

Entrepreneurship in Library and Information Services: New Job Opportunities

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Abstract

In the growing environment of information the role of LIS professionals are changing day by day and the job opportunities also increasing in this field. Though there are various job opportunities in this field, it is not possible to get job for all LIS students in this sector, there are some limitations. But all LIS students or professionals would like to get job in this sector. So there are some new alternative job opportunities as 'Library entrepreneurship' to serve in LIS sector. In the growing demand of various information requirements, technological changes etc are giving birth of new type of competencies and job opportunities in this field and rising new hopes to the students or professionals.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Business Opportunities, Independent Information Profession, Librapreneurship, Librapreneurs, LIS Professionals, LIS Career

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is the process of starting a business or other organization. The entrepreneur develops a business model, acquires the human and other required resources, and is fully responsible for its success or failure. Entrepreneurship operates within an entrepreneurship ecosystem.

An entrepreneur is someone who organizes, manages, and assumes the risks of a business or enterprise. An entrepreneur is an agent of change. Entrepreneurship is the process of discovering new ways of combining resources. When the market value generated by this new combination of resources is greater than the market value these

resources can generate elsewhere individually or in some other combination, the entrepreneur makes a profit.

Entrepreneurs are leaders willing to take risk and exercise initiative, taking advantage of market opportunities by planning, organizing, and employing resources, often by innovating new or improving existing products. More recently, the term entrepreneurship has been extended to include a specific mindset resulting in entrepreneurial initiatives, e.g. in the form of social entrepreneurship, political entrepreneurship, or knowledge entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship as a Career in LIS

Librarianship as a profession provides a number of employment opportunities. Most of the library science professionals (LIS) choose employment for their career prospects. The employment in this field is limited and the number of LIS graduates is increasing year by year and hence the unemployment increasing rapidly in the library and information science field. Due to unemployment in LIS field, few LIS professionals are forced to migrate to other jobs. Also the IT professionals are also encroaching into this field which is a threatening to the LIS as a career profession.

To retain the LIS professionals in the same field and to serve Library field, there is an urgent need to explore the alternative to the LIS jobs. The best and alternate solution would be entrepreneurship, where LIS professionals may start a venture in the library and information science field and become budding entrepreneurs which shall be coined as Librapreneurs.

Entrepreneurship is becoming an increasingly popular alternative career choice in the current economic slowdown. It can play a major role in alleviating unemployment and underemployment. The LIS graduates who have burning desire to make profession as a hobby and aim to accomplish, build an enterprise, wish to be independent, enjoy freedom and challenges in this field may opt entrepreneurship as a career and become a Librapreneur. To become a successful Librapreneur, one has to work hard, has a strong vision and mission, determination, need to dedicate long hours and endless energy.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to introduce the entrepreneurship awareness and skills to the LIS students and professionals with the aim of motivating them to acquire skills necessary to operate in 21st century libraries and embrace entrepreneurship as a viable means of combating the rising unemployment challenges.

Entrepreneurial Competencies

A LIS professional who interested in starting a venture in library and information science field should possess the following entrepreneurial competencies which are a combination of knowledge, skills and appropriate motives or traits that an individual should possess to perform a given task:

1. Initiative
2. Opportunity Seeking
3. Persistence
4. Information Seeking
5. Concern for High Quality of Work
6. Commitment to Work Contract
7. Efficiency Orientation
8. Systematic Planning
9. Problem Solving
10. Self-Confidence
11. Assertiveness
12. Persuasion
13. Use of Influence Strategies

Skills requirement

These soft skills shall underlie characteristics of a person which result in effective and superior performance of a job. Competencies may be hard and soft, but they can be seen in successful entrepreneurs. These competencies can be developed through proper training interventions.

Skills are abilities or proficiencies required of a person in a position to plan and execute an action geared at accomplishing some tasks or achieving some goals. Skills are the learned capacity to carry out predetermined tasks with the minimum outlay of time and energy. For the purpose of this work, LIS students should acquire the professional and managerial skills as a basic step towards successful entrepreneurship venture.

1. **Information technology skills:** These include networking, library automation and digitization, web based services, reprography, micrographs, facsimile, video text, teletext, database creation and management systems including CDS-ISIS, LIBSYS, KOHA and other library management systems, content development, desktop publishing, intranet, presentation, hardware/software skills and relational databases including the ability to create data structures which facilitate the indexing and retrieval of information and thesaurus development. Some specific technical skills like HTML, network administration, PHP and MYSQL,

efficient use of search engines, use of blogs to provide services, web cast and search skills.

2. **Information literacy skills:** These have to do with the ability to locate information efficiently and effectively, evaluate information critically and competently and using information accurately and creatively. Also included here is the economics and marketing of information products and services, information resource management, information processing and organizing, e-mail, multimedia perspectives and video conferencing. Information literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning and enables learners to master content and extend their investigations to become more self-directed, thereby assuming greater control over their own learning. Other skills include:
3. **Managerial skills:** These are the business management skills such as marketing, financing, accounting, control, planning and goal setting, decision making, human relations and managing growth. They are essential in launching and growing a new venture. Embedded here is also the knowledge of records management principles and electronic book keeping.
4. **Personal entrepreneurial skills:** These include inner control/discipline, risk taking, innovativeness, change orientation and ability to manage change, persistence, and visionary leadership.
5. **Technical skills:** Written and oral communication, interpersonal, monitoring environment, the ability to organize, and network building. These skills form the basis of the modular approach to an entrepreneurship curriculum. A course or sequence of courses can be developed depending on the needs, interests, and resources of the particular department. This approach will help to ensure that the most important areas of the field are covered in the courses offered.

The fact remains that traditional roles are becoming less frequent in the array of entrepreneurial careers now open to information professionals. An assortment of different competencies, skills and graduate qualities is required to suit such opportunities. For example, the work required in a physical institution like a library is different from that required for managing virtual information flows in intelligent, learning, networked organizations. In this context, the role of the librarian is much more important; he or she will have to act as a facilitator, advisor, consultant, navigator, searcher, researcher, evaluator, organizer, preserver, communicator, technical expert as well as a manager, leader, entrepreneur and visionary. In essence, education for LIS is no longer technical, but must include new cognitive, social and situational processes

Entrepreneurial Opportunities in LIS

The following are the few entrepreneurial opportunities for Librapreneurs. Interested LIS professionals may explore the possibilities to start a new venture and become successful and fulfil their entrepreneurial dreams.

1. Library Consultancy Services

Consultants as individuals or a group of experts able to provide special expertise in one or more technical fields. These services may be of an advisory, supervisory, or implementation nature and are provided by skilled experts with specialized knowledge and experience. LIS professionals with strong subject knowledge, information technology and communication skills may start a service oriented venture "Library Consultancy Services" and offer various services in all corners of library functional areas such as:

- Library collection building;
- Data entry services;
- Indexing;
- Abstracting;
- Retrospective conversation;
- Cataloguing and Classification;
- Packaging information;
- Translation Service;
- Library automation;
- Digitization;
- Creating databases and website design;
- Training to library staff.

2. Career Counsellor

Starting a career counselling business is a good choice if you are a people' person and love to talk give advice and can communicate well with children, teenagers and adults alike. With the rise of career choices and too many fields to join, students need career counsellors who can help them decide which career path to choose and what to decide for their future.

To start this business, we need excellent interpersonal and negotiation skills that can help to deal with people who are facing career problems and employment issues. From counselling them on how to choose the most appropriate field to choose that matches with their qualifications and dealing with their employers the best way are some of the issues that you will address as a career counsellor. Librapreneurs may explore this

business opportunity as the career counselling is one of the top best businesses that are thriving and earning good revenue.

3. Library Software Developing Industry

A library software industry can be started having utter knowledge of library operations and software development and how to sell them to different companies on contract basis. We do not have to be perfect in this to start the business all we need is to know the rules that are required to make it successful. We should plan business and become a part of the market. The success of our dream can only become a reality if we start working on it with honesty and dedication.

In this hi-tech world, people depend entirely on technology either in personal life or for business purposes. The tasks that are part of any business are also conducted with the help of computers and softwares which make them hassle free. Your business plan should include the need of equipment, expenses and proficient employees. Before venturing into this project it is better to study and evaluate the present library softwares available in the market and also look into the open source softwares.

4. Lending Library

While lending libraries can be simple to set up, they're perhaps not as simple as one might first think. It's wise to be cautious in starting a sustainable lending library and the benefits may not be enormous. Librapreneur should be clear about the motive in starting the lending library and define the priorities. The aim of the lending library is to serve the society at large. It is advised to figure out how many members of your society will actually use the library and how those members will grow over time. The size of the library is also plays major role. An oversized space could end up being a costly mistake while an undersized space might fail to meet the demands of customers.

5. Reprography Services

Reprography/Photocopy service is a rewarding business. Presently reprography services are used by all categories of people. This is service based unit. This business can setup at commercial or residential areas. The market for this service is exponentially growing. Presently the competition in this field is very high. To sustain in this business one has to provide qualitative and quantitative services.

6. Book Distribution Agency

A Book Distribution Agency or Book Distributors are partners with book publishers who take the book to the market through booksellers around the world. They are the vehicle for promoting book. Distributors create the catalogues of new titles that they promote to wholesalers, large retailers, individual book stores, buyers, etc.

Book distribution industry can be broadly divided into two segments, viz., Small Distributors and Large Distributors. Small distributors are those whose business focus is limited to a specific subject area or for a few publishers or to particular geographical location whereas large distributors is a center of maximum number of publishers, all subjects and they large network and franchises to market and sell the books globally.

Librapreneurs who has infrastructure such as land, small warehouses can explore the book distribution agency as a feasible business opportunity. Before venturing into this opportunity, it advised to prepare detailed project report. Even in this business one can explore the partnership among other LIS professionals.

7. Periodical Subscription Agency

The objective of any periodical or journal subscription area is to information needs of the subscribers of worldwide journals, periodicals, serial publications, magazines, etc. either in print format or electronic format. These agencies provide the following services:

1. Provide all types of information published around the world to the Indian customers
2. Access to current pricing of periodicals
3. Speedy processing of orders
4. Promote Indian publications abroad as leading Exporters
5. Faster delivery of journals

8. Subscription Agency of Electronic Book/Journals

There is growing demand for the subscription agents of electronic resources especially for journals. Presently the leading management institutions are planning to distribute e-text books instead of printed text books to the students as a part of the course curriculum. The business model is almost similar to the Book Distribution Agency and the Librapreneur may think and plan to start the subscription agency of e-book and e-journal services.

9. Book Publishing and Printing Industry

Publishing and Printing is a business and has the characteristics of all businesses. The basic objective of the publishing and printing industry to produce the books for education which can change the individual's social outlook and also publishing is also considered a service to the society. The primary objective of the publisher is to exist for the benefit of society, rather than for the benefit of their stakeholders i.e. to achieve both social and business objectives. Thus Publishing industry may treat as a "social business".

Hence looking into the above, the LIS professionals may think and look at an opportunity to taking up career in publishing and printing business. Based on the investment capacity, initially Librapreneurs may explore to start publishing industry as “sole proprietorship” or “partnership”.

Librapreneurs may also subcontract various business processes such as printing, binding, editing, proof-reading, layout design and sales (to a distributors) which will help in developing micro-entrepreneurs.

Book Packaging which deals with entire process up to the state of printing i.e. binding, editing, proof-reading, layout design, etc. is handled by an outside company and later sold to publishing industry. It is also a viable business opportunity for Librapreneurs.

10. Digital Book/Periodical Publishing

A digital book/periodical provides an opportunity of online browsing and reading which is easier than reading a traditional book/periodical. A digital book/periodical can be accessed at any time if you have an Internet connection. Starting a digital book/magazine is very cost effective as well as profitable. If someone is interested in starting own business then starting a digital book/magazine is a good idea.

The Internet is accessible to almost everyone therefore a digital book/periodical will be accessible to several people across the world. A digital book/periodical is also eco-friendly since this business will not produce any harmful waste. A digital book/periodical will not require a printer, ink and papers therefore you will be able to save your cost.

11. Online Bookstore

The world today has turned into a global village; where everything can function very efficiently with a single click. In these calamitous times, surviving the turbulent corporate world can be possible by shifting towards an online business or e-business showing an exponential growth in its potentials.

Presently most of the individuals and even the Librarians are purchasing the books through online resources viz., flipkart, amazon etc. Librapreneurs with strong Information Technology knowledge may explore to start a venture “Online Bookstore” with proper legal rights and safeguarding the online business.

Conclusion

There must be various difficulties in entrepreneurship business in this field regarding financial, marketing, resources and so on. So the professionals need the encouragement

to step into business including financial support, entrepreneurial training and information regarding the business. It will also may reduce the unemployment and balance the social and cultural equity.

Leading results in today's LIS professionals will require some innovative spirit to carry the profession through the changes that will need to be made to secure a sustainable future. And demonstrating those innovations with tangible products and services that impact and change processes as we know it, will become the librarian entrepreneurs of this future. Innovation takes leaders who are willing to invest in an open and creative culture that will foster new ideas and break standard or conventional thinking in carrying out professional responsibilities. And these leaders will have to incorporate innovation strategies into the strategic planning process in order to make innovation real and sustainable.

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