

ISSUES FACING THE LIBRARY INDUSTRY IN 2008 – A PERSPECTIVE FROM THE RECRUITMENT INDUSTRY

The One Umbrella would welcome the opportunity to participate in the ALIA Education and Workforce Summit. The One Umbrella is Australia's most established and professional information management recruitment service for temporary, permanent and contract information management staff at all levels. We have a national network of offices in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra and Brisbane.

Over 1400 public and private sector organisations have used our service. Clients are from the business, telecommunication, science, medical, financial, legal, education, and government sectors, and include many of Australia's best known public and private organisations.

Over 80% of our clients use us more than once because we provide the solutions they require through our industry specialisation, geographic coverage and personal service. Demand for our industry best-practice service continues to increase.

The One Umbrella has been involved in assisting organisations and individuals associated with Libraries to match up organisations with quality staff for temporary, contract & permanent positions for over 20 years.

Now more than ever, the changes that have been going on in the past few years to the increasingly rapid flow of electronic information has been a challenge for people to keep up to date with the latest in new technologies.

It is a challenging & exciting time for Information Management professionals to keep pace with these changes so they are able to further develop their careers. People with good electronic Information skills are highly sought after by employers from all industry sectors over people who haven't updated their skill base in recent years.

As well, we also see the need for many information professionals seeking employment to develop skills in better self-marketing, and skills required in job seeking, i.e. resume writing, interview preparation. The changing nature of the workforce also contributes to altered expectations of job candidates. Older candidates can be surprised by the increasing emergence of temporary and short-term roles.

Unsurprisingly, candidate expectations are also rising in terms of what an employer can offer them. Aside from the obvious one, higher salaries, candidates are looking for job security, variety in their work, opportunities to learn new skills & opportunities to work with up to date technology. This way they keep up to date with the latest developments in Information Management & enhance their careers within the industry. It must be stressed that employers that don't factor in such candidate requirements run the risk of not being able to attract the best people or even losing good employees to other organisations including direct competitors.

Some organisations & their Human Resources departments aren't aware of the role Librarians can play to assist them as a value-adding service rather than being viewed as a cost. Corporate libraries have regularly been down-sizing or even closing their

Libraries as they are viewed as an expense. Greater education & promotion to employers is needed to reverse this line of thinking.

In our view, the biggest danger of all however is losing Library staff to other industries if organisations can't offer people competitive salaries & conditions in comparison to other industries. As we are currently in a workforce with a 4-4.5% unemployment rate, this makes today's environment a real candidate driven market.

Tertiary institutions that offer relevant & up to date courses will attract new students, whether they be VCE graduates or people in their second or third careers, but continual effort needs to go into actively marketing & promoting Libraries as an attractive option to students, especially as baby boomers look to leave the workforce. Typically mature-aged entrants to the industry tend to come from the education sector, administration, IT & customer service amongst others.

Moving beyond 2008, we can all influence positive change in the workplace if these issues can be addressed. The One Umbrella looks forward to being involved in assisting in developing & implementing an action plan for ALIA & it's membership.

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