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# Introduction

This book is an introductory textbook on information services management. It draws together in an accessible form the principles of management as they need to be understood by library and information professionals. The text is not a substitute for reading on general management, but supplements it by reviewing well established management concepts and practices from the perspective of the management of public libraries, academic libraries and other information services. Examples from this context are used throughout.

Written by a team that comprises a management academic and a practising information services manager, the text introduces and applies established management concepts and models to information service management practice. The book's underpinning philosophy is that theory and practice should be tightly intertwined. Theoretical models and concepts have their foundations in practice. The applications of theories and concepts can assist in sense making, communication, sharing and analysis. They can act as frameworks for the articulation and sharing of best practice and promote shared learning. Such application of theory in its turn advances and develops theory to allow it to accommodate a wider variety of contexts, and to evolve in line with practice.

Since most library and information services are part of a wider organization, their management practice will be influenced by that organizational setting, whether the setting is a university, a local authority or a business organization. Responding effectively within this organizational context is a key theme that runs through this text. Library management is concerned with managing people, services, information, collections and resources, and finance, but managers also need to work beyond the confines of the library. They need to understand and influence their environment, to respond to the power and politics of a situation, to contribute to strategic direction in arenas related to knowledge management, learning and information, and to promote their own careers. In a changing environment, they need to be clear about the contribution that information services can make.

Library and information services in the 21st century face a number of

challenges. Managing digital resources and achieving a balance between the access and archive functions is a key issue for all information service managers. A library and information service is no longer delivered only through the library building and issue desk, and users and staff may be remote. In extreme examples the library is entirely virtual but the more common dilemma facing most library managers is the hybrid library, with its blended multi-channel information service delivery. In addition to this erosion of the importance of physical presence, functional boundaries between information professionals and other groups are being eroded. In universities, teamworking with academics in the design and delivery of learning experiences promotes library professionals' understanding of pedagogy and academics' understanding of information retrieval and the use of digital information resources. Economic and political agendas associated with digital citizenship, social inclusion and learning in the information society provide strong drivers for change. Information service managers need a positive and flexible engagement with change. They need to inspire and challenge their staff and others in their organizations to think creatively about the importance of information management. This is the background against which this text is written.

The scene is set through the first two chapters, on information organizations and management and leadership. Chapter 1 is an introduction to both the range and role of information organizations. More importantly for those whose experience of these organizations is limited it explores the complexity, diversity and the networked and global nature of such organizations, and how their roles are changing in increasingly digital environments. Chapter 2 explores the nature of management, managing and leadership, through an exploration of management roles, and how individuals can develop into ever more effective leaders and managers.

The next two chapters are about people, or staff in information services. Staff motivation, competences, attitudes and the way in which they are managed have a big impact on the quality of the information service delivered to users. Chapter 3 examines people in organizations, covering both the factors that affect, for example, motivation, job satisfaction and teamworking, and also the management of such issues. Sections covering mentoring and coaching, managing conflict and managing stress introduce perspectives on how people can be supported, challenged and developed to be successful for themselves and for the information service. Chapter 4 looks at the contractual aspects of staff management. Working within parameters and guidelines established by the wider organization, the information service manager will need to engage in human resource planning, job

design, recruitment and selection of staff, appraisal, and training and development.

The next two chapters are united by their focus on customers. The customer orientation, with its focus on customer relationships, that drives much current marketing practice, is echoed in the conceptual frameworks associated with service quality and quality management. Chapter 5 encourages consideration of the nature of the offering or product being delivered to information service customers or users, and the importance of understanding and interpreting the concept of customer value. Later sections introduce some practical approaches to marketing communications. Chapter 6 focuses on quality management. After an exploration of the nature of service and information service quality and approaches to its measurement, the chapter introduces total quality management approaches to the accreditation of quality, benchmarking, and performance management.

Finally, the concluding two chapters deal with strategy and direction, and the allocation of resources to support progress towards strategic objectives. Chapter 7 examines the key financial challenges for information services managers, covering topics such as sources of funding, budget setting and planning, and costing and pricing. Entrepreneurial approaches to resource capture and utilization, and the 'bidding' culture are the topics of specific sections. Chapter 8 puts strategic planning processes under the microscope. It explores the nature of strategy and planning, and looks at the stages in the strategic planning process, introducing some useful tools.

The sequence of chapters has been carefully designed. After the first chapter, which provides context for management in information organizations, the following three chapters focus on aspects of organizational behaviour and people in organizations; this order communicates the importance that managers must place on working with people. The next two chapters have a stronger external focus, considering marketing, and quality management. The final two chapters address processes associated with the integration of internal and external perspectives.

Bland generalizations and dry theory would not communicate the reality. We have therefore used examples and cameos to tell the story. Because we are based in the United Kingdom (UK), we have greater awareness of the developments in the UK, and many of our illustrations are UK based. We apologize to our international readers for this. We cannot claim to be able to competently monitor or cover the specifics of relevant policy agendas in all parts of the world, and we are aware that governments and other organizations worldwide are more or less committed to the role of information organizations, and more or less able or willing to invest resources to support developments. Nevertheless governments

and other organizations in all communities are struggling with the same social, technological and economic drivers for change. Accordingly, whilst the specifics of the UK-based examples may not be generally applicable, they are illustrative since the drivers, issues and approaches are widely shared, and these set the longer-term agendas for management practice.

The book features:

- *Learning objectives* – Study objectives are identified at the beginning of each chapter.
- *Summaries* – Summaries review the content of each chapter and draw together the key themes that have been developed.
- *Reflections* – Reflection points are distributed throughout each chapter. These questions are intended to encourage the reader to pause and think about the text. They can also be used as group discussion points.
- *Review questions* – Review questions appear at the end of each chapter. These are examination-type assessment questions designed to encourage readers to review, interpret and apply the material in the chapter. They provide an opportunity to test retention. The questions also flag the key issues that are addressed in each chapter and in that sense provide an additional summary of key themes. Although all questions can be answered from the material in this book, better answers will also draw illustration from professional practice and experience, and concepts from wider reading.
- *Challenges* – Each chapter has a list of Challenge questions. These should not be confused with the Review questions. Although the basic concepts for thinking about the questions are embedded in the text of the respective chapter, these Challenge questions are designed to provoke further investigation, discussion and debate. There are no easy answers to these questions; they are precisely the imponderable questions that information service managers and researchers know to be at the heart of practice and theory, but for which if there is an answer it will be contingent on the context, and likely to change tomorrow. These dilemmas are what makes management interesting!
- *Case studies* – Each chapter includes a case study to further illustrate the application and relevance of the concepts in the chapter. Each case study is accompanied by case study questions that can be used as the basis for individual reflection or group discussion.
- *References and additional reading* – Sources cited in the text and other useful sources, including as appropriate both print documents and websites, are listed at the end of each chapter.

We have tried to pack as much as we can into the pages of this book, and have continually been frustrated by what it has been necessary to omit. We hope that the book nevertheless serves as a sound starting point for the adventure of management in information organizations. Management involves people and politics, and is never straightforward or predictable. It can be challenging, surprising, frustrating, disappointing, satisfying, inspiring and exhausting, and often several of these simultaneously. Enjoy!

### **Audience**

This book is designed to introduce students of library and information management to the practice, experience and theoretical principles of information services management. In particular it should prepare them for their first posts as library and information service managers and alert them to the challenges and rewards of management. Indeed, the book can be used as an on-the-job training guide for staff new to management, helping them with those difficult first steps. Practising information service managers might also enjoy revisiting some of the topics covered in the book.

### **Acknowledgements**

We are grateful to various organizations for permission to reproduce extracts from their documents or websites. Acknowledgement is included adjacent to the individual items. We would also like to express our thanks to the very professional team at Facet Publishing for supporting the idea and realization of this book from its conception. We have both been blessed with patient families who know that writing is just one of those things that we have to do. Our appreciation goes to Steve, Peter, Shula and Zeta, for giving us space and showing just the right amount of interest!