BOOK REVIEW

Tajuk Buku: Quality Management for Information and Library Managers.
Pengarang: Brophy, Peter & Couling, Kate.
Pengulas: Zawiyah Baba*

The author, Peter Brophy is well known for his research and writing on quality in library and information services. He is University Librarian and Head of Centre for research in library and information management at the University of Central Lancashire. Kate Couling is Assistant Librarian and Quality Coordinator at the University of Central Lancashire.

Described as the ‘definitive work on all matters relating to quality in library and information services’ (Norton, 1996), this book can be regarded as a basic text which serves as a first stop for those seeking to piece together the quality jigsaw in managing library and information services.

The book is in two parts. Part I introduces Quality Concepts including why quality matters, the quality gurus and their contribution to the quality literature and thinking, the quality assurance standard ISO 9000, the customer perspective, the quality awards, the Citizen’s Charter and Total Quality Management. In Part I the authors discuss topics on quality generally, with some emphases on service organisations. Chapter 4 on the customer’s perspective is an exception as the authors make particular reference to libraries in giving examples of customer expectation, perception and demand, and illustrates the special difficulty libraries face in assessing customer satisfaction.

Part II relates quality concepts to library and information services and includes recent research and applications, the library’s purpose and mission, comparing library and information services using statistics, standards and guidelines, performance measurement and effectiveness in LIS, contracting out and charters for libraries and implementing quality management in LIS.

The application of quality concepts are applied in library and information services are discussed in depth in Part II and discovers the considerable activity as well as increase in research and development. The authors focus on the use of the mission statement as a tool for defining library purpose, as a starting point for quality management. One of the means with which libraries have sought to manage service quality is through the monitoring of statistical measures, adoption of standards and use of agreed guidelines. The authors recognise the shift away from explicit standards for library and information services towards more general guidelines and sees this largely as a result of refocusing of management on autonomous units rather than on national ‘norms’.

The chapter on effectiveness in library and information services provides an in-depth and useful examination of the subject and outlines research already carried out as well as advances in quality management in the library and infor-

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A quality audit is provided in the last chapter of the book in the form of questions which library and information services might ask in achieving a clear agenda before action can be taken, in order to map out what is already in place, and in doing so identify where action might be targeted.

There are 4 useful appendices, 3 for application of quality in LIS and an extensive bibliography of sources on quality and organisational effectiveness from both library and information services and other service, commercial and industrial background. Appendix I is entitled Criteria for information science, and identifies core areas of information science which should be considered in determining quality of LIS. Reproduced from the Institute of Information Scientists, these areas include information science, information management, information technology and ancillary skills. A model mission statement for the public library service, reproduced from the 1991 Office of Arts and Libraries document Setting objectives for public library services is included in Appendix II while Appendix III is A Charter for Public Libraries, published by the Library Association UK in 1993.

This book provides a comprehensive and useful overview of quality programmes and their implementation in service organisations, particularly in library and information services. It is highly recommended both for those interested in implementing quality programmes in these organisations. It also serves as a useful comparison or theoretical base for evaluating on-going quality programmes in library and information services.