Skilltype

Developing a People Strategy with Skilltype

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Today's library leaders understand that developing a comprehensive people strategy to attract, develop, retain, and engage staff is essential to realizing the vision, mission, and values of their organization—now and in the future. A library organization is a constantly evolving social organism, designed to respond to and ideally anticipate the shifting needs of the communities served. Current, accurate, and actionable information about staff skills, experience, interests, and roles is essential to crafting a people strategy that creates the conditions for excellence and impact.

While staffing is often one of a library's largest budget lines, information about people, expertise, and roles is often fragmented across HR systems, staff directories, learning management systems as well as files in digital or paper form. The key insights hidden away in spreadsheets, PDF files, anecdotes or e-mails are inaccessible when there are key decisions to be made about the library's future. Few libraries have the time or capacity to mine or analyze their stores of unstructured internal data to inform the selection of strategic priorities, succession planning, aligning the scope of departments and teams with library wide goals, or for the effective distribution of work.

While most libraries have well-honed strategies for the selection, development, retention, and stewardship of collections that incorporate data, community needs, and peer analysis, libraries are just beginning to apply the same approaches to cultivating the library's talent.

Skilltype makes it possible for libraries to model and analyze expertise across divisions, departments, branches, and teams to develop a flexible people strategy to cultivate leaders, plan for the future and make the most of finite resources. Skilltype's Insights are dynamically updated throughout the talent lifecycle so that leaders have a current view of evolving capabilities. When skills are gained due to the arrival of new hires and ongoing training and development, Skilltype data automatically reflect these changes as new staff profiles are created. When skills exit the organization through staff retirements or departures, each library's Talent Audit is similarly updated. With Skilltype, library leaders have a birdseye view of current strengths, emergent staff interests that might be cultivated into capabilities through training, and weaknesses where the organization may be missing key skills important to realizing strategic goals while designing their strategic plan. These Skilltype insights enable leaders to identify specific competencies so they can recruit internally or externally to close key skills gaps, meet important milestones and ensure organizational readiness.

Skilltype's unique controlled vocabulary of library-specific competencies, products, job roles, and strategic directions provides leaders with standardized skills data to understand the distribution of competencies across organizational units and job categories. Libraries

participating in consortia are also able to extend their Insights data to view capabilities across an extended talent pool, to better understand the unique or overlapping expertise the library contributes to a network. With these additional insights, partner libraries can strategically develop skills to rise to common challenges such as digital infrastructure, student success, or digital literacies.

As a library develops a people strategy, Skilltype will automatically uncover staff in the organization who already have the desired skills and product experience to close the library's skill gaps, perform missing functions when there are staff vacancies, or identify internal candidates for reskilling and upskilling to fill certain roles. Skilltype data may highlight opportunities to reallocate headcount across departments, positions that might be filled by internal candidates, or areas where a set of skills may be over or under-represented across campus locations. Each of these approaches provides hiring managers with additional options beyond traditional searches and the costs of lengthy external recruitment.

Strategic Planning: As each library selects key strategic directions, skills, and products when completing the organization's profile, these capabilities become the foundation of the library's Insights. The library's Talent Audit can reveal the staff with the requisite skills to contribute to the effort, and intentionally cultivate the staff who are interested in these areas of priority such as data management, user experience, or scholarly communication. The Talent Audit can be used to 'reality check' planned strategic initiatives against current skills and capacity, such as situations where priority skills may be missing or concentrated within a single individual. Libraries can choose to use the Organization's Profile for scenario planning by choosing skills that will be important in the future, and adding or removing those skills to see the resulting changes in the Talent Audit. Libraries connected to consortia are also able to look at an extended view of skills across a region to better contextualize how other organizations develop similar initiatives.

Succession Planning and cultivation of future leaders: Skilltype's Directory provides scannable views of staff members, affiliated teams, and job roles which can reveal key staff who act as informal leaders, connectors, and early adopters ready to lead new services or join a cohort of emerging leaders. From a library's comprehensive Talent Audit, new arrivals or early career staff who have demonstrated a pattern of frequent Skilltype training activity may be paired with staff with deeper experience or institutional knowledge in a formal mentoring program or selected as a project duo for knowledge sharing based on mutual skills or interests.

Organization design and alignment: Skilltype's Talent Audits visualize the distribution of acquired skills, interests, and skill gaps for a holistic macro view of the organization's skills or local views of teams or departments. Organization leaders will be able to see the library's full

distribution of skills to gauge their strengths, growing areas of interest, and gaps. If an academic library is noticing a trend in faculty need for digital scholarship consultations and considering creating a new team to optimize this service, leaders can dive deeper to find the individuals who have signaled expertise with or interests in digital scholarship, project management, data science or cultivating relationships across the university to support the effort. Detailed views for a skill such as Instruction might also reveal individuals ready to lead a new adult literacy initiative for a public library.

Manage teams for excellence: With Skilltype, managers are able to view and search across team members' skills, product experience, interests, and training activity to prepare for reviews, ongoing check-in meetings and to distribute new work. Managers are able to make informed decisions about a group's readiness to fulfill its scope and goals. With team-wide skills data in one place, managers are better prepared for authentic conversations that deepen engagement, encourage growth, and cultivate future leaders. Skilltype data can point managers to training or performance goals that situate team members to make important, measurable contributions to a team or the library as a whole. When managers and staff have data at the ready about their skills, product experience, and training activity throughout the year, recalling and summarizing accomplishments to date takes less effort for managers and staff with more space for a focus on aligning goals with the team or organization's priorities and key skills.

Align development funds with priorities: Library staff are often curious and intrinsically motivated to learn new skills or achieve mastery in a discipline. Organizations, conferences, vendors, and training providers offer an abundance of training events and experiences to choose from on a daily basis. Over the course of a year, this can result in an eclectic training experience across a library which may not cultivate the competencies most important to the library's future. Skilltype helps staff find the signal and filter out the noise through targeted recommendations sourced from a global collection of more than 5,000 training materials on a platform designed for the needs of busy professionals who are learning in the flow of work. Individuals and team managers can create personalized Training Lists. Skilltype training activity data helps the organization's leaders understand the impact of training investments and recalibrate as needed.

Staff engagement and Retention, Mentoring: The comprehensive views provided by Skilltype will help to uncover staff who may be ready for leadership opportunities, new challenges, or specialized training who may be hidden within a complex organization chart, regardless of their job titles, rank, or length of service. Skilltype will reveal staff who have demonstrated interest in learning high-priority skills through their Skilltype activity. Such individuals may be candidates for new roles or growth-oriented project assignments to learn by doing. Leaders

and managers are able to intentionally recognize, coach or mentor employees to deepen their engagement with the organization. An investment in Skilltype is helps to demonstrate an organization's commitment to staff development staff by making access to training more equitable, aiding in the ongoing retention of highly skilled staff.

The library talent landscape is dynamic, complicated, and highly specialized. Incorporating data into library management practices has the potential to build more effective, inclusive, and responsive organizations which develop staff to meet, anticipate or exceed the needs of diverse user communities. Skilltype provides library leaders with data, tools, and resources to start managing the expertise of the workforce with the same care, rigor, and discipline that is applied to library collections. Libraries' ability to connect people to knowledge has never been more important. We at Skilltype are happy to work with the library community to transform talent and career management workflows that work better for libraries and library staff. Contact us to find out how we can work together to create the conditions for excellence, engagement, and impact.