

10 ways libraries power high performance organisations



AUSTRALIAN SPECIAL LIBRARIES

There are as many as 2,000 special libraries in Australia serving clients in government, health, law, business, banking, consulting, research, science and technology, the arts, media and other industries. The word library doesn't always appear in the title; instead some are called information services or research units, terms which also describe their main purpose and function.

FACTS NOT FICTION

In a post-truth, fake news environment, the need for information professionals in the workplace is even greater than before. Information professionals are not only trained in research and critical thinking, they help others develop these skills. Anyone can Google; not everyone knows how to identify the most relevant, timely and credible sources.

1



DECISION-READY INFORMATION

With more than 4.5 billion pages on the internet and counting, executives are often challenged by the sheer quantity of content available. Information professionals are skilled at filtering large quantities of data to find what's needed. They can present this in a variety of ways, from infographic through to full report, helping to turn a loose idea into an evidence-based concept.

2



MAKING BIG DATA USABLE

The role of the information professional has always been to manage and curate information, whether that's by cataloguing a collection to make it discoverable or by helping to turn a mass of statistics into a rich mine of information. These underlying skills are highly applicable in the context of big data.

3

TAILORED RESOURCES

Special libraries create collections tailored to the needs of their clients. Increasingly, these are digital collections, including ebooks, journals and databases. Information professionals keep up to date with the very latest products, print and digital, and are skilled at negotiating the best subscriptions for their employer.

4



ANY TIME ANYWHERE

Special libraries can support a global workforce to work any time, anywhere by delivering information straight to people's smartphones, tablets and laptops.

5



WORLD VIEW

Individual librarians participate in formal and informal networks with their peers worldwide. They stay at the cutting edge of information theory and practice, and are the first to hear about new content and software from suppliers in Australia and overseas. The benefits to their organisations are increased expertise, resource-sharing and efficiencies.

6



THE LATEST NEWS

Information professionals understand the special needs of their clients. They monitor the media, social media, print and online publications and other daily sources to provide alerts when highly relevant new information emerges. The information is targeted to organisational needs and objectives.

7



LEARNING ORGANISATIONS

Information professionals are critical for learning organisations. They support the professional development needs of other staff by providing appropriate resources within the collection that help them remain relevant in today's knowledge economy.

8

INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY

The roles of IT professionals and information professionals are intertwined. IT staff manage the pipeline, information professionals manage the content that flows through it. Today's information professional has a good knowledge of ICT and is a confident user of new technologies, which is a real asset to the team.

9



PRESERVING THE PAST

While much of the action in special libraries is digital, organisations will still have print collections and paper records which need to be maintained or replaced with digital facsimiles. Sometimes there are unique materials of historic significance. Librarians are the professionals who know how to sustain and future-proof this content for the next generation.

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Australian Library and Information Association

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