
ALLAN, Barbara. *Supervising and leading teams in ILS.* London: Facet Publishing, 2007.
224 pages. ISBN 978 1 85604 587 2. £39.95.

Having just been promoted to a team leader's position, I was looking for some information about best practice in doing the job. This book fits the bill, exactly. It contains practical ideas, along with some theory, and gives plenty of 'food for thought'. In the introduction the author states that the book is intended for 'new and aspiring team leaders and supervisors', but it would also be useful for 'experienced practitioners who wish to refresh their approach to managing teams'.

Chapter 1 sets the context for the book, talking about the roles and responsibilities of team leaders and supervisors, and offers some background to management and strategic planning. Chapter 2 discusses different approaches to managing teams, and contains lists of questions the reader might ask in order to review and reflect on their team and teamwork. Confidence in the role of team leader is explored in Chapter 3. Assertiveness and emotional intelligence are particular characteristics which are discussed.

Chapter 4 deals with theories of motivation, and suggests ways in which the team leader can motivate the team. Both routine and project work in Information and Library Services are examined in Chapter 5, and ideas on managing the work of the team are discussed. Chapter 6 examines the theory of communication skills, and explains how this involves thinking about the person with whom we are communicating, what we want to communicate, and the most effective means of getting the message across. It also includes guidelines for effective meetings, which I found particularly useful.

The discussion of complex teams in Chapter 7 is a little too theoretical for me, but the advice on human resource management in Chapter 8 is extremely useful. Chapter 9 talks about the workplace learning cycle and how team leaders can facilitate and manage this within their team. In Chapter 10 the more personal professional development of the team leader themselves is discussed. This chapter explains how the team leader should pay attention to such things as work/life balance, time management, personal and career support, professional networks and communities of practice. With the help of these activities, the individual can become a better and more efficient team leader.

Each chapter includes references so that the reader can go into more depth in any areas of particular interest, and there are case studies from real life situations, and practical activities to help the reader deal with their role.

The author writes authoritatively as she has worked as a team leader in an academic library, and as an independent consultant and trainer. This is an excellent book for someone just starting out as a team leader, and I would thoroughly recommend it for people in this situation. However, it contains a lot of useful information for anyone who has been in such a role for a while, and wants to refresh their ideas and practices.

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