in our personal lives, constantly choosing between them. Organisations are the same; they are not what they were; they will not be the same into the future’ (2007, 69).

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**REFLECTION** Can you identify several key challenges facing a library service that you know well?

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Given the context outlined here, the challenges facing leaders in the 21st-century library and information sector could appear overwhelming. From the perspective of senior leaders who are managing large and complex library and information services, the difficulties, from the strategic to the detailed and day-to-day, can be summarized as:

- ◆ lack of adequate resources and staffing levels
- ◆ the amount of bureaucracy, regulation and administration
- ◆ lack of continuity
- ◆ time pressures related to workload
- ◆ poor organizational communication
- ◆ perception of the library within the wider organization
- ◆ self-doubt and lack of self-confidence
- ◆ negative cultures
- ◆ speed of change and the amount of ‘unknowns’
- ◆ lack of strategic drive and vision.

(After Mullins’ research into public library leaders, 2005).

The focus in the library literature does appear to be on the negative aspects of leadership – the barriers to progress, the professional and personal difficulties. Turning this on its head, what could be identified as the positives that would motivate leaders and aspiring leaders? We would summarize these as:

- ◆ the ability to influence people and organizations
- ◆ the potential to make a difference
- ◆ self-development – stretching yourself and testing your skills and abilities in a challenging context
- ◆ inspiring other staff and seeing them develop
- ◆ developing services that users really want and need
- ◆ personal satisfaction.

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**REFLECTION** What other disadvantages and advantages do you see for leaders working within a context characterized by continuous change?

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In assessing the challenges for leaders of information services, it is useful to consider some of the more recent challenges facing different sectors and types of services. It is also important to consider how leadership, at all levels, can contribute to overcoming such challenges and what kind of leadership individuals can provide (both in terms of management and non-management positions). This is depicted in Table 1.3.

**Table 1.3** Examples of recent challenges and possible leadership roles

<b>Type of library and information service</b>	<b>Nature of challenge scenario</b>	<b>Leadership</b>
Public library	Introduction by public library authority of service standards that at first sight appear bureaucratic and impossible to achieve	Head of Library Service – outline why they must address the standards  Customer services staff – champion the service standards Library assistants – think about how to promote them to customers and how to communicate
Academic library	Development of e-learning by the university; the library is not viewed as a partner in this and appears to be being bypassed	Subject liaison librarians – discuss how they could contribute with the departments they liaise with  Academic support manager – develops a policy around how they will support e-learning and raises this at departmental meetings
Health service library	Implementation of new role review scheme and pay model that makes staff feel very insecure and concerned about the future	Manager with responsibility for HR issues – provides briefings for staff to demystify the scheme  Library assistants – first staff to go through the scheme speak positively to colleagues about the process and the outcomes
Branch library	Rationalization of services as a result of budget cuts may result in the branch closing	Head of library service – goes to meet staff at the branch regularly to discuss their concerns and ensure they are fully involved in the decision-making process  Team at the branch library (at all levels) – suggest alternative ways forward

It is clear that leadership is not necessarily always aligned to the management hierarchy and nor should it be. Leadership is not the realm of the most senior staff nor the most experienced, nor the youngest, who are often viewed as the

most innovative. The aim is to cultivate leadership at all levels and to recognize it in all types of individuals and roles.

A final challenge for leadership has been described by Yukl (2002) as ‘ethical leadership’, the sense of moral duty and leadership with a ‘higher purpose’. This relates directly to a leader’s values and integrity, strongly emphasized by Hooper and Potter (2001) as fundamental to leading in a changing environment. Leaders with a strong ethical driver would therefore consider issues such as equity (in access to services for their customers), inclusion (involving all levels and types of staff in decision-making) and impact (the effect of decisions on stakeholders or the environment).

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**REFLECTION** Give some examples of how a strong ethical stance might influence leadership behaviour.

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## **Self-leadership and management**

Given that the challenge of leadership is described as like the ‘quest for the holy grail’ (Handy, 1993, 97), how can we as individuals improve and develop our leadership abilities at all stages of our career? Although this is covered in detail in Chapter 2, ‘Knowing Yourself as a Leader’, and Chapter 7, ‘Leadership Development’, we will consider at this point the ‘self’ as part of the leadership challenge. The first step is self-reflection, looking to yourself and your own experience, not simply books and theories! ‘Look back upon your own experience. You have been both a leader and led by others. What do you think makes a person a leader?’ (Adair, 2003, 7). It is hoped that with self-reflection comes self-awareness and self-knowledge, viewed by many current theorists and leadership development authors as the key to unlocking leadership potential and understanding your impact on others.

### **Can everyone be a leader?**

There are two schools of thought with regard to this tricky question. One argues that everyone has leadership potential; this can be nurtured and can come with self-analysis but does also depend on the context within which an individual is working. As stated throughout this book, leadership is not simply something that ‘senior managers do’ but should be evident through all

levels of an organization and also in someone's personal life. Others argue that not everyone can become a leader and that the transition from manager to leader is neither automatic nor easy:

Most managers, with or without self-analysis, never cross the gulf. I have no truck with organizations which claim that everyone in them is a leader. The vast majority of staff and managers do not lead; call them leaders if you like, but don't expect them to lead. They won't. They can't. (Taffinder, 1995, 42)

The other question to consider is whether you *want* to be a leader, whether you have the desire or the potential. This book aims to provide theories, frameworks, practical examples and inspiration to help develop that potential but it is worth reflecting on whether this is the challenge you wish to take. Taffinder (1995) again provides an extensive questionnaire to help us consider this; we have adapted and summarized it in Figure 1.1.

<p><b>1. Imposing context</b> Can you stand outside your own organization and see it as it really is? Do you understand the context of your business and organization? Have you articulated the core of what matters to your business, what you stand for?</p> <p><b>2. Risk making, risk taking</b> Are you serving the future of your organization or merely guarding its past? Are you willing to make mistakes and take the consequences? Do you actively take risks by seeking opportunities?</p> <p><b>3. Unpredictability</b> Are you prepared to experiment? Do you create adventure in your organization?</p> <p><b>4. Conviction</b> Do you believe in yourself? Are your opinions your own or someone else's? Do you thoroughly believe in what you are doing in your organization?</p> <p><b>5. Generating critical mass</b> Can you make what you believe in happen? Can/have you convince(d) people of the urgency of the need to change, to grab opportunities?</p>
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**Figure 1.1** Leadership questionnaire

Drucker (2005) asks other questions to help us to 'build a life of excellence': these can be summarized as:

- 1 What are my strengths?
- 2 How do I work?
- 3 What are my values?
- 4 Where do I belong?
- 5 What can I contribute?

With all of these questions it is crucial to ask for feedback from colleagues, friends and family in order to build up a complete and (hopefully) as truthful as possible a picture. This type of exercise has also been presented as the ‘reflective best self’ (Roberts et al., 2005), which helps individuals both know themselves and play to their strengths. Taylor (2002, 23) goes further to suggest that there is actually a formula for success in leadership at whatever stage of our lives and careers:

- 1 Know where you want to go – dream bigger dreams, and know when they have been achieved.
- 2 Know where you are now – take ownership of your life, and be honest about where you are.
- 3 Know what you have to do, to get where you want to go – widen your choices, and make true decisions, closing off all other options.
- 4 Do it! – with a persistent action – persistence is incompatible with failure.

Chapter 2 takes this theme of self-awareness and leadership styles and explores them in much more detail and with many more theoretical models.

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**REFLECTION** Apply Taylor’s four-point formula to where you are currently in you career and your life. How useful is it?

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## **The philosophy of this book**

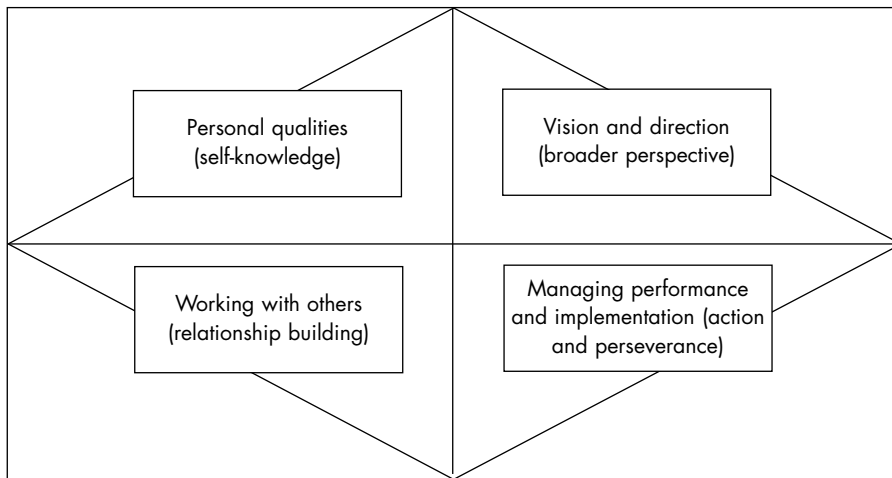
We hope that by now the philosophy of this book is beginning to emerge and make sense to you. We would summarize it as follows:

- ◆ Leadership should be carried out at all levels in an organization – it is not the domain of senior staff only; individuals should consider what

leadership role they can play at any level to influence practice.

- ◆ There is no one best form of leadership for library and information services – leadership needs to be adaptive, flexible and context specific.
- ◆ Theory and practice must go together and leaders must engage in both – this is the basic approach of this book.
- ◆ Learning must be at the heart of what we do and we must spend time on leadership development from the start of our careers and at whatever stage we are at – at whatever level, leaders should be striving to improve practice and to learn from others.
- ◆ We must think about how individuals can improve, develop and deploy their leadership abilities – this requires a commitment from all individuals to their own development.

Figure 1.2 summarizes the key elements of leadership as discussed in this book. We introduce this simple model because it provides a useful benchmark against which to measure the scope and emphasis of some of the theories of leadership and leadership development that are discussed later in the book. The model emphasizes the fundamental importance of people and relationships at all levels, a view that will be built on throughout this book.



**Figure 1.2** Roberts and Rowley's leadership diamond

## Summary and conclusions

This chapter has considered the leadership challenge in the 21st century from a broad perspective and then narrowed down to consider the specific challenges for library and information professionals. These challenges are very real and raise questions about the future of the profession if leadership is not seen as central to library and information services staff roles and future development. This chapter has also explored several topics briefly that will be explored in detail throughout this book, for example knowing yourself as a leader, influencing change, and leadership at all levels. It has also attempted to define leadership and its relationship to management.

To conclude, the leadership journey we each undertake is a personal one and we must consider leadership in different ways at different points in our career and life. Taylor (2002, 16) represents this as seven journeys – leadership of:

- ◆ self
- ◆ people
- ◆ teams
- ◆ company
- ◆ culture
- ◆ skills
- ◆ career.

This book touches on all of these journeys and provides in-depth insight into theories and practice to enable library and information professionals to reflect on where they are and what tools they should use to support their leadership behaviour and development.

### Review questions

- 1** Why is leadership so important to society in general and to the library and information profession specifically?
- 2** What are the top five characteristics of leaders that ‘followers’ have identified?
- 3** How would you define the relationship between management and leadership?

- 4** Is leadership something that comes only with senior management roles?
- 5** How would you summarize the difficulties associated with being a senior leader in library and information services?
- 6** Why is self-awareness seen as so key to successful leadership?

### **Challenges**

- 1** Why are we (in the 21st century) obsessed with leadership and its development?
- 2** Has there been a failure of leadership in society?
- 3** What does an effective leader do?
- 4** Why are conceptions of leadership so slippery and contested?
- 5** Are the challenges for leadership within the library and information services common across all sectors?
- 6** How can self-awareness be cultivated to support effective leadership development and behaviours?

### **Case study interview with Julia Glynn, Librarian and Technology Consultant, Kenyon College, Ohio, USA**

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#### **Biography**

Julia Glynn currently works at Kenyon College (Gambier, Ohio, USA) as a librarian and technology consultant, and co-manager of Helpline. Librarian and technology consultants are unique in the library and information science profession. She manages collection development for assigned academic departments, provides reference services, teaches bibliographic and technology instruction sessions, and provides desktop computing and instructional technology support. As the co-manager of Helpline, Julia oversees the day-to-day running of the desk and manages 20+ student employees. In 2003, Julia graduated with a MS (Master of Science degree) from the University of Illinois' Graduate School of Library and Information Science. She is active in the American Library Association's (ALA's) Intellectual Freedom Round Table, ALA's International Relations Round Table and the Academic Library Association of Ohio.

**1 What do you think the major challenges are for the library and information sectors?**

Many experienced librarians and library administrators will soon reach retirement age, so the library and information science profession needs to be sure there are enough qualified librarians to fill in these potential employment gaps. Information technology is progressing at a rapid rate and communication methods are quickly evolving, therefore we need to be sure that librarians are properly trained to use, manage and train others to use these new and changing technologies effectively. Multicultural awareness is important as our local communities expand in size and diversity. Library administrators must be smart about purchases as budgets get tighter and costs of materials (print and electronic) increase.

**2 What role does leadership have in addressing these challenges?**

Current leaders need to be sure that the future leaders are properly trained over the next few decades. Without effective leaders, the profession will flounder as these challenges grow and new challenges develop.

**3 How would you describe the difficulties of being a leader (from your own experiences)?**

Being a leader is a complex and demanding responsibility. And at certain moments it can be frightening! Even if you don't realize it, someone may be watching to see how you react to a situation. You are a role model whether you want to be one or not. I know that as a manager of my library's computer help desk, my actions reflect not only on me but on everyone who works at the library and the service point. If I lose my cool during a tense interaction with a patron, not only will I lose the respect of my employees, I may also ruin the good reputation of the help desk.

**4 How would you describe the benefits?**

The best part about leadership is the ability to implement ideas and watch them grow into successful policies. As a relatively new service point manager, I am steadily gaining confidence in how best to run the computer help desk. In the past year, my co-manager and I have created two new positions for experienced student employees who want a higher level of responsibility and redesigned the training process for new student employees. The successes of these ideas encourages me to develop new ones.

**5 At what point in your career did you feel, 'I am a leader'?**

I'm not sure that I am at the point in my career where I would describe myself as a leader. There are moments when I recognize that colleagues look to me for advice or assistance not because I am a leader but because they see me as more experienced or knowledgeable.

I do feel that I am on my way to being a leader, but someone who still needs to gain more confidence. I have learned to recognize important leadership skills and I work to develop these skills. For example, I am a reluctant public speaker but being an effective communicator is an important skill to have so I continue to place myself in situations which require me to speak to groups of people. Although I still get very nervous, I can feel the improvement in my public speaking skills, and the more I continue to give presentations, the better communicator I will become.

**6 What is your approach to 'self-management and leadership'?**

My current organization has a flat management hierarchy. Flat organizations tend to have few levels of management between staff and managers, allowing for a workplace atmosphere which allows staff to have a greater level of input in making decisions. In Kenyon's Library and Information Services, this means that we have one vice-president, four directors and then everyone else. By having only a few managers and administrators, this allows everyone the opportunity to be leaders in a variety of areas. Anyone can be a leader for an internal organizational team or choose to run a project on one's own. We are encouraged to be self-managers. No one stands over our shoulders and tells us what to do.

Our flat organization has allowed me the opportunity to try different professional roles and activities. I enjoy this freedom. It can be difficult at first to self-manage. Once I realized the potential of being able to do almost anything within reason, I also realized that I need to manage my time responsibly otherwise I would overwhelm myself and never finish any projects.

**7 What does leadership mean to you?**

This is a tough question. A leader is not necessarily a manager or an administrator, but rather someone whom colleagues gravitate towards out of professional respect. Some people aim to be leaders, others have the role thrust upon them by other people.

My ideal leader is someone who is professionally accomplished, trustworthy, self-aware but also able to see the world through the eyes of others, and a 'big picture' thinker.

## References and additional reading

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