
Mission-Oriented Management: Librarian-Trained Directors in Nonlibrary Settings

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ABSTRACT

ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS, GOALS, AND required skills of librarian-trained managers who choose careers in nonlibrary, but library-related, settings different from those of directors of libraries? This question will be explored by executives from two library-related organizations—one a not-for-profit library cooperative and one a private sector information vendor. Methodologies for exploring this topic include interviews with colleagues in nonlibrary settings, analysis of executive position descriptions from library-related organizations, a review of associated professional literature, and observations of the authors.

INTRODUCTION

Are the characteristics, goals, and required skills of librarian-trained managers who choose careers in nonlibrary, but library-related, settings different from those of directors of libraries? Readers can determine the answer to that question after comparing the characteristics described later with those ascribed to library directors by other contributors to this compilation.

The authors have chosen to explore this topic by interviewing eight colleagues (including each other) who currently hold senior or top management positions in organizations directly related to or serving the North American library community. The authors conducted the interviews in person or via phone using the survey instrument attached as Appendix A. Information and opinions

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provided by the interviewees were examined for similarities among the contributors, but these data were compared only in informal and anecdotal ways to characteristics generally ascribed to traditionally employed librarians and/or library directors. The authors also analyzed executive position descriptions from library-related organizations, and it is interesting to note that only three of the eight interviewees' organizations have established position descriptions on file for these top management positions. Position descriptions for three additional positions of interest in analyzing nontraditional librarian careers are incorporated into this discussion (see Appendix B). A review of the professional literature and observations of the authors complete the methodologies used to prepare this report.

This discussion will focus on the characteristics of a representative set of individuals who currently serve in managerial or leadership positions in nontraditional, but library-related, settings, and who also have in their educational background a master's degree in library science. The authors wish to acknowledge with thanks the interviewees identified in Table 1. All comments expressed by the interviewees are the opinions of those individuals and are in no way intended to reflect the opinions or policies of the organizations they represent professionally.

TABLE 1
LIBRARY DIRECTORS IN NONLIBRARY SETTINGS
COLLEAGUE INTERVIEW LIST

1. John Garralda Director of Operations The UnCover Company Denver, Colorado	5. Ward Shaw Chief Executive Officer CARL Systems, Inc. Denver, Colorado
2. Bonnie Juergens Executive Director AMIGOS Bibliographic Council, Inc. Dallas, Texas	6. Debra Wallace Manager, Marketing and Business Development ISM Library Information Services (formerly UTLAS International) Toronto, Ontario
3. Rebecca T. Lenzini President CARL Systems, Inc. Denver, Colorado	7. Robert A. Walton Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Innovative Interfaces, Inc. Berkeley, California
4. Catherine F. Nevins Vice President, Member Services OCLC, Online Computer Library Center, Inc. Dublin, Ohio	8. Peter R. Young Executive Director U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science Washington, D.C.

The eight interviewees represent four senior managers and four top managers of seven library-related organizations. Five of the organizations are headquartered in the United States; two are chartered abroad, one in Canada, and one is a partnership between U.S. and U.K. companies. Four are for-profit companies, two are not-for-profit corporations, and one is a U.S. federal government agency. All eight interviewees hold M.L.S. (or equivalent) degrees.

Defining the Nonlibrary Setting

Increasing numbers of librarians find themselves working in what are referred to as "nonlibrary settings." Some leave the profession entirely. Some embark upon entrepreneurial careers as self-employed information specialists who seek and serve information-hungry clients. Others create or seek employment in organizations that exist primarily to serve or support libraries.

In analyzing career choices of M.L.S. graduates from the University of Pittsburgh, Detlefsen and Olson (1991) determined that roughly one-third of the graduates studied were not working in libraries at the time of the survey. The "leavers," or those who depart the profession, were defined as "those who were not working at all or who identified themselves as being in some other field entirely, as in real estate, law, teaching, the business sector, etc." (p. 293). These individuals exhibited a number of characteristics in common with the interviewees for this report, as will be reflected in their comments.

Alice Sizer Warner is one of today's most articulate spokespersons for the entrepreneurial information specialist. She captures the imaginations of many in the library profession with this call to arms: "Wherever there is confusion, wherever things are in a mess, there is an opportunity for a librarian. By seizing such opportunities, many librarians now earn their livings nontraditionally" (Warner, 1990, p. 946).

Both the "leaver" and the "entrepreneur" have received attention in the professional press in recent years, and they are described and discussed at great length in the items listed in this report's *Selected Bibliography* for further reading on the topic of alternative careers. For purposes of this discussion, however, a "nonlibrary setting" is defined as an organization that exists primarily to serve or support libraries. It is within this context that the interviewees have chosen to serve the library profession, and it is also within this context that the authors describe librarians working outside of traditional library settings as "managers with a library mission."

Throughout the interview process, and in the authors' subsequent analysis of the opinions expressed by the interviewees,

it became clear that responses did not vary greatly depending upon the for-profit or not-for-profit status of the interviewees' organization. The authors speculate that this is partly due to the revenue-generating demands of not-for-profit organizations; partly due to the similar mission-oriented educational backgrounds of the interviewees (all of whom have earned M.L.S. degrees or equivalent); and partly due to the types of rewards cited as important to the interviewees (only two referenced higher personal earnings as specifically related to the nonlibrary setting). Rather than earnings, interviewees mentioned job satisfaction, impact upon the field, "making a difference," or "creating something from scratch" as work rewards.

REQUIREMENTS FOR LEADERSHIP IN THE NONLIBRARY SETTING

The characteristics most commonly mentioned in answer to the questions, What skills are needed for success in your current position? and Describe the personal attributes and characteristics which you believe have most contributed to your success, are listed in Table 2.

TABLE 2
CHARACTERISTICS/SKILLS REQUIRED FOR SUCCESS IN THE NONLIBRARY SETTING

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Number of interviewees specifying this item</i>
Analytical/Problem-solving approach	4
Bottom-line orientation	3
Business and management skills	7
Comfort level with politics	3
Communication skills	6
Decisiveness	1
Desire and ability to learn quickly	3
Fast-paced environment	7
Flexibility, lack of bureaucracy	6
Library experience	7
M.L.S.	8
Production orientation; Results driven, action-oriented approach	3
Public service (client-centered) orientation	4
Risk taker	8
Spirit of adventure	6
Technology knowledge, skills	5
Willingness to work hard, to work smart	4

"Risk-taking"

Among the most common phrases used by the interviewees to describe the requirements for their current posts is "being a risk-

taker." These managers typically were interested in assuming full responsibility and accountability for their actions. In the interviews, most dwelled at length on the risk-taking requirement. Some remembered the first high-risk career move, as reflected in this statement: "My most significant promotion was into sales—this was scary, risky, an activity about which I felt culturally at odds." Another confided that: "Many librarians suffer from lack of confidence, and some become risk-takers to overcompensate for low self-esteem." One reflected on fear as an inhibiting factor in making the move to the nontraditional setting, and said: "I wish I had confronted the fear and made the move earlier." Most, when asked about giving advice to a librarian aiming for a similar nontraditional position, agreed that it is necessary to become a risk-taker in order to get what one wants out of life.

Conversely, when asked, Do you believe most librarians are well suited to the kind of job you are doing? many responded "No," stating that the traditional librarian is "risk averse." One respondent reflected that, "we don't learn business concepts related to risk analysis in library school!" Another boldly stated that, "the greatest missing ingredient in libraries today is the spirit of entrepreneurship. Librarians have interpreted their service mission to mean they cannot take risks at a time when they should take more risks...".

Flexibility

Several of the interviewees also noted "flexibility" and "multitasking" as keys to their success in the nonlibrary setting. Most had sought positions which would offer challenges across many areas and noted that their traditional library posts were not able to offer this variety of experience and opportunity.

The interest in "flexibility" is most likely the counterpart to the frequently expressed desire to avoid, as one interviewee put it, "Death by bureaucracy." Another said, "I had tried to 'break the mold' for twelve years, but felt like I was constantly beating my head against that proverbial wall." And a third: "I'm just not comfortable working in any bureaucracy, and libraries are definitely a type of bureaucracy." In each case, the individual had sought to leave a bureaucratic environment and replace it with an environment which rewards those who are "quick on their feet" and who can handle multiple tasks simultaneously. These skills are not generally rewarded within highly bureaucratic settings and, indeed, may be penalized.

Many of those interviewed noted they could have chosen to continue to move within the traditional library director or department

head ranks to positions of higher authority or larger responsibility. Others noted that the problems and challenges of traditional library management remained interesting and attractive. In the speakers' cases, however, a conscious choice was made to pursue opportunities which provided more autonomy and demanded accountability.

Yet in every case in which respondents cited previous library experience, they stressed the importance to their careers of that direct library experience. Their reasons were varied: "For credibility," "for foundation," "for context: I still think of myself as a librarian." Three cited the value of cross-experience for success in their current environment, describing a career pattern of "crossing boundaries" to work in both technical and public services and among multiple types of libraries. For all who cited a library-related sense of mission, having actually worked in libraries was very important to success in their current positions.

Though not common, it should be noted that a couple of interviewees had worked to receive the M.L.S. after attaining considerable success working within the library field at large. In these cases, the M.L.S. was seen both as a way to learn more about the field and a way to become validated to those within the field: a "union card," as one individual expressed it.

Communication and People Skills

Communication cropped up frequently as a descriptor of skills and personal attributes required for success in management—of libraries as well as in nontraditional settings, as several hastened to point out. One respondent commented that a debating skill developed in high school "has served me well." Another expressed the importance of having excellent communications skills: "The visionary and change-agent role *depends* upon communication skills."

Many of the interviewees noted the importance of a basic set of "people skills" which can be applied to staff development, customer service, and sales alike. The importance of communications and people skills in building strategic organizational relationships was noted. A basic attitude of "liking people and letting it show," as one interviewee expressed it, may in fact be the foundation of an all-important service orientation for individuals in these roles.

Several of the interviewees noted the need for strong presentation skills; requirements for these skills were clearly evident in the job descriptions and résumés reviewed. In most cases, presentations are made in support of corporate objectives (i.e., "communicating mission, priorities and activities" of a given organization) or are made on broader topics of relevance to the library field.

Analytical/Problem-Solving Skills

The need to approach challenges in an analytical and problem-solving manner was noted by most of those interviewed. While this requirement would seem to be a key for anyone in a managerial position within or outside of the library profession, it is perhaps the case that the nonlibrary setting affords more opportunities to solve problems creatively—that is, beyond the confines of the traditional and more bureaucratic construct. While four out of eight interviewees specifically named analytical problem-solving as a required capability, another mentioned the “ability to define core issues and prioritize” and a sixth described the requirement for “lots of data-gathering and analysis; the ability to read and think critically.”

On a more personal note, stamina or endurance, resilience, and a sense of humor were also mentioned as necessary characteristics for success—or survival. And various sets of specialized knowledge bases relative to certain specialized positions or environments were also mentioned as success factors. Three respondents stressed the importance of a bottom-line orientation with one commenting that: “Library school didn’t foster this!” And a lifestyle that sustains years of working long hours, as well as “working smart,” was mentioned by several interviewees. One said bluntly: “Don’t be afraid of hard work. Nine to five won’t make it.” Others said “intelligence counts” and “long hours and self-instruction were the order of the day” throughout their careers.

Two respondents mentioned the importance of recognizing that perfection cannot always be achieved, either for lack of time or due to human frailty. One went on to stress the importance of learning that “it’s okay to make mistakes. What’s important is to make decisions and go on. I remind myself that Babe Ruth is frequently applauded as the Home Run King but few remember he was also the Strike-Out King.”

PREPARATION: EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE, SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE

The characteristics cited in Table 2, along with the elements of advice respondents offered to librarians (see Table 3) seeking careers in nonlibrary settings, paint a picture of the nontraditional work environment as fast-paced, demanding, of high visibility, and rewarding. How could the interviewees have prepared earlier and better? What are their recommendations for librarians thinking about moving into nontraditional careers?

Without exception, the interviewees noted that many of the skills developed either in preparation for, or during a career in, library science translate readily to the nonlibrary setting whether that setting

TABLE 3
ADVICE TO LIBRARIANS SEEKING CAREERS IN THE NONLIBRARY SETTING

<i>Suggestion/Advice</i>	<i>Number of interviewees specifying this item</i>
Automation: Have education, interest, and/or devotion	5
Business, finance, and management courses: Take more and earlier	7
Change jobs frequently	2
Cross type of library lines	3
Don't let fear hold you back	4
Focus on "big picture," less on details	7
Learn a foreign language	2
Marketing and sales skills: Learn about and respect	3
Willingness to work hard; put in long hours	
Those who openly referenced this:	5
Those who exhibited this:	8
More/better courses needed from library school:	
Systems Analysis	1
Marketing for Not-for-Profit Organizations	1
Group process skills	1
Decision-making tools	1
Technology (concepts, applications)	3
Funding, development processes	1

is not-for-profit or for-profit in nature. Mentioned specifically were management skills, organizational skills, and reference skills. As noted by one individual: "The basic skills for managing any organization translate."

Most of those interviewed also expressed a wish that their formal M.L.S. training had included more business and financial management coursework as well as more learning opportunities in the areas of automation and computing. One suggestion for those preparing for a career in nonlibrary management was to focus less on the "details" and the "how to do it" level, and more on the concepts behind the details. One interviewee suggested that those headed for the nonlibrary setting "can't prepare, but must build and 'make it happen'." This same individual offered the following advice: "Figure out something you want to do, and set out to achieve it step by step." Another respondent said the best way to prepare for the leadership role was to "study transcendental meditation; take philosophy, public policy, international relations, and technology courses; change jobs every three years for twenty-four years; and work across all professional borders, in public, special, and academic libraries and in public and technical services." Another respondent said "I should have learned a foreign language and developed more global sensitivity."

In a 1985 article in which she discussed the requirements and needs of the M.L.S. education from the vendor's perspective, Lenzini (1985) suggested that the profession "mold the educational process to incorporate the business management and marketing skills that these students [headed for the nontraditional career] will require." She noted that these new skills may combine with traditional librarian skills to produce individuals better prepared not only for the nonlibrary sector, but also for the library setting (p. 494).

The frustrating and sometimes painful side of holding a position of authority and accountability in a fast-paced and very visible work environment was mentioned by several of the interviewees, somewhat in the form of advice to the would-be traveler of similar paths: "Endurance, hard work and long hours, and an ability to handle lots of stress are definitely required." "Learn not to overcommit...and then get caught! Your good intentions don't seem to count!" "You have to recognize you can't control all the things you're responsible for; learn to work through others." "A personal goal for me is to balance work and family so as not to turn into a zombie. My task list always includes both personal and professional goals." "I'm trying to remember to build in time for my family and time for myself."

AN INTEREST IN AND DEVOTION TO AUTOMATION

A common characteristic of almost all of those interviewed was an interest in and a belief in the role of technology in libraries. This bias may in fact merely reflect on the individuals chosen by the authors to be interviewed, or it may be a significant characteristic particularly relevant to the library field's growing linkage to technology.

More than half of those interviewed could point to professional experiences in which they either introduced automation to libraries or were involved closely in early automation activities in the field. This involvement ranged from creating automated systems, to installing the first OCLC terminals, to selling and supporting the earliest vendor-based library circulation systems. One respondent talked about having been "in the vanguard" in bringing automation to libraries.

Interestingly, Detlefson and Olson (1991) in their study found corresponding high levels of interest in the field of "information science" as opposed to traditional "library science" among those who had left the profession (p. 282).

Lenzini (1985) noted the increase in the number of professional librarians employed by the vendor community and related the increase specifically to the rise in the number of automated library system

vendors, which sought to employ those with backgrounds in either technical services or library automation (p. 494).

Greater Job Mobility

A second common characteristic among the pool was job mobility. Whether within a single institution or between multiple employers, those interviewed had routinely changed jobs or job responsibilities at least every three years. As one of those interviewed noted, "I didn't go looking; the jobs came to me." Indeed, several noted this phenomenon; most had not actively searched for a position since early in their professional careers, and all had attained positions of management and leadership in the nonlibrary setting.

The pattern certainly reflects the stated characteristic of "flexibility" as discussed earlier and the interest expressed by the pool in multiple challenges and opportunities. Again, Detlefson and Olson's (1991) findings correlate the "leaver" characteristics to the "nonlibrary setting" characteristics: in their study, those in the "leaver" category had worked for more employers and had experienced more promotions than had their traditional counterparts (p. 285).

Service Orientation

Another common personal characteristic among those interviewed was concern for serving the patron or client in a "customer is always right" service environment. This attitude, which should be found not only in nonlibrary settings but throughout traditional libraries, was thought to be something which is in fact frequently missing from libraries. Traditional librarians have a reputation of too often believing they know "what is good for the patron" or client and therefore delivering not what is perceived by the client to be needed but what is thought by the librarian to be needed.

Another expression of the same concern appears in Lenzini's (1985) article. She notes that a shift in emphasis is required of the traditionally educated librarian moving to the private sector, a shift which fosters critical evaluation of current services and a "marketing" attitude. This attitude is characterized as one in which the business (or library) "seeks to determine the products or services which are needed and then provide them" (p. 495).

REWARDS

A common perception is that the director in a nonlibrary setting is there, in part at least, to earn more money than is possible in the traditional setting. The interview group, as noted earlier, contradicted that image (see Table 4). While two individuals acknowledged their greater earnings or earning potential in their current nonlibrary positions, those who commented about earning

TABLE 4
REWARDS IN THE NONLIBRARY SETTING

<i>Reward</i>	<i>Number of interviewees specifying this item</i>
Earning potential greater than in traditional librarianship (but a secondary motive; a "score-keeper")	2
Flexibility, lack of bureaucracy; new opportunities and challenges	6
Have fun! Enjoy one's work!	8
Multitasking, variety of roles, responsibilities	3
Knowing that one can "make a difference"	5
Ownership opportunity or "Build something from scratch" "Pioneer in some element of profession" "Being the first!" "Satisfying personal quest"	6
Responsibility & authority, ability to "get things done"	4

power stated that money was at best a secondary motivator. Primary were the needs discussed earlier, particularly related to the working environment. These individuals valued their "freedom" above compensation.

The greatest "rewards" appeared to be the ability to work and contribute within a mission-oriented setting which fostered the flexibility, rapid pace, and control which have been described. Of paramount importance was the ability to exercise decision-making without the spectre of second-guessing which often haunts the traditional library director. The phrase "bottom line orientation" was often used in a positive sense to summarize this desired environment. Important messages in all eight interviews included "Have fun!" "Enjoy your work!" "My job must include a high fun quotient" and "After all these years, I still love my job!"

On the other hand, the lack of interest in earnings as a primary reward does not mean the respondents are not involved constantly and intimately with the organizational process of earning revenue. As Alice Sizer Warner (1990) states, those who are successful in nonlibrary environments must be "comfortable with money" (p. 946). Further, Warner maintains that: "You have to like selling. You have to sell all the time, think about it all the time" (p. 947). She urges those crossing into information entrepreneurship to "get tough in the for-profit sense" (p. 948), which is certainly advice that applies to the managers of library-related organizations in today's financial climate.

These themes were echoed by the directors in nonlibrary settings. As one individual phrased it: "One challenge to librarians working in the business side of the information industry is to charge for information—the normal librarian mindset is to provide information or access at no charge." Again the phrase "bottom-line orientation" must be cited. Nearly every interviewee, at some point, used these words, perhaps meaning by them the environment which allows and supports rapid and nonbureaucratic decision-making, as noted earlier, and most likely illustrating, as Warner suggests, a "comfort" with the "tough-minded" nature of the nontraditional setting.

A sense of mission and the importance of working in the library field were expressed by many of the respondents. When asked about "your personal goals for the future," responses included statements like "create a more systematic approach to the business, a more mature business environment"; "accomplish organizational goals we're continually defining to strengthen our mission"; "help librarians shift to new roles in the information industry; help create a totally new world"; "make the organization I created a more healthy one"; "I'm working to endow a chair at a library school in the name of a respected mentor..."; "my role is to help others reposition libraries as a balance point in achieving information access equity for the nation."

CONCLUSION

In the earlier discussion, the authors have reported on, and analyzed, the information and opinions shared by eight interviewees, all of whom earned M.L.S. or equivalent degrees, most of whom have worked in libraries prior to moving into the nontraditional arena, and all of whom hold high-level positions in nonlibrary organizations that exist primarily to serve or support libraries. The library service mission of the organizations appears to be a unifying factor in characterizing the individuals; the for-profit or not-for-profit status does not appear to be a differentiating factor among them. Only three items were specified by all eight participants as being critically important to their success in the library-related but nonlibrary arena: that they be willing risk-takers; that they hold an M.L.S. or equivalent degree; that they find joy in their work. Additionally, they all described or exhibited a willingness to put in long hours—it is hoped "working smart" as well as "working hard." On these four items there was unanimity.

Additional personal characteristics important to success in the nontraditional leadership roles undertaken by these individuals include, in descending order, desire and ability to work in a fast-paced environment, a spirit of adventure, flexibility and discomfort with bureaucracy, and a public-service or customer-service

orientation. Skills commonly described as necessary include, also in descending order, business and management skills, library experience, communication skills, technology knowledge and skills, and analytical problem-solving skills. Uncharted but inferred throughout the interviews is a comfort level with money—the focus on revenue-generating activities. Those who do not bring that comfort level to the position must develop it in order to find overall satisfaction in their nontraditional roles.

Scattered throughout the interviews were comments relating the characteristics and skills required for these positions to both traditional library directorship requirements and to nonlibrary business management requirements. Many of the traits and skills discussed earlier are readily transferable in both directions, and, indeed, more and more library directors are recognizing the need for and obtaining business management skills. In a tight economy with government accountability the battle cry of the 1990s, the risk-taking characteristic and analytical skills espoused by the interviewees are becoming more valued in the traditional library management arena along with financial planning knowledge. As one interviewee put it: "Our profession is challenged even to stay in existence. We must adopt and adapt business skills without losing our sense of mission..."

But this also works both ways. Librarian skills are also valuable to the evolving business environment, particularly in the "information age" and a society drowning under the barrage of data—if not information—generated by the minute. Interpretation, synthesis, and management of information are skills that have become basic tools required of managers and leaders in all industries. One interviewee spoke of the importance of librarians "cycling out" of traditional library work into the business or at least the library-related business world on a regular basis; another spoke of the value to those in the nontraditional arena of "dipping back in"—much as one imagines faculty members of professional schools would/should do. "The more we move out into nontraditional settings, the better equipped the profession will be to address future opportunities."

And where do the individuals interviewed for this article go from here? What are their most likely next career moves? One is planning to move into the business world, not necessarily in the library support arena, and expects to go back for some "retooling" in the form of additional education. One mentioned returning to more traditional librarianship, seeking a directorship in a "cutting edge" institution. Others spoke only of staying in the line of fire, striving to create more or become better—not necessarily bigger. Several spoke of "having so much still to do" and "so much still to learn." These are strong and positive sentiments to bring to one's work.

APPENDIX A

Librarian Trained Directors in Nonlibrary Settings Colleague Interview Questions

1. Name; Current position; Organization & Title
2. Length of time in position
3. Educational background
4. Prior positions
5. About current position:
 - a. Nature of organization [For profit or N-F-P]
 - b. Nature of position
 - c. Skills needed for success
6. General discussion items:
 - a. What led to/attracted you to your current position?
 - b. What was attractive/unattractive about remaining in a library setting?
 - c. Describe career history (significant events, decisions)
7. Describe the personal attributes and characteristics which you believe have contributed most to your success
8. What are the challenges of your current job? What's rewarding? What's not?
9. How could you have prepared better for what you are doing today?
10. Do you believe most librarians are well suited to the kind of job you are doing? What determines a good fit?
11. If a librarian reading this article wanted to aim for a position like yours, what advice would you give him/her?
12. What are your personal goals for the future? And how do you hope to achieve them?
13. Additional general comments...

APPENDIX B

Position Descriptions/Advertisements Reviewed

Of eight positions held by interviewees, only the three not-for-profit organizations currently have established position descriptions for high-level executive positions. The following position descriptions/advertisements were reviewed during the course of developing this article.

1. American Library Association
Chicago, Illinois
Executive Director (position advertisement, 1993)
2. AMIGOS Bibliographic Council, Inc.
Dallas, Texas
Executive Director (current position description)
3. NELINET, Inc.
Newton, Massachusetts
Executive Director (current position description)
4. OCLC, Online Computer Library Center, Inc.
Dublin, Ohio
Vice President, Member Services (current position description)
5. Southeastern Library Network, Inc. (SOLINET)
Atlanta, Georgia
Executive Director (position advertisement, 1993)
6. U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science
Washington, D.C.
Executive Director (current position description)

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