

Emotional intelligence in the workplace

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- recognizing that we still have a lot to learn about how the library collection and catalog are used by patrons;
- encouraging staff to grow, with the understanding that personal growth results in institutional growth; and
- employing “judgment-based” cataloging rather than rules-based cataloging.

Boissonnas, however, feels that the most important tool available to library managers to foster integration is budgeting. For full integration to take place, budgets must be structured by library service or program, rather than by library departments.

In conclusion, Boissonnas said that libraries should build upon existing links between technical services and reader services. He referred to the CORC project as a good example of integration between collection development and technical services staff.

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Emotional intelligence in the workplace

Jack G. Montgomery (Western Kentucky University) and Eleanor I. Cook (Appalachian State University) facilitated a discussion about how emotional intelligence can be used to improve management skills of the administrator. Simply stated, “emotional intelligence” is the application of “intelligence” to emotions. It involves knowledge and management of one’s emotions, recognition of emotions in others, the ability to manage those emotions, and the ability to use emotions to motivate behavior.

During periods of stress many people respond out of habit. Regardless of the situation, their emotional patterns take over thereby reducing their ability to function rationally. In the workplace, this could be a serious problem. By applying emotional intelligence, one can learn to monitor one’s reactions and short-circuit the emotional pattern before it takes over. This self-awareness would give a manager the ability to avoid letting anger interfere with his ability to perform. Similarly, recognizing how a staff member is responding emotionally can help the manager keep control of a situation and not allow it to get out of hand.

In order to develop emotional intelligence, it is necessary to become aware of the physiological responses which begin before one is consciously aware that there is a problem at hand. Stomachache, shortness of breath, hyperventilation, and racing mind are frequent indicators that something is wrong. As soon as one notices these reactions, counter measures, such as deep breathing, should be put into practice. By slowing down these responses, a person is better able to deal with the situation at hand. As a manager develops this awareness, she should try to enhance her sensitivity to signs of stress in the staff. While the manager cannot change the employee, by recognizing when an employee is getting upset she can initiate techniques to restore conditions in which problems can be addressed constructively.

Emotional intelligence should not be seen as a quick-fix solution to workplace problems. It is a gradual learning experience which can lead to improved communication in the work group, greater productivity and fewer interpersonal problems.

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What does vendor consolidation mean to you?

The library marketplace has seen many consolidations, buy-outs, and mergers among its book and serial vendors in recent years. This vendor consolidation has had an effect on the way libraries do business. Barry Fast (Vice President for Marketing, Academic Book Center) moderated a panel of four presenters: John Abbott (Appalachian State University), Rick Anderson (University of North Carolina, Greensboro), John Secor (President and CEO, Yankee Book Peddler), and Keith Schmiedl (President, Coutts Library Services).

Anderson argued that many librarians are conducting their business in ways which will backfire on them. He pointed out that for many years, librarians put pressure on vendors to cut prices and at the same time demanded the same or enhanced levels of service. The inevitable effect has been that suppliers have been unable to break even and some have been forced to merge or go out of business. Librarians should be evaluating the cost effectiveness as well as the cost savings of the products they purchase. In a marketplace with less competition among vendors, librarians must develop strategies to identify the services they need along with the products they purchase. They must recognize that they will pay for the services rendered.

Schmiedl observed that the mergers and acquisitions among vendors are the result of pressures in the market: the businesses are working on smaller margins while libraries are demanding enhanced services. Vendors have made enormous investments in technology to keep their companies competitive, but these technological improvements have not increased profits. Librarians, under pressure to maximize their budgets, have demanded and received deeper discounts from the vendors. Unfortunately, many vendors complied in order to maintain their customers, but did not adequately evaluate the cost of the services they agreed to provide. In addition, buying through consortia has added pressure on the vendors to cut the prices but has not provided greater revenue for them.

Secor pointed out that while both employees and customers view mergers with skepticism, the competitive market forces on suppliers and customers have led to continued consolidation among vendors. Mergers bring change and consolidate power. He argued that a good merger can reinvigorate a business. This is to the advantage of all parties. In today's market innovation is the key to success. Vendors do not have unlimited cash to keep developing programs without pricing their services to cover the costs of development. They must begin