

BOOK REVIEW / CRITIQUE DE LIVRE

Staff Development on a Shoestring: A How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians. By Marcia Trotta. New York, N.Y.: Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc., 2011. 117 pages (soft cover). ISBN 978-1-55570-730-9. US\$70.00.

Budget cuts create challenges to providing continuing education opportunities for staff. The goal of *Staff Development on a Shoestring* is to ensure that each client receives the same quality of service, whether it is 10 am Monday morning or 3 pm Saturday afternoon. Whether libraries are in the public, academic, or medical sector, it is necessary to create a service that people want to use.

The author, Marcia Trotta, is experienced in the Public Library field, having served as Director of the Meriden Connecticut Public Library and as President of the Connecticut Library Association. Her manual aims to assist library managers with development of in-house training sessions to keep staff current on new procedures, technologies, and strategies that can be used to provide services on a limited budget but that still meet clients' needs.

The book's physical shape is that of a manual, and it is number 175 of the "How-To-Do-It-Manuals" series. Although slim, the manual comes with a Table of Contents, List of Figures, and Index. The manual is divided into 12 chapters; it can be read in its entirety, or each chapter can stand alone and be read independently. Each chapter includes a checklist of items covered in that chapter, which assists in locating items of interest. Another time saver are the tables and boxes that highlight significant facts.

Trotta emphasizes the need for continuous staff development for better service and to improve core competencies. The manual begins appropriately with Stating a Case for Staff Development. In Chapter 1, Trotta shows that the costs of continuing education for staff can be minimized through in-house training. She provides a cost analysis worksheet to help calculate costs of training programs.

The process for staff development begins by creating library policies on customer service and staff development. Samples are included in Chapter 2, which also lists training topics that a library director might refer to when designing a developmental program. Subjects such as dealing with angry patrons, managing collections, communicating effectively, etc. provide a good start for brain storming potential topics for training.

Staff development and good customer service include valuing the work place. Trotta emphasizes that internal marketing is key for communicating purpose but also for creating a positive workplace environment. Internal marketing can be something as simple as informing your staff about a new database, and Trotta suggests looking at internal marketing plans from long established organizations such as General Electric or the Disney Corporation.

Homegrown training in Chapter 3 covers the elements required for developing an in-house instructional team. Trotta advises that seeking leaders means looking for staff with specific qualities such as a sense of humour, as this may at some point help to diffuse a difficult situation. Seek and utilize is the motto. The Education Objective of Bloom's Taxonomy is included to help develop meaningful learning objectives, which are essential when setting up training programs. Along with tips for trainers on developing participants' skills is advice for the participant on remaining open to learning and practicing those new skills.

This manual considers all aspects of staff development including a section on the responsibilities of the manager when considering needs for training such as customizing job descriptions and providing positive feedback. Like all good training manuals there is a section on success (Chapter 4) that discusses what it takes to be a competent leader and offers keys to successful problem solving.

A framework for best practices for in-house training (Chapter 5) contains theory, presentation, modeling, practice, feedback, and coaching. For reference, it lists organizations that have developed successful staff development programs.

Mentoring is suggested in Chapter 6 as a beneficial method of staff development, especially for new employees. Costs, e.g., time the employee spends in the mentorship program, are some of the factors that need to be considered, and a mentor survey can help to evaluate potential mentors.

Chapter 7 focuses on staff development outside of your library, including developing relationships with external colleagues. Trotta suggests barter training as an option. This is described as matching one of your employees, who is an expert in one field, with another library that requires that expertise. That library reciprocates by providing a trainer who has expertise in another area where your organization is lacking. Other outside development opportunities that are relatively inexpensive (no travel or accommodation costs) include: partnering with other companies, e-learning, and continuing education courses offered at community colleges and universities. Trotta encourages membership in library associations and networking with other organizations in the community as effective means of professional development.

Training models and handouts for programs on such topics as customer service, time management, and teamwork are included in Chapter 8. They can be used as is or adapted to your library's needs. Examples of evaluation tools and checklists for rating employees and assessing training programs are provided in Chapter 10. Ways to reward employees and advice on when to recognize staff contributions are highlighted in Chapter 11. Finally, Chapter 12 provides a directory of resources.

One good reason for purchasing this manual is for access to the many handouts, tables, outlines, and worksheets that are included. The author gives permission for readers to copy and adapt these products. Large margins and several blank pages are included in the manual for note taking.

This manual is ideal for those starting out in a managerial or supervisory position. Its models, handouts, and worksheets make for helpful templates in developing training programs. I'd like to see the next edition or supplement provide case studies that would demonstrate how the template might work in real life situations. *Staff Development on a Shoestring* does what all good manuals

do; it provides guidance with clear steps, examples, and innovative ideas.

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