

Summary



[Profession.rebooted] / Germany's Library Associations Invest in »Marketing and Communication« for the Profession – Commission on »Staff Recruitment« Founded (Ute Engelkenmeier, Sophia Manns-Süßbrich, Luis Moßburger)
(pp. 44 – 47)

To what extent libraries are prepared for the future depends not only upon how specific their strategies are. Decisive for the success of such strategies is above all, whether a library is able to recruit competent staff members to implement these ideas, to offer them good employment conditions, and to make them into active members of their organisation. Taking collective action can strengthen the position of all libraries in the labour market. To facilitate this, there needs to be a clear consensus – a common ground of action, so to speak – on the basis of which, for example, campaigns, job descriptions, and job announcements can be formulated. To create such a common ground, a task force on staff recruitment was established several years ago by Germany's library and information science umbrella organisation »Bibliothek & Information Deutschland« (BID). In 2020-2021, in cooperation with the entire community, a vision for the library as employer was then developed.

The task force (AG) on staff recruitment submitted a recommendation to the board of BID that the measures which are currently viewed as necessary should be implemented in a more sustainably and with a long-term perspective than would be possible with the present, largely voluntary committee. For the next three years, the Association of German Libraries (dbv) and the two professional associations – VDB and BIB – will fund a half-time position with the title »Marketing and Communications« and tasked with developing a communication strategy to promote our profession. The work already accomplished within the task force will also be continued in a sustainable manner, with the three associations acting concertedly to create a joint commission on »Staff Recruitment«.

A Chance to Reposition and Restart / Project Trendreport: Key Challenges for German Libraries in 2023 (Tobias Seidl, Cornelia Vonhof)
(pp. 48 – 50)

Libraries in Germany see themselves faced with a wide range of challenges at this time. It is helpful to be conscious of this situation and to be able to set priorities when trying to establish one's position in terms of, for example, strategic development and the identification of future areas of action. Moreover, it can be appropriate to tackle the particular challenges which other libraries are also facing in a similar manner, not alone but rather in cooperation (whether with libraries, associations, or with professional counterparts). To offer practitioners a fact-based foundation for such cooperation, Cornelia Vonhof and Tobias Seidl – both professors at the HdM Stuttgart – developed a research project to investigate the kinds of challenges which staff members in German libraries are facing.

The research project was carried out with two steps. First, in November 2021, randomly chosen library administrations in public and academic libraries were asked in a qualitative questionnaire about the challenges which they see facing their respective libraries in the next one to two years. Taking the approximately 170 challenges which were formulated in this first round of questioning, the research team condensed these to 31 key challenges in eight thematic clusters.

These challenges became the basis for the second questionnaire to which all libraries in German-speaking countries were invited to participate in the spring of 2022. All participants could evaluate the relevance of these 31 challenges from their own perspective. The level of response was very high.

The Numbers Game / A New Attempt to Convince Special Libraries of the Value of the German Library Statistical Survey (Gisela Gruhn-Accaino, Gaby Heugen-Ecker, Volker Heydegger, Therese Nap, Karin Schmidgall, Monika Sommerer)
(pp. 51 – 53)

Within the Association of German Libraries (Deutscher Bibliotheksverband, dbv), special libraries are the largest and also the most heterogeneous group within the category of academic libraries. In March 2022, the number of special libraries in Germany stood at 1,930. However, only a small number of special libraries contribute to the annual statistical survey of libraries, the Deutsche Bibliotheksstatistik (DBS), and that number falls each year. In 2021 the level of participation was eight percent, after only 150 special libraries returned the standardized questionnaire. This limited amount of data means that it is not possible to make representative statements. The reasons why the large majority of special libraries do not contribute to the DBS can be found in the frequently relatively small size of the libraries; the time required to complete the questionnaire; the restrictions set by their funding agencies with regard to confidential data, such as budget or operating policies; the DBS's exclusive orientation toward numerical measurements; and the absence of an appealing presentation.

In the pandemic year of 2021, a small task force, together with the editorial staff of the DBS, gave the questionnaire for special libraries a thorough makeover. The resulting questionnaire will now take into account the current trends and also highlight the services of special libraries in relation to each other and also to general academic libraries. A number of outdated questions have been dropped and the category of basic data collection expanded. The new questionnaire will become the basis for data collection for the report year 2022. This represents a new approach to firmly establishing the role of the DBS within the community of special libraries in Germany.

Translated by Martha Baker