The Management of Archives: A Research Agenda

PAUL H. McCARTHY

Abstract: The author outlines the need for the development of a research agenda on the management of archives as the basis for the significant changes and innovation required of archives and archivists in order to become more effective and to meet the needs of their constituencies in the next generation. Fundamental changes in the political, technological, and cultural environment in which archives function will require more competent archival managers, more effective archival programs, and a profession more inclined to view its needs and issues from a management perspective. Recommended areas of research include the development of management competency models for archivists; the study of institutional culture, organizational effectiveness, and change management; the analysis of management education needs and delivery; and the evaluation and development of guidelines and standards for archival programs. The role and responsibility of individual archivists and archival institutions to develop this agenda is also outlined.

About the author: *Paul H. McCarthy is University Archivist and Head of the Alaska and Polar Regions Department of the Rasmuson Library at the University of Alaska; he is currently serving as the Acting Director of the library.*

AT LEAST FOUR FACTORS will dramatically affect the operations of any archives during the next ten to fifteen years: (1) the continuing information explosion; (2) the development and use of sophisticated electronic media to transfer, store, and make accessible vast amounts of information; (3) a dramatic change in the demographic characteristics of the work force; and (4) increased competition for public sector funding. The increase in and rapid transmission of information will continue to change significantly the nature of archival materials. The shrinking work force simultaneously will get older and be comprised of a larger percentage of minorities whose academic preparation will be less adequate than that of the population in general, increasing the competition for skilled, educated staff.[1] Increasing competition for public sector funding will heighten the pressure on archives for effective and efficient management. As part of the public service economy, archives are not immune to the global economic and technological developments affecting the private economy. "Adapt or die,"[2] the battle cry of the business community during the past several years, has been reinforced by the crises the United States economy has experienced in the latter part of 1987. Factors such as these will set the parameters for archival programs and emphasize the need for change and innovation in the years ahead.

As people and professionals, archivists may either be drawn by their vision or be captured by their crises. We may either establish the momentum allowing us to navigate the sea of change, with some expectation of reaching our destination, or we will be buffeted by the tides of circumstance and fate. Archivists must seize the initiative and forge the archival vision. The sound perspective needed to develop the vision to carry archival programs into a meaningful future will be based on a professional research agenda that addresses the need for change. Through research, archivists can appraise critically those program elements that require change, while preserving those elements that are successful. A research agenda in management can help archivists envision a future and then assess and evaluate the methods and techniques needed to obtain that future.

While the definition of management depends on one's perspective, one of the most concise and inclusive definitions is that used by the American Management Association: "Management is getting things done through and with people."[3] This definition encompasses the traditional responsibilities of management as articulated by Lawrence Asa Appley in 1969,[4] with a recognition that many of the responsibilities of current management are accomplished through influencing others in addition to directly exercising managerial authority.[5] Richard

[1]For discussion of the characteristics of the work force in the year 2000, see "Efficiency of Economy's Service Sector Must be Buttresssed, Study for the U.S. Says," *Wall Street Journal*, 3 July 1987, p. 5(W). The article was based on William B. Johnston, et al., *Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the 21st Century* (Indianapolis: Hudson Institution, 1987).

[2]Alan M. Webber, "In This Issue," *Harvard Business Review* 66 (January-February 1988): 4. This issue focuses on the need for innovation in modern American business and suggests many applications appropriate to the nonprofit public-sector service agencies such as archives; see particularly Peter Drucker, "The Coming of the New Organization," 45–53.

[3]American Management Association, *Essentials of Management: Participant Workbook* (New York: American Management Association, 1977), 5. This work contains a number of related definitions of management, but the one cited has the virtue of being both concise and inclusive.

[4]Richard E. Boyatzis, *The Competent Manager* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1982), 16, citing L. A. Appley, *A Management Concept* (New York: American Management Association, 1969).

[5]A particularly illuminating discussion of the importance of influencing others, especially peers, as part of a modern manager's responsibility is in John P. Kotter, *Power and Influence: Beyond Formal Authority* (New York: Free Press, 1985).

E. Boyatzis, in *The Competent Manager,* incorporates Appley's definition and further elaborates the role of the manager: "A person in a management job contributes to the achievement of organizational goals through planning, coordination, supervision, and decision making regarding the investment and use of corporate human resources. A manager is someone who 'gets things done through other people.' The result of the manager's actions can be linked to performance of an organization unit."[6] Peter Drucker, in his classic *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices,* notes that management is inseparable from the tasks to be accomplished.[7] R. Alec Mackenzie, in *Improving Managerial Performance,* sees management as a process that converts resources in an effective manner to achieve objectives focusing on inputs, operations, and outputs.[8] Using a three-dimensional model, Mackenzie states that the input of time, information-knowledge, and human, physical, and financial resources are marshalled by management through operations such as research and development, service/production, marketing, finance, and personnel administration to produce certain desired outputs.[9] Thus, the archival manager is much like the conductor of an orchestra. Assuming a leadership role, the conductor takes personal responsibility for the performance of the group and draws together the professional talents of each member to produce a work that meets the desires of the audience while providing a satisfying experience for each of the contributing members. Management, in essence, is the assumption of responsibility for achieving the goals of the particular unit in a conscious manner by using the resources available, and exercising specific functions that direct and coordinate the activities of others to accomplish those goals. While some might suggest there are fine differences, for the sake of discussion in this article, the terms management and administration are used interchangeably.

There are three broad areas of research relating to the administration of archival programs: the competency of the *individual* practitioner, the development of successful archival *programs,* and a *professionwide* effort to discover new theories of management and innovative ways of applying management practices to solve vexing archival problems. The development of a research agenda for the management of archives seems alternately very obvious, elusive, or extremely difficult. It seems obvious because the flood tide of management literature provides archivists with numerous issues and questions for research. It is elusive and difficult, however, because careful and reflective reading of the section of *Planning for the Archival Profession* dealing with the administration of archival programs does not immediately suggest areas for traditional research efforts.[10] There is a general lack of archival literature focused on the administration of archival programs; rather, archivists have tended to write about the administration of archival *collections.*[11] The relatively few

[6]Boyatzis, *Competent Manager,* 16–17.

[7]Peter F. Drucker, *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 37. A chapter in this classic work, "The Dimensions of Management," pp. 39–48, provides a good summary of the function of management.

[8]Alec Mackenzie, *Improving Managerial Performance* (n.p: R. Alec Mackenzie, 1982), 3–4.

[9]Ibid.

[10]*Planning for the Archival Profession: A Report of the SAA Task Force on Goals and Priorities* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1986), 14–21.

[11]A survey of *Library Literature* (New York: H. W. Wilson) for the last eleven years (1975–1986) reveals few theoretical or applied studies dealing with general archival management issues. Many of the articles cited under administration target the care of records, the application of automated technology, or the description of academic programs. In contrast, the literature cited under administration of libraries is replete with articles that treat problems, opportunities, and career options from a management perspective.

sessions at the annual meetings of the Society of American Archivists (SAA) that have dealt with the needs of archival managers and planners have largely examined management and administration on a symptomatic basis—focusing on specific problems such as hiring and budget—rather than archival programs as a whole.[12]

In spite of these difficulties, I will identify at least one key research opportunity in each of the three areas noted above. Of necessity, these research areas are of an applied nature. Theoretical studies in management are seldom undertaken by managers but, rather, by psychologists, sociologists, engineers, and other academics delving into human motivation, the nature of industrial culture, and operations management. A description of their work and suggested applications of their studies to archival administration and management suggests appropriate research efforts for archivists.

Personal Competency of the Individual Archival Manager

For many years archivists have viewed themselves as scholarly professionals steeped in a sense of history and responsible for the preservation of a documentary heritage to be accessed and interpreted by select scholars. A knowledge of historical sources, theory, and tradition (or more recently of library science); a background in the history of one's institution; and a grounding, if possible, in archival theory were the paramount requirements to be archivists. Managerial skills, if recognized at all, seemed solely related to the preparation of an annual budget and occasional personnel evaluations. The need for a wide array of managerial skills seemed foreign indeed. The institutions for which most archivists worked—colleges and universities and governments—relied on measured development, tradition, and an innate understanding of the institutional mission for direction and management.

The last twenty years have brought the rapid expansion and then severe contraction of higher education and governmental institutions. This cycle sounded the death knell to that more "gentlemanly" tradition of management. Institutions that once saw the business administration specialist as a technician have adopted goals, management by objective, cost accounting, long range planning, and the other accoutrements of modern institutional management. Archivists, prepared for entry into professional life in the traditional ways of history or library science, must now function in an environment in which the development of postgraduate management expertise and skills is critical. Some archivists have picked up the necessary skills "on the fly," while others have floundered. Many archivists have tried to be efficient with the task at hand rather than effective with the task to be done.[13] The development of individual archival managerial competence is necessary, not just to enhance archival programs, but also to ensure their survival and the survival of the historical record. Management training will allow the archivist to function as part of a management team and

[12]A survey of programs from recent annual meetings of the SAA reveals a very small but increasing number of sessions beginning to address specific management topics; sessions dealing with case studies, strategies, and analysis have been offered in recent years. The 1982 Boston meeting made a major effort to feature planning as an integral part of archival administration. In 1987 there were five or six sessions that tackled management issues, largely the result of the formation of the Archives Management Round Table, which made a concerted effort to introduce management related sessions. In contrast, the American Library Association has long had a Library Administration Division which publishes a journal. It is perhaps a sign of the maturing of the archival profession that its practioners increasingly recognize the importance of management.

[13]The differentiation between effectiveness and efficiency is extremely important and is particularly well treated in Drucker, *Management*, 45: "Effectiveness is the foundation of success—efficiency is a minimum condition for survival after success has been achieved. Efficiency is concerned with doing things right. Effectiveness is doing the right things." For a more extensive discussion of the terms, see Richard L. Daft, *Organization Theory and Design* (St. Paul: West Publishing, 1986), 102–28.

to contribute to the welfare of the institution, as well as gaining the support to develop an effective archival program.

The development of effective management education programs for archivists is a significant challenge to the profession, requiring research into the three components identified by Boyatzis in his study of effective job performance: the individual's competencies, job demands, and organizational environment.[14] The initial tendency of many developing management education programs is to focus solely on management functions such as planning, on roles such as leadership, or on tasks such as public relations, with an eye to the institutional environment in which these are carried out. Such training, though it focuses on the job demands and the institutional environment, ignores the competency of the individual involved, missing a critical element in effective performance.

While job demands delineate job expectations and the environment defines the manner in which the individual acts, only the study of individual competency reveals what capabilities are required for effective performance. Understanding competence is the key to understanding effective performance. While archival management training has begun to address the other two elements of performance, little or no attention has been paid to personal competency. According to G. O. Klemp, Jr., "a job competency is an underlying characteristic of a person which results in effective and/or superior performance of a job."[15] Competency based research identifies what is required for the individual to translate knowledge into effective managerial behavior.

The Boyatzis model resulted from a study of over two thousand managers in forty management positions in twelve organizations in both the public and private sector. The intent of the study was to suggest critical behavioral elements of management, an integrated generic model of management, and the issues involved in assisting individual managers to improve their capabilities.

In the model, Boyatzis identifies six management clusters: goal and action management, leadership, human resource management, directing subordinates, focus on others, and specialized knowledge. Within each of these clusters, he outlines competencies and threshold competencies that relate to effective performance. Examples of these competencies include proactivity (goal and management); conceptualization (leadership); use of socialized power[16] (human resource management); and developing others (directing subordinates). The study also analyzes management in terms of the competencies demanded of entry, middle, and executive level managers, suggesting that each management level requires the exercise of different competencies or of the same general competency in differing ways as the individual progresses.[17] Boyatzis notes that different competencies are required of public sector and private sector managers.

Reflection on the competency based model raises significant issues and suggests pertinent research efforts for archival educators and others interested in developing the management capabilities of archivists. Is the model applicable to archives in whole? Are the demands of archival managers the same or significantly different from those of other managers? Are different competencies required of private versus public sector archivists, as suggested by the model? One could begin answering these questions

[14]Boyatzis, *Competent Manager*, 13.

[15]Ibid., 20–21, citing G. O. Klemp, Jr., ed., *The Assessment of Occupational Competence*, Report to the National Institution of Education (Washington, D. C., 1980).

[16]Socialized power is the use of forms of influence by individuals in management positions "to build alliances, networks, coalitions, or teams" to achieve particular results (Boyatzis, *Competent Manager*, 122–23).

[17]Ibid., 225–41.

by identifying the characteristics of the management levels of archivists. The entry level archivist may be responsible for supervising the activities of a few technical or clerical employees, for informing them about their performance, and monitoring their successful completion of specific assignments such as arranging and describing collections. The middle level manager works with the entry level professional both in terms of individual performance and the performance of the work group that he or she supervises. The middle level manager evaluates the contribution of this group to the larger mission of the repository, considering, for example, how well the efforts of the technical services staff facilitate the efforts of the archival reference staff. While coaching workers is still important to the middle manager, it not as significant as it is to the entry level manager. At the executive level, the manager's vision turns outward toward the various constituencies the repository serves, to advocate and represent the interests of the institution. The executive level manager also judges the performance of the middle managers by the performance of the departments they supervise. Such judgments are reached by applying qualitative and quantitative measures (collections processed, users served, record surveys completed) and by evaluating progress toward the goals of the organization rather than by using measures that evaluate individual performance.

Additional questions relate to the development of educational opportunities to ensure the personal competency of archival managers. What are the fundamental elements of the complex management demands in today's archives, and the particular challenges faced by new professionals as they assume their first professional positions as archivists cum managers? What types of educational opportunities would allow archivists to broaden their perspectives of management roles, functions, and competencies? How can such educational programs be developed when no one institution is prepared to accommodate all these needs? What institution, agency, or educational group can best develop or encourage the development of management competency in the individual, while others focus on more traditional management education?

Boyatzis notes that "the changes needed by an effective entry level manager to be effective at a middle level management job are substantial, and probably reflect the most difficult transition in a person's career." He suggests that "organizations should assist managers in these transitions through one of three options: training, career pathing, or special mentoring."[18] What are the changes required of an archivist moving from an entry to middle level position? What steps can the profession take to ensure that younger professionals are more likely to make that transition in the future? What are the appropriate roles for educational institutions, employers, postgraduate trainers, and the profession? Only if these questions are carefully pondered and appropriate research undertaken, can archivists begin to develop the variety of approaches to management education required to meet the needs of budding archivists as well as seasoned veterans. Research that clearly defines the competency needs for entry, middle, and executive level archival managers and contrasts the needs of public sector and private sector archivists would be a very effective initial step in the profession's efforts to improve the managerial performance of archival administrators.

The development of managerial effectiveness will require many archivists to reconsider their role. Research exploring archival managerial behavior, roles, and responsibilities is necessary. For the active hands-on archivist, the movement to in-

[18]Ibid., 225.

creased responsibility may require several significant and often difficult changes. Individual archivists need to consciously reflect on and analyze the elements of their personal management style. Research based on the use of a competency model, such as the "Integrated Competency Model" developed by the American Management Association, can point out the strengths of the individual, and highlight areas in which small or significant changes would substantially improve the individual's management capabilities. An analysis of the application of a competency model to archival work at the entry, middle, and executive management levels will help archivists address personal management requirements at the various career stages and provide information useful in the development of an integrated approach to management education.

The use of a competency based management model will permit archivists to distinguish more clearly between knowledge and practice. Many progressive administrators have approached management from a scholarly perspective, which has primarily focused on time-honored rights, responsibilities, and prerogatives, rather than on an approach that stresses the behaviors that produce good management. The intense study of the five major management areas—planning, organizing, controlling, motivating, and coordinating—may make archival managers more learned in management theory but not necessarily more effective. As Boyatzis has explained, "Unfortunately, it is usually not the lack of knowledge but the inability to use knowledge that limits effective managerial behavior."[19] The fact that knowing is not doing invites the archival manager or would-be manager to delve more deeply into management research and effectiveness theory to develop specific applications to archival operations.

Application of a model to different levels of archival work will suggest to the individual, the archival educator, and the profession appropriate activities to improve archival managerial skills.

The aspiring manager will be more cognizant of the various skills and traits appropriate to different stages of an archivist's career. It will be evident that each level of management requires different competencies or the different exercise of the same competency. This can be a source of both solace and challenge, for failure then may be viewed as a signpost that the archival manager must change behavior to transcend management levels effectively or must exercise a different responsibility for a familiar institutional task. By using such competency models and reaching an accurate self-appraisal, the individual archivist at the entry level and at middle management will be challenged to outline an appropriate strategy combining education, workshops, mentoring, and critical observation that embodies a lifelong commitment to learning. Study and research into modern management, a recognition of its complexity, and an understanding of concepts such as management clusters detailed in the competency model will lead most archivists and the profession to conclude that modern archival management is not a "seat of the pants" operation.

For the experienced executive level archival manager, the use of these models may have less direct personal application but will be quite useful in recognizing the complexity of training required for staff members when promoting staff through various management levels. More critical appraisals of staff competencies will suggest better job "fits" and will permit supervisors to work more carefully with aspiring managers to analyze skill levels and determine ways to strengthen skill areas

[19]Ibid., 4.

that need improvement. Also, since many executive level managers function as role models, it is critical that they thoroughly understand the complexities of modern management and effective performance.

The development of a comprehensive management training program is essential to the profession. Even those archivists relatively proficient in today's techniques need to prepare for the challenges of tomorrow. In an increasingly complex institutional life with an emphasis on productivity and relevance, the demand for competent archival managers will be critical. Research into competency based managerial performance will permit the profession to analyze the management education and training offerings open to archivists; evaluate the gaps, if any, in the array of offerings by educational institutions, agencies, and training groups; and then identify and develop needed training activities, and suggest appropriate courses of study and training to individual archival managers.

If archivists cannot manage themselves and their archival institutions well, they will fall victim to those nonarchival managers who assert that they can do a more effective job. A number of archives have already suffered that fate. Research into management capabilities can help provide the archival profession with effective programs managed by competent archivists.

Effective Archival Programs and Research Needs

The development of effective archival programs is equally important for the profession, and archivists should engage in a variety of strategies to develop more effective programs. Research studies dealing with institutional culture, organizational effectiveness, management of change, the reexamination of archival processes from a management point of view, and the evaluation of alternate ways to provide post-baccalaureate professional and technical training and education are all high priorities for evaluation. Each of these areas can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of archival programs and thus on individual archivists and repositories.

Every institution has a culture. As noted by Boyatzis and confirmed by Deal and Kennedy in *Corporate Culture: the Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life*, the environment in which work is accomplished is a major determinant of effective performance. For some agencies, the impact of institutional culture may be easily downplayed or overlooked; for others, it may be easily ignored as too "soft" and irrational.[20] Many experts see corporate culture as more important to institutional success than structure or strategy.[21] Corporate or institutional culture is a very important element in the development of individual competency, as well as in organizational effectiveness and change management, discussed below.

While archivists recognize the powerful cultural forces that shape the perspectives and values of individuals and groups, it is more difficult to appreciate how these forces shape institutional life without engaging in critical analyses and study. What is the role of corporate culture in archives, and what is the relationship between the culture of the archives and that of its parent agency? A significant research effort could describe, analyze, and evaluate the effect of various institutional cultures on the success of archival programs. To better understand the institutional culture of an archives and its parent agency, research efforts need to examine its business environment, the values that the agency holds as important and transmits to employees, the role models personifying these values, the rites and rit-

[20]Terrence E. Deal and Allen A. Kennedy, *Corporate Cultures: the Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1982), 18. The authors explore the elements of culture in a very understandable way with specific examples relevant to public service agencies.

[21]Ibid., 6.

uals establishing behavioral norms, and the cultural network communicating these elements to members of the organization. For example, upon reflection it seems obvious that a corporate archives, state records agency, and university archives operate in significantly different business environments that have an impact upon the management of these repositories. Likewise, the values and philosophical underpinnings that define success for an individual employee will differ due to the environment and the focus or mission of differently situated archives. It follows, therefore, that the administrative role models and rituals of corporate life, civil service, and academia differ markedly. For instance, the democracy practiced in academic institutions would seem intolerable in the more hierarchical corporate structure. The informal communication network that operates well in one setting would be inadequate in others. Through research, archivists could systematically identify the institutional culture of the various types of archives and compare and contrast these with the culture of the parent institution. Such research could indicate how archivists' professional values are reinforced by or in conflict with the institutional culture of their parent institution. Such research would help archivists to respond more successfully to institutional demands and to plan program development that is more consistent with the expectations of the parent institution. Such research may also indicate that a generic model of archives is not equally suitable for private corporations and public institutions, for small and large programs, for universities and public agencies. It may indicate that commonly held professional values of archivists are not shared by the varied institutions that support archives, explaining in part why programs have failed.[22]

A knowledge of institutional culture may be more important to the public service agency than the private for-profit business. The public sector agency lacks convenient and more objective criteria for success, such as net profit and return on investment, and thus relies on criteria such as client satisfaction and goal achievement, which are less objective and measurable.

For too long, archivists have assumed that others share and thus support the scholarly and educational values esteemed in archives. It is easy to assume that resource allocators share archivists' institutional culture and values. A clear understanding of the place of archives in the cultural and commercial marketplace is the beginning of a growth process. *The Image of the Archivist: Resource Allocators' Perceptions* by Sidney J. Levy initiated this process for the archival profession. Levy explored the attitudes and perspectives about archival programs held by many resource allocators; he often found they varied from archivists' perceptions.[23] Damning by their faint praise, resource allocators candidly and realistically expressed their views of archives and the place of archives in their respective institutions. A series of research studies on the impact of institutional culture on archives will amplify the findings of the Levy report and provide the profession with a planning platform for the future. Such research would provide not only a mirror of reality but a benchmark against which change could be measured.

Another critical area for study is the organizational effectiveness of archival programs. Numerous questions come to mind. Do archival programs accomplish what they set out to and if so, how? Do archivists

[22]Frederick Rose, "In Wake of Cost Cuts, Many Firms Sweep Their History Out the Door," *Wall Street Journal,* 21 December 1987, p. 25.

[23]Sidney J. Levy and Albert G. Robles, *The Image of the Archivist: Resource Allocators' Perceptions* (Chicago: Social Science Research, 1984).

have a clear idea of their repository's mission and primary clientele? How can repositories best ask and answer that primary business question, "What business are we in?"[24] Do repositories achieve their goals by conscious design, by lurching from crisis to crisis, or by proceeding under the assumption that the unspoken goals and values of the administrator are shared by the staff? Do repositories pose and answer basic questions about their existence and mission?

Archival repositories need a "bottom line" as much as do businesses; the achievement of specific program goals is as important to archives as the achievement of a sales goal or profit margin is to business. "Without a shared understanding of goals, leaders and supporters of even the most well-meaning nonprofit will almost inevitably find themselves drawn into activities that diminish and divide the organization, undermining its effectiveness and undercutting its performance."[25] Jerome H. Want, in an article in *Management Review*, stresses the importance of mission development, implementation, and monitoring to effective institutional performance. According to Want, the primary components of corporate mission—purpose, principle business aims, identity, policies, and values—when well articulated, allow corporate mission to be "the driving force for productivity throughout the organization."[26] Siri N. Espy, in *Handbook of Strategic Planning of Nonprofit Organizations*, lays out a realistic planning, implementation, and evaluation process that archivists could use to plan and develop more effective organizations.[27] Espy's process includes analysis of the organization's current "business," the consequences of staying in that business, and the future business desired; evaluation of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; "environmental scanning" or reflection on the environment of the repository[28] and identification of organizational givens; delineation of institutional mission and values; identification of "stakeholders";[29] and the development of goals and objectives. All of these are critical considerations for archivists who desire to develop more effective programs.

Research projects building upon the work of Espy and others that evaluate the program effectiveness of particular archival programs and the general characteristics of successful archival programs should be a high priority for individual archivists and the profession. Analytical profiles or case studies of successful archival institutions should be compiled in order to examine and evaluate organizational effectiveness and to determine the program and staff characteristics that contributed to the respository's growth and development. Whether the studies develop the points suggested by Want or the more extensive measures developed by Espy or other parameters of organizational effectiveness, the publication of in-

[24]This primary business or institutional question, first introduced in Peter F. Drucker, *Management*, 77, is a critical one that each institution must regularly answer and reflect on. The answer is not as obvious as it first appears.

[25]Philip D. Harvey and James D. Snyder, "Charities Need a Bottom Line Too," *Harvard Business Review* 65 (January–February 1987) : 14.

[26]Jerome H. Want, "Corporate Mission: The Intangible Contributor to Performance," *Management Review* 75 (August 1986): 46–50, esp. 48.

[27]Siri N. Espy, *Handbook of Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations* (New York: Praeger, 1986), 10–41.

[28]Environmental scanning is the analysis and evaluation of the opportunities or threats to the organization in the economic, legal or regulatory, political, technological or medical, social, demographic, or competitive areas in which it operates (Ibid., 31).

[29]Stakeholders in the nonprofit organization are individuals who benefit from the services of the agency or who are interested in the organization because its purpose is important to them and is one they will support through funding, contributed services, support, or influence (Ibid., 35).

depth institutional studies would be most helpful to individual archivists seeking to apply similar measures to their own programs.

Critical administrative histories of archives approached from a management point of view, focusing on attitude, perspectives and beliefs, management skills, and techniques utilized, would provide evaluations of the particular management approaches that have made these institutions effective. A well-defined and structured oral history project with current archival administrative leaders might be used to identify the strategies employed to make repositories more responsive to user needs or successful in garnering support from parent institutions. Archives with a long history of success under several directors might be compared with institutions which, while successful as the result of the efforts of a singular individual, have failed to institutionalize techniques to continue that success.

In seeking to strengthen archival programs, the contemporary archival manager must have a very critical eye on the present and a visionary eye directed toward the future. The manager must clearly see what is actually going on in the agency and how effectively it is dealing with problems and responding to needs. The manager must also understand the archives's relative standing to peer agencies within the institution, devoid of the cultural value system and mystique often created and maintained only within the archives and occasionally shared by some of its elite users. A competent manager must be reality based. As Scott Peck said in *The Road Less Traveled*, "We must always hold the truth, as best we can determine it, to be more important, more vital to our self interest, than our comfort. Conversely, we must always consider our personal discomfort relatively unimportant and, indeed, welcome it in the service of the search for truth. Mental health"—and here I would substitute program effectiveness—"is the ongoing process of dedication to reality at all costs."[30] Studies on institutional culture and organizational effectiveness can provide the harsh mirror of reality that will allow archivists to move toward the future with more precision.

Armed now with a more sobered view of the importance of archives, archivists also need a strategy that will allow them to sharply focus that second eye on the future. An effective manager must always try to understand the future as it can be and then move the archival repository to that future, toward what the program can be. Too often people are trapped in the present, replicating what they are, rather than striving to transform themselves into what they can become. An effective administrator should be a transformational leader targeted on the future rather than the transactional administrator focused on the present or past. There is a powerful paradox well articulated by Allan Wheelis in *How People Change:* "The way we understand the past is determined, rather, by the future we desire."[31] In a challenge intended for the business community, but equally applicable to archivists, Noel M. Tichy and David O. Ulrich call for a new brand of leadership to revitalize business in the United States: "New leaders must transform the organizations and head them down new tracks . . . transformational leaders not only make major changes in these three areas (organization's mission, structure, and human resource management), they also evoke fundamental changes in the basic political and cultural systems of the organization."[32] In an era when information sources are exploding and

[30]M. Scott Peck, *The Road Less Traveled: A New Psychology of Love, Traditional Values and Spiritual Growth* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), 51.

[31]Allen Wheelis, *How People Change* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 115.

[32]Noel M. Tichy and David O. Ulrich, "SMR Forum: The Leadership Challenge—A Call for the Transformational Leader," *Sloan Management Review* 26 (Fall 1984): 59–68. A more detailed discussion of the man-

the methods of communication and information storage and use are changing in fundamental ways, archives and archival leaders must change dramatically to meet the new demands. Archivists must transform their institutions into what they can be! An understanding of the events that trigger change; of the technical, political, and cultural forces that resist change; and of how the transformational leader creates vision, mobilizes commitment, and institutes change in institutions will provide archivists with useful strategies and techniques to make the necessary fundamental changes required for archives to survive and succeed.

An appropriate research effort could study the development and articulation of transformational theory as it relates to archival administration, with examples drawn from the experience of various repositories. Archivists could investigate the creation of the archival vision, the nature and mobilization of commitment, and the elements of change that relate to archival programs. There are natural and vital links in these studies to those previously mentioned relating to institutional culture and organizational effectiveness.

Envisioning the future is not easy. It requires extensive reading, creative thought, research, and demanding reflection using both nontraditional, nonlinear thought processes as well as precise, logical, methodical analysis. Archivists must challenge the traditional approaches, keeping those that are effective and, through applied research, determine new approaches that will meet program demands.

To do this, archivists must re-think and challenge the assumptions, patterns of work, and behavior used for the last several generations in archival administration. If administration and management mean "to take charge of, to take responsibility for," archivists must critically analyze how they handle the flood of materials that come into archives. Archivists must recognize that no matter how stringent and sophisticated the review process, more records will be preserved than can be easily handled; no matter how large a staff the archives can employ, the volume of records will exceed the staff's capabilities to arrange and describe using traditional methods. For years archivists have lamented the growing backlog of collections and the lack of staff to process it. As managers, archivists must break from the traditional methods for handling archival materials.

Hospital and emergency medical personnel use the concept of "triage," the allocation of treatment to patients according to a system of priorities designed to maximize the number of survivors during a disaster or emergency situation. The medical appraisal and strategy of allocation of services is determined upon the initial contact with the victim.

Facing a similar crisis situation with records, archivists likewise might employ such an approach. As collections grow, backlogs will increase. Voluminous records, created at great expense, will experience only marginal use.[33] Archivists' hope that additional staff and money will permit archives to become current becomes increasingly unrealistic. While more precise appraisal policies may winnow the amount of records flooding into the archives, archivists could profitably adopt the notion of triage for documentary materials.

It is a management responsibility to recognize that a strategy, no matter how useful in the past, is no longer effective. The ar-

agement of change is contained in Noel M. Tichy, *Managing Strategic Change: Technical, Political and Cultural Dynamics* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1983).

[33]Dennis Kneale, in "What Becomes of Data Sent Back From Space? Not a Lot, as a Rule," *Wall Street Journal*, 12 January 1988, p. 1, describes what is becoming a modern information crisis. The data acquisition capabilities of modern science, particularly space science, have outrun the capability of software and staff to utilize collected information. Scientists study only 10 percent of the information; information specialists have been able to process only approximately 1 percent of the data. The advent of desk top publishing may cause a similar crisis in archives in the near future.

chival manager must be prepared to call into question the soundness of professional assumptions and perspectives given realistic view of the future. For archivists, a continuing challenge is to review, innovate, and reconceptualize archival processes to meet current needs. The archival manager must view the repository program as an integrated system, rather than viewing service to users, access to collections, and administration of collections and facilities as distinct management areas. Research into the concept of information triage and further examination of "backlog management" will enable archivists to deal more effectively with modern collections. What level of processing can be carried out within a reasonable time frame and will benefit the maximum number of users? Which records should receive priority treatment? How much is the archives willing to spend to preserve records for popular or scholarly use? Which records should be given little or no processing, thus shifting more of the burden of understanding the collection over to the researcher? Determining the level of processing, estimating the related costs, identifying users benefited, and reshaping collection policies according to a brutally realistic view of the future are high-risk, high-cost management decisions because staff time, once allocated and expended, cannot be recalled; collections not accessioned or thoroughly processed may never be accessioned or reprocessed. Archival managers must treat the archives in all its components as a cohesive, integrated system and must carefully envision the future in order to answer accurately these questions. Studies relating to minimal level cataloging and backlog management may suggest more satisfactory approaches.[34] Extensive critiques of institutional services by knowledgeable users, long a business technique, might provide archival managers with a new perspective of operations, furnishing the ideas needed to reconceptualize services to better meet user needs.

We must re-think the archival paradigm conceptually and eliminate or analyze such frustrating problems as backlog. Also, archivists' credibility with resource allocators depends upon the ability of archival managers to design and carry out the mission of their agencies, in control of their destinies rather than as victims of circumstance, the image which many archives project. If archivists are unwilling to make these difficult decisions, someone less informed will.

The recent need to reduce the work force in private industry and public agencies has led to a reevaluation of the provision of specialized services. In many cases, managers have found it more efficient to outplace services, or contract for consultants, or temporarily hire personnel for specialized services than to expand the permanent work force to meet those needs. In reevaluating functions of archival programs, archivists also face a number of similar "make-or-buy" decisions. Projects investigating the comparative advantages of outplacement and contracting versus the in-house provision of services could be very useful. The recent increase in archival consultants and itinerant archivists has accelerated the development of a talented pool of archival subject and process specialists. Research suggesting how this pool could be best utilized on a contract, outplaced, or temporary-hire basis would facilitate archives' access to specialized talent on a demand basis without the consequent growth in staff and institutional overhead.

There are several other areas in which research on alternate provision of needed services would be beneficial. Many archives already use a separate conservation

[34]Several interesting perspectives of the successes, perceived failures, and assumptions of seeking an alternative level of intellectual control such as minimal-level cataloging in libraries is contained in Karen L. Horny, "Minimal-Level Cataloging: A Look at the Issues—A Symposium," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 11, no. 6 (1986): 332–42 and following articles.

service for item-level processes. While the development of in-house conservation capabilities is the ideal for which many archivists strive, only the largest archives have the need and the budget to realize this ideal. The use of an outside conservation lab is the result of a make-or-buy decision. Other conservation services might be dealt with similarly. A conservation survey and the development of an institutional strategy for dealing with conservation problems are natural outgrowths of the conservation piecework service for which many repositories already contract. By extension, by using conservation specialists, archives could formulate strategic preservation plans much sooner and more precisely than they could by relying solely on current staffs. Studiès of the actual costs of conservation efforts of the largest institutions and the development of cost/benefit ratios applicable to smaller institutions can provide meaningful data for decision making in smaller institutions.

Likewise, research evaluating and measuring the effectiveness of contracting for, out-placing, or temporarily hiring for discrete parts of the traditional processes of arrangement and description could be particularly effective. If utilized systematically, archivists with processing specialties can meet particular repository needs, especially for intricate or extensive collections. Initially, experiments evaluating the regular and systematic use of consultants to analyze collections and to provide strategic work plans could be done. The extension of these consultative services to the actual arrangement and description processes might be investigated as effective management practice in the future. Indeed, in an unplanned and uncoordinated way, archives are already practicing this when, often with outside funding, they use specialists to process paticularly significant collections. Such ad hoc use of consultants deserves careful scrutiny and further elaboration and refinement.

The use of specialists to assist with strategic planning, collection management, and the development of funding are also management possibilties in the public sector that parallel current practice in the private sector. One respected management consultant envisions a future in which businesses and institutions have fewer core staff members and utilize the talents of specialists on a regular basis.[35] Research by archivists providing basic information about the people comprising this proposed pool of specialists, careful analysis of the cost of comparable projects using specialists versus permanent staff, and the development of a matrix of values with associated costs could help archivists evaluate more carefully all available options.

Part of the virtue of outplacing, contracting for, or using temporary services lies in the fact that they allow larger institutions to utilize individuals and small groups, who often can act more quickly and at a lower cost than a large institution. Within a large bureaucracy, the use of incentives and better management may encourage improved performance paralleling that exercised by individuals and smaller groups outside the institution. The use of incentives coupled with careful task analysis, especially within larger archival institutions, is another fruitful area for research. The National Archives and Records Administration recently engaged a management firm to assist with time studies and task analyses in determining ways that certain repetitive work could be made more efficient with the application of modern management techniques. Their conclusions strongly suggest that major increases in output can be achieved by careful task analysis, batch treatment of similar reference requests, redesigned search strat-

[35]Thomas J. Peters, *Thriving on Chaos: Handbook for a Management Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1987), 16.

egies, and the use of incentive pay for employees.[36] NARA was also able to reduce staffing and consolidate work space without decreasing output. This experience has shown that incentive pay can improve efficiency when managers carefully study procedures and group similar tasks together so that employees gain from the efficiencies rather than feel exploited by the process. Such an approach requires managers to take a more active role in task analysis, work assignment, and the art of managing than has been traditional.

One of the more controversial areas of research is the evaluation of alternative ways to deliver education and technical preparation to archival staff members lacking professional training at the postbaccalaureate level. Staff education and training will be an increasingly critical issue to archives in the next ten years. It is projected that by the year 2000, more than one-third of the work force will be drawn from minority populations which traditionally have been the poorest prepared educationally. The number of functionally illiterate persons in the work force is likely to increase. To complicate matters, the size of the work force will decrease due to the lower birth rate. All of these factors will create a very competitive labor market for archives within the next fifteen years. Social conscience and practical reality will make postemployment education an important consideration for the archival manager.

Basic and advanced training of staff is becoming too expensive and complex for any but the largest archives to provide in-house. Experienced archivists, while skilled professionals, realize that they cannot provide the consistent and sustained postappointment training needed by staffs. The pattern of individualized and idiosyncratic training now provided to archival staffs makes difficult, if not impossible, the attainment of a consistent body of professional knowledge and practice. Archives may entice consultants and regional and national professional associations to provide standardized training on-site or regionally. The movement toward standards and guidelines may be accelerated by the realization that the need to provide quality, consistent professional education is otherwise unachievable. With proper incentives, professional associations, in conjunction with archival employers, may develop a coordinated, integrated educational program that is viewed by institutions as the primary training program for their technical, clerical, and student staff. The SAA workshops can be viewed as a prototype for such postgraduate training. For more specific applications, however, managers might entice archival educators to regularly spend time on-site for mutual consultation and instruction. Delivery of services in this way would institutionalize standards professionwide more effectively than the promulgation by associations and professional standards committees have proved capable of so far. Research demonstrating the utility and cost-effectiveness of this latter approach might lead to the formalization of more standardized educational and training elements.

Research opportunities relating to archival programs abound. Four areas—the study of organizational effectiveness, the management of change, alternate ways to deliver archival education and training, and the analysis of the institutional culture of archives—are of high priority and can have a substantial, immediate impact on the profession. Individual archivists will continue to make the many "make-or-buy"

[36]"Study to Develop Military Records Search Work Standards," conducted for the National Archives and Records Administration, Office of Program Policy and Evaluation, by Management Analysis, Incorporated, 1985; and "Management Study of the Correspondence Support Staff, NNIR," prepared for Planning and Policy Evaluation Branch, National Archives and Records Administration, by Management Analysis, Incorporated, 1987.

decisions that every manager faces, although research on these issues presents some intriguing possibilities. The investigation of incentives and technical time-motion studies may be beyond the capabilities or needs of all but the largest archives.

Issues for the Profession

The third area for research in archival management focuses on issues at the professional level. Management research issues can well involve evaluation of the effectiveness of education for the profession, the value and role of certification from a management point of view, and the development of appropriate benchmarks in judging archival programs, all areas noted in the GAP report.

Research in the area of education from a management viewpoint can suggest whether current training programs are effective and how best to address the archivist's changing educational needs. Analysis of job vacancies, archival employment patterns, and academic preparation of individuals who have entered the profession within the last five years would illuminate employment practices and either confirm or challenge long-term educational strategies. Continuing analysis of pathways into the profession might suggest courses, workshops, and techniques that would promote educational standards. Are a significant number of people without academic archival training being hired? Is the master's degree in history or library science with a minor in archival administration likely to become *de rigeur*? Is the number of students produced by the graduate programs sufficient to fill current and expected vacancies? Will there be an educational split in the profession, with one segment with professional degrees and the other with a variety of nonarchival preparations? Graduate education versus continuing-education workshops can be assessed by studying hiring practices; do organizations hire professional archivists or train current, nonarchival staff to fill positions? A correlation of education with job requirements will allow managers to understand the available work force and educators to focus their programs more closely to actual needs.

While not immediately applicable to a research agenda for management, the profession's efforts toward certification demand attention and critical research. The drive toward certification has been based largely on the desire to professionalize the work of archivists and ensure a standard of training to prospective employers. The development of certification tests and standards will employ the best talents of the society to identify the acknowledged critical professional areas. Yet to be verified are the correlations between the areas tested and real-world job requirements, between success on the test and successful job performance, between the efforts directed toward certification and the use of certification by employers in the employment process. Certification will be ignored by archival managers unless its effectiveness as a dependable screening device can be demonstrated both to the manager's satisfaction and to the satisfaction of the agencies that monitor public hiring practices.

The development of guidelines and standards for archivists and archival programs suggests several additional areas for research. Studies of individual competency and organizational effectiveness are interrelated with the study of standards for archival programs. The profession should proceed on a continuum from guidelines to benchmarks toward standards when determining the adequacy of archival programs and facilities. However tempting, it would be unwise to attempt to establish idealized standards for programs and facilities without thoroughly analyzing the state of current archival programs nationwide. Standards established by a profession are much more readily accepted if they reflect reality. Research efforts analyzing and establishing benchmarks for well-run archi-

val programs and facilities would serve as the basis of establishing future standards. Parent institutions will be much more likely to use or feel constrained to use professional standards when they are backed by competent research and are understood and accepted by the profession at large.

The development of an apparatus and process to regularly gather significant statistics about archival facilities, coupled with a strategy to analyze these statistics could provide a data base offering a multitude of research opportunities of importance to archival administrators. The 1985 census of archival institutions, described by Paul Conway in the Summer 1987 issue of the *American Archivist*,[37] was an initial step in this direction. SAA's Task Force on Institutional Evaluation is rapidly completing a "Program Assessment Workbook" that provides for the collection of institutional data which could serve as a base for "what is" so that archivists could move toward "what should be." This data, coupled with the current statistics and future updates, could provide an array of information to establish archival norms, benchmarks, and, finally, standards that will significantly affect archival management.

Opportunities and the Research Process

Research into aspects of archival administration should engage the energies of individual archivists and the attention of archival institutions. The development of research opportunities and resources requires the cooperation of managers and agencies and the discipline of the individual archivist. While most archivists like to envision research centers and readily available grants, most will not have such opportunities. Research and a critical approach to problem solving in archives must become an everyday exercise for each archivist. The research and writing accomplished by most archivists will come out of their everyday experience, as a result of their particular approach to their work and discipline. For research to become a way of life for archivists, managers must allot time for it. By the same token, individual professionals will have to take the time to engage in research and writing, activities which for some archivists may be more painful than answering the siren song of never-ending archival work. Indeed, the archivist who does not take time to do research is akin to the woodcutter who is too busy chopping wood to stop and sharpen the axe. Whether or not archival managers are given the time for research, each must strive to make and take that time.

The development of stronger reciprocal relationships between archival institutions and academic programs could lead to more critical, incisive, and visible research programs than are now possible at the graduate level. Research studies conducted as part of graduate archival work could be further enhanced by institutional support provided by well-managed forward-looking neighboring archival agencies. Strong graduate programs in other disciplines—especially the sciences—offer a built-in support system of graduate assistantships and fellowships, specialized facilities and equipment developed with strong grant support, and mentor relationships with a variety of specialized senior faculty. While archival education programs are unlikely to support similar structures because of the lack of extensive grant support or interested private corporations, alliances between established archival institutions and graduate programs could provide research opportunities that would benefit both the student and the institution, as well as the profession. Knowledgeable and enthusiastic students could study the effectiveness of different program

[37]Paul C. Conway, "Perspectives on Archival Resources: The 1985 Census of Archival Institutions," *American Archivist* 50 (Summer 1987): 174–92.

efforts, analyze the cost of operations, and compare archival institutions of similar size or similar type.

The development of a closer relationship between archives and educational institutions could be particularly fruitful in other ways. Grants or carefully crafted sabbatical leave proposals might provide the time for archival administrators to spend on campus to do research and utilize the assistance of archival graduate students. Perhaps visiting professorships for archivists in schools of history and library science can provide support and assistance for the management studies the profession so desperately needs. Archivists may be able to draw students in allied fields into larger research projects that utilize their expertise to solve joint managerial problems. Joint projects with librarians and other information specialists who share similar problems are also possibilities that should be explored.

Archivists should, however, be able to develop several centers of research. The National Archives and Records Administration has recently demonstrated that it can engage in and critically foster noteworthy archival research. Through the establishment of the Office of Program Policy and Evaluation and the studies previously cited, NARA is taking a leadership position in archival management research. The same is possible for other institutions, large and small. Some of the best research has come from smaller institutional archives. Studies such as *Understanding Progress as Process*,[38] which is an example of collaborative research by several archivists and historians, and the many studies emanating from the fellowship program at the Bentley Library at the University of Michigan testify that research is not the exclusive domain of archivists in larger institutions.

Archivists face many challenges. We must develop the management of archives as an important part of the larger research agenda. To do less is to court oblivion. Archivists must be capable of managing and leading effective archival programs, lest they invite the leadership and control of others. An archival vision is necessary in the evolving information field, a vision that deals effectively with today's records and maintains the critical role of the archivist. Our lives and our profession are developed by decision or by default. There is no other choice; we will either be drawn by a vision or driven by our crises. Two thousand years ago Horace, the Roman poet and literary critic, set an agenda: "Seize the day."[39] In our own time I would suggest the archivists' cry be, "Seize the moment!"

[38]Clark A. Elliott, ed., *Understanding Progress as Process: Documentation of the History of Post-War Science and Technology in the United States* (n.p.: Joint Committee on Archives of Science and Technology, 1983).

[39]Bergen Evans, *Dictionary of Quotations* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1968), 88.