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## Librarians Are Finding

### Endless Opportunities

By Kelly Gates

Senior-level corporate librarians, now often known as chief information officers (CIO) and directors of information research, are in high demand in nearly every industry research specialty, executive recruiters say.

The clamor for candidates is especially urgent not just in traditional arenas, such as law and financial services, but also in fields such as executive recruiting and consulting. The profession owes this boost largely to the growth of the Internet, which has caused an information explosion that must be managed.

"There's a huge demand for librarians with strong research skills, a solid management background, Internet experience, an understanding of their employer's industry and indexing and analyzing capabilities," says Carol Berger, president and CEO of C. Berger, a search firm in Wheaton, Ill.

As the Internet expands every day, corporate librarians must be able to sort through the jumble, "picking out the most valuable information and discarding the stuff that can't be used," says Ms. Berger. And as technology continues to evolve, it's increasingly difficult for companies and organizations to find professionals with the qualifications and experience to run their libraries efficiently. The combination of responsibilities "calls for an experienced, highly qualified librarian," she says.

### Candidate Profiles

Top candidates for CIO or directors of information services roles today are expected to have a master's degree in library science (MLS) and 10 to 20 years of experience in their specialized knowledge area. "The best candidates have worked at several different library settings within the same field," says Linda McKell, president of Advanced Information Management, a search firm in Hollister, Calif. "This variety of experiences gives them a better understanding of the entire field, not just one sector of one field."

Consider the career path of Lucy Lettis, who in June was named director of the business information network at Arthur Andersen LLP, a global consulting firm based in New York. She started her career as a general librarian, then moved on to become manager of library services at a Fortune 500 company, conducting technological, scientific, engineering, legal and marketing research. She then became a librarian for the corporate information center at American International Group (AIG), an international insurance and financial services firm in New York. At AIG, she focused on financial research and analysis.

Most recently Ms. Lettis had been director of Arthur Andersen's New York business information center. "I recognized that we needed to build a network bridge over the Atlantic, but we first needed to focus on networking in the Americas," she says. She drove the expansion and now oversees about 65 information professionals.

"Our information professionals are required to perform research on various industries and companies, do geographic research and competitive intelligence, and we monitor trends, provide forecasts, and do financial research, among many others," she says. "My experience working in so many diverse environments has been very useful in a multidisciplinary service organization such as Arthur Andersen."

## **Specialists Wanted**

Specialist librarians are in greatest demand. As a result, the profession is drawing experienced professionals from other fields who want to make a career change. "There are a lot of people from other fields and disciplines --attorneys, business people, nursing and medical specialists --who are getting their MLS so they can become specialty librarians," Ms. Berger says. "There aren't enough people who know an industry and have the librarian qualifications, so those who have both are paid very well. This entices a lot of people to add the MLS to their other degrees."

Roger Parent, executive director of the American Association of Law Libraries, a trade association in Chicago, says 30% of his group's members who are law librarians have both a library-science and a law degree. "They aren't seen as librarians of the past who filed and gathered information. They're information specialists who are just as important as the lawyers themselves," he says.

## **Recruiting Databases**

Executive recruiting is a new arena that's drawing skilled and experienced librarians. Many search firms want to build libraries (and library staffs) that include information on clients and their industries, competitor search firms and candidates, says Charlie Heller, president of Heller and Associates, a New York recruiting firm.

"With more information about industries and positions, search firms have a better chance of luring the best candidates for jobs, so librarians are being paid well for their services," he says. "I just had a candidate take a position at an executive search firm that wanted him to build an information center and hire a staff to run it. He received total compensation of nearly \$200,000."

The successful candidate had an MLS, a master's degree in business administration and more than 10 years of experience as a director of library and information services, specializing in financial services and investment banking.

Many of Mr. Heller's clients, including search firms, recruit information specialists from the financial industry. "They're the best of the best. These specialists have been gathering and analyzing every type of information you can imagine for years and years, so they're more than qualified to work at a search firm," he says.

Consulting firms are another source of demand for librarians, says Mr. Heller. "Firms like KPMG, PricewaterhouseCoopers and A. T. Kearney really need librarians to manage their corporate libraries, but also the libraries for their investment banking departments, too," he says. "The investment bankers at consulting firms are the ones generating the money and they don't want to wait for information from librarians who work for a bunch of different departments, so they're demanding librarians of their own."

Mr. Heller recently placed a director of information services at a major mergers and acquisitions firm that's building a corporate library. The candidate has an MLS and M&A experience, which were required. He also had developed a search engine for a dot-com firm that allows bankers to research investment information more quickly and efficiently. The professional received \$100,000 to start, which included his annual salary and a signing bonus.

## **Brain Drain**

As demand in the corporate sector grows, major universities are finding it more difficult to keep experienced professionals.

Alan Wichlei, vice president and director for Isaacson Miller, a search firm in Boston, says he placed a director of research and information services for Harvard Business School and was asked to fill the position again less than three years later. "The first director was so good that [the Massachusetts Institute of Technology] snatched her away from Harvard to run all of its libraries. It was a bigger role for her because she would oversee more people and information, and she even got an increase in salary," he says.

## **Compensation**

Pay for librarians varies according to their field and geographic region, say recruiters. For example, chief law librarians frequently receive annual salaries of \$136,000 and more from law firms in New York, says Mr. Heller. In California, salaries for senior librarians in corporate libraries range from \$80,000 to \$120,000, says Ms. McKell.

Demand for librarians is strong in all geographic regions, Mr. Heller says. "Major cities like New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Atlanta and cities in California are great places for a senior librarian to look for a job," he says. Most senior-level librarians work in corporate headquarters, which typically are in major metropolitan areas. Recruiters say that the demand for librarians will remain strong well into the future. "Librarians have a much-needed ability to quickly identify important information, analyze it and organize it for corporate executives," says Ms. Berger. "As information continues to be added to the Internet, these professionals will be needed more than ever to manage the flow of information into their corporations."

--Ms. Gates is a free-lance writer in Muskegon, Mich.