Developing a Strategic Plan for Forest Public Library

Part One: Mission, Vision & Value Statements, Environmental Scan,

and SWOT Analysis

Megan Bergeron

Group Member 2

Group Member 3

Group Member 4

Group Member 5

San Jose State University - School of Library and Information Science

LIBR 204-16

March 25, 2015

Abstract

Forest Public Library is the subject of a two part organizational analysis. This first part is comprised of a literature review exploring uncooperative library staff behavior, specifically: bullying co-workers, insubordination towards management, filing grievances against the library, and unwillingness to accept and be trained in new technologies and skills. The analysis also includes new mission, vision, and value statements that reflect the library and the community's changing needs in an effort to continue to succeed in playing a vital role in information access. The environmental scan then goes over the characteristics of the library and the community to which it belongs. An analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats follows the environmental scan. This analysis is particularly valuable as Forest Public Library faces a number of issues shared by other public libraries today.

   Keywords: Forest Public Library; public library; organizational change; environmental scan; SWOT

Developing a Strategic Plan for Forest Public Library

Part One: Mission, Vision & Value Statements, Environmental Scan, and SWOT Analysis

Forest Public Library, located in Forest, New Jersey, faces many challenges due to a halted renovation project, stagnant and uncooperative staff members, and geographic barriers that discourage some community members from visiting the library. These problems strain the library's already inadequate budget by funneling much needed funds into litigating grievances, paying fines, and spending money to fix the library facilities. Still, the library remains a thriving hub of community activity, and Forest continues to have a great deal of support for the institution. A strategic plan is needed to help the library overcome its difficulties in order to achieve its promise of excellence in all service areas, to improve staff relations, and to draw in more patrons. A review of the literature on uncooperative library staff is presented, along with an environmental scan, SWOT analysis, and new mission, vision, and value statements.

Literature Review

Libraries continue to be a valuable source of vital and pertinent information, even with the influx of technology and the digital revolution. While some predict that the digital age will bring the centuries-old library industry to an end, the digital age has not and cannot answer all the information needs of the public (Ross & Nilsen, 2000). As professionals who can link digital and print resources, the importance of libraries and librarians irreplaceable. The usefulness of libraries and librarians today has been the concern of researchers and institutions associated with them (Abifarin, 1997; Titangos & Mason, 2009), since libraries are faced with a myriad of problems as a result of the digital revolution.

In the midst of organizational change, management may be confronted with an uncooperative and resistant staff. Forest Public Library, the subject of our environmental scan and SWOT analysis, has undergone many challenges in its recent transitional period, and one of the biggest issues it faces is an uncooperative staff. Issues include bullying, the filing of grievances by staff against management that costs the library thousands of dollars each year, and staff resistance to information technology (IT) utilization. This review will analyze the literature on the lack of cooperation on the part of library staff. It will also explore the types and causes of conflict. The paper finally discusses some suggested steps that may help address the lack of cooperation of library staff.

Resistance to Technological Change

Current discussions about problematic issues concerning librarians revolve around the challenges posed by the digital and technological revolution that have changed how patrons access library materials (Edwards & Walton, 2000; Hudson, 1999; Ramzan, 2004; Ramzan & Singh, 2010). Technological changes have been driven by the needs of the library, as in library housekeeping systems and online database searching, and the needs of the user, as in the provision of public access to networks (Farrow, 1997). These technological changes continue to raise human resource issues. One of those issues is the resistance among certain library professionals and staff to embracing technological change.

As far back as the mid-1990s, researchers such as Rowley (1996) observed that most

veteran librarians were overwhelmed by the new digital and technological systems. Well into the

twenty-first century, the problem still exists of some librarians lacking competence in coping

with the automated library systems. Such functions include: cataloging, serial checking,

circulation, accounting and ordering (Hudson, 1999; Ramzan & Singh, 2010; Ramzan, 2004).

Indeed, the sophistication of information technology has altered old methods of serving library

patrons in complex ways, posing challenges for librarians to cope with.

Some of the problems identified by scholars are lack of knowledge, a phobia of using

computers, and the failure of management to motivate incompetent librarians in this regard

(Hudson, 1999; Edwards & Walton, 2000; Rowley, 1996). The internet and Web 2.0 have

become a necessary part of how business must be done in libraries today (Arif & Mahmood,

2012). Librarians lacking competency in information technology often find themselves in

situations where they are not able to help patrons which results in librarians experiencing low

self-perception for not being able to perform basic expectations (Hudson, 1999; Ramzan, 2004).

Several studies have elucidated the factors associated with staff attitudes regarding the

use of information technology in their libraries. These factors include: age (Farrow, 2007;

Melchionda, 2007; Morris & Venkatesh, 2000; Spacey, Goulding, & Murray, 2004), recency of

attaining professional qualifications (Ramzan, 2004), perceptions of the usefulness of IT

(Spacey, Goulding, & Murray, 2004), level of IT knowledge (Ramzan, 2004), recency of

experience in using IT (Jones, 2002), level of use of IT (Ramzan, 2004; Spacey, Goulding, &

Murray, 2004), and subjective norms (Morris & Venkatesh, 2000; Spacey, Goulding, & Murray,

2004).

Farrow (2007) explains that in the new information era, tensions can arise among staff

with the increased emphasis on training for new skills. Staff who are older and more experienced

may be more resistant to changing their ways during any organizational transition. Older staff

can view automation as a "threat to their way of working" (Farrow, 2007, p. 322). They may

perceive their jobs to be in jeopardy as their own skills become obsolete. Additionally, they may

experience stress and anxiety because their status of being the experienced, competent staff

member may erode as they are not able to grasp the essentials of IT as quickly as the youngest,

newest junior staff members.

In her review of the literature on attitudes and roles of librarians in the age of the internet,

Melchionda (2007) found that more traditional librarians viewed the internet as a threat to the

prestige of their profession. Additionally, many traditional librarians felt their jobs threatened as

new roles and positions called for people better trained in the use of technology. Spacey,

Goulding, and Murray (2004) also found that age affected perceptions of the ease of use of the

internet, with older staff viewing the internet as more difficult to use than their younger

counterparts. They also expressed less confidence in their IT and computer skills compared to younger staff.

Beyond age, Spacey, Goulding, and Murray (2004) found that attitudes of library staff toward using the internet at work were related to whether they intended to use it, with positive attitudes directly correlated to positive intentions to use the internet at work. Also, staff who perceived the internet as useful had more positive attitudes towards it and a higher intention to use it.

Other Sources of Conflict

If librarians are uncooperative, bad tempered, or rude to colleagues or patrons, they can damage the reputation of the library, drive away patrons, and harm staff morale. Allowing negative attitudes to continue unchecked can send the signal that bad behavior is tolerated and even acceptable. There are many ways in which librarians can be uncooperative. Librarians may speak inappropriately to customers, object to requests made by patrons, or ignore patrons. They may also bully and misinform library patrons who most need their attention (Hannabuss, 1998).

On a micro level, librarians may be apathetic or resistant to completing assignments given to them by their supervisors; they may be poor team players with other colleagues and may sometimes indulge in undesirable social behaviors such as gossip, threats of violence, passive-aggressive acts, harassment, and misrepresentations (Clapp, 2011; James, 2002; Spacey, et al.,

2004). Negative and difficult behaviors are often the expression of an underlying problem or

struggles that are not being addressed. Sometimes employees who engage in these behaviors are

simply negative and unhappy people who have morale problems wherever they go (Clapp, 2011).

They may lack self-awareness and repeatedly blame others, bad luck, and favoritism for their

problems.

Another issue that can emerge is role conflict. There may be confusion about

responsibilities and how roles may overlap or duplicate one another (Edwards & Walton, 2000).

This confusion may result in staff becoming territorial in their work and losing sight of the

bigger goal of working together to advance the institution as a whole (Jannetta, 2006). Other

issues that can create conflict include interpersonal conflicts with management and coworkers or

a lack of knowledge or understanding of particular library services and their value.

Some libraries also operate under union contracts and this can create some unintended

and negative consequences for staff-staff and staff-management relationships. Although unions

ostensibly exist to protect workers and promote equitable and fair working conditions, they can

encourage an "us versus them" mentality between staff and management. In a union

environment, organizational change can be hampered by contracts which require all changes to

be carefully negotiated and considered (Johnson, 2002). Both staff and administration may

struggle to make necessary changes or additions to the contract until it is expired. Furthermore,

unions can make it difficult to get rid of underperforming employees, particularly those with

seniority. This can result in management and staff having to endure the negative behaviors of

problematic staff with little recourse.

Overcoming Staff Resistance to IT Utilization

It is the recommendation of scholars that the first step to overcoming resistance to IT

utilization is to work at developing openness and flexibility in librarians to assimilate new

technologies (Ramzan, 2004; 2007; Melchionda, 2007; Hudson, 1999). As observed by

Melchionda (2007), "A native inclination to face changes, an understanding of new technologies

and of clients' needs and a proactive service attitude will be the winning traits to drive librarians

into the digital future"(p. 135). It should not be taken for granted that trained librarians

automatically possess the knowledge and skills of innovative computer technology or the

functions of new software and computer applications. The very fast pace at which IT is evolving

makes previously acquired skills of librarians quickly obsolete. These skills need to be updated

with the evolving technologies to keep the utility of library professionals and staff abreast with

patrons' needs.

Management should make it a policy to hold frequent in-service training for all librarians.

Older and technophobic librarians should be guaranteed a friendly learning environment that

drives away the fear of innovation and instills in them the confidence to adopt new IT resources.

Regular in-service training is paramount to ensure familiarity with and mastery of these IT

novelties that have now become an integral part of the information professions today (Janes,

2002).

Overcoming negative behaviors in the workplace:

Negative behaviors in the workplace can stem from two sources: librarians'

idiosyncrasies, and how librarians handle patrons' negative attitudes in the library.

Idiosyncratically, librarians may engage in gossip, spread unfounded rumors in the workplace,

libel, and undermine colleagues. Too often, some of these behaviors get overlooked by

management and nothing is done to curb them. There should be workplace policies that

discourage such undesirable employee habits. Culprits should be punished after reprimands fail

to change such behaviors. Other steps may help stop or alleviate these problems, such as

reassigning offenders to different sections where it may be difficult to indulge in negative acts.

Dealing with Underperforming Employees

To solve the problem of underperforming staff, there must be proper management

apparatus in place. Equitable distribution of the workforce across shifts and departments and

proper placement of staff in their areas of interest or expertise are some of the successful

approaches. Layoffs, loss of jobs, and expansions of service, among others, have led to a smaller

workforce with each employee carrying a heavier workload (Hudson, 1999). Workers confronted

with unrealistic expectations may underperform due to job-related stress. Ultimately, it is

paramount that management take an interest in the work of each staff member. Where

deficiencies are noted, management should confer with the staff member involved to determine

the underlying cause. Touching base will help identify the problem of underperformance more

effectively and will promote efficiency within the library.

Conclusion

Rapid technological developments have impacted libraries in profound ways. As libraries

reconsider new roles and services, conflicts will continue to emerge among and between staff

and management of libraries. Although not all conflict is negative, uncooperative staff can inhibit

libraries from performing at their best. To prevent and overcome negative behaviors in the

workplace, libraries should include regular, mandatory training for staff, establish of clear

policies for work and behavior, enforce consequences for problem behaviors, and procure a

flexible staff open to learning new skills. Managers should work to create a climate of trust by

rewarding staff who make positive and exemplary contributions to the workplace, and by

judiciously assigning staff to areas of work according to their strengths and interests.

Forest Public Library Vision, Mission, and Value Statements

Vision

Our vision for Forest Public Library is that of a community hub that inspires literacy, creativity, and on-going learning for both patrons and staff. Our library will create a space where members of the community come to learn, share, and connect with one another.

Mission

At Forest Public Library our mission is to build a community environment that fosters education, engagement, and enjoyment through the use of diverse programs that celebrate members of the community and expand relationships between patrons and staff. We are dedicated to creating an innovative library that uses emerging technologies to give clear access to information services.

Values

Forest Public Library will achieve these goals by providing excellent service to our patrons in the form of staff that are both knowledgeable about library services and current and emerging technologies. The library will provide staff with ongoing training to keep them up to date on the latest technological innovations. In order to chart our progress and see areas of opportunity we encourage both staff and patrons to provide feedback on how we are doing and what changes we could implement to preserve our welcoming and accessible library. Our knowledgeable staff can assist patrons with finding solutions to their information needs and can teach patrons how to use technology in the library to help them achieve their information goals.

In addition to these educational opportunities, the library will provide a variety of programming

for all ages, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds to build a strong sense of community at

the library.

Environmental Scan

History and Community

The borough of Forest Public Library was primarily an agricultural community until the

mid-20th century. By the 1930's the area was still a small town with less than 1,000 residents.

After World War II the population boomed as the area transformed into a suburb for commuters

to New York City. During this population growth, the library moved from a small room over a

firehouse into the Ponds Memorial Building, a public works structure built in 1936. At that time,

the entire library collection fit on the main floor but by 1971 the library added a balcony to

expand the growing adult collection and the building's basement was renovated into a children's

department.

In 1998 voters approved a $2.6 million referendum to renovate and expand the library

facilities. Construction began in 2002 but the work was delayed and expenses mounted. In 2005,

the borough declared the contract in default. Since then, the library was able to open a new wing,

but the original building remains unusable. The new wing houses the children's collection on the

main floor, the adult collection in the basement, and the teen collection in a corner of the adult

area. The library has hired a new architect and is in the process of continuing the renovation

(Birchenough, 2013).

The community is highly educated and family oriented. 96.3% of the population is in

possession of a high school diploma, 52.7% have bachelor's degrees, and 21% have graduate

degrees. The community is well known for being a great place to raise children and 42% of

households have children under 18 (Macmillan, 2001). Seniors make up a large portion of the

community as well, with 26% of households having someone 65 years or older. Median

household income comes in at $113,965, making the borough fairly affluent (U.S. Census Data,

2010). There are good public schools and the area boasts a low crime rate.

Funding

The majority of funding for the borough's library comes from property taxes. According

to New Jersey state law, public libraries receive at least ⅓ mil, or $.33 for every $1,000 of

assessed property values from their boroughs. While the high property values and median

income of the area ensure this is no small amount, it is not sufficient to cover the library's

operating costs. The funding is not necessarily consistent, and if property values fluctuate, so

will the budget. In 2014, the borough approved a one-time supplemental bonus for the library to

make up for the budget shortfall, but it is unrepeatable and un-extendable.

The library also receives a small amount of state aid which provides additional funding

per capita. At the present, the library state aid program is only 34% funded, amounting to about

$.42 per person annually. Full funding through state aid would provide $1.11 per person (New

Jersey Library Association, 2015). Due to the tight budget, special projects are often dependent

on donations from the community.

Economic Trends

As indicated by the high median income, the borough is strong economically. Census

data from 2010 to 2013 indicated a 1.6% growth in the overall population of the town, which

may bring a proportional increase in property taxes if more people move to the area and purchase

homes (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Most likely due to the higher education level in the area,

Forest residents enjoy lower unemployment and higher pay than most of the state. Despite its

affluent patrons, the library budget has little room left for materials since such a large portion is

devoted to personnel. These costs have caused the library to have shortfalls.

Political Trends

Currently the New Jersey Library Association is sponsoring a petition to increase funding

for the state aid program so that libraries in need can receive additional funding. The petition is

aiming for 5.5 million dollars in aid to be added to state funds for libraries. Currently there are

two bills in the New Jersey legislature to increase the state per capita aid program by 3 million

dollars (New Jersey Library Association, 2015).

Another political issue the Forest Public Library is facing is tied to the new Common

Core Curriculum. The state of New Jersey adopted the Common Core Standards in 2010 (New

Jersey Department of Education, 2015). The new standards have led to an increased demand for

leveled fiction. The concept of leveling fiction and organizing or labeling children's sections of

libraries by level is opposed by the American Library Association, and restricting access

"violates the Library Bill of Rights" (American Library Association, 2010). While the library

wishes to meet the public's needs, it must also adhere to its principles and the reality of the

monetary issues it faces. The curriculum is also controversial, and many local teachers and

parents reject anything that ties into the common core. Anecdotally, many of the families opted

out of this year's testing.

Sociocultural factors

The town is predominantly white (92.7%), with Asians as the second largest demographic

at 4.2%, and Hispanics, African-Americans and other races making up the other 3.1%. There is a

small immigrant population in the borough. The immigrant population present tends to use the

library and attend storytimes to expose children to English. The borough trends older, with the

median age being 40 years. 9,442 (77.2%) of the town's residents are over 18. The library sees

heavy use from primary and secondary school aged children, who account for about 22.5% of the

population, and 42% of households in the community have children. The ratio of men to women

is nearly even, with 51.1% of people being female, and 48.9% male. As of 2010 there are 4,335

occupied housing units, and 4,041 of those units are owner occupied, so 93.2% of residents own

their own residence which is a boon as most library funding is derived from property taxes (U.S.

Census Bureau, 2010).

Vendors

The library is a member of the Bergen County Cooperative Library System (BCCLS).

BCCLS (pronounced "Buckles") is a consortium of 75 libraries, 61 of which are in the borough's

home county. Library patrons can borrow books and other materials from any of the libraries in

the consortium. BCCLS purchases library software and digital collections for the entire

consortium, so Forest Public Library gets these services cheaper than it could individually but

does not have the opportunity to pick and choose which vendors it uses for these services.

As far as their physical collection, Forest Public Library orders most books from Baker &

Taylor using a 40% group discount. All media items are purchased using Amazon. Occasionally,

Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and other retailers are used for items that are in-demand. Furniture

and supplies are occasionally purchased from library vendors such as DEMCO and Brodart but

recently the library has been able to get better deals by purchasing supplies from Staples and

furniture from IKEA. However, IKEA won't honor the library's status as a tax exempt

organization, creating potential financial issues since government organizations are not allowed

to pay taxes in New Jersey.

Competitors

The Forest Public Library's main competitor is one due to geography. Railroad tracks

divide the area in two with a library on each side. Each side's population therefore tends to go to

whichever library is on their side of the tracks, so Forest Public Library does suffer from a loss of

potential patrons to the other library. The affordability and convenience of downloadable and

streamable content also provides competition for the library. As mentioned before, the

community has a high median average income, and so can easily fit such content into their

personal budgets, decreasing their need for library services such as checking out books, cds, or

dvds.

Technological Developments

Like most public libraries, Forest Public library provides free wi-fi access for users, as

well as having computers for use. Some of the computers are owned and maintained by the

library. Others are owned and maintained by BCCLS and are on a separate network with separate

printers. This can cause confusion for patrons and staff. The library has a printer, scanner,

photocopier, and a fax machine available for use by patrons. In addition to this, the library also

boasts an AWE all-in-one touchscreen early literacy computer station for helping young children

learn. In its collection, the library boasts 12,710 e-books, 1,008 audiobooks, 2,943 DVDS, and

65 video games. The Forest Public library does not circulate personal computing devices such as

laptops, e-readers, or tablets (Borough of Forest, 2015).

In recent years, the previous director did not feel she had a comprehensive grasp of new

and emerging library technologies, and also acknowledged that some staff members were not

technologically savvy. As a result, there was less focus and emphasis on working with new

technology. The new director, however, is a tech enthusiast and may seek to invest part of the

library budget in that area.

Legislative and Regulatory Developments

There has been a history of litigation by the borough concerning the 2002 renovation.

Failure to complete the renovation along with ballooning costs caused the borough to declare the

contract in default. The litigation was finally settled for $140,000 in favor of the library, however

$272,000 was spent in legal fees (Birchenough, 2013). The construction was done so poorly and

caused enough damage that the library is not currently up to code. Other legal matters continue

to plague the library as well, mostly due to staff members filing grievances with the union.

Dealing with these grievances has cost the library thousands of dollars.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

    Community.

Forest residents value municipal services, including the library. Since the community is

consistently ranked on regional and national lists of good towns for families, many younger

residents were attracted to the town particularly for these services. Long-time residents also

value the boost that these accolades give the real estate market, and want to continue to cultivate

the town's reputation. Residents demonstrate their support of the library with their usage of

services. 61% of the residents have library cards. In 2014 the library conducted 7,145 reference

transactions, served 8,672 computer users, and checked out 90,507 physical items in addition to

2,732 electronic items (Borough of Forest, 2015). Despite heavy library use, there is little

tension between library staff and patrons. Library staff seldom has to deal with behavior

problems or irate library users since most patrons are respectful. The few disruptions usually

come from the middle school users during the peak after-school hours.

The town council also supports the library, enough that in 2014 they granted the library a

one-time supplemental bonus of $35,000 to cover operating expenses for the year. The Library

Board is typically supportive of the director and has a comprehensive vision of library service.

The appointees serve as liaisons between municipal leaders and the library and are strong

resources for collaboration. The borough's Department of Public Works maintains the library

facility and is willing to assist with special events such as "Truck Day," in collaboration with the

library and local emergency services.

The school district is also eager to collaborate with the library and allows outreach visits

both in the school and in field trips to the library and will publicize library events. The Friends

Organization is also very dedicated and raises money for the library through special events,

including a large annual book sale.

Youth Services.

Since 42% of Forest households have children under 18 (United States Census, 2010),

and many older residents are regular caregivers for their grandchildren, youth services are very

important to the community. Children's programs, especially storytimes, are popular and well-

attended. In 2014, in coordination with an early literacy initiative called Raising Readers with

the Forest Public Library, storytime schedules became consistent and year round with no

registration, participation caps, or residency requirements.   The storytime curriculums have been

revamped to be more fun and interactive with songs and movement at every level.

In addition to storytimes, regular children's programs include music programs, therapy

dog visits, drop-in crafts, and teen maker programs. The library also offers special events and

performances throughout the year, particularly during the 8 week summer reading program.

Since the library is located next to the middle school, some classes will visit during the year to

search for books for assignments. The middle school students are heavy library users with 60-80

students in the library every day after school. All kindergarten students receive a library card

through the library's outreach program with the school.

The children's collection is also improving to meet the needs of the community. Forest

Public Library received a grant from the NJ State Library in 2013 to have the SWAT Team

Consultants visit the children's room and make suggestions for the library to improve service in

this area. Among the team's top recommendations was a complete overhaul of the long-neglected

book collection. Since summer 2013, 40% of the books have been removed from the collection.

This allowed staff to make more room to meet industry standards for shelf capacity, create

displays, and to remove all books from the top shelf which is out of reach for most children.

Along with the weeding, came an intensive project to rebuild the collection by purchasing

attractive copies of classics, updated nonfiction, and more modern contemporary fiction,

especially high-demand titles. Thanks to this revitalization, circulation of juvenile materials

increased 6% in 2014(Borough of Forest , 2015).

BCCLS.

As a member of the BCCLS consortium, Forest Public Library is connected to 75 public

libraries. Forest Public Library patrons benefit from being able to use their cards at any system

library to borrow items and can also return items to any member library. Items are also shipped

between member libraries to fulfill patron requests. As a small organization, Forest Public

Library benefits from access to larger and better funded collections. BCCLS membership also

supplies Forest Public Library with some expensive technology that the library could never

finance individually. BCCLS also pays for online content including databases, Overdrive, Zinio,

Hoopla, and Naxos. In fact, BCCLS has been a trailblazer in trying software intended for multi-

branch libraries for use by a large consortium (Bergen County Library System, 2015).

BCCLS also provides technology training through webinars and through small classes on

site in a computer lab at BCCLS headquarters. BCCLS offers meetings to share ideas for

programming, collection development, and policy. Some training sessions will highlight new

technology or allow library staff to preview equipment in person. With these free programs, even

libraries with tight budgets can afford to send staff for training.

Weaknesses

Facility.

The library facility is one of the biggest weaknesses faced by the library. Since

renovations were never completed, the space is too small and does not have a logical flow to it.

The adult collection is stuck in a basement with no natural light. The only meeting spaces

available for library and community programs are the staff room and the storytime room. Both

spaces are problematic. When groups are using the staff room, library employees do not have a

place to take breaks. Groups that use the storytime room are often disturbed by the noise of

children playing and displace the young people who like to congregate there. The library does

not have a space for teens, despite the heavy library use by this age group.

Every day after school the children's room is filled with middle school students who

crowd the room and are intimidating for younger children and families. The YA books occupy a

small corner of the adult department downstairs and teens rarely venture down there since there

is no space to sit and they are not allowed to talk in that area. The children's collection is

awkwardly divided in the space and staff have a limited line of sight due to 6 foot tall

bookshelves angled throughout the room. The building also has severe engineering and design

problems. Automatic double doors in the lobby open wide leaving circulation staff at the front

desk freezing in the winter and too hot in the summer. Bathrooms are not adequately ventilated

causing a noticeable sewage smell. Lighting is weak and dim so it is difficult for staff and

patrons to see. The building also does not meet fire codes or safety standards.

Since litigation regarding the failed renovation and construction has been settled, the

borough has hired a new architect and is currently in the design phase for a new project. While

this has an opportunity to improve the library visually and functionally, the community is

understandably skeptical and cautious. Also much of the budget may be dedicated to just fixing

safety issues and community members may end up feeling they do not get as much benefit from

the renovation as they expect. If this project goes well it could be wonderful for the library.

However, if the renovation goes over-budget or does not impress community members, it could

turn them against the library.

Geography.

In addition to a flawed facility, Forest Public Library struggles due to geography. The

train tracks that make the community a desirable home for commuters also run straight through

town. Residents who live across the tracks prefer to frequent the neighboring library on their

side. The library across the tracks is a beautiful new facility with a budget of $1.4 million. Their

better funding is reflected by a larger, newer collection and more programs that require pricey

materials or paid presenters.

Library lovers cannot be blamed for taking advantage of this nearby BCCLS member.

However, their reciprocal borrow hurts the reputation and funding of Forest Public Library. In

2013, Forest Public Library was fined because 23% of their cardholders' checkouts took place at

the neighboring library. Since then the library has made improvements to the collection and

programs to try to entice residents to return to their home library. The efforts do seem to be

helping as in 2014 borrowing by Forest Public Library patrons at the neighboring library was

down by more than 5%. Unfortunately, the physical boundary of the train tracks and the allure of

a better funded library will continue to draw borrowers away from Forest Public Library. In order

to attract residents, Forest Public Library should enhance customer service and educate residents

that their patronage helps the library.

Stagnation.

The library staff at Forest Public Library has unusually low turnover. While in many

cases experienced staff are an advantage, at this library they are a problem. All of the full-time

staff members have been in their current positions for at least a decade, with many serving for 25

years or more. This permanent staffing has prevented administration from building a strong team

or bringing in candidates with new ideas. It has also led to mounting personnel costs that cannot

be reduced. To make the problem even worse, the full-time staff are out of touch with current

library practices and inept with technology, so the part-time staff and a few temps are needed just

to supplement their outdated skills. This leads to uneven coverage with 95 hours of weekly

staffing in the children's room, but only 24 hours in the adult department.

The union has also fostered an environment of anti-management thinking. The shop

steward held the view that any consideration for the bigger picture of the organization or

cooperation with administration was dangerous for staff. Her leadership was particularly litigious

and even small complaints escalated into formal grievances that cost the library thousands of

dollars a year to fight. In this anti-management culture, any staff members who are willing to

cooperate with the administration are considered traitors. This antagonism leads to bullying of

staff members who attempt innovation or are willing to work with the director. The bullying

ranges from criticism of co-workers to physical threats, and has been severe enough to cause two

library assistants to leave within the past 3 years. Due to civil service laws and union restrictions,

the library is stuck with the current staff until they retire.

Opportunities

Forest Public Library is on the verge of some big changes that provide opportunities for

improvement. A promising new director who lives in town took over in March 2015. Architects

are planning for a renewed renovation of the library facility. Patrons are feeling rejuvenated by

the refreshed children's department. Long-time staff are close to retirement which will allow the

organization to pursue a more positive and affordable staffing model. Also, due to the strong

community connections, Forest Public Library can only benefit by increasing outreach to the

schools and community organizations. This outreach can generate support in the form of

donations, increased library use, and community awareness and engagement.

In the past year, Forest Public Library has already seen the advantages that change

provides. Thanks to extensive collection development, merchandising, advertising, and improved

programs, library attendance and circulation are up. The town feels enthusiastic and proud of the

potential of the library. Hopefully, Forest Public Library can embrace the positive momentum of

these improvements, and continue to modernize and grow.

Threats

Forest Public Library faces a common threat with many public libraries, particularly in affluent areas: on-demand content. While the library does offer some streaming content and free downloads, these services are not particularly popular. Most of the residents in the area can afford to purchase their own materials, and will do that when it is more convenient. Residents do not mind paying for media on iTunes or Amazon; especially when digital files do not require travel time or waiting, and should work flawlessly as opposed to scratched library discs. Many residents will also buy popular books if there are too many patrons waiting on the request list. In order to attract patrons, the library must think carefully on what services the residents actually want the library to provide. The library must offer something different from what is available to purchase.

<div align="center">

Conclusion

</div>

Forest Public Library, despite budget and personnel problems, is a valuable resource for its community. It provides popular programs for youth of all ages in addition to standard information services. Though it lacks the facilities and collections of the nearby rival library, it has seen increased use by patrons over the past year. During a time when many libraries are seeing increased budget cuts, this library's community supplied additional funding to ensure the library could meet its financial needs. All of these factors signal a positive outlook for the library.

Going forward, the library can take steps to address the weaknesses and threats outlined in the

SWOT analysis and to continue building on its strengths and opportunities. Doing so will ensure

the continued support from the community that is vital to any public library.

<div align="center">References</div>

Abifarin, A. (1997). Motivating staff in Nigerian university libraries. *Library*

    Management, 18, 124-128. doi:10.1108/01435129710166437

American Library Association. (2010, January 16). Questions and answers on labeling and

    rating systems. Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/

    interpretations/qa-labeling

Arif, M., & Mahmood, K. (2012). The changing role of librarians in the digital world: Adoption

    of web 2.0 technologies by Pakistani librarians. *The Electronic Library, 30*, 469 – 479.

    doi:10.1108/02640471211252184.

Bergen County Library System. (2015, March 12). What is 'Buckles.' Retrieved from

    http://www.bccls.org/about_BCCLS/what_is_bccls.shtml

Birchenough, M. (2013, May 2). Oakland public library renovation hits a high water mark.

    Franklin Lakes-Oakland Suburban News. Retrieved from http://www.northjersey.com

Borough of Forest. Forest Public Library. (2015). New Jersey 2014 Annual Data Collection.

Unpublished report.

Edwards, C., & Walton, G. (2000). Change and conflict in the academic library. *Library*

   Management, *21*, 34-41. doi:10.1108/01435120010305618.

Farrow, J. (1997). Management of change: technological developments and human resource

   issues in the information sector. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 12*(5), 319-324.

   Retrieved from http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journal/jmp

Hannabuss, S. (1998). Bullying at work. *Library Management, 19(5)*, 304-310.

   doi:10.1108/01435129810218483

Hudson, M. P. (1999). Conflict and stress in times of change. *Library Management, 20,* 35-38.

   doi:10.1108/01435129910248669

Janes, J. (2002). Digital reference: Reference librarians' experiences and attitudes. *Journal of the*

   American Society for Information Science and Technology, 53(7)*,* 549-566. Retrieved

   from https://www.asis.org/jasist.html

Jannetta, C. (2006). Handling gatecrashers: conflict management and resolution. *Legal*

   Information Management, 6(1), 28-30. Retrieved from http://journals.cambridge.org/

   action/displayJournal?jid=LIM

Johnson, C. F. (2002). Union staff and customer service: do they collide? *Public Libraries,*

   41(3), 136-137. Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/pla/publications/publiclibraries

MacMillan, D. (2001, November). Great places to raise kids for less. *Businessweek.*

Retrieved from http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/toc/11_27/B4235magazine.htm

Melchionda, M. G. (2007). Librarians in the age of the internet: their attitudes and roles. *New*

Library World, 108(3/4), 123-140. Retrieved from http://www.emeraldinsight.com/

loi/nlw

Morris, M. G., & Venkatesh, V. (2000). Age differences in technology adoption decisions:

implications for a changing workforce. *Personnel Psychology, 53*(2), 375-403. Retrieved

from http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1744-6570

New Jersey Library Association. (2015). *Petition to increase per capita state aid.* Retrieved from

http://www.njla.org

Ramzan, M. (2004). Effects of IT utilization and knowledge on librarians' IT attitudes.

The Electronic Library, *22*, 440 – 447. doi:10.1108/02640470410561974

Ramzan, M., & Singh, D. (2010). Factors affecting librarians' attitudes toward IT application in

libraries. *The Electronic Library, 28*, 334 – 344. doi:10.1108/02640471011033675

Ross, C. S., & Nilsen, K. (2000). Has the Internet changed anything in reference? The library

visit study, phase 2. *Reference & User Services Quarterly, 40,* 147-155. Retrieved from

http://journals.ala.org/rusq

Rowley, J. (1996). Motivation of staff in libraries*. Library Management, 17,* 31-35.

doi:10.1108/01435129610119610

Spacey, R., Goulding, A., & Murray, I. (2004). Exploring the attitudes of public library staff to

the Internet using the TAM. *Journal of Documentation, 60,* 550-561. Retrieved from

http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journal/jd

Titangos, H. H., & Mason, G. L. (2009). Learning library 2.0: 23 things @SCPL. *Library*

Management, 30, 44-56. doi:10.1108/01435120910927510.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). *Profile of general population and housing characteristics.*

Retrieved from http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/

productview.xhtml?src=bkmk