Recent Publications

BOOK REVIEWS

Riggs, Donald E. *Strategic Planning for Library Managers.* Phoenix, Ariz.: Oryx, 1984. 137p. $27.50. LC 82-7375. ISBN 0-89774-049-1.

Turbulence: rapid technological change, unexpected competitive threats, shifting market demands, rapidly evolving regulatory conditions—libraries today are facing environmental turbulence to an unprecedented degree. Those library administrators seeking to control, rather than be controlled by, their environments must recognize the turbulent, uncertain, and innovative nature of their environments and rationally plan for the orderly development of collections and services. Effectively used in the military and business, strategic planning is an intensive, highly structured technique for planning in typically large and complex organizations facing turbulent environments.

In thirteen short chapters Riggs leads the reader through the usual major phases of strategic planning, beginning with a definition and rationale for its use and giving some advice on how to organize for planning, proceeding to specification of organizational mission, goals, objectives, strategies, alternatives, and contingencies, then to policies and resource allocation. Along the way Riggs proposes, especially for larger libraries, the use of a management information system to generate and control the large amounts of information needed for effective strategic planning and of Planning-Programming-Budgeting System (PPBS) to control program implementation and to evaluate program accomplishment. The book concludes with a discussion of the systemic nature of strategic planning, some advice on implementation, including guidelines for making organizational change more palatable to those who will be affected and ways to evaluate and control the entire strategic planning process.

Riggs' useful conceptual orientation to strategic planning would have library administrators and managers first think forward to desired states in terms of the collection, services, and domain of the library, and then think backward to the immediate requirements necessary to achieve these states. Riggs centralizes too much of the planning process among top management for this reviewer's tastes; on the other hand he does cover a lot of ground in specifying the work to be done.

One of the most important first steps in strategic planning is to do a self-analysis covering the library's strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities. Next are specified the library's intended mission, goals, and objectives (clear distinctions are made among the three, and Riggs cautions that they must be consistent with those of the parent or controlling organization). The crux of strategic is strategy formulation, and it is in this chapter that one clearly sees both the strengths and weaknesses of the book.

The inherent complexity of libraries and their systemic nature, Riggs correctly notes, requires a strategy that recognizes the interrelatedness of the library's many parts by making explicit the interdependencies among program components. The strategy must also be flexible: because of the turbulent, or at least changing, environment facing libraries, alternatives and contingency plans must be specified. All this is presented in a logical and coherent

manner. Riggs' treatment of the subject, however, is at once complex and superficial. He is fond of list making and enumerative prose that makes for disjoined reading. One trips over endless lists of things to do or not to do, to consider or to avoid, of questions to ask, of criteria to apply. While this list making could be seen as comprehensiveness of coverage (almost to the point of making the presentation a cookbook approach), this reviewer feels these lifted (and footnoted) lists are an inadequate substitute for original thinking and felicitous prose, that they fractionate the presentation and contribute to an uneven quality throughout. The impression is one of breadth of coverage but of insufficient depth. Riggs' book is not really a cookbook.

The paucity of strategic planning material in library literature is accurately reflected in Riggs' selected bibliography and chapter references. Charles McClure is a librarian who has written on the planning process in libraries. For a shorter treatment of the subject see McClure's article in the November 1978 *C&RL*; his edited collection of papers, *Planning for Library Services: A Guide to Utilizing Planning Methods for Library Management* (New York: Haworth, 1982) is a useful compendium of contemporary planning approaches.

In this generally successful application of a complex business procedure to libraries, Riggs makes certain explicit and implicit assumptions, some of which may attenuate the usefulness of the book to particular libraries. He assumes a library of moderate to large size and one that is hierarchically structured for authority and decision making. He also assumes one characterized by strong, centralized management and control process and by a high level of rationality: to wit, a stereotypical (and idealized) bureaucracy. Indeed, the closer one's library is to General Motors in size, complexity, and structure, the more valuable Riggs' book will be.— *Albert F. Maag, Capital University Library, Columbus, Ohio.*

Changing Technology and Education for Librarianship and Information Science. Ed. by Basil Stuart-Stubbs. Greenwich, Conn.: JAI, 1985. 188p. (Foundations in Library and Information Science, V.20). $23.75, individuals; $47.50, institutions. LC 84-21330. ISBN 0-89232-515-1.

What takes two-and-a-half years to produce, costs libraries twice as much as individuals to purchase, and is outdated by the time it is marketed? Answer: this book. This latest volume in the Foundations in Library and Information Science series is an edited transcription of a June 1983 invitational conference hosted by the University of British Columbia's School of Librarianship. It is both ironic and symptomatic of the technological challenge facing librarians that the proceedings of such a conference took so long to reach a wider audience and that they came traditionally packaged—in a clothbound photo-offset printed edition complete with justified margins.

This small conference of research librarians, information scientists, and educators met to examine and discuss "the impact of changing technology on the recording and dissemination of knowledge, on research libraries as agents in that process, and on education for librarianship and information science." The volume includes the full text of six major theme papers, eleven formal commentaries, and very brief summaries of informal discussions. The conversational style of the commentaries and the personal style of oral presentations are faithfully recorded. Given the delay in publication one might have expected instead to see a heavily edited and tightly organized monograph that succinctly presented the most important elements of the conference.

John Black opened the conference with an overview of changing technology's relationship to scholarly communication and its implications for research libraries. He illuminates his discussion of technologies by examining three functional areas in which innovation has been extensive and rapid—distribution, computation, and storage. While he could not have precisely anticipated all the new technologies, such as CD/ROM, he charts the direction of that change and highlights the implications for libraries. One obvious, but still sobering, conclusion is that re-