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Duisburg, 2020-03-10

Making the library an attractive employer

Questionnaire for the guided interview about HRM in Dutch libraries

Human resources management (HRM) is of special importance for libraries, as human resources are input factors, which influence the library's development as a service provider. Though, the framework of each library is very individual especially regarding the funding institution and its provided HR services, financial restrictions, legal framework, and the local labour market, a broader view can still be inspiring. Therefore, in June 2019, Bibliothek & Information International and the Goethe-Institute offered Christina Kläre the opportunity to survey HRM in Dutch libraries as "Librarian in Residence". The following questionnaire was developed to evaluate the core HRM-process and the supporting elements. It focuses on the research question: What strategies and instruments make libraries an attractive employer? Accordingly, the questionnaire asks for the presence of strategies regarding HR marketing, HR development and knowledge management and for the instruments to implement those strategies and to enhance attractiveness as an employer. Moreover, by asking the interviewees to identify the future services of university libraries and the related skills and competencies a librarian needs, the effectiveness of the implemented instruments as well as the need for additional instruments are discussed.

The following questionnaire is used as a scientific instrument to survey HRM in Dutch libraries qualitatively. Therefore, the interviewee – the HRM expert of the selected library –, who generously agreed to participate in the survey, is interviewed about three categories with a focus on the specific library:

1. Organization of HRM
2. Strategies and instruments of HRM
    2.1. HR marketing
    2.2. HR development
    2.3. Transparency, internal communication and knowledge management
3. Future of HRM

The questions are formulated and posed as open as possible, as "[t]he open interview provides the room for the interviewee to unfold his [or her] own outlooks and reflections."[1] Moreover, the realization as a guided interview allows summarizing all answers to an HR marketing portfolio.

The expert interviews focus on HR liaisons, HR advisors and managers of Dutch libraries. These experts play a hybrid role by serving as source of information with respect to their knowledge about staff of the respective library and the organizational framework and as research subject due to their professional practice.[2] The interview can be classified as a systematizing expert interview.[3]

The interviews took between 20 and 120 minutes depending on the background of the interviewee and the available time. At some libraries, the interviewer had the opportunity to cover several perspectives of HRM in more than one interview.

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[1]Meuser, Michael; Nagel, Ulrike: The expert interview and changes in knowledge production, in: Bogner, Alexander; Littig, Beate; Menz, Wolfgang (Eds.): Interviewing experts, Basingstoke 2009 (Research methods series), pp. 17–42, p. 31.
[2]Cf. Bogner, Alexander; Menz, Wolfgang: The theory-generating expert interview. Epistemological interest, forms of knowledge, interaction, in: Bogner, Alexander; Littig, Beate; Menz, Wolfgang (Eds.): Interviewing experts, Basingstoke 2009 (Research methods series), pp. 43–80, p. 47.
[3]Cf. ebd., pp. 46–47.

Nearly all interviews have been taped, if agreed by the interviewees, and transcribed. Still, as many information refer to individual management styles and the institutional system, the recorded interviews and the transcripts are not published.

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The Questionnaire

Privacy policy:

I. Aim of the interview

The interview is used in an article about a comparison of German and Dutch libraries' HRM. In the article, best practices and main system differences will be presented. The article will be published Open Access in English in a peer reviewed gold Open Access journal. The interviewer will inform the interviewee about the publication via E-Mail, as soon as the article is published. The information will include the link to the download page of the article.

II. Questions and answers:

The interviewee is allowed to refuse to answer any question, after it is posed. The answer will then be labeled as "not applicable" (n/a).

III. Review:

Before using the interview for a publication about a comparison of German and Dutch libraries' HRM, I want the interviewer to send the transcript to me via e-mail.

○ Yes.
○ No.

Then, the interviewee may correct, delete or add some statements by using the correction mode. If the interviewee does not contradict any of the statements in the recorded interview one month after provision of the transcript, the interviewer may use the transcript as sent to the interviewee.

IV. Recording:

Prior to starting the interview, the interviewee confirms that the interview can be recorded and used in one of the following ways by selecting the data protection category and signing at the end of the privacy policy:

Type of recording (single choice):
○ I agree to audio recording of the interview and I allow the interviewer to make hand written notes.
○ I agree to audio recording of the interview only.
○ I agree to hand written recording (notes) of the interview only.

Anonymity (single choice):
○ The publication may refer to the name of the library and to my name.
○ The publication may only refer to the name of the library.
○ The publication may neither refer to the name of the library nor to my name.

Using the recorded interview (single choice):
○ The recorded interview may be published on the repository of the University of Duisburg-Essen (cf. https://duepublico.uni-duisburg-essen.de/) with respect to specifications under III. and IV. under the following license: Attribution-No Derivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-ND 4.0) (cf. https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0/).
○ The recorded interview may be used for any scientific purposes (future publications and workshops) by the interviewer only.
○ The recorded interview may only be used for the publication as mentioned in I.
With my signature, I hereby confirm that I have read the privacy policy and I confirm my selection of options under III. and IV.

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Institution:

Name of the interviewee:
(in block letters)

Date, place, signature of the interviewee

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Contact information of the interviewee:

Position / job of the interviewee:

Date, time:

1. Organization of HRM

1.1.   How is HRM organized at university library (UL) < Name >

HRM tasks are undertaken by …

☐ library management; # of people:

☐ HRM department; # of people:

☐ HRM staff position; # of people:

☐ HRM team; # of people:

☐ HRM working group; # of people:

☐ Others:

1.2.   Who are the main partners in HRM outside the UL < Name >?

☐ HRM (department) of the university

☐ Others:

1.3.   How is the staff of UL < Name > structured regarding the following aspects?

1.3.1   # of employees, total (FTE)

1.3.2.   # of employees per student (FTE)

1.3.3.   # of employees per scientist

1.3.4.   Age structure

1.3.5.   Gender

1.3.6.   Hierarchy

1.3.7.   Part time options

1.4.   If money does not matter, how should staff structure look like at UL < Name >?
(e. g. competencies, educational achievement, …)

1.5.   What competencies should the "perfect" librarian at UL < Name > have?

2. Strategies and instruments

2.1. HR marketing

HR marketing describes the measures that aim at increasing employer attractiveness as well as recruiting employees and retaining them for the long term.

2.1.1. What is the HR marketing strategy at UL < Name >?

2.1.2. What instruments are used for HR marketing at UL < Name >?

2.1.2.1. External HR marketing (focused on recruiting):

2.1.2.2. Internal HR marketing (focused on retaining):

2.1.3. Are there any difficulties in requiring employees?

2.1.4. Are there any difficulties in retaining employees for the long term?

2.2. HR development

2.2.1. What is the HR development strategy at UL < Name >?

2.2.2. What instruments are used for HR development at UL < Name >?
☐ Internal further education workshops – library level (online and / or offline)
☐ Internal further education workshops – university level (online and / or offline)
☐ External further education workshops (online and / or offline)
☐ Qualification
☐ Internship (NL and / or abroad)
☐ Cooperation talks
☐ Mentoring
☐ Networking
☐ Multipliers
☐ Others:

2.3. Transparency, internal communication, knowledge management

2.3.1. What instruments are used for transparency and internal communication at UL < Name >?
☐ Wiki
☐ Meetings
☐ Meeting minutes
☐ Employee newspaper
☐ Intranet
☐ Shared file repository
☐ Others:

1.5.2. What makes the meetings efficient?

1.5.3. What makes the meetings effective?

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1.5.4.   What is the knowledge management strategy at UL <Name>?

1.5.5.   What instruments are used for knowledge management?
☐ Wiki
☐ Meeting minutes
☐ Intranet
☐ Shared file repository
☐ Others:

3. Future

3.1.   What are drivers of positive change in HRM of UL < Name >?

3.2.   What will be the biggest challenge for UL < Name > regarding HRM in the next 10 years?

3.3.   Why is this / are these the biggest challenge/s?

3.4.   What induces this / these challenge/s?

3.5.   What instruments are already implemented to tackle these challenges?

3.6.   What instruments should be implemented to tackle these challenges?

3.7.   What services will the UL < Name > of the future offer?

3.8.   What staff competencies / skills are needed for these (c.f. 3.7) services?

3.9.   Who will train people to get these competencies / skills?