LIBRARY RECRUITING & HIRING
HOW TO GET THE BEST PEOPLE ON BOARD

Quinn Galbraith
HR Manager
Harold B. Lee Library
“The old adage ‘People are your most important asset’ is wrong. People are not your most important asset. The **right** people are.”

— Jim Collins, *Good to Great*, p. 64
STARTING THE B.U.S.

Bring the right people on board
Unload the wrong people
Switch Seats
BRINGING THE RIGHT PEOPLE ON BOARD

1. Anticipate the needs & know the position
2. Recruitment methods
3. Narrow the selection (candidate review)
4. Interviewing
5. Reference checks
ANTICIPATE THE NEEDS

“[Libraries] need to stop treating recruitment as a big surprise. They have to approach hiring from a rigorous strategic and objective viewpoint.”

A case for succession planning: How academic libraries are responding to the need to prepare future leaders, 2012
KNOW THE POSITION

You need to know enough about the position to know whether or not the applicant may be a good fit.

- Major responsibilities
- Job description
  - Knowledge required
  - Skills
  - Abilities
RECRUITMENT METHODS

What recruitment means do you use the most?

A. Word of mouth
B. Job posting on your website
C. Listservs or free online web sites
D. Paid postings (journal, classifieds etc.)
OTHER RECRUITMENT METHODS

• Other recruitment methods – how do you reach the superstars that aren’t actively looking for a job change?
• Databases – do you keep a database of past applicants?
• Social Media
• Academic internships – does your library sponsor internships?
• Volunteer opportunities – look at those who volunteer
Selecting for Potential and Skills

Above-the-waterline Characteristics

Education
Work experience
Years of library experience

Below-the-waterline Characteristics

Leadership potential
Customer service skills
Teamwork skills
Friendliness
Ability to get along
Ability to supervisor
Initiative
Work ethic

And any other quirks that don’t show up on the resume
Casting the Net
QUALIFICATIONS FOR A REFERENCE LIBRARIAN IN A PUBLIC LIBRARY

Ideal Qualifications

- Public library experience 5+ years
- Reference experience 3+ years
- MLS
- Supervisory experience 3+

Willing to sacrifice for superstar employee with high potential?

- MLS
- 1-5 years Public library experience
- 1-3 years supervisory experience
- (might be no experience working at a Reference desk or Supervisor)
NARROWING THE SELECTION (CANDIDATE REVIEW)

- Initial screening
- Committee size
- Reference checks
- Phone Interviews

Often we think, “But, I don’t have the time!”
INTERVIEWING

When in doubt, don’t hire—keep looking.

“You don’t compromise. We find another way to get through until we find the right people.” Alan Wurzel, former CEO of Circuit City, Good to Great (p. 54-55)

Behavioral Questions

“Which of your strengths contributes most to your leadership ability?”

“Tell us of a time where you worked with a difficult person and how you worked through that.”

“Tell me about a recent failure. How did you handle it and what did you learn?”

Beware of Biases

Halo effect vs. Horn effect

“Most interviewers overvalue first impressions and personality” (monster.com)

Legal Pitfalls

**DO NOT** ask about

- Race
- Color
- Religion
- National origin
- Gender
- Pregnancy
- Disability
REFERENCE CHECKS
SWITCHING SEATS Finding the best fit for the person

Succession Planning
• Put your best people on your biggest opportunities, not your biggest problems. (Good to Great, p. 58)
• “Organizations should, at the very least, review their high-level leadership requirements every two to three years, and develop a plan that can answer the following questions: How many people will we need, in what positions, in the next few years?” (“The definitive guide to recruiting in good times and bad,” p. 77)

Cross Training
• “The best leaders [come from] inside the [library] who have somehow maintained enough detachment from the local traditions, ideology, and shibboleths to maintain the objectivity of an outsider.” (“Solve the Succession Crisis by Growing Inside-Outside Leaders, p. 94.)
• Try the “shoe on for size.”
“But whatever the future brings, [libraries] that learn to hire talent and retain it successfully will have a distinct advantage in the years ahead.”

REFERENCES


QUESTIONS