

# SPEC Kit 344

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Talent Management

November 2014

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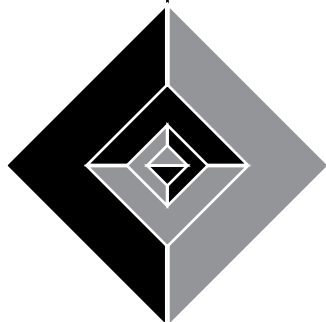
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## **SURVEY RESULTS**



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### Introduction

Talent management is defined as “an integrated set of processes, programs, and cultural norms in an organization designed and implemented to attract, develop, deploy, and retain talent to achieve strategic objectives and meet future business needs” (Silzer and Dowell 2010, p. 18) and is considered to be most effective when an organization develops a commitment to nurturing talent in order to meet organizational objectives (Silzer and Dowell 2010). However, according to the ASHE Higher Education report “Creating a Tipping Point: Strategic Human Resources in Higher Education,” there is “little formal programming in higher education that currently supports strategic talent management practices [and] as a result, universities lag behind industry in the development of practices to develop and retain talent” (ASHE 2012, p. 46).

A lack of commitment within higher education to the talent management planning strategies needed to attract, develop, and retain talent is problematic for the community as a whole, but when one considers the changing landscape of research libraries within higher education, their increasing need for new, complex, and technology-driven skills sets, and the impending reshaping of the workforce, the situation becomes more critical. The American Library Association estimates that by 2015, 30% of librarians will be over the age of 60, with the majority of these librarians retiring between 2015 and 2025 (Davis 2009). ARL has seen significant leadership change since 2005 with 103 of its 125 member libraries experiencing a change in executive leadership (e.g., directors, deans, university librarians); this represents an 82% turnover rate. And this trend only seems to be accelerating; since 2013 there has been an almost 26% turnover of

executive leadership in member libraries, with recruitments for 32 new leaders during that period.

Although a large number of librarians are projected to retire in the next decade, and executive library leadership is already retiring at a high rate, workforce demographics thankfully show that the number of younger librarians is increasing and library school enrollments are surging (Davis 2009). Since the library workforce will have both librarians new to the field as well as a large number of librarians retiring and nearing retirement, research libraries need to actively manage their talent and strategically develop their workforce in order to successfully recruit and retain new librarians while ensuring that the vacancies left by librarians retiring from the profession are filled by competent, experienced professionals.

This survey investigated which talent management strategies ARL libraries are deploying to manage and develop their organization's workforce. The talent management areas explored in the survey include talent strategy, recruitment and hiring, retention, employee engagement, job classification management, compensation management, performance assessment, competencies, professional development planning, and leadership and succession planning. The survey was distributed to the 125 ARL member libraries in July 2014, and 53 libraries, or 42%, responded to the survey by the August 4, 2014 deadline.

Forty-nine libraries responded to the question regarding union status. Of these, 53% (26 responses) are unionized, and 47% (23 responses) are not. At 19 of 43 responding libraries (44%) librarians have faculty status, and at 24 (56%) they have parallel status. Additionally, at 19 of 42 responding libraries (45%) librarians are eligible for tenure, at 16 (38%) they have

continuing appointments, and at 7 (17%) librarians have time-specific appointments. Other professional staff have faculty status at one of the 14 responding libraries (7%), and have parallel status at the other 13 (93%). In addition, 12% of the responding libraries (3 of 26) grant tenure, 69% (18 responses) have continuing appointments, and 19% (5 responses) have time-specific appointments for other professional staff.

### **Talent Strategy**

According to Edward Gubman, “connecting people to strategy to serve customers will build extraordinary results and long term value” (1998, p. 8). This section of the survey focused on assessing the talent strategy each responding library uses by determining which talent management activities are being undertaken, if these activities are aligned with a strategic plan or vision for the library, which talent management challenges the libraries are facing, and the staffing in place to support talent management strategy and programming. The survey responses indicate that most libraries are undertaking the traditional strategies to develop and manage their workforce. In fact, all 53 libraries reported offering professional development opportunities to their employees and 96% (51 responses) also conduct employee performance assessment of their workforce. However, among these libraries there is much lower use of either activities or programming to retain top talent (31 responses, or 58%), use of competencies for recruiting, managing, or developing employees (31 responses, or 58%), or compensation analysis (36 responses, or 68%).

Analysis of the data also indicates that talent management activities are not represented in the responding libraries’ organizational strategy. The percentages of libraries reflecting talent management strategies in their strategic plan ranged from a high of 43% (23 of 53 responses) for professional development opportunities to a low of 6% (3 responses) for job analysis/classification management and compensation analysis (also 3 responses). This lack of strategic focus on talent management activities may prove to be problematic for research libraries as they continue to evolve, require different skill sets, and see their work forces change as a large number of librarian retire in the near future.

When the respondents were asked to indicate the talent management-related challenges they are currently facing or will face in the next three years, 60% (31 of 52 responses) indicated that they were currently facing budget cuts that were affecting fiscal resources, although the percentage indicating they would still be facing budget restrictions in three years was considerably lower at 27% (14 responses). Another challenge facing these libraries is the current retirement of a large number of staff (23 responses, or 44%), with an even larger percentage reporting that they would be facing that problem in three years (36 responses, or 69%). These data are not surprising and seem to be supported by literature that indicates that the majority of librarians over the age of 60 will be retiring between 2015 and 2025 (Davis 2009). The answers to this question also foretold other themes that are seen throughout the other responses to the survey. Approximately 53% of the responding libraries (28 of 52) indicated that internal salary inequities are a current challenge, although somewhat surprisingly a much lower percentage of libraries (7 responses, or 13%) thought they would still be facing this challenge in three years. Another interesting theme that appeared was that 48% of the responding libraries (25 responses) felt that their current workforce was not able to be re-trained or re-skilled in order to meet the current organizational needs; in addition, a third of responding libraries (17 responses) also indicated that they were not finding job candidates that had the skills they needed. There were also numerous qualitative comments that underscore the challenge of recruiting IT positions, in particular.

Although almost all of the 50 responding libraries have a human resources professional employed by the library (44 responses, or 88%), fewer libraries reported having a training professional dedicated to employee professional development and training (15 responses, or 30%), an organizational development professional (14 responses, or 28%), or a strategic coordinator dedicated to managing the strategic plan (12 responses, or 24%).

### **Recruitment and Hiring**

“There is no doubt that recruiting the right employees can be challenging, but the rewards of a



well-constructed strategy are enormous, because effective recruiting is the foundation upon which any talent management program is built” (Breaugh 2009, p. 21). This section of the survey focused on learning what strategies or local circumstances have impacted the responding libraries’ success in recruitment, how successful the libraries have been in recruiting a specific set of skills, the relative importance of various credentials (e.g., MLS, MIS, PhD) when recruiting, the type of onboarding activities the responding libraries have undertaken, and the greatest challenges they have when onboarding new employees.

The survey asked respondents to indicate which strategies or circumstances had the most effect on the success of their recruitment efforts. The 50 responses show that most circumstances have a positive impact (determined by either a 4 or 5 on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 having negative impact, 3 having a neutral impact, and 5 having a positive impact). The most positive strategies/circumstances include benefits packages, support for professional development, position responsibilities (41 responses each, or 82%), and work environment (40 responses, or 80%), followed by reputation of the institution (36 responses, or 72%), flexible work scheduling (30 responses, or 60%), employee engagement (29 responses, or 58%), sabbatical/professional/research leave (24 responses, or 48%), potential for promotion (21 responses, or 42%), eligibility for tenure/permanent status (19 responses, or 38%), and faculty status for librarians (17 responses, or 34%). The only circumstances or strategies that had a more equal balance of being either a positive or a negative were the salary range (both 18 responses, or 36%) and local cost of living (positive was 21 responses, or 42%; negative was 19 responses, or 38%).

The survey next asked how successful libraries were in recruiting staff with the following skill sets: language expertise, IT expertise, subject expertise, senior management/executive expertise, functional expertise or other. In general, the 51 respondents seem to have reasonable success in recruiting for all skill sets; however, they reported that they were less successful in recruiting for two skill sets (determined by either a 1 or 2 on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not at all successful, 3 being neutral, and 5 being very successful): information technology expertise (9 of 51

responses, or 18%) and senior management/executive expertise (9 of 50 responses, or 18%).

Another interesting finding was that all 51 respondents unanimously indicated that a Master’s of Library Science was an important to very important degree for potential employees (determined by either a 4 or 5 on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not at all important, 3 being important, and 5 being very important). Only 83% of them (42 responses) indicated the same for a Master’s of Information Science. The relative importance placed on the MLS as compared to the MIS does not seem to align with the importance of information technology expertise and skill sets that is seen in other responses throughout the survey.

Onboarding is “the process of helping new hires adjust to social and performance aspects of their new jobs quickly and smoothly” (Bauer 2010, p. 1) and the faster new employees are onboarded, the faster they can function effectively and contribute to the mission of the organization (Bauer 2010). The results of the survey show that many of the 51 responding libraries use traditional programming, relying on a new employee orientation at either the library (50 responses, or 98%) or the university/institution (49 responses, or 96%) to onboard their staff. A much smaller percentage use other onboarding techniques such as providing networking opportunities to new staff (28 responses, or 55%) or staff pairing such as job shadowing or coaching (20 responses, or 39%). The challenges to onboarding new employees that were most frequently cited by the responding libraries (31 responses) were: employees who were geographically dispersed, acclimating new employees to the culture of the organization, orienting new employees to the structure and roles within the library and in the larger institutional context, and the time it takes to develop and/or maintain an onboarding program.

## Retention

“Retaining the appropriate talent can determine the success or failure of the organization” (Phillips and Connell 2003, p. 5). Lack of employee retention can result in high financial costs, loss of productivity, loss of expertise, degradation in service quality, and decreased satisfaction of the remaining employees, and negative image of the organization (Phillips and

Connell 2003). This section of the survey investigated the impact of strategies or local circumstances on retention, the top three reasons employees leave the responding libraries, which positions are most difficult to retain, and whether the responding libraries track their voluntary turnover rates, and if so, what those rates are.

The responses to a question about which strategies or local circumstances impacted (either negatively or positively) their retention efforts very much mirrored the 50 respondents' answers to the parallel question in the previous recruitment and hiring section of the survey. Again, almost all circumstances have a disproportionately positive influence on retention (determined by either a 4 or 5 on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being negative impact, 3 being neutral, and 5 being a positive impact). These include position responsibilities (38 responses, or 76%), employee engagement (37 of 49 responses, or 76%), support for professional development (37 responses, or 74%), work environment (37 responses, or 74%), benefits package (36 responses, or 72%), reputation of the institution (34 of 49 responses, or 69%), flexible work scheduling (32 responses, or 64%), eligibility for tenure/permanent status (26 responses, or 52%), local cost of living (22 responses, or 44%), potential for promotion (20 responses, or 40%), faculty status for librarians (20 responses, or 40%), and sabbatical/professional/research leave (20 responses, or 40%). Only salary range (negative: 17 responses, or 34%; positive: 18 responses, or 36%) had an equal balance of being seen as a positive or a negative.

The top three reasons employees leave their positions are retirement (35 of 50 responses, or 70%), other library employment opportunities (33 responses, or 66%), and other employment opportunities outside of libraries (21 responses, or 42%). The third statistic is interesting since it seems to indicate that there may be a high number of library employees leaving the field of academic librarianship.

When the survey asked respondents to identify the most difficult positions to retain within their organization, 63% (26 of 41 responses) indicated information technology positions; the next closest type of position was librarian at 27% (11 responses).

Since a lack of retention can be expensive and create a host of organizational and managerial

challenges, it is important to know the rate of employee turnover in an organization. Approximately half of the responding libraries track voluntary turnover rate (28 of 51 responses, or 55%) while about half did not (23 responses, or 45%). The turnover percentages reported ranged from 0% to 30%, but the majority of the responses indicated a turnover rate of 10% or below. According to the Society for Human Resources Management (2014), the industry wide average voluntary turnover rate is 13%.

## Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is defined as “the extent to which employees commit to something or someone in their organization, how hard employees work, and how long they stay as a result of that commitment” (Corporate Leadership Council 2004, p. 4). Research has shown that higher employee engagement is related to better performance and better employee retention (Corporate Leadership Council 2004). This section of the survey explored the responding libraries' assessment of employee engagement, the level of engagement within these libraries, and the levels of satisfaction with a variety of workplace issues.

The results indicate that 76% of the responding libraries (38 of 50 responses) have undertaken, or been a part of an assessment of employee engagement within the last five years. Twenty-eight of those libraries (74%) have been part of a campus wide survey and 14 (37%) have administered a library-focused assessment.

When asked to assess the level of engagement of their employees, 72% of the 47 responding libraries (34 responses) concluded that their staff were engaged or very engaged, with only 28% (13 responses) describing their staff as somewhat engaged or not at all engaged.

Employee engagement may or may not be aligned with employee satisfaction, so it is important to look at both (Society for Human Resource Management 2014). The survey asked respondents to report the level of employee satisfaction with a variety of workplace issues. The workplace issues that employees are most satisfied with (determined by a larger number of responses with either a 4 or 5 on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very dissatisfied, 3 being satisfied, and 5 being very satisfied) are: support for professional development (25 of 45 responses, or 56%), flexible work

scheduling (23 of 46 responses, or 50%), the benefits package (22 of 46 responses, or 48%), relationship with colleagues (21 of 46 responses, or 46%), relationship with their supervisor (14 of 46 responses, or 30%), sabbatical or research leave (14 of 45 responses, or 31%), tenure or permanent status track (13 of 46 responses, or 28%), and faculty status (10 of 46 responses, or 22%). The workplace issues that employees are least satisfied with (determined by a larger number of responses with either a 1 or 2) include: communication within the organization (28 of 46 responses, or 61%), salary (22 of 45 responses, or 49%), amount of work (19 of 45 responses, or 42%), opportunities for promotion within the organization (19 of 46 responses, or 41%), trust within the organization (17 of 46 responses, or 37%), selection process for promotion within the organization (12 of 44 responses, or 27%), and employee morale/engagement (11 of 46 responses, or 24%). Employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction with organizational climate/culture was equal.

### **Job Classification Management**

Job analysis is crucial in developing employees and their careers, maximizing their talent, designing learning, improving processes, assessing the value of positions, and managing job titles and classifications (Franklin 2005). This section of the survey assessed the responding libraries' approaches to job description management and job analysis. It also examined the types of positions that have seen the most change in job duties within their organizations, whether the responding libraries have seen significant changes in their job classification structures, and whether there have been some changes in paraprofessional duties.

The majority of the 51 responding libraries reported that they review their employees' job descriptions on a regular basis, specifically when there is a vacancy (47 responses, or 92%), during organizational restructuring (40 responses, or 78%), during performance appraisal/evaluation (37 responses, or 73%), and during performance planning (36 responses, or 71%). However, only 36% of the responding libraries (18 of 50 responses) indicated that they had conducted a systematic job analysis in the last five years to ensure alignment between the work being done and the job titles.

The responding libraries reported the most significant change in the job duties in functional specialist roles (22 of 49 responses, or 45%), information technology positions (22 of 51 responses, or 43%), senior/executive management positions (19 of 51 responses, or 37%), and technical services positions (18 of 50 responses, or 36%). Responses from 49 libraries indicate an approximately equal split regarding significant changes to their classification structure or series titles in the last five years, with 53% (26 responses) indicating that they had not experienced a significant change and 47% (23 responses) indicating they had. In addition, 88% of the responding libraries (44 of 50 responses) agreed with the statement that library support staff (e.g., paraprofessionals, library assistants, etc.) are taking on the responsibilities once considered professional librarian responsibilities. The qualitative comments overwhelmingly indicate that these duties are in technical services areas (primarily in cataloging) and reference services.

### **Compensation Management**

The compensation strategy of an organization must match the larger organizational strategy and the talent management strategy. Smart and successful organizations manage their compensation strategy through planning and regular assessment (Koss 2008). This section of the survey investigated the compensation management strategies used by the responding libraries and any compensation management challenges they are currently facing.

The results of the survey indicate that the majority of the 51 responding libraries do not employ a systematic approach to analysis of employees' compensation relative to the market. Only 26% of the respondents (13 responses) conduct this compensation analysis every one to four years and 8% (4 responses) analyze the data at intervals of 5 or more years. Sixty-five percent of the responding libraries (33 responses) take an ad hoc approach to compensation management with 51% (26 responses) conducting the analysis only on an as-needed basis and 14% (7 responses) reporting that they had never conducted this type of assessment.

When it comes to managing employees' compensation to address internal equity, more of the responding libraries adopt a systematic approach: 43% of them

(21 of 49 responses) reported that they adjusted compensation after a systematic review. Twenty-seven percent (13 responses) take a more ad hoc approach, adjusting compensation only after an employee raised a concern, and 20% (10 responses) indicated they don't make adjustments to employees' compensation.

Compensation management challenges are prevalent among 44 responding libraries: 66% (29 responses) indicated they are unable to offer competitive merit raises, 52% (23 responses) indicated that their salaries are not competitive with similar jobs external to the organization, and 41% (18 responses) indicated that salaries are not equitable within the organization.

### **Performance Assessment**

Performance assessment is the most commonly used management process and has a correlation with improved performance (Effron and Ort 2010). This section of the survey asked about the use and frequency of performance assessments, as well as which employees received assessments.

Nearly all of the responding libraries (50 of 51, or 98%) offer performance assessments annually. However, annual performance assessments are not conducted for all employee segments. Almost all library support staff and other professional staff (49 of 51 responses each, or 96%) receive annual performance assessments. Fewer professional librarians (41 responses, or 80%), unit managers (42 responses, or 82%), and executives (40 responses, or 78%) receive annual performance assessments. Qualitative data for those who receive appraisals on a non-annual basis show that some professional librarians receive biannual appraisals and tenured librarians tend to not receive appraisals. Several responses indicated that head librarians and deans receive appraisals every 5 years when their contracts were up for renewal.

The most prevalent challenges libraries face with performance assessments are inconsistency in ratings and rate inflation (23 of 47 responses, or 49%). Additionally, 19% (9 responses) indicated that staff compensation is not aligned with performance.

### **Competencies**

"A competency is a measurable characteristic of a person that is related to success at work. It may be a

behavioral skill, a technical skill, an attribute (such as intelligence), or an attitude (such as optimism)" (Lombardo and Eichinger 2001, p. 5). While the literature is not conclusive, it does suggest that the use of competencies has a positive influence on employee engagement, employee satisfaction, and manager success (Effron and Ort 2010). This section of the survey explored competency usage among libraries and identified the top critical competencies needed.

Thirty-one of 50 respondents (62%) have identified competencies for their employees. About two-thirds of these use or refer to competency models developed by one of the library associations. The others use models developed by their university or state human resources offices. When asked whether competencies are aligned with organizational strategy, responses presented a wide range of alignments: three of 24 respondents (13%) indicated they had identified competencies that are aligned with the library strategic plan and are used for all employees. One library has aligned competencies to the library strategic plan, but they only use them for non-librarian staff. The most prevalent theme was that the library used the university-defined competencies that were aligned with the university strategy (6 of 24 responses, or 25%).

The most compelling data from the competencies section identified the top critical competencies employees need to possess in order for libraries to be successful. Of the 31 respondents who answered the question, 45% (14 responses) indicated communication, 45% indicated collaboration and teamwork, and 32% (10 responses) indicated flexibility and adaptability. Some referred to the communication competency as having writing and verbal skills and others defined it as an organizational practice of internal and external communication.

### **Professional Development**

In a study by the Corporate Leadership Council (2004), personalized development plans and a commitment to employees' careers had a significant impact on discretionary effort put forth by employees. Additionally, training and development programs that use a mix of experience-based (on-the-job experience), people-based (learning through others such as mentors and coaching), and traditional learning methods (such as

training and reading) are considered the most effective and lasting programs (Lombardo and Eichinger 2001). This section captured the types of professional development activities, practices, and programs used within ARL libraries.

Of the nine talent areas explored in the survey, professional development is represented most in strategic plans. The survey asked about seven different types of professional development opportunities: travel funds, library-wide training offerings, individual training funds, experience-based development, leadership development programs, and customized development plans. Of the seven choices, travel funds (48 of 50 responses, or 96%), library-wide training offerings (47 responses, or 94%), and individual training funds (41 responses, or 82%) are the most prevalent offerings. Customized development plans are the least frequently offered (16 responses, or 32%). While funds for travel and training are consistently offered, the underutilization of customized development plans could be interpreted as a signal that ARL libraries may not be realizing their return on investment in professional development expenditures.

The survey also asked about the types of professional development plans offered to different types of employees. Training plans are the most common type of plan for library support staff, other professional staff, librarians, and department/unit managers. Leadership development plans are also common for librarians, department/unit managers, and other professional staff. For administrative managers, competency-based plans were the most frequently reported, followed closely by training and leadership development. Leadership development plans are the most common for library executives. When asked which plan type has been the most successful, 76% (25 of 33 responses) selected training plans.

### **Leadership and Succession Planning**

Leadership roles have been increasingly hard to fill with successful candidates (Charan, Drotter, and Noel 2001). Leaders are dealing with new work environments that require greater collaboration, higher volume of information, and new job responsibilities with wider scopes and high rates of change (Corporate Leadership Council 2013). This section of the survey

explored leadership development and succession planning offerings and practices at ARL libraries.

A fair number of ARL libraries (17 of 49 responses, or 35%) indicated that they had a leadership development program. Qualitative data from some of the libraries that did not have a leadership program indicated that they participated in other programs offered by the university, used external programs, or offered leadership development on an ad hoc basis.

Almost half of the respondents (22 of 47 responses, or 47%) indicated they identify High Potential Employees (HIPOs) within their libraries. Of those, most use the designation for prioritizing leadership development opportunities (17 of 22 responses, or 77%). Seven other libraries indicated they informally recognize such individuals.

Most of the respondents (39 of 48 responses, or 81%) indicated that they do not have a succession planning strategy. Qualitative data suggests that many organizations address succession decisions informally. Half of the respondents (25 of 50) indicated they typically hire executive staff from outside the organization and about a quarter (12 responses) indicated they primarily hire from within the organization. Of those who primarily hire from outside, 22% indicated the need for fresh perspective and skills. Of those who mostly hire from within the organization, 25% indicated that knowledge of internal practices, history, and culture is the primary reason. Thirteen respondents selected “other” and their comments show that most (10 responses, or 77%) hire equally from outside and within the organization.

### **Conclusion**

A robust use of a talent management strategy allows organizations to maximize their talent investment by attracting, retaining, and developing employees in a comprehensive way that is aligned to organizational strategies and goals. Research libraries are currently facing, and will continue to face, talent-related challenges as they require an increasingly dynamic and technology-driven workforce, more senior and experienced librarians and staff retire, and new librarians enter the profession requiring career and leadership development. The results of this survey highlighted two talent management trends in research libraries.

First, the results seem to indicate that most of the responding libraries are not using a systematic approach to deploying a talent management strategy. Many of the libraries indicated that they are undertaking some talent management activities such as professional development or performance assessment, but far fewer are deploying a comprehensive program with strategies, practices, and tools aimed at attracting, developing, and retaining top talent. The survey results in totality point to the lack of strategic and systematic programming, with most responding libraries addressing talent management through ad hoc, informal, or fractured approaches. However, some libraries have implemented talent management programs and the qualitative comments did indicate that others are either currently in early stages of development or are participating in talent management occurring at the institutional level.

The second trend illustrated in the survey results points to a widening skills gap in the workforce of ARL libraries. Many libraries reported that current employees are not able to be re-trained or re-skilled and job candidates do not have the skills required to meet libraries' needs as roles continue to change and require new skills and competencies. It is not

known definitively which skills are missing within the workforce since the survey did not ask explicitly for missing skills. However, information technology came up as a consistent theme when discussing difficulties in recruitment and retention.

In conclusion, talent management practices and tools are emerging best practices for organizations. While ARL libraries have not fully incorporated talent management strategies and practices into their organizations, some libraries are in the process of implementing some activities and practices into their long-term strategies and everyday work. The survey data show a need to connect talent management to organizational strategies, especially for addressing impending retirements and closing the skills gap. The authors believe the need to develop talent management capabilities should be addressed by individual organizations in strategic plans and comprehensive talent management programs. Likewise, professional associations should focus on adapting talent management best practices to the research library environment and provide professional development programs to support such practices. These efforts should be integrated in order to cultivate the talent needed to meet the demands of the modern research library.