

“Health Libraries Endangered or Integral?”



A Training Needs Analysis

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Purpose:

“To establish the professional development requirements of those working in Victorian Health Libraries.

To assist in working towards:

- **Ensuring the relevance of the profession in the future**
- **Teasing out the specific skills required to develop ourselves in our role**
- **increase our perceived value with our organisations.”**

Training Needs Workshops

Two training needs workshops were conducted by Karin Flynn- Managing Principal – People Potential Unlimited. These were designed to elicit feedback on the challenges currently facing Health Libraries and identify the skills and capabilities required of Health Librarians to meet these now and in the future. The workshops consisted of a maximum number of 15 participants. The first was for non-hospital representatives, the second for representatives of hospital libraries. It was felt the needs of these groups may be different

Participants in the workshops were asked to identify

- The demands and expectations of their current working environment?
- Which skills/capabilities would assist them to work effectively in their environment and towards the future?

Participants were asked to respond to the first question then explore the skills and capabilities required to work within the current environment and prepare for the possible challenges of the future. The participants' feedback was recorded and form part of this report.

The following report is designed to outline the feedback from the sessions (skills/capabilities are bolded within), prioritise the key areas requiring attention and offer some recommendations as to the next step Health Libraries Inc. may consider in meeting these identified training needs.

The key themes identified by both groups were

A need to:

- **Increase the profile of Health Libraries amongst stakeholders**
- **Compete for resources**
- **Understand the technical language of other professionals.**

1. Stakeholder Awareness.

Currently the role, range of services and expertise of Health Librarians appears poorly understood by users, decisions makers and executives.

Health Librarians appear to be defending, justifying and protecting their repositories of information and the floor space they occupy.

Advances in the range of media (**information technology updates**) available has placed pressure on the visibility of Libraries (**Change Management**) as users become more distant from the source of these services, with even some heavy users not realising they are, due to third parties mediating the information search.

Traditional perceptions of Health Libraries, in general, appear to have been maintained (**Change Management**) by stakeholders rather than being replaced with the current reality, or of a future vision (**Strategic planning**), of the Libraries services and value to the organisations.

In order to increase the profile and re-establish the value of Libraries in Health significant additional skill development in the areas of communication with these stakeholders will be critical (**Marketing & Promotion**).

In particular, Librarians will benefit in further developing skills which assist them to promote (**Marketing & Promotion**) their Services/professional expertise and to create strategic plans which are aligned with organisational objectives. These skills would include **event management** and/or **fundraising**.

Developing alliances (**Strategic Planning**) with key decision makers should be part of such plans.

In developing the level of promotional skills required to increase perceived value Health Librarians will also benefit from increasing their **networking** enabling increased collaboration and support from their professional Health Library colleagues.

Training needs (skill/capability development):

Marketing (PR), Networking, Change Management, Negotiation and Strategic Planning Skills

2. Perception of Professional Librarians

Professional Librarians believe stakeholder perception is one of them being “boring book minders” rather than the highly skilled professionals managing multi-media and resources.

Consensus was this contributes to a lack of perceived value (**marketing & promotion, workplace training, networking, presentation**) by stakeholders. Librarians believe they, and their libraries are viewed as an old-fashioned stereotype more relevant to the print age. Skills developed in the areas listed would assist Health Librarians promote a more positive and realistic image to stakeholders.

Training needs (skill/capability development):

Marketing (PR), Networking, Workplace Training, Presentation,

3. Resources: Procurement and Management

Health Librarians juggle the needs of users and organisations to provide the best services possible with limited funds. Prioritising (**Business Planning**) and **networking** to pool resources and maintaining or sourcing additional funds (**negotiation**) to develop libraries was identified by both groups as part of their current role.

The ability to successfully secure funds for purchasing resources (**strategic planning, Writing Proposals**), maintaining or growing floor space and implementing library initiatives is an area where **negotiation skill** development may impact positively on libraries taking a proactive approach.

Health Librarians are held responsible for managing budgets, sometimes sourcing funds, through **fund raising**, and justifying their allocated funds (**report writing**). Applying skills related to **managing a small business** may assist Librarians develop the skills required to promote, increase the profile of and manage the Health Library. Although the context of the Library is often within a larger organisation the skills required to **manage a small business** are similar.

Additionally, developing skills in these areas would assist Librarians take a proactive stance in the types of statistics collected (**strategic planning**) and align these with the language and strategies of their organisation to influence decision makers.

Training needs (skill/capability development):

Networking, Negotiation, Strategic Planning, Small Business Management, Fundraising, Report Writing, Business Planning, Writing Proposals.

4. Educating user groups.

Educating users (**Customer Service**) was seen to be important in managing user expectation, enabling users to effectively access resources and services and to assist users benefit earlier and more comprehensively in their use of these services.

In order to do this Health Librarians identified benefit in exposure to Adult Learning Models and training techniques (**Workplace Training**). This included design, delivery (**Presentation Skills, Coaching**) and evaluation of education initiatives (**Workplace Training**). Additional training in how to use the associated equipment would be important (**technical training**).

Accessing targeted users (**Marketing & Promotion, Networking**) was viewed as challenging as was incorporating this into the Libraries workload (**time management**).

Training needs (skill/capability development):

Customer Service, Workplace Training, Presentation Skills, Coaching, Technical training – training equipment, Networking,

5. Networking

Participants in both groups identified and emphasised the need for **networking**. This was related to peers, counter-parts in other organisations (including beyond health) and with internal and external stakeholders.

The non-hospital group identified feelings of isolation and all participants described networking opportunities with peers to be important.

Training needs (skill/capability development):

Networking, Negotiation, Strategic Planning, Small Business Management,

6. Working with other professions.

Legal, Evidence Based Therapy and I.T Terminology and Knowledge

Health Librarians found an increasing need to understand **legal terminology as related to contracts, consortia and copyright**. Access to training, or advisory resources in these areas would improve Librarian confidence in managing procurement in this area and distribution of materials.

Communicating needs to the Information Technologists (**I.T. terminology**) was also identified given the increasing reliance on electronic media. Again, access to training, or advisory resources would improve Librarian confidence in managing procurement and materials in this area

The move towards Evidence Based Therapies by Clinicians was seen as requiring an understanding of this method of research (**EBT research methods**) and possibly a need for adapting Library influencing strategies (**strategic planning**) towards this method. Similarly, access to training, or advisory resources in these areas would improve Librarian confidence.

Training needs (skill/capability development):

Legal terminology (contracts, consortia and copyright) I.T. terminology, EBT research methods, Negotiation, Strategic Planning, Small Business Management,

7. Accreditation (particularly Hospital Libraries)

Librarians expressed concern as to being visible and having their individual needs considered (**Strategic planning, marketing & Promotion, Networking**) within their Networks Library group particularly if they were not the 'lead' library.

Training needs (skill/capability development):

Negotiation, Strategic Planning, Marketing & Promotion, Technical EQUIP Guides,

Training needs in context. Recommended priorities.

In the current context it is recommended Health Libraries approach their training needs in a manner which develops the skills most relevant to ensuring their viability. The following list recommends which skills would have the greatest impact on ensuring Health Libraries are viewed as an integral part of the organisations in which they are based and should be a priority. Additional training needs are listed according to their level of urgency.

A number of skills developed in the High Impact list compliment those in the less urgent. For example, marketing and Promotion can include Event management as a component.

High Impact	Medium Impact	Lower Impact
Strategic Planning	Management	EBT Terminology
Networking	Time Management	Technical EQUIP Guides
Marketing & Promotion	Managing People; Volunteers & Staff	
Customer service	Business Writing: reports & proposals	
Negotiation	Professional Updates & refreshers	
Business Planning	Coaching	
Education: Training Adults	Change Management	
Presentation (Public Speaking)	Financial management	
Small Business Management	Budgets	
Influencing Others	Budget Reporting	
Financial management: budgets & budget reporting	Interpersonal Communication	
	Fundraising	
	Project Management	
	Event Management	
	Contract & copyright Law	
	Information Technology	
	Computer software e.g. web publishing, MS Office	

The data collected from the workshops has been tabled below. The recommended priorities have resulted from combining the themes from the workshops and the authors experience in developing skills and organisational capabilities.

What is the Health Libraries Environment demanding? Workshop Feedback

	Workshop One Non-Hospital Libraries.	Workshop Two Hospital Libraries.
Rapid change	How to keep up with	Staying up to date
Intranet Management	Increasing involvement	Time consuming
	Using existing Skills in classifying and organising information	Administrative/clerical
	Heavy admin/clerical load, good for library tech, challenge for one person library	
Resources – Limited resources	Not for profit – reliance on funding	Having to cost resources to departments
	Barrier to innovation due to funding terms	“Up-to-Date” popular but expensive
	Journals OK	
	Technology investments – limited	
	Salaries not attractive	
	Highly dependant on Networking and sharing of resources	
Decision Makers: not using or having a low level of understanding of libraries as:	Lack of awareness of what we offer, our language, meaning of our statistics	Study and research space
	Producing reports which show stats that have no meaning	Scope of services and users served
	Heavy admin burden to justify/defend library	Needs of users
	Change to nature of library usage	Not using or having a low level of understanding of libraries as: A repository of information,
Client Expectations	Want it now – not prepared to wait > day	Want information yesterday or at least now!

	Think they are more informed in finding information themselves	Low awareness of effort/skills required to source information
	Demands changing – come to librarian once have exhausted their own search – questions more complex	Calling for help when 'stuck'. May not be convenient time for the librarian.
	More remote – email, PDF requests	Low awareness of what services/resources are available
	Don't really know how to search for information or know when they have the right information	Only consider library when they need it unless physically visible to them
		Not enough books to bring users into library → not enough funds →not enough books (catch 22)
		Becoming more 'virtual' therefore traditional opportunities to promote services decreased
		Low level of awareness that if not available electronically may be in the print collection
		Think all information is available electronically
		Electronic material is available yet may not have appropriate software to utilise e.g. adobe or adequate level of computer literacy.
		Expect hospital library will be as well resourced as they have come to expect from Universities.
		Expect free full text
		Increasingly virtual' therefore traditional opportunities to promote services decreased
		Low level of awareness that if not available electronically may be in the print collection
		Value Libraries
Competition	Google	
	Libraries Australia access soon to free database searches	
Networking	Professional Isolation	
	Limited opportunities to meet face to face, via phone to establish necessary relationships.	
Legal	Consortium/contracts	

	Need for understanding of legal terminology	
	Understanding contracts	
	Copyright law particularly re: electronic resources	
Technology	Need to be technologically "savvy"	I.T./policy determines whether can publish own pages
		merging/de-merging – platform can change
		Some users only have intranet access or no access at all
	Work smarter using e-lists	Electronic Journals - Change – need change volumes/access codes. Speed. Access
	Using computer programs e.g. MS Office	Using computer programs e.g. MS Office
	Awareness of what value of software programs (cost/benefit)	
	Librarians at different levels of computer literacy – one-on-one help	
Image	Seen as 'boring' stereotype of profession	Perception is "Library = Books". Not recognised for the range of media, services and sophistication now offer
	Overhaul of image needed	Need to evolve "Libris = books" Libraries are no longer about books
	Need for increased awareness and understanding of the change to role of libraries and the information, technology and services offered.	Perception is "Library = Books". Not recognised for the range of media, services and sophistication now offer
		Ageing workforce & limited places to study Librarianship
Consortia	Difficult to understand contracts related to	Pooling of resources
		Increased buying power through negotiation and economies of scale
		Not providing budget savings

Educating Users	Gaining access to users	Fitting educating them into users busy schedules
	Evaluation	Fitting education into librarians workloads
	Providing before urgency	Increasing phone support to users
	Not aware they don't know how	Process and policies related to copyright
Financial	Managing budgets	Managing budgets
	Financial Reporting – doing & understanding	Diversity of budget formats
		Doubling up on resources in different media
Infrastructure		Inadequate hardware/software e.g Adobe
	Defending floor space	Defending floor space
	Other areas looking to commandeer floor space	Ability to protect can depend on where Library sits in organisations structure & decision maker reporting to.
		physically visibility = increased foot traffic
		Inadequate hardware/software e.g Adobe
		Do not appear to value libraries
		Committees may be made up of non-library users
		Proxy users eg. Via their PA, secretary or students & don't realise they are dependant on the libraries services
		Expected Consortia to decrease budgetary needs however has maintained or increased purchasing in order to pool
Statistics	Generating lots of statistic to justify existence – library driven	Feeling compelled to provide enormous amounts of statistics in reports to protect library however
	Time burden to collect	Not collecting those stats that persuade
	Library generated to defend	Meaning of these is not understood by decision makers
Accreditation (EQuIP)		Smaller hospital libraries in Network needs - hard to ensure heard in the accreditation process
		Can be 3-5 libraries in Network required to follow the lead library
		Decreased ability to address individual library needs
		Differing policies for different libraries in same Network
Evidence Based Therapy		Need to understand users use
		Apply to own service justification
Management	Managing upwards – influencing others	Managing people; employees &/or volunteers

What skills/capabilities would assist you to work effectively in your environment and towards the future? Workshop Feedback

Workshop One – Non-Hospital Libraries.	Workshop Two –Hospital Libraries.
Planning*	Negotiation*
Strategic	Understanding professions jargon eg IT, Legal (copyright, contracts)
Business	Communication
Aligning with the organisations strategic/business plan	library needs to other professions e.g. I.T.
Forecasting future needs, technologies, demands	library needs and value to decision makers
Organisational Skills; Time Management	Interpersonal skills
Project Management	
Finance	Strategic Planning*
Budgeting	Identifying & creating strategic alliances with internal decision makers and other stakeholders
Legal	Identifying appropriate strategic alliances
Copyright law	Aligning needs of the library with the organisations strategic imperatives
Contracts/consortium terms	Networking*
Risk management	User groups
Resource information	Stakeholders – users, decision makers, external sources of support related to professional, fund raising,
Influencing*	Establishing stronger communication links with other Health Libraries/ professional colleagues – think tanks – initiative sharing
How to influence management/organisation	Influencing *
Where direct reporting line or authority doesn't exist	Education*

Where direct reporting line or authority doesn't exist	Adult learning methods, design and delivery
Dealing with difficult people	Evaluating user education programs
Change Management*	Using different media to access target audiences for education
Adapting to change	How to use equipment associated with education eg electronic whiteboards, data projectors
Planning for change	
Creating a more favourable, engaging image of Libraries/Librarians as knowledge managers, researchers and educators	Marketing or PR*
Negotiation*	Presentation skills/Public speaking
Marketing*	Creating a profile/perception of interest, value and need within organisations
Presentation skills – to groups	Accessing stakeholders; executives, users and peers
Presentation of profession	Pro actively marketing services rather than defending them
Image of profession becoming "Information Professional"	Fund raising
Projecting a more favourable image	Promotion of events e.g Heart Week
Challenging stereotypes around librarians	Event Management
Publications	Understanding own professional value and promoting this
Targeting appropriate audiences	Organisational skills
Accessing target audiences	Time management
Involvement on key project teams/committees/ Creating, maintaining and increasing service profile	Evidence Based Therapy – understanding the trend of users and adapting to this
The Services/products available	Understanding this research method
Feedback	Creating own EBT in support of services
Accepting	Technical Expertise
Encouraging	Professional refreshers to ensure old skills are maintained and update on new the skills of the

	Librarian Profession.
Giving	Change Management*
Technology	Adapting to
Updates in advances	Anticipating
Being informed of advances in	Proactively moving towards
Computer training	Management skills*
- MS Office programs, databases, search engines	Financial Awareness
- One-on-one training	Managing budgets
- Web editing	Operational
Knowledge Management	Capital equipment – library
	Resources
Information exchange and sharing with others in profession.	Special purpose grants/funds
Adult Education Principles and practices	Costing to departments
Coaching	I.T
Training	Microsoft Office Programs
Teaching	Navigating publisher's websites
Networking*	
Self motivation – overcoming professional isolation	

The information provided in this report identifies the skills and capabilities required by Health Librarians to meet the demands of their current environment and assist in working, pro-actively, towards establishing/maintaining an integral place in the organisations in which they operate.

This report does not cover the 'how' to go about this but rather 'what' the specific skills and capabilities are to ensure the relevance of Health Libraries.

People Potential Unlimited™ offer training strategy consulting services should you wish to take the important next step of designing 'how' to implement these recommendations and 'who' might provide the most relevant training.

We would like to thank you for the opportunity to work with Health Libraries Inc and in particular thank the workshop participants for sharing their time, knowledge and understanding of their environment and needs.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss, in more detail, this report with you and trust it will be a useful resource in planning for the professional development of Health Librarians.

Sincerely,

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