



What makes a **Good** Librarian?

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Most people – even librarians – do not always realise what value we as librarians add to a library. Truth to be told is that a Good Librarian is the heart and soul of a vibrant, well-used library. So, what makes a Good Librarian?

User-centred focus

Working in the library is about and for the user. For a Good Librarian, administrative duties must never be more important than assisting the user.

Willingness to make an effort to find the information requested by users

As a Good Librarian you will ensure you know all the available sources of information, for example, SN, SABINET, knowledgeable colleagues and interlibrary loans. You will offer to obtain material or information, if time allows it.

Objectivity

A Good Librarian will assist in providing

information requested even if it does not agree with his or her personal values. This means that the sources you refer your user to will not only reflect your own view on a subject, but will offer all available viewpoints.

Friendliness

A Good Librarian should remain friendly at all times, even when you do not feel friendly. You could ask colleagues and friends to monitor your degree of friendliness and responsiveness. We do not always realise what we look like and a frowning, blank or sour-faced appearance could perhaps be what we sometimes look like.

Availability and accessibility

The users of the library are the reason why we are there in the first place. A Good Librarian should never be too busy to assist. It is easy to seem too busy to help someone, but it is important to prioritise, and keep in mind that the user will approach you again if you show willingness and availability to be of service.

Good communication skills: communicate with and listen to users

As a Good Librarian you have to make eye contact, ensure that you understand the request properly and know and

practice the general principles for good communication.

Helpfulness

A Good Librarian will offer assistance when someone is clearly unsure of how to search for something. You will offer advice on search methods, reading advice, et cetera. You may just help someone who is too shy to ask for help. You should not wait until someone asks, but offer assistance or advice as soon as you realise it might be needed.

Knowledge of the stock and authors

You should know your library stock and/or be familiar with your data system to answer enquiries and assist with research.

Reading

Though a librarian cannot read everything, reading as much and as widely as you can will ensure that you will have opinions on library material. You will be informed about certain genres and authors and will thus have more confidence on reading material.

Willingness to learn

There are always new discoveries being made; new ways of doing things, new crafts, et cetera. A Good Librarian will be able to cope and lead users by reading pertinent articles in professional journals.



where to start looking for something and many do not really know what they would like. A Good Librarian will introduce the reader to material that will keep users coming back for more.

Ask questions

Curiosity and interest in the reader's reading habits and informational satisfaction will make a Good Librarian ask questions about their reading experience and will make recommendations about the material.

A responsibility to be as useful and helpful as possible

The members of the public out there, and the library users in here, should know that a Good Librarian is the person to go to should they want reliable answers or information. People can help themselves on the Internet to a certain extent, but a Good Librarian should be able to assist them even better. People will only realise this if the Good Librarians make themselves indispensable.

Enjoy your work

Anybody who enjoys their job will be enthusiastic about it, which almost automatically makes them leaders in their field. People who enjoy their work are a pleasure to work with.

Curiosity

This is one of the defining characteristics of a Good Librarian. You will not be able to just walk past a newspaper or book without browsing through the main articles or the gist of that book. This is one of the reasons why librarians should be admired for having an extensive general knowledge and being able to find any resources.

Knowledge about patrons

Knowing your patrons and their preferences will enable excellent service delivery when you can offer titles on a subject or genre because you know the reader will like it. Most people are not readers because they do not even know

become a librarian. The combination of a love for people and reading makes for the best librarian of all.

Bibliography

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Use (and be comfortable with) technology

The story/fable that technology will replace libraries and librarians will only become true if librarians allow this to happen. A Good Librarian will be well-informed in using technology to enhance the irreplaceable worth of the library.

Be organised

The ability to find filed or other information in the office or library is another great characteristic. This gives users the confidence in the librarian's ability and enhances the good image of the library.

Trust

A Good Librarian can be trusted with personal information about a patron after assisting with personal or private requests.

The love of reading should never have been the only reason for someone to