Qualities of Next Generation Librarian (NGL): A Discussion

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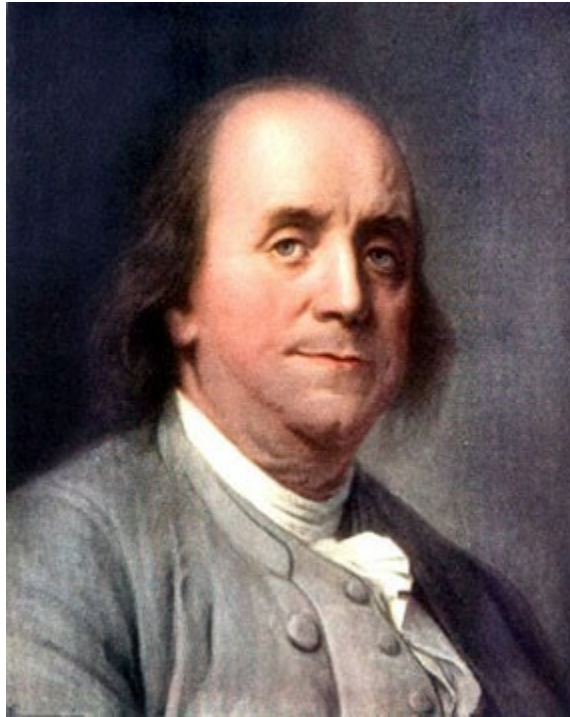
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Could you guess who is he?

He is Mr Benjamin Franklin!

(1706-1790)

Benjamin Franklin….

- Fond of learning & reading & was a great innovator
- Discovered electricity & invented lighting rod, bifocal glasses…
- Founded first subscription library & served as librarian
- Can be considered as an exceptional role model for librarians
- Developed & practiced 13 virtues

The Thirteen Virtues
of Benjamin Franklin at Age 20

1. "TEMPERANCE. Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation."

2. "SILENCE. Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation."

3. "ORDER. Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time."

4. "RESOLUTION. Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve."

5. "FRUGALITY. Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; i.e., waste nothing."

6. "INDUSTRY. Lose no time; be always employ'd in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions."

7. "SINCERITY. Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly, and, if you speak, speak accordingly."

8. "JUSTICE. Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty."

9. "MODERATION. Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve."

10. "CLEANLINESS. Tolerate no uncleanliness in body, cloaths, or habitation."

11. "TRANQUILLITY. Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable."

12. "CHASTITY. Rarely use venery but for health or offspring, never to dullness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another's peace or reputation."

13. "HUMILITY. Imitate Jesus and Socrates."

B Franklin

Introduction

Today's discussion based on

□ 13 qualities of the next NGL as proposed by Andy Burkhardt

□ Adapted on the lines of 13 virtues developed & followed by Benjamin Franklin

□ Should be used as a tool by us for self improvement

Who is a Next Generation Librarian?

- NGL is the one who
  - strives to embrace the virtues discussed
  - evolves as a librarian
  - evolves with the profession
- Not necessarily young or new to field or is an expert in technology
- Is simply open minded & willing to try new things
- Willing to challenge the old way to find the best possible way
- Embodies attitude regardless of age, experience & proficiency in IT

Qualities of NGL

Courage

- Courage is not absence of fear
- Taking actions in spite of fear
- Use fear to motivate yourself to improve as a professional
- Taking decisions involving risk is necessary
- Take risks to grow as a professional & in the profession
- Examples:
  - Teaching in a class room full of new students
  - Stating radical/rational view point in a meeting
  - Speaking up in a faculty/staff meeting
  - Taking difficult decisions
- Courage is nothing but action in the library profession

Flexibility

- Change comes quickly and often; be prepared to adapt!

  - Education, libraries, and nature of information is changing

  - NGL should be

    - able to scan the horizon & identify trends & changes
    - able to see the change as an opportunity to improve themselves & their services
    - able to quickly adapt to new situations & environments

Service Oriented

- Learn to give your attention & talent to others

  - Be passionate about quality & recognize the importance of a meaningful and memorable experience for users

  - Be rooted in present, but look forward & anticipate user needs

  - Remember: Library is a place to have a distinctive experience with information & NGL should be mindful of this when delivering services

Balance

- Find balance in budget, time, user needs, and technology

  - Librarians are often tasked with diverse responsibilities

  - Thus virtue of balance is essential to thrive in profession

  - Balance facilitates perspective in workplace and allows librarians to spend time on what is truly important

Collegiality

- Learn from and share with your colleagues!

  - NGL have plethora of skills & ideas to share with colleagues
  - Essentially they have a lot to learn
  - NGL have entered the field at different times & backgrounds
  - NGL should appreciate that multigenerational environments improve quality of services
  - By sharing knowledge across sections, generations, & levels of hierarchy, the library is strengthened resulting in a collegial & enthusiastic environment

Curiosity

- Be comfortable not knowing, but strongly desire to find out!

    - While librarians must remember that they do not know everything, a NGL should be excited to find the answer or solution to a problem
    - Librarianship is about discovery, both for themselves as well as users
    - We will never have all the answers, but can model the virtue of curiosity and lifelong learning for users

Creativity

- Let your mind not be limited by what has come before

  - NGL should not be limited by statements like
    - we have tried that before
    - that will never work
    - what is the use of it or what is great about it
  - Rather NGL likes to ask questions ' why not?'
  - Librarianship requires imagination & application of lessons from outside the field
  - NGL should understand the creative process & engage it to solve our 21st century problems

Thoughtful

- Ignore the bandwagon and engage attentively

  - While curious & courageous to try new things, NGL should
    - know the new & different is not necessarily better
    - know their library and users, and consider the needs of particular situations

  - Do their research without being overly cautious
  - Are thoughtful in all of their implementations and actions

Playful

- Librarianship is a serious profession, but we need not take ourselves too seriously
- Librarians should foster a sense of play, in the work that they do
- Being playful
  - promotes welcoming environment for users
  - makes library interactions more memorable
  - opens librarians up to being more creative

Collaborative

- Look for opportunities to collaborate with others

  - NGL sees the library as an important component of institution
  - From student to academic to alumni affairs, the library should be visible, and work with all key players on the campus
  - Library services should not be confined to the library building
  - By building relationships and working collaboratively with various departments across campus, a little piece of the library is left behind whenever those connections are made

Directions

- Set a goal and work towards attaining it

  - NGL should

    - often work on exciting projects

    - Focused in their work and mindful of their goals

    - work hard to make their vision a reality, whether working on small task or an entire career

Passionate

- Invest fully in your pursuits

  - NGLs approach their profession with **passion**

  - They bring excitement and enthusiasm to all that they do

  - Librarians who are passionate believe their work matters and do their best to make a difference in the lives of their users as well as the profession

Assertive

- Shed the passive librarian stereotype and advocate for ones needs

  - Librarians often are portrayed as shy, passive book jockeys

  - NGL must be confident & willing to state the needs

  - They need to be outspoken library promoters

  - We may lose opportunities due to lack of assertiveness

Conclusion
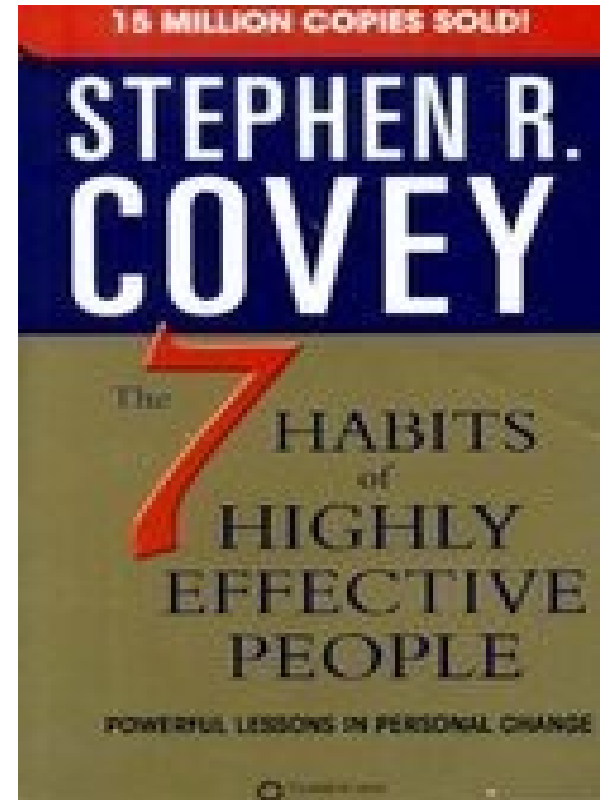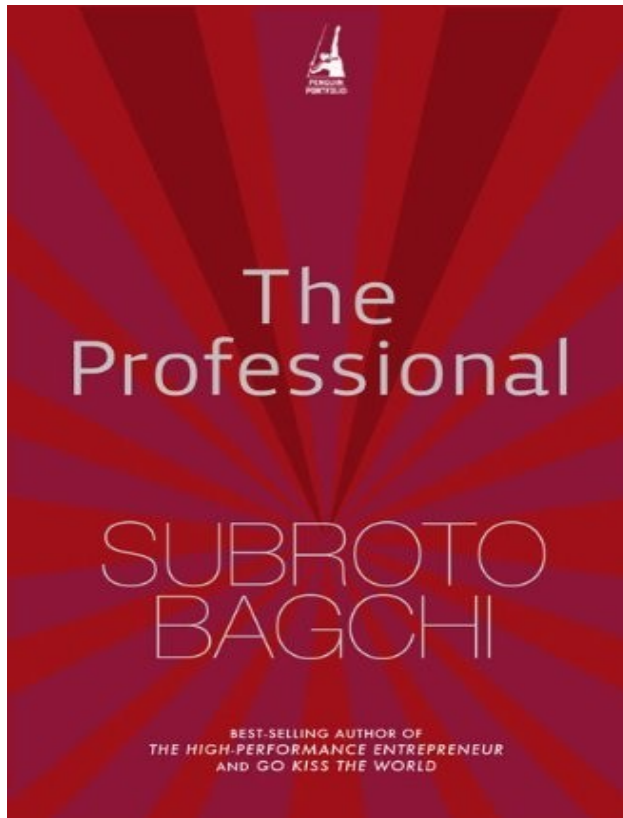
- Qualities serve as pointers for development as a 21st century successful & dynamic NGL

- Can be used across the library community as an inspiration as well as model for excellence in librarianship

- Librarians today and in future will constantly need to be re-tooling and reinventing themselves

- Provide a framework for continued self- empowerment

- Striving for improvement is the attitude that embodies a NGL

Reference

- Burkhardt, Andy Johnson, Catherine R. and Tamilson, Carissa. "In the spirit of benjamin Franklin: 13 virtues of next-gen librarian", *C&RL News* September, 2011pp450-467

Must Reads

Questions & Clarifications?

Thank You?