Leading and Managing
Archives and Records Programs:
Strategies for Success

Edited by
Bruce W. Dearstyne

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Leadership is an elusive thing. We know it when we see it, but it can be difficult to quantify or emulate. Yet, as a society we long for true leaders in various spheres: politics, business, education, etc. We do not just want managers who can crunch numbers and execute business plans. Rather, we want leaders with inspiring visions and the motivational skills to help us achieve more than we thought possible both individually and collectively.

Leadership also is important in the world of archives and records management. Programs have risen and fallen largely upon the leadership of a dedicated professional who has earned the respect of his or her colleagues in the parent organization. We sometimes mistakenly believe that archives and records management are all about the records; in reality they are all about the people we serve. Outstanding leaders have internalized this view and make it the hallmark of all they do.

Despite this success, we are at a professional crossroads. Many of the outstanding leaders of archival and records management programs are nearing retirement. This leads to some key questions: Can the archives and records management programs they built survive past their own retirement? Are there lessons we can learn from the success of the current generation? And, ultimately, how do we develop the next generation of archives and records management leaders?

Bruce Dearstyne has taken an important step in answering these questions by editing the volume you now are reading. Bruce is an internationally recognized leader in his own right, making distinguished contributions in archives, records management, and professional education. He well could have written the entire volume on leadership. However, Bruce chose to approach some of his professional colleagues in the United States and the United Kingdom to share their insights as well. The result is an all-star lineup of archives and records management leaders sharing stories of success and failure.

Because leadership is always dependent upon context, many of the
stories are personal. Each author has been careful, however, to draw
genral principles from his or her experiences and to relate them to
archivists and records managers from other types of institutions. The
result is a balanced, very readable text that includes both personal an-
cedotes and universal insights.

This volume is an excellent example of Neal-Schuman's purpose in
establishing the series *The Archivist's and Records Manager's Bookshelf*. The
authors in this volume recognize that archivists and records manag-
ers have much to learn from one another. They also recognize that
 technological imperatives and organizational realities are bringing the
two professions closer together. Finally, they appreciate that we learn
from one another’s stories as well as from more formal educational
structures.

I hope you will be both inspired by these stories of leadership and
motivated to bring your own programs in archives, records manage-
ment, or another discipline to even greater heights.

*Gregory S. Hunter, PhD, CA, CRM*
*Palmer School of Library and Information Science*
*Long Island University*
*Series Editor*
Preface

Leading and Managing Archives and Records Programs: Strategies for Success provides insights into strategies for leading, developing, and managing effective archives and records management programs. It reflects the experiences and insights of some of the most accomplished leaders in the fields who have established track records developing and applying strategic approaches and building and sustaining successful programs over the course of several years.

These chapters are written by individuals who provide their own perspectives about what they did; they are not case studies prepared by external observers. In short, the book offers accumulated experience and wisdom that can be considered and applied by others. The authors not only relate their experiences but also reflect on why things happened, what they learned in the process, and how the developments in their programs related to broader trends in the field.

These wonderfully wide-ranging accounts share common themes. Each chapter reveals the hard work required to achieve sustained program success, to construct and nurture a program, to deal with challenges, and to keep the program fresh and responsive. The chapters also reveal the importance of developing skills and applying leadership approaches that fit the individual program and its organizational environment, and that are responsive to the challenges of the times.

THE AUTHORS

The authors of the following chapters include Eugenia K. Brumm, Diane K. Carlisle, Carol E. B. Choksy, Peter Emmerson, James E. Fogerty, Mark A. Greene, Edie Hedlin, Tanya Marshall, Philip F. Mooney, Gregory Sanford, Kelvin Smith, Leon Stout, and Christine Ward. They express multiple perspectives and insights. They include two program directors from Great Britain, thus bringing an international perspective. Each uncovers the secrets of his or her success and
lays out what it takes to build and manage a dynamic, high-achieving program.

THE AUDIENCE

These essays have been written primarily for:

• people who lead or manage archives, records, and related programs;
• professionals who aspire to such leadership;
• executives who are interested in strengthening the leadership of archives and records programs in their organizations;
• students in archives and records programs;
• information professionals in related fields; and
• others who want to understand successful leadership and management techniques.

THE CHAPTERS

Chapter 1, “Setting the Stage: Challenges and Opportunities in Leading Archives and Records Programs,” provides context for the essays in the subsequent chapters by discussing some of the issues, challenges, and opportunities faced by leaders and managers of archival and records management programs.

In Chapter 2, “The Records Management Leader,” Eugenia K. Brumm examines the role and importance of leadership in successful, high-achieving records management programs, and describes the skills sets and the behaviors that are most often associated with such leadership.

In Chapter 3, “Records Management Standards: What They Are and Why They Are Important,” Diane K. Carlisle focuses selectively on the standards and best practices in the field of records and information management, concentrating on standards and best practices that are developed through a formal standards body, such as the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), or the International Organization for Standardization, or through professional associations.

In Chapter 4, “Leading a Successful Records Management Program,” Carol E. B. Choksy discusses experiences, insights, and obser-
vations on excellence in records management programs. She describes and analyzes the skills needed by successful records managers today, including skills in communication, relationship management, strategy development and execution, employee development and leadership, project management, and negotiating in the environment of the industry and the organization.

In Chapter 5, “From Cultural Luxury to ‘The Way We Do Things . . . ?’: The Influence of Leadership in Archives and Records Management,” Peter Emmerson draws upon his experience as head of Barclays Bank’s Records Services operation and as a consultant, and discusses how important it is for records management to be responsive to, and aligned with, the changing circumstances and strategic objectives of the wider business. He examines what this means in practice and draws out the strategic and leadership points.

In Chapter 6, “Competing for Relevance: Archives in a Multiprogram Organization,” James E. Fogerty uses his experiences directing archives and oral history programs to examine the importance of supporting the organization’s goals and, at the same time, identifying and meeting the expectations of external constituencies. He describes strategies for dealing with business records and for capitalizing on opportunities to strengthen the program and raise its profile.

In Chapter 7, “Trying to Lead from Good to Great and Some Reflections on Leadership at All Levels,” Mark A. Greene reflects on his experience in playing a leadership role in a variety of settings, and notes the important role leadership plays at all levels of an organization. He focuses on three important components of leadership: “defining, disseminating, and implementing a vision; defining and managing change; and making decisions.”

In Chapter 8, “Meeting Leadership Challenges: Lessons from Experience,” Edie Hedlin shares the insights gained and the lessons learned from her varied archival career. These include supporting the goals of the parent organization; defining and constantly articulating your mission; seeking and working with allies; developing careful plans and setting priorities; focusing on staff productivity; and evaluating your leadership/management style.

In Chapter 9, “Stranger in a Strange Land: The Archivist and the Corporation,” Philip F. Mooney discusses the unique opportunities and challenges faced by corporate archivists. He examines why corporations begin archival programs; why corporate archival programs some-
times do not succeed; how to sell history to corporate management; how to integrate archives into the business plan; how to market the archives; why forming relationships with other operating units is important; how to measure the value of the archives; and leadership’s role in administering an archival program.

In Chapter 10, “Managing Change at the Vermont State Archives: A Continuing Issue,” Gregory Sanford and Tanya Marshall examine the evolution of the Vermont State Archives over the past quarter century. They describe strategic approaches that have helped in its development “from a small, outdated office to a modern, robust program,” including making records-based information useful to decision makers, expanding statutory authority, and integrating records and archives management.

In Chapter 11, “Appraising, Transferring, Preserving, and Making Available Born-Digital Records from Central Government Departments (‘Seamless Flow’),” Kelvin Smith describes the Seamless Flow Programme of the National Archives of the United Kingdom, an Internet-based delivery system for digital records. The Programme is divided into projects, eight of which are summarized. The ninth, the Business Change and Training Project, is discussed in detail because it is central to the Seamless Flow Programme and presents some of the most complex management challenges.

In Chapter 12, “Leading from the Middle: Building a University Archives,” Leon Stout reflects on his leadership experience and describes his work as the University Archivist at Penn State University. He provides insights about leadership at the middle level, where one serves as a program manager but must also answer to executives higher in the institution’s leadership hierarchy, and examines qualities that were important to him in his leadership work over the years.

In Chapter 13, “The State Archives, Education, and Politics in New York,” Christine Ward examines the New York State Archives’ strategic approaches to supporting the mission of its parent organization, the State Education Department, and the goals of state government. She describes the leadership work involved in expanding the program, campaigning for program resources, and tailoring the archives program to changing institutional priorities.

Chapter 14, “Leading Archives and Records Programs: Perspectives and Insights,” places the essays in this book into perspective by considering interpretations of leadership that have been advanced in re-
cent literature and by examining how these insights may apply to archiving, records, and related information programs.

Chapter 15, “Leading Archives and Records Programs: Issues and Sources,” suggests topics for further attention, as well as sources with which to explore them, and delves further into some of the issues raised by the authors of the other chapters.
Acknowledgments

I am very grateful to all the authors in Leading and Managing Archives and Records Programs: Strategies for Success for sharing their ideas with us. They all took time from busy schedules and other priorities to organize and share their best thoughts on leadership and management techniques. Each did so in the hope that the information and experience will be useful to many others in their own leadership and management endeavors. It is often the case that the people who are the busiest achieving program breakthroughs and impact have the least time to write about what they have done.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the people who supported, guided, and fostered the production of the book. Dr. Gregory Hunter, professor at the Palmer School of Library and Information Science, Long Island University, who is the editor of the series, of which this volume is a part, The Archivist’s and Records Manager’s Bookshelf, encouraged and helped shape the original proposal. Several people at Neal-Schuman provided the guidance and support essential to get the book done. Charles Harmon reviewed and strengthened the initial proposal and got the project started; Elizabeth Lund and Paul Seeman, the editors for the book, were immensely helpful as the chapters were developed; Amy Rentner, production editor, managed the final revisions and the process of getting the book completed and published.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Susan, for all her patience, support, encouragement, and wisdom with many projects over many years, including this book. She read all of the chapters and prepared the index for the book. Without her, none of this would be possible.