

Academic BRASS

Published by the
BRASS Business Reference in Academic Libraries Committee

Vol 8 (2), Fall 2013

Michael David Miller
Liaison Librarian In Management And Business
Bibliothécaire de liaison : gestion et affaires
Bibliothèque des sciences humaines et sociales | Université McGill
Humanities and Social Sciences Library | McGill University

Building A Local Community Of Management And Business Librarians: The Case Of A New Management Liaison Librarian, Facebook, And Québec Business Librarians.

On March 3, 2014, I was welcomed as the new liaison librarian in management and business at the Humanities and Social Sciences Library at McGill University to cover a year-long maternity leave. I had spent the previous seven months as an allied health sciences librarian at the Bibliothèque paramédicale¹ of the Université de Montréal². A position I started fresh out of library school. Adieu medical databases, of which there are few, and bonjour never-ending seas of business resources!

The management liaison librarian at McGill serves a diverse clientèle that includes all the members of the Desautels Faculty of Management: undergraduate and graduate students, the professorial body, as well as all members of the McGill University community with an interest in management and business issues. Services are primarily in English, but also in French given our location in Montréal, North America's largest French speaking metropolis. The management liaison librarian I am replacing has a excellent record of providing renowned services to her patrons and is leaving me very large shoes to fill. Coming into this position I felt overwhelmed by the task of maintaining and ensuring this quality and exemplary service for the Faculty of Management. I needed to find a way to reduce this overwhelming feeling. I have wonderful resources available to me within the Humanities and Social Sciences Library, such as my fellow liaison librarians, my library head who is also a former business librarian, as well as the liaison librarians located at other McGill University libraries. However, the task of being the lone management and business librarian was still a bit frightening, and I can only ask so much of my non business librarian colleagues. So I began to look around me, and as any young librarian in his mid-twenties would do, I opened my computer, went to Facebook, and founded a Facebook group. My saviour would be named, *La Communauté québécoise des bibliothécaires en gestion et en affaires (CQBGA)*³. I then decided to adamantly contact the business librarians of Québec. My optimism was strong: no business librarian could hide from me. Celia Ross does

¹ Translation: Allied Health Sciences Library

² Translation: University of Montréal

³ Translation: The Québécois Community of Business and Management Librarians

tell us in the preface of her ***Making Sense of Business Reference***⁴ that business reference can be frightening, and I do agree that it is, but I was ready to consult this fear head on. The *Communauté québécoise des bibliothécaires en gestion et en affaires (CQBGA)* was created in order to help mitigate some of this self-imposed pressure of perfection. I find myself lucky to be in Québec because there are roughly ten universities that have either a faculty of management, school of business, or offer programmes in business and management. Four of the largest business schools are located in Montréal, where I also happen to be located. There are two French language schools, *HEC Montréal*, an affiliated business school of the *Université de Montréal*, *École des sciences de la gestion (ÉGS) at the Université du Québec à Montréal*⁵ (UQÀM), and two English language schools, the John Molson School of Business at Concordia University and the Desautels Faculty of Management at McGill University. In addition, there is a school of public administration that covers a lot of management subsets, the *École nationale de l'administration publique*⁶ (ÉNAP), that, like UQÀM, is a part of the *Université du Québec*⁷ system.

With all of these schools and programmes, there lot of librarians. There is at least one librarian for each school with some schools having two, three, or even four librarians in management and business.

At present, there are nineteen total members in our newly established business and management librarians community. The vast majority of the members are practicing librarians and the others are information science students interested in business librarianship.

To date, this group has been a success. I have been able to create a close professional relationship with a business librarian at *HEC Montréal*. This has also led to a conference proposal including myself, a business librarian from *HEC Montréal*, from the *Université de Sherbrooke*⁸ for the upcoming *Congrès des milieux documentaires du Québec*⁹. We have used this resource to help guide each other through difficult business reference questions. Through this, two questions come to mind. My first few weeks in office I received a precise and difficult question on strategic foresight of local internet web page designers by a graduate student. I typed out my cry of help in the Facebook group and had three very fruitful suggestions. I also asked the opinion of the community's members in regard to the acquisition of graphic novels in an academic setting as well as what they perceive to be their primordial business databases. The most recent question I asked was in regard to French language databases and electronic resources for one of my students and the community from all corners of Québec sent me in their suggestions.

I would like to see this group continue to grow and evolve. I am the current dominant voice within the group, and my main goal for the moment is to motivate the other members to use this social networking site to its full potential. This group, though simple Facebook group, is in a way a virtual manifestation of what librarianship is to me. A uniting place that promotes the sharing and exchanging of ideas, of knowledge, of information, and most importantly, connecting people. It reminds me a lot of a library.

"One can be instructed in society, one is inspired only in solitude ». - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

⁴ Ross, Celia. *Making Sense of Business Reference : A Guide for Librarians and Research Professionals*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2013. Print.

⁵ Translation: The School of Managerial Sciences of the University of Québec in Montréal

⁶ Translation: National School of Public Administration

⁷ Translation: University of Québec

⁸ Translation: University of Sherbrooke

⁹ Annual library and librarian congress in Montréal (Québec)

I find it amazing how a bit of perceived solitude can serve as valuable inspiration.

Works Cited

Ross, Celia. (2013). *Making Sense of Business Reference: A Guide for Librarians and Research Professionals*. Chicago: American Library Association.