

Strategic Planning and Management for Library Managers

By Joseph R. Matthews. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2005. xiv, 150p. \$40 (ISBN 1-59158-231-8).

The reality for most librarians is that, sometime in their career, they will be involved in strategic management and planning. While library school courses occasionally deal with this topic, it is from a theoretical perspective only. Most librarians are promoted or coerced into leadership and management roles, often with little or no training or resources at their disposal to assist them with the transition or change of responsibilities. Strategic planning is one of those duties assigned to library managers and leaders that often get pushed to the lowest-priority list, mainly because there are few guidelines and handbooks available in this area. Since the publication of Donald Riggs's *Strategic Planning for Library Managers* (Oryx, 1984), little attention has been given to this vital topic. Matthews's book attempts to provide information on how to explore strategies; demystify false impressions

about strategies; how strategies play a role in the planning and delivery of library services; broad categories of library strategies that can be used; and identification of new ways to communicate the impact of strategies to patrons. As the author states in the introduction, the focus of libraries has moved from collections to encompass the arena of change itself. Finding strategies to enable operation in a fluid environment can mean the difference between relevance and irrelevance in today's competitive information marketplace.

The book is divided into three major sections: (1) what is a strategy, and the importance of having one; (2) the value of and options for strategic planning; and (3) the need to monitor and update strategies. The first four chapters make up the first section. Chapters 1 and 2 go through the semantics and the need for strategies, as well as the realities and limitations of strategies. Chapter 3 provides brief introductions to schools of strategic thought. These include the design school, the planning school, the positioning school, the entrepreneurial school, the cognitive school, the learning school, the power school, the cultural school, the environmental school, and the configuration school. Chapter 4 introduces types of strategies: operational excellence,

innovative services, customer intimacy, and the concept of strategic options. Section 2 consists of chapters 5 through 8 and provides information on what strategic planning is, what its value is, process options such as planning alternatives and critical success factors, and implementation. Section 3, comprised of chapters 9 and 10, focuses on the culture of assessment; monitoring and updating strategies; and tools available for managing the library. Two appendixes are provided: one containing sample library strategic plans, and another with a critique of a library strategic plan.

Overall, the book is very straightforward and understandable, with numerous illustrations, process workflows, and charts. I found the information very interesting and useful, and the final section on assessment and measurement of strategic planning is essential for libraries to implement and monitor in today's marketplace. The various explanations related to schools of strategic thought were especially helpful. This book should be read by every library manager and director involved in strategic planning and process.—Brad Eden, Associate University Librarian for Technical Services and Scholarly Communication, University of California, Santa Barbara

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