

BOOK REVIEW / CRITIQUE DE LIVRE

Career Q&A: A Librarian's Real-Life, Practical Guide to Managing a Successful Career. Markgren S., and Eatman Allen T. Medford, NJ: Information Today, Inc.; 2013. Softcover: 240 p. Price: USD\$39.50. ISBN# 978-1-57387-479-3. Available from: <http://books.infotoday.com/books/Career-Q-and-A.shtml>.

Susanne Markgren and Tiffany Eatman Allen offer helpful, real career management advice for librarians at every stage of the profession in their book, *Career Q&A: A Librarian's Real-Life, Practical Guide to Managing a Successful Career* (2013). The authors' profiles are a testament to the breadth and scope of their work experience, and it's impressive—both are “working librarians with more than 30 years' experience between [them]”. Markgren is the Digital Services Librarian at Purchase College, State University of New York, and Allen is Director of Library Human Resources at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Markgren and Allen are also the advice columnists of the original “Career Q&A with the Library Career People” now the “Library Career People” blog. It's obvious they have taken years of experience coupled with column and blog know-how, and they have applied it to this career management handbook—a real benefit to readers. Preparing your resume, interviewing, becoming involved in associations, moving to a management role, and getting ready for retirement—these are a few of the many important topics covered in *Career Q&A*—there's something here for all of us.

The stage metaphor is used to represent career progression within the three parts of the book and, as the authors note, intended to parallel the various junctures within a librarian's career path. “Part One: Setting the Stage” looks at the basics of getting started in the profession. Chapter topics include the likely suspects: searching for a job, writing a cover letter, putting together a resume, managing your online presence, and the interview. I found the brief comparison of a resume and curriculum vitae a nice recap, as these two terms are so frequently used interchangeably. A helpful outline with accompanying descriptions of the standard components of a resume is included for those needing a review or lesson on how to organize a resume. Although at first glance Part One seems intended for the job newbie, as a mid-career librarian who moved to a new position in the last year and a half, I would have found the content of this chapter a welcome refresher while preparing the materials for the job application.

Advice in “Part Two: Staging Your Own Set” is invaluable—here, Markgren and Allen underline the importance of professional involvement through association work and they reinforce their discussion with real-life scenarios; for example, Billy Cook's (an MLS graduate) “five tips for getting started with professional organizations” is a great starting point for MLS students looking

for ways to network. How to embark on presenting and writing, job flexibility, plus nontraditional career paths are also discussed in Part Two. The last chapter, covering nontraditional career opportunities, is especially interesting given our current professional climate with all the emerging changes in the information field and the changes in our roles as librarians—as the authors point out, “The skills we are known for . . . are all skills that are useful, and even desired, in many different professions—earning them their reputation as ‘transferable skills’ ”.

In “Finishing Stages”, Part Three's title, the topics of stepping into management positions, following technology trends, collaborating, and finally retirement are all nicely covered. I'm always looking for ways to keep on top of new technologies and the approaches and online resources contained in Chapter 12 are certainly worth checking out. Retirement sounds so final; however, Markgren and Allen are able to disprove this mistaken finality with “Tales from a Retiree”. A take-home message for this chapter is that retirement, “. . . does not have to signify the end of one's involvement in the profession or an end to one's passion, motivation, and commitment as a professional”—retirement is the opening of a new chapter.

One of the strengths of *Career Q&A* is how each chapter stands on its own, living up to its subtitle, *A Librarian's Real-Life, Practical Guide to Managing a Successful Career*. For example, although I read this book in its entirety for my review, when I first thumbed through it I was intrigued by Chapter 4, which covers professional identity and social media, and I turned to that chapter first. Without revealing my age, I graduated from Library School when the verb “to google” was relatively new to the lexicon. As difficult as it might be to believe, I'm not on Facebook or Twitter and remain to be convinced of the advantages of these tools to my professional identity. Having now read Chapter 4, I can say that the authors have succeeded in demonstrating, to me, the potential value of having an online professional presence. At the very least I am considering the creation of a LinkedIn profile. Furthermore, I was able to jump into this chapter despite not having first read the preceding chapters.

Although *Career Q&A* contains the standard content that you would expect to find in any career management book, what makes this particular book stand out is the authors' use of a range of tools to enhance the reader's experience. Some of the tools used include librarian profiles, interviews, responses and advice collected from a survey the authors conducted in 2011 (which is reproduced in Appendix C), and questions and answers from the authors' columns and blog. For instance, a career Q&A is used to open and set the topic for each chapter. Nineteen librarian profiles are used throughout the book as sidebars, labelled “Voice of Experience”—these contributions were derived from the “. . . successful, engaging, and inspiring librarians” the authors had the opportunity of meeting

during their career paths. It doesn't stop here, references are available at the end of each chapter; in addition, a list of resources, print and online, are contained in Appendix B, so if you want more information about the chapters' topics Appendix B is your next best bet.

Offering real-life career advice at every stage of the profession, *Career Q&A* is a worthy addition to one's personal career management library. The reading experience is enhanced with the inclusion of interviews, profiles,

Q&As, and survey responses, making the advice more tangible and enjoyable to read. In short, if you're in the market for a career management handbook this one, I believe, will serve you well.

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