

Summary



Increasing Number of Jobs Remain Vacant / Results of a Survey on Employment in Libraries of Baden-Württemberg

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More and more vacant positions are not being filled due to lack of qualified applicants. A recent publication of the German Economic Institute (IW) reports there is a lack of 440,000 workers. This is not only a problem for companies seeking highly specialised workers, but also affects the public service sector, as can be seen in lead stories about the lack of teachers or health care workers, to mention only two areas. Likewise, in libraries of all kinds it is becoming more difficult to fill positions and recruit new professionals. After being repeatedly addressed on this matter, the Baden-Württemberg section of the German Library Association (dbv) last summer initiated a survey with the goal of presenting solid numerical findings based on individual reports and experience from the libraries in that federal state.

For the central question of »How does the employer regard the current offering of job applications?« the response could be made on a scale of 1 (very good) to 5 (unsatisfactory). The results clearly show how precarious the present situation is. For public libraries in larger cities (with populations between 50,000 and 400,000) the level of applications received is still judged more positively than in smaller cities and towns or in academic libraries. From the answers it is clear that especially in academic libraries it is especially difficult to fill vacancies at the medium-level, i.e. non-management positions. But also for positions at the senior level it was reported that there was a good or satisfactory number of applications for only about 50% of the jobs posted.

Training and Continuing Education: Cornerstones of Staff Recruitment at the Hamburg Public Libraries / More Personnel Through Options for Internships and Softening Classical Stereotypes (Andrea Beyer, Janette Achberger)

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Even for a metropolitan library system like the »Bücherhallen Hamburg« it is becoming increasingly more difficult to recruit suitable and trained employees. In response to this challenging situation, the library has, first of all, increased the number of apprenticeship positions, and secondly, improved the conditions for students seeking to do an internship. In addition, the opportunities for taking continuing education courses have been expanded in order to enable people who had trained for other professions to enter library employment and also to support entry-level employees. For the largest group of employees in the library system, the library assistants (called in German: FaMI), recruitment is conducted nearly entirely by offering job contracts to graduates of the apprenticeship programme. In the case of both job groups, the current demographic trends and the prospect of increased job openings due to more retirement-aged employees mean that by the year 2020 the problem of personnel recruitment and retention will be even more exacerbated – and not only for the Bücherhallen Hamburg.

The number of suitable applications being received is on the decline, particularly for management positions in the decentralized network of library branches – and even from within the library system there are very few applications for advancement. On the one hand, this may be due to the newly introduced types of qualification required of applicants, and, on the other hand, to the relatively small number of employees between the ages of 35 and 45 who were able to enter libraries in the 1990s and early 2000s, when employment opportunities were lower. Hence, since 2013, leadership positions have repeatedly been filled by staff members with little professional experience and little or no management experience.

International Orientation, Interdisciplinary Projects and Creative Programming / The Next Library Conference Berlin 2018 (Tim Leik, Juliana Pranke)

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First conducted in 2009 by the Aarhus Public Libraries (Denmark), the Next Library Conference is today one of the most important independent professional conferences for public libraries in the 21st century. It is held every two years in Aarhus. In 2014 the first foreign conference was held in Chicago, and the procedure is to become a steady feature.

Now the Next Library Conference is coming to Berlin. It will be organized by the Berlin Central and Regional Library (ZLB) and Germany's Federal Cultural Foundation in cooperation with the Aarhus Public Libraries from September 12 to 15, 2018. It will offer 400 international participants from 36 countries from the fields of libraries, politics, culture and education the opportunity to explore and discuss the future role of libraries. Among the main speakers are the library visionary Richard David Lankes, the pioneer of participative museums Nina Simon, and the »pattern breaker« Stefan Kaduk. In addition, 33 so-called interactive sessions (workshops) and 48 ignite talks (five-minute talks) complete this year's programme with the motto »Encourage the Unexpected.« A campus made up of mobile units located around the America Memorial Library will reinforce the workshop style of the conference and also strengthen its visibility and the possibility for participation by local citizens.

Translated by Martha Baker