

# The value of an MBA

Gaynor Austen, Queensland University of Technology

Some years ago I attended a two-day course run by a local university on staff selection. For the first time, my eyes were opened to the immense quantity of management research information which is available, and to its value in informing the library management process. In my own role, managing a large library (at that time a multi-campus college of advanced education library with about 130 staff), I felt that exposure to more of this theory would be beneficial, particularly if it was combined with practical application. When it was suggested to me that higher degree studies would be an advantage in my career progression, I did not hesitate to choose to undertake a Masters of Business Administration (MBA).

Five years of part-time study later, I graduated from Australia's longest MBA course, at the University of Queensland. There were times when I doubted that some of my studies were a valuable use of my time — especially when I was appointed to lead my university library through a major amalgamation, but still had to find time to study. The compulsory finance unit, for example which I hoped would provide me with greater public sector financial management skills, spent the whole semester examining issues such as debt verses equity, and the bases of the share market. Very useful for private investment, but not much help to my immediate budget problems!

On the whole, however, my experience in the general management stream was practical and immediately applicable to my job. The best aspect of the course was that we were encouraged to apply the theory taught to work related issues in our projects.

Some of the papers I wrote in conjunction with the course related to applications of total quality management in a university library; a microeconomic analysis of the overseas fee-paying student industry; an examination of a real life dispute between two staff members, considered in the light of forms of power in an organisation, and the application of marketing concepts within my own library.

I have no doubt that much of this work provided important impetus for initiatives within the Queensland University of Technology library.

The opportunity to mix, and work on projects, with students from a variety of professions was invaluable. Many different approaches to problems were shared. Most of the engineers, and there were many in the course, found it impossible to accept that there was no one ultimately right answer to problems in human resource management! Several librarians were doing the course, in particular Helen King (then at James Cook University, now Bendigo Campus librarian at Latrobe) and I shared experiences and support throughout the course. At the end of the course, since we both finished on the Dean's commendation list, we felt we had provided pretty good evidence that librarians can perform just as well in such courses as engineers, lawyers, accountants and computing specialists! Overall, I would strongly recommend such a course for anyone contemplating a career in library management, particularly for those already in management roles, who have the opportunity to put their learning into action in the real world.

## BookFind-CD Australian Edition

### Install

under Windows or DOS, or both, from the same CD.

### Select

from a wide range of search criteria to broaden or refine your search — Author, Title, Key Word in Text, Series Title, Subject Classification...

### Search

a bibliographic database of over 2 million English-language titles worldwide, including both imported and Australian published titles.

### Find

full information from Book Data's database — with descriptions, contents lists, readership levels, subject classifications...

### Export

the data you find on disk, download it, or just print it from your screen.

### Locate

book/s by accessing international publisher and distributor databases, to find local distribution addresses, and worldwide contact details.

### Trial

BookFind-CD Australian Edition yourself, free and without obligation, to see what it can offer.

## BookFind-CD

The Australian perspective



### Book Data in Australia

Reply Paid 20  
PO Box 746  
Noosa Heads Qld 4567.  
Tel (074) 74 8544  
Fax (074) 74 5202  
(Open Wednesdays, fax or message can be left all week)

### Book Data in the UK

Northumberland House  
2 King St. Twickenham  
TW1 3RZ UK  
Tel +44 181 892 2272  
Fax +44 181 892 9109

### DISTRIBUTORS

#### Baker & Taylor

Tel 02 436 2666  
Fax 02 436 2170

#### Barcode Solutions

Tel 02 637 7366  
Fax 02 897 2327

#### James Bennett

Tel 02 9982 2122  
Fax 02 9971 1309

#### BiblioFile Australia

Tel 03 9521 6421  
Fax 03 9521 6009

#### DA Electronic Media

Tel 03 9210 7777  
Fax 03 9210 7788

#### DLS Australia

Tel 03 9558 0204  
Fax 03 9558 0516

#### Tom Milledge & Assoc

Tel 074 48 0149  
Fax 074 74 5202