

Running head: BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY: PART ONE

**The Role of Goal Setting at the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library**  
**Part One: Mission, Vision & Value Statements, Environmental Scan,**  
**and SWOT Analysis**

Student 1  
Student 2  
Student 3  
Mary Beth Romo  
Student 5

San Jose State University – School of Library and Information Science

October 12, 2015

### Abstract

This is the first part of a two-part analysis of goal setting theory and how it applies to the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library. In this analysis, current literature on goal setting theory is discussed along with recommended updates to the mission, vision, and value statements of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library. Goal setting theory and the literature discussing it is relevant to the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library because of the need for the library to adapt to the constantly changing and diverse population it serves, as well as addressing the trends and threats of the surrounding environment and addressing its own weaknesses. The uniqueness of the population served by the library requires the library to create, evaluate and revise its goals on a regular basis in order to provide the best services possible to its patrons. Also included in this analysis is an environmental scan that identifies trends affecting the strategic planning for the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library, and a SWOT analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

*Keywords:* Buffalo & Erie County Public Library; B&ECPL; City of Buffalo; Erie County; public library; goal setting theory; environmental scan; SWOT

## **The Role of Goal Setting at the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library**

### **Part One: Mission, Vision & Value Statements and Environmental Scan**

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library is a multi-branch library located in the City of Buffalo, NY and the surrounding region comprised of Erie County New York. This region, which saw a decline in population since the 1970s, is starting to grow again both in size and in diversity. However, due to the changes in population and diversity over the years, the region has had to deal with a high poverty level and major economic crises. These changes in the patrons, as well as increasing employment opportunities and economic growth and revitalization along the waterfront of Buffalo, have and will create opportunities and problems that will need to be addressed by the library as the library strives to stay relevant and beneficial to the population it serves. One way this can be done is by incorporating goal-setting theory into updated mission, vision, and value statements for the library. Also included in this analysis is an environmental scan and SWOT analysis. These have been included in order to give a well-rounded view of how goal-setting theory can be applied to the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library.

### **Literature Review**

Every institution has a task it must accomplish. For an institution to exist, it needs to meet performance standards, quotas, objectives, and deadlines. Thus, every institution has a goal or set of goals that they aim for. Having goals is helpful for an institution as a whole, but merely having them is not enough. The act of goal setting is a vital step. This is where goal setting theory comes into play. Edwin A. Locke developed goal-setting theory over several decades of experiments. It states, “specific and challenging goals lead to higher performance than easy goals, ‘do your best’ goals, or no goals” (Locke, Shaw,

Saari, & Latham, 1981). Although experiments on goal setting have mainly focused on the individual, goal setting theory can also be applied to larger groups and institutions. Goal setting theory has been tested and observed by several researchers over many years, and despite some controversies, seems to hold true.

### **Beginnings of Goal Setting Theory**

Before Locke developed what is now known as “goal setting theory,” he conducted several experiments on goal setting and motivation. One of his early studies tested whether goal setting alone could increase an individual’s motivation. A group of 20 participants were split into two groups: a high motivation group and a low motivation group. Both groups were given a series of math problems to complete. The low motivation group was eventually given a specific goal to aim for, while the high motivation group was told to simply “do their best.” At the end of the experiment, the low motivation group had “caught up” to high motivation group in terms of performance (Bryan & Locke, 1967). Thus, simply setting a specific goal may be enough to raise motivation in individuals, even if they usually have low levels of motivation.

Locke then went on to conduct several more studies, one of which tested whether an individual’s knowledge of their results could increase their motivation, and what it meant for an individual’s goal setting practices. The study put forth this theory:

...If a person appraises his performance as unsatisfactory in relation to some particular standard, he will ordinarily set himself a goal to improve his subsequent performance. If he is satisfied with his performance, he may attempt only to maintain his previous level of achievement. Or, if he is indifferent to a piece of knowledge, he may take no action at all regarding it. The crucial issue, then, is not

that a person is given KR [Knowledge of Results] but what he does with it (Locke, Cartledge, & Koeppel, 1968, p. 475).

Essentially, the study explains that individuals not only need a specific goal to improve their performance, they also need to know how well they had performed on a previous task and what mistakes were made. If an individual with high motivation is given “Knowledge of Results” then it will lead to the individual setting more specific, hard goals (Locke et al., 1968). This in turn will lead to higher performance. Thus, the process of goal setting not only raises performance in low motivation individuals, but in high motivation individuals as well.

### **Solidification of Goal Setting Theory**

In 1981, Locke (along with Shaw, Saari, and Latham) published a paper reviewing previous research on goal setting, and set forth the “goal setting theory.” The review found that 48 studies supported the hypothesis that hard goals lead to better performance, and 51 studies supported the hypothesis that specific goals lead to better performance. These studies taken together show that 99 out of 110 studies supported the goal setting theory. That is, specific and complex goals lead to better performance compared to medium, easy, or no goals (Locke et al., 1981).

Goal setting works so well in increasing performance because it increases motivation, which directly affects three components of action: direction, effort, and persistence (Locke et al., 1981). Having a goal makes people more focused on the task (direction), put in more work in order to reach the goal (effort), and also stick with the task longer (persistence). The same review also found that “participation in goal setting may affect performance through its influence on goal difficulty” (Locke et al., 1981).

Thus, goal setting in a group environment would also be beneficial for improving performance. This would make goal setting useful in business settings, as goal setting is a useful tool not only for individual purposes, but also for companies and corporations.

### **Early Developments of Goal Setting Theory**

By the mid-1980s, goal setting theory was fairly established in the field (Austin & Bobko, 1985). Thus, most research on goal setting in the 1980s focused on other aspects of goal setting. One of these studies by D. Johnson, Maruyama, R. Johnson, Nelson, and Skon (1981) looked at the effects of cooperation and competition on goal structures. It was found that a cooperative behavior (when everyone is working towards the same goal) promoted higher achievement compared to competitive behavior (when everyone is working towards different goals). It can be inferred then, that group goal setting would only produce higher productivity results if all members of the group are working collaboratively instead of competitively against one another to achieve the set goal or goals.

Goal setting theory has also been tested in other populations outside of North America. One particular study by Punnett (1986) studied whether the effects of goal setting would be applicable to a rural community on a small Eastern Caribbean island. The study focused on a sample of 92 rural women, who smocked children's clothes for a living. These women were observed, and then split into three groups. The first group received a goal that was 20% higher than their highest productivity, the second group was merely told to "do their best," and the third group received no instructions (control group). The results gathered at the end of the observation period found that the group that was given a specific goal had much higher productivity than the "do your best" group and

the control group. These findings suggest that goal-setting theory “may be widely applicable in varied settings” (Punnett, 1986). Although more research is needed to truly confirm this phenomenon in other countries, the positive results of this study are encouraging.

### **The Effects of Goal Commitment on Goal Setting**

Towards the end of the 1980s, several studies were done to test the influence of goal commitment on goal setting and performance, as it had not been studied intensively before. An analysis of several past studies by Locke, Latham, and Erez (1988) defines commitment as: “one's attachment to or determination to reach a goal, regardless of the goal's origin. Thus it can apply to any goal, whether self-set, participatively set, or assigned.” Goal commitment is linked to higher productivity and performance. If a high goal is set, but there is no individual commitment to the goal, then goal setting theory fails (Locke, et al., 1988).

While goal setting is affected by goal commitment, goal commitment is itself affected by several factors. Goal commitment can be affected by external influences, interactive influences, and internal influences (Locke, et al., 1988). A major external influence is a goal set by an authority figure. Trust in an authority figure is a vital component for increasing commitment, and therefore motivation (Locke, et al., 1988). If there is a low level of trust in an authority figure, then goals set by that authority figure may not be respected. This statement can be expanded to say that a good leader is necessary for strong goal commitment.

This phenomenon was observed in another study by Locke and Somers (1987), which was a field experiment focused on the Tactical Air Command (TAC); an

organization under the command of the US Air Force. Previous set goals for the organization were unrealistic and therefore often ignored. However, an intervention by a new leader with clearer set goals led to much higher productivity. While this study shows that goal-setting theory holds in complex tasks (in this case, workers in an air force), it also places an emphasis on good leadership (Locke & Somers, 1987).

Interactive influences of goal commitment are those relating to participation in the goal setting process. This was already touched upon in the above sections. Examples of internal influences on goal commitment are perceived expectancy of results and self-efficacy. Goal commitment tends to be lower on more difficult goals, due to the lowered expectancies (Locke, et al., 1988). Self-efficacy, an individual's own judgment of how well they can perform a task, can also cause lowered goal commitment if an individual's self-efficacy is low. Lowered expectancy of results and lowered self-efficacy therefore causes lower performance, even when specific goals are set.

Although it has been proven that goal commitment directly affects how well goal setting improves performance, more studies need to be conducted on the factors influencing goal commitment (Locke, et al., 1988). Being able to raise goal commitment has significant implications for leaders and managers; and by extension, companies and institutions.

### **Criticisms of Goal Setting Theory**

There have been several criticisms of the goal setting theory. Theories should, as a primary function, be able to predict behavior. Goal setting allows this prediction, but only in the most generalized of ways. Differences in settings, studies, researchers, and participants can cause wide variations in results, making predictions both difficult and



unreliable. The majority of the original research was done on work-related and educational-related goal setting, leaving demographics limited.

Differences in settings, even small differences, can cause the results from goal setting studies to be skewed. Most goal setting studies are more effective in the field than they are in a laboratory setting due to the qualification of the material studied. Field studies, however, are much more likely to be affected by outside influences and therefore are more likely to experience some skewing in the results. Two athletes who have experienced an ankle injury may be influenced by their personal relationship with the trainer that is overseeing their rehabilitation, their desire to enter back into the game or event, their physical condition before the injury, and even how much support they receive from their families. These factors, among many other potential factors, can cause the goal setting study to skew more positive or more negative. The same type of factors can affect the results in educational goal setting and work goal setting.

Differences in researchers have also contributed to the criticisms. Both the application of goal setting and the uniformity of assessing the results have come under fire from those who have studied the theory (Kim, 1984; Ordonez, Schweitzer, Galinsky, & Bazerman, 2009). Units of measurement from successes and failures do not exist for this theory, vary wildly between studies, and can be, again, affected by outside influences. In addition, little research has been done to determine the effect of multiple goals, even if they do not conflict, on a participant. The limited research has shown that participants will focus only on the goal that they consider most important, while ignoring the rest; but much more information is needed to validate this.

There are also limitations in the research studies themselves. It was not until after the year 2000 that an age component was added into studies. Older adults were found to be more willing to take on a limited range of goals, while younger adults were more willing to work with a wider range of goals. Younger adults were found to prefer goals that increased their level of performance in areas such as memory, while older adults were more interested in goals that helped maintain their performance or compensate for a loss of performance (West, Ebner, & Hastings, 2013). Research studies also failed to consider the complexity of the goal. More complicated goals, and the tasks to reach the goals, can cause a variety of behavior that would not normally be found (Cohen & Iluz, 2015). Higher risk-taking and unethical behaviors were found when complicated goals were set. Ford Motor Company allowed unperformed safety tests to be cited in order to meet a complex series of goals to allow a new automobile to hit the market. They also allowed a design flaw to remain uncorrected; deciding that the cost of lawsuits from those injured or killed would be less expensive than correcting the flaw (Ordonez, Schweitzer, Galinsky, & Bazerman, 2009). Finally, the research studies only consider the effect of goal setting on a specific goal. These studies fail to recognize that the participant, in reaching the goal, may develop a kind of tunnel vision, allowing them to see only the goal and not the surrounding material (Ordonez, Schweitzer, Galinsky, & Bazerman, 2009). For instance, long-term goals of an organization may be ignored in favor of meeting short-term goals that will only benefit the organization in the present.

The participants also can skew results in this type of study. In a group setting, for instance, if the leader of the group has a passion for the topic, they may rush through the goal setting process, making goals that are too easy, too difficult, short-term, or have too

high a level of complexity (Thorgren & Wincent, 2013). Goal setting is vulnerable to each of these missteps, and having a leader or a charismatic team member that feels passionately about the goal can cause one or more of them to appear.

### **Goal Setting Theory Today**

Goal setting theory has undergone, and continues to undergo, refinements that should allow more accurate prediction of behavior for a wider variety of subjects. Many of these, such as goal choice and learning goals, are specific to one area of study. Goal choice, for example, is specific to sports-orientated goals and allows researchers to examine the effects of past performance on setting goals for athletes. It also examines the positive effects of meeting lower goals versus the negative effects on missing higher goals (Porter, Gogus, & Yu, 2011). Goal framing can involve many different areas of goal setting. It focuses on the goal itself, and on how the goal is perceived by the participant. If the goal is a challenge, such as a boss telling an employee that this goal can be met, then it is viewed much differently than if the boss states that the goal must be met or the employee will lose their job. The challenge versus threat may also help to answer the criticism of high-risk and unethical behavior. The purpose of the goal is also being examined. As with the age-related differences, the outcome of the goal may also lead to various motivations within the participants. Those who have a learning trait will choose goals in which they can acquire knowledge, while those with a performance trait will not only choose performance goals, they will choose goals that they are confident they can meet. Currently, research in goal setting varies from the individual to small groups to large organizations (Locke & Latham, 2006).

**Conclusion**

Goal setting theory uses goals and the motivation to reach them in an effort to make the final outcome higher, greater, or simply better than it would have been if the goal was generalized, such as ‘do your best’. Organizations that intend to use goal setting to achieve their goals should keep in mind that the goals must be attainable but challenging, that reaching the goal must involve feedback, and that those working toward the goal must be both motivated and committed to reaching the goal. All of these aspects will need to be addressed once a team is chosen so that the entire team is working cooperatively to make the organizational changes that are needed.

**Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Mission, Vision, and Value Statements****Mission Statement**

The Mission of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library is to engage with the community to promote partnerships with local residents as well as local and regional organizations, especially local school districts and universities. We also strive to promote and encourage literacy in both English and the native languages of our patrons to ensure that the diverse population of the greater Buffalo area feels supported and welcomed at the library. In order to accomplish these goals, it is necessary for the library system to prepare for the future by studying historic and current trends, and effectively and responsibly use and expand revenue sources that are or will become available.

**Vision**

The vision of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System is to provide resources for our unique, diverse, and growing community that will enhance and delight the lives and education of the patrons. Our vision is to not only reach out to the local

community, but to also create a relationship with and help support the needs and goals of the region surrounding the City of Buffalo.

### **Values**

The core values of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System were developed to support and fulfill both the mission statement and the vision of the library system. The core values are comprised of the five main ideas listed below.

- **Diversity**

Create a database and system that encourages diversity in both its collection and the patrons that utilize the system.

- **Technology**

Emphasize the growing use of technology in today's educational environment by providing online access to the library database as well as access to current and new technologies available on the market that also expand the educational role of the library.

- **Customer Service**

Provide the best possible customer service by exercising patience, spending the time necessary to ensure that the patron leaves feeling satisfied, treating patrons with respect and courtesy, and striving to maintain a professional level of integrity in the workplace.

- **Sustainability**

Strive to keep sustainability a priority within the master plan of the library as well as in the everyday workings of the library by looking for ways to reduce the

carbon footprint of the library system and increase efficiency in the workplace while maintaining an inviting and comforting environment that promotes learning.

- **Community Partner**

Work with community leaders and members to ensure the library is meeting the needs of the local community and school systems, as well as striving to be a beacon of progress to the community in regards to new ways of educating patrons and utilizing technology.

## **Environmental Scan**

### **Demographic Trends**

According to the City of Buffalo Comprehensive Plan (n.d.), the population of the city of Buffalo has declined steadily for the past 60 years, with the total amount of people in 2000 half of what it was in 1970. The change in the profile of Buffalo residents between 1970 and 2000 is dramatic. The number of households living in poverty has expanded significantly. One third of Buffalo's population currently lives below the poverty line. There was a 50% decline of married family households and a sharp rise of households with a female head-of-house. The decrease in city population has coincided with a corresponding increase in the suburban population of Erie County. Western New York has lost a third of its 20- to 40-year olds since 1970 (Cardwell, 2015).

The western New York area has experienced a slight growth in population recently, due to an influx of refugees and immigrants (Zremski, 2015). The 2014 US Census Bureau (2014) reports that 99.5% of Buffalo's population consists of 50.4% Whites, 38.6% Black/African Americans, and 10.5% Hispanic/Latinos.

The Buffalo and Erie County Public Library (B&ECPL) must adapt services to an evolving population. Programs and materials that address the issues of the poor, the unemployed, the racially diverse, the new family structure, and the immigrant populations would be appropriate.

### **Economic Trends**

Buffalo is the third poorest city in the United States, with a poverty rate more than twice the national rate of 14.9% (Thomas, 2014). Manufacturing has been declining since the 1940s, leaving vast amounts of abandoned property. Despite the long decline, much of the infrastructure necessary for manufacturing remains (Cardwell, 2015).

In 2012 Governor Andrew Cuomo pledged \$1 billion of tax breaks and grants to regenerate the economy. Under a comprehensive plan, the state is targeting advanced manufacturing, health and life sciences, and tourism. Thanks to incentives, a renewable energy developer is transforming the former steel mill into a green power plant, a rooftop solar installation company is building a panel factory, and Yahoo has opened a data and customer service center in the area ("Buffalo billion," n.d.; Cardwell, 2015).

The Buffalo area is also benefitting from two private investors who bought the two local professional sports teams and are heading redevelopment projects. Ventures include HarborCenter, a mixed-use hockey and entertainment facility, and the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus.

Although unemployment has been reduced to 5.3%, wages are below the national average and not growing quickly. Another concern is that many residents lack the skills necessary to participate in the economy (Robinson & Epstein, 2015). Library programs could help patrons obtain the skills required for new employment opportunities. Research

into current development projects would reveal what types of jobs will become available to Buffalo area residents in the future. The B&ECPL could use this information to design programs and training courses to target specific skill sets that will be attractive to employers. Job search and resume programs would also be beneficial.

### **Political and Public Policy Trends**

Current statistics reported by the Pew Research Center (2015) reflect a positive shift in the nation's approval of President Obama's job performance. US citizens now view the Democratic Party more favorably than the Republican Party, though the public sees few prospects for partisan cooperation and legislative success on the horizon.

The American Library Association (ALA) reported in its "State of America's Libraries" (2015), that the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), which is the primary source of federal funding for libraries, received \$180.9 million in December 2014. These funds support grants to states, which are then allocated to programs such as job-searching databases, resume workshops, and summer reading programs. In July 2015, President Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, authorizing public libraries to be eligible providers with access to federal funding for effective job training and job search programs. Parents, teachers and librarians are lobbying for the 2015 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Amendments would address specific concerns about school libraries. Although the quantity and quality of library programming is on the rise, tight budgets demand justification for program expenses (ALA, 2015).

According to the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library's 2015 Budget, Erie County funding for the Library will increase 1.9% from 2014. The Library's overall



operating budget, including State Aid and library revenue increased 1.8% from 2014. The total operating and grants budget for 2015 is \$27,338,621. 85.2% of the library's funding comes from Library Property Taxes, but the Library's share of a typical property owner's taxes is only 1.6% (\$6.29 per capita). In a comparison with library systems with equivalent populations, the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library provides service at low cost. However, lack of sufficient funding and the constrained size of the facility impact the ability to provide services ("Buffalo & Erie County Library 2015 Budget," 2014).

The Library has faced three major budget cuts in the past ten years: -24% in 2005, -7% in 2009, and -5% in 2011. Since 2009, contractually obligated expenses rose nearly \$1 million by 44%. Also, since 2009, budget cuts have resulted in a 20% reduction of full-time talented staff, a decrease in opening hours, and an 11% decrease in the purchase of new materials. Despite these financial challenges, demand for library services persists. Since 2007, computer use sessions are up 100% and program attendance is up 59%. There is heavy use of free Wi-Fi, but statistic counts began only in 2012 ("Buffalo & Erie County Library 2015 Budget," 2014).

The decline of funding along with a concomitant elevation in demand for services means that the B&ECPL will need to continue to advocate for more funds. The positive shift in the public's perception of the President and Obama's support for public library services may create a more favorable atmosphere for increased library funding. A tangible demonstration of the value of the library and its services is essential. The B&ECPL may also consider exploring alternative sources of income.

### **Technological Trends**

"Internet Live Stats" (n.d.) reveals that today there are over 3 billion people worldwide with Internet access at home. This trend is expected to continue, placing an emphasis on equitable access to the Internet and digital literacy. Equal access to digital information is necessary in order to function in modern society. According to the *New Media Consortium Horizon Library Edition Report* (2015), the traditional concept of literacy has expanded to encompass the understanding of digital tools and networked information (p. 24). In order to address the growing digital divide separating those with Internet access from those without, library programs that address digital skills are required. Libraries (including the B&ECPL) must also continue to provide Internet access with terminals and Wi-Fi; and must reach out to its underserved constituents, ensuring equitable access to digital materials.

Mobile device usage, which is now significantly higher than desktop device usage, is expected to continue to grow (Bosomworth, 2015). It is predicted that by 2020, 80% of adults will have a smartphone. The proliferation of mobile technology has changed library patrons' expectations for access to library services and materials. In response to this trend, libraries are developing "mobile-friendly websites, apps, catalogs, and e-books, as well as discovery tools that meet patrons where they are through SMS alerts and social media" (*NMC Horizon Report*, 2015, p. 18). The B&ECPL must therefore be diligent in providing mobile services that evolve with technology.

There is an increased awareness of the importance of user experience. Studies indicate that first impressions in the digital world are crucial. Since nearly all of a user's initial perceptions are related to design, libraries must ensure clear and easy navigation of

their databases and websites (*NMC Horizon Report*, 2015, p. 16). Additionally, the trend of inclusive design conveys the recognition of the necessity for technological products to appeal to a broad range of diverse users. Technological products “should be designed to be as usable... as possible for the widest possible audience involving as many people and types of people and types of users as possible” (Enis, 2015). This provides guidelines for how the B&ECPL should implement inclusive design in its technological products, in order to provide positive discovery experiences for all of its patrons.

The *NMC Horizon Report* (2015) reveals that skillsets valuable in the modern workplace focus on creativity, design, and engineering. In the 21st century, where technology is rapidly advancing, invention and innovation are highly prized. The Maker movement, encompassing engineers, artists, and builders, has led to an understanding that making activities and hands-on projects “effectively engage learners in creative, higher-order problem solving through self-directed design, construction, and iteration” (p. 36). Libraries must find a way to encourage and support the acquisition of these distinctive features of innovation. The B&ECPL should continuously assess the interests of its patrons, and build relationships with local experts in those areas. Makerspace programs should appeal to these interests, and knowledgeable community members should facilitate learning.

The advancement of machine learning, in which computers use algorithms and analyze data to make predictions, will have an effect on library services. Since libraries possess huge sets of data, they are well poised to take advantage of machine learning. Buffalo libraries could provide patrons with individual services tailored to their personal profiles. Services and information outputs could be adjusted in real time. However, the

use of personal and confidential information for these purposes challenges privacy rights (*NMC Horizon Report*, 2015, p. 46).

The trend of gamification, which refers to the use of game design in non-game contexts, is a way to engage and motivate users, or to help users solve problems. Typically, tasks are broken into stages, and upon completion, participants are rewarded with badges, prizes, or recognition on leaderboards. Library patrons who participate in gamified programs may receive points for reading, tagging, and reviewing books, which can then be exchanged for prizes (Enis, 2015). The B&ECPL could examine the possibilities of incorporating gamification into programs and services.

The field of digital technology continues to be male dominated and educational and training programs persist in attracting male learners. Statistics from the National Center for Women in Technology indicate, “In 2012, only 12 percent of computer science undergraduate degrees were earned by women. Lack of representation in high school and college has led to low representation in the growing field, with women holding only 26 percent of jobs requiring a computer science degree” (Enis, 2015). Buffalo libraries could address this discrepancy by offering workshops and coding programs specifically geared toward girls.

### **Trends in Public Libraries**

Historically, public libraries have strived to address literacy issues by offering programs. Modern literacy programs reflect the needs of library patrons, based on community input, as well as research, studies and current trends.

The American Library Association’s (ALA) annual *State of America’s Libraries Report 2015* discusses early literacy programs that are geared toward low-income

children, who appear to be at a disadvantage when they reach school age. Library programs are designed to enrich their vocabulary and prepare them for school. Adult literacy programs address the one in six American adults who have difficulty with basic English. A variety of digital literacy programs aim to equip patrons of all ages with the skills necessary to access and share digital information. Library programs that respond to the changing job market should focus on employment and skill building (ALA, 2015). Literacy programs at the B&ECPL should address the most needy and underserved patrons in the community.

Services for teens are moving toward a connected learning approach, focusing on the interests of the learner. In this learning model, community coaches and mentors supplement library staff and facilities (ALA, 2015). Makerspaces, a recent trend in libraries, utilize the physical library space for community collaboration and non-traditional learning activities. Thriving makerspaces embody the ideals of a culture of creation, offering a range of opportunities from 3D printing, to music recording, to craft instruction, to assistance for immigrants, to cultural and arts programs, and much more (Fontichiaro, 2015). The makerspace of the B&ECPL should be utilized to its full potential by encouraging and facilitating creative collaborative endeavors.

Library professionals continue to advocate for privacy and for intellectual freedom. The ALA's *Privacy Tool Kit* educates patrons about the effects of new technologies on privacy. The ALA is working to reverse the increasing number of challenges to books with diverse content and authors of color, by promoting diversity in library collections and protecting these materials from censors (ALA, 2015). Buffalo library materials need to reflect the diverse nature of its patrons, offering suitable content

for all. Library users should be offered materials explaining their privacy rights and how digital technology challenges those rights.

### **Competition**

Public libraries face competition from alternative sources of discovery, mainly the Internet. The *NMC Horizon Report (2015)* recognizes that “libraries are in the difficult position of having to compete with highly relevant online environments such as Wikipedia” (p. 26). Internet users are accustomed to performing web searches that result in “countless pages of relevant articles, reports, and media” (p. 26). For the B&ECPL to remain a dynamic community information hub, and for its staff to remain useful and knowledgeable facilitators of discovery, B&ECPL information professionals must adapt to and embrace new technologies, respond to the evolving needs and expectations of its patrons, and demonstrate the value and relevance of the library and its services.

### **SWOT Analysis**

#### **Strengths**

As technology continues to further ingrain itself into our everyday lives, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System has done an excellent job of incorporating technology into its more traditional services. There is probably no greater example of this than the installation of the Launch Pad Makerspace at the Central Library. At the Launch Pad, patrons can book a technology trainer to help them print free designs on the new 3D Printer, or take them through the basics of music and video creation at the in house Recording Studio, featuring software tools such as Avid Pro Tools 12, Final Cut Pro X, Garageband, Audacity and HUE Stop Motion Animation Studio, as well as a Casio synthesizer and Les Paul standard electric guitar. Other interesting activities include

augmented reality books, that bring books to life in 3D; robot building using Cubelets; Leap Motion, which allows for virtual reality interaction with computers using infrared technology; MaKey MaKey, a technology utilizing alligator clips to turn normal everyday objects into touch pads; Osmo Gaming for iPads and even a little bit of basic circuit building.

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library also has a massive online presence, ranging from their website, an active social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, Flickr and two blogs: one on Genealogy & Local History and the other about the Rare Book Room collection, both of which are updated on a semi-regular basis.

In catering to the research needs in an electronic world, the library provides subject guides directing patrons towards useful books (print and e-book alike), websites, and any of their 69 different database subscriptions. While print resources aren't going anywhere in the foreseeable future, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library has laid down a solid technological foundation to build off of, as the shift towards technology continues, attracting a brand new generation of library users.

However, even with today's focus on technology, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System still maintains a vibrant and diverse collection, ranging from books, historical documents, maps and local artifacts. Highlights of the collection are Mark Twain's handwritten manuscript of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, housed in its very own room prominently displaying the restored mantle of his Buffalo home. Other special collections are the complete four volume set of *The Audubon Birds of America* by John James Audubon; 14 first editions by L. Frank Baum, author of *The Wizard of Oz*;

Shakespeare's First, Second, Third & Fourth folios; a collection of the Federalist Papers, some derived from the personal collection of Thomas Jefferson; the Milestones of Science collection, containing 200 extremely rare works by the likes of Galileo, Sir Isaac Newton and Nicolaus Copernicus; and even a couple of cuneiform clay tablets dated around 2350 B.C.

The Grosvenor Room, originally founded as a separate reference library with a major focus on genealogy, local history and music, amassed an extensive collection that eventually merged with the Buffalo Public Library to form the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library as it is known today. Local historians and genealogists looking to conduct research are greeted with 25,000 volumes dedicated to the telling of local history, 5,500 charted genealogies, and over 850 census records for Erie County, Western New York and a handful of states. Also included are hundreds of old city directories and phone books, 110 reels of local church and cemetery records, 28 local newspapers on microfilm, military rosters and histories, indices to immigrant passenger lists, immigrant ship information and English Parish Records, all topped with subscriptions to 55 genealogical and local history periodicals. The music collection covers over 2,000 years of musical history, and contains over 300,000 songs ranging from the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century to present day, recorded on a collection of CDs, cassette tapes, vinyl LP's and 78's. In total, the Rare Book Vault contains over 10,000 rare and priceless titles, seldom found outside of larger collections such as the New York or Boston Public Libraries, containing works from some of America's greatest literary minds like Walt Whitman, Edgar Allan Poe, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry James, James Fenimore Cooper, even the influential founding father Benjamin Franklin.



A few of the branch libraries maintain special collections of their own, the most notable being the Alden (Ewell) Free Library with its collection of local Native American tools and artifacts and the Lackawanna Public Library, which holds a satellite collection from The Steel Plant Museum of Western New York.

Perhaps the system's greatest strength lies not in its vast collections or even in its embrace of the latest technologies, but in its resilience and ability to overcome adversity. In the past ten years, the library has been rocked by two major budget crises that threatened to close their doors permanently. Despite the significant setbacks of the past decade, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library has continued to find new ways to make up for budget shortfalls and rebrand itself as a center of learning for the 21st Century. One of these efforts to raise additional funds came in the form of renting out space at the Central Library to a full service café appropriately named Fables, which as a part of the rental agreement, pays a percentage of their sales to the library. Besides generating revenue, the addition of a full service café also generates foot traffic through the library, especially during the lunch rush in the middle of downtown Buffalo. It also entices patrons to stay longer and explore the different services the library has to offer, such as the Launch Pad Makerspace, located in the room right next door. They have also opened an Online Store, which sells reproductions of commemorative envelopes, posters and prints found in their collection, generating income, and sparking interest in the collection.

### **Weaknesses**

As previously discussed, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library's greatest weakness lies in the unpredictability of its funding. Dependent on Erie County for over

85% of their budget, the library is at the mercy of taxpayers and the lawmakers that represent them. This can lead to some major fluctuations in the budget, as was the case in 2005. The county slashed the library budget by 24.5%, forcing the closure of 15 of its 52 branches, the termination of its bookmobile service, and the elimination of 225 jobs. In the aftermath, 12 of the remaining branches cut hours of operation below minimum standards set by New York State, many subscriptions lapsed and book acquisitions slowed to a trickle. In the following years, the library system showed signs of recovery, hours of operation were restored, and book acquisitions slowly began to increase. However, by 2011, Erie County was again forced to reduce the library tax levy by \$4 million, resulting in the lowest level of funding since 1994 and causing another round of cuts in operation hours and the elimination of an additional 47 jobs (“Erie County Library Funding History,” 2014).

This unpredictability makes planning major maintenance projects, especially those needed at the aging Central Library, extremely difficult. A prime example of this is the situation with the three elevators that service the Central Library. Over the past year, 2 of the 3 elevators consistently malfunctioned, leaving the smallest of the 3 to service the entire building.

Not only has building maintenance suffered as a result of these budget cuts, but planned building improvements have come to a grinding halt as well. Built in the early 1960s, the ceilings and structural beams of the Central Library were treated with materials containing asbestos. The original plan was to seal off the library section by section to remove the asbestos, before it started to fall apart and present a danger to the public. However, this plan entailed rebuilding the inner walls, ceilings, ventilation and

lighting in a configuration that would better serve the needs of a library in the 21st Century (“Central Library Frequently Asked Questions,” n.d.).

In a collection as old as Buffalo’s the need for book repair grows significantly. In recent years, the department in charge of mending has been overwhelmed by the sheer number of books coming across their desks. With limited funds and personnel, there have been many cases where books were placed back on the shelves without needed repair, or even discarded from the collection because there was nothing they could do with the resources available at the time.

Another point of weakness is appealing to people of diverse cultures. Despite having a net population loss for decades, the refugee/immigrant population of Buffalo continues to show significant growth, and with that growth comes a multitude of new languages. One local high school, according to Lenore Tetkowski, chairwoman of the education committee of the League of Women Voters Buffalo/Niagara, has 42 different languages spoken within its halls. The selection of foreign language materials to choose from is rather limited, taking up only part of a wall in a 400,000 square foot facility. Communication is also a major problem with a staff comprised of mainly English speakers. Only a handful of workers know some of the major European languages such as Spanish, French or German, and one can speak Nepali. This makes it extremely difficult for some groups to fully utilize services provided by the library.

In recent years, vandalism and theft have become a growing concern for the library. A few years ago, the library began an initiative to place RFID tags in all books. However, vandals seem to have turned it into a game, where they rip out the RFID tags, oftentimes doing damage to the book in the process, and then either steal it or resshelf it in

another area of the library. The RFID tags are then often stuffed in the vents or hidden behind other books on the shelves. Theft became such a common occurrence in the Urban Fiction section that Acquisitions started ordering two copies of new Urban Fiction books, putting one on the open shelves and the other in the closed stacks in the hopes of holding on to at least one of them. This constant need to replace books and RFID tags has placed an increased strain on library resources, already stretched thin by budget cuts.

### **Opportunities**

The revitalization of Buffalo has been brought on by two things: investments from the Pegula family (Terry Pegula is a natural gas tycoon who now owns the Buffalo Bills of the National Football League, the Buffalo Sabres of the National Hockey League, the Rochester Americans of the American Hockey League and the Buffalo Bandits of the National Lacrosse League), and the “Buffalo Billion” (\$ 1 billion promised by New York Governor Andrew Cuomo for the economic revitalization of Buffalo and its surrounding areas).

The emergence of new businesses and development projects in the Buffalo area affords the library with additional opportunities to serve its patrons. The library could provide essential training programs that would equip community members with skills needed to fill new employment positions. The library might also consider appealing directly to investors and businesses for donations and contributions. The board of trustees could make a strong case for the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library as an integral part of the revitalization of the area. With sufficient funding, the library could not only provide employment and skills training programs, from which new enterprises would benefit directly, it could also become a showcase, presenting a community with an

educated workforce, a vibrant hub for modern technology, digital tools, and information services, and a cultural center that would engage and attract residents and businesses in the future.

At the very least, the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library would benefit financially by a reduction in the poverty level and an influx of tax revenue, which would go a long way in securing additional funding for library operations in the future.

### **Threats**

The inconsistency of funding by Erie County, which provides up to 85% of the library's funding is not just a weakness, but also a threat to its very existence. Some of the immediate impacts of the 2005 and 2011 budget crises were the abandonment of the bookmobile program and the closure of 15 branches. In 2014 the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library analyzed the budgetary data of the past 10 years to better understand their long-term impact. What they found was that, while consumer prices had increased by an estimated 26% since 2004, the library tax levy had fallen by 6.6%, total funding had fallen by 21.3%, and the number of full-time staff positions had fallen by an astounding 53%. The library estimates that if the county had adequately adjusted for inflation, the total budget for the library would be roughly \$13.7 million higher annually than it is today ("Erie County Library Funding History," 2014).

Finally, there are the threats all libraries of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century are faced with on a day-to-day basis: competition from Internet tech giants such as Google. In a world where people want the answers to their questions immediately, many lack the patience or motivation to utilize the resources provided by their local libraries. With the Internet providing 24/7 access to information that is easy to find, libraries such as the Buffalo &

Erie County Public Library must find their niche in the information world if they are to withstand the digital onslaught.

### **Conclusion**

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library is an important service and component of the greater Buffalo area. It strives to provide the citizens of Buffalo and Erie County with a wide range of resources that assist these citizens in meeting their goals and information needs in regards to education, entertainment, cultural identity, and employment. As the library strives to stay both relevant and up-to-date in the ever changing 21<sup>st</sup> century, goal setting will play a major part in how the library adapts to changes in the patrons, the funding available, and technological advances. The environmental scan and SWOT analysis included in this analysis will provide and help establish the goals that will be shared in the second part of this analysis. An annotated bibliography that highlights the best practices in regards to goal-setting theory and its role in the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library will also be included.

### References

- American Library Association (2015, April). The State of America's Libraries Report 2015, Rosa, K (Ed.). *American Libraries*. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/news/state-americas-libraries-report-2015>
- Austin, J. T., & Bobko, P. (1985). Goal-setting theory: Unexplored areas and future research needs. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 58, 289-308. Retrieved from [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)2044-8325](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)2044-8325)
- Bosomworth, D. (2015, July 22). Statistics on mobile usage and adoption to inform your mobile marketing strategy. *Smart Insights*. Retrieved from <http://www.smartinsights.com/mobile-marketing/mobile-marketing-analytics/mobile-marketing-statistics/>
- Bryan, J. F., & Locke, E. A. (1967). Goal setting as a means of increasing motivation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 51(3), 274-277. doi:10.1037/h0024566
- Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (2014, December 18). *2015 Budget* [Web page]. Retrieved from <http://www.buffalolib.org/content/budget-information/2015-budget>
- Buffalo billion [Web page] (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://buffalobillion.ny.gov/about-buffalo-billion>
- Cardwell, D. (2015, July 20). The Wind and Sun Are Bringing the Shine Back to Buffalo. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/21/business/energy-environment/the-wind-and-sun-are-bringing-the-shine-back-to-buffalo.html? r=0>

Central Library frequently asked questions. (n.d.). Retrieved from

<http://www.buffalolib.org/content/related-information/central-library-frequently-asked-questions>

City of Buffalo Comprehensive Plan (n.d.). *Population* [Web page]. Retrieved from

[https://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/files/1\\_2\\_1/mayor/cob\\_comprehensive\\_plan/section\\_2459139390.html](https://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/files/1_2_1/mayor/cob_comprehensive_plan/section_2459139390.html)

Cohen, I., & Iluz, M. (2015, October). When cost-effective design strategies are not enough: Evidence from an experimental study on the role of redundant goals. *Omega*, *56*, 99-111.

Enis, M. (2015, February 5). LITA Members Talk Tech Trends. *Library Journal*.

Retrieved from <http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2015/02/shows-events/ala/lita-members-talk-tech-trends-ala-midwinter-2015/> -

Erie County library funding history. (2014, April 3). Retrieved from

[http://www.buffalolib.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Finance/2014/ErieCountyFundingSupportForLibrary\\_History\\_20140403\\_PM.pdf](http://www.buffalolib.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Finance/2014/ErieCountyFundingSupportForLibrary_History_20140403_PM.pdf)

Fontichiaro, K. (2015). Creation Culture and Makerspaces. In Hirsch, S. (Ed.),

*Information services today: An introduction* (Chapter 19). Lanham, Maryland:

Rowman & Littlefield.

Internet live stats [Web page] (n.d.). Retrieved October 6, 2015 from

<http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users/>



- Johnson, D. W., Maruyama, G., Johnson, R., & Skon, L. (1981). Effects of cooperative, competitive, and individualistic goal structures on achievement: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 89(1), 47-62. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/bul/>
- Kim, J. S. (1984, March). Effect of behavior plus outcome goal setting and feedback on employee satisfaction and performance. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 27(1), 139-149. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/255962>
- Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (2006, October 1). New directions in goal-setting theory. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 15(5), 265-268. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8721.2006.00449.x
- Locke, E. A., & Somers, R. L. (1987). The effects of goal emphasis on performance on a complex task. *Journal of Management Studies*, 24(4), 405-411. Retrieved from [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1467-6486](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1467-6486)
- Locke, E. A., Cartledge, N., & Koeppel, J. (1968). Motivational effects of knowledge of results: A goal-setting phenomenon? *Psychological Bulletin*, 70(6), 474-485. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/bul/>
- Locke, E. A., Latham, G. P., & Erez, M. (1988). The determinants of goal commitment. *Academy of Management Review*, 13(1), 23-39. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=aom>
- Locke, E. A., Shaw, K. N., Saari, L. M., & Latham, G. P. (1981). Goal setting and task performance: 1969-1980. *Psychological Bulletin*, 90(1), 125-152. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/bul/>

- New Media Consortium (n.d.). *NMC Horizon Report 2015 Library Edition*. Retrieved from <http://cdn.nmc.org/media/2015-nmc-horizon-report-library-EN.pdf>
- Ordenez, L. D., Schweitzer, M. E., Galinsky, A. D., & Bazerman, M. H. (2009). *Goals gone wild: The systematic side effects of over-prescribing goal setting*. Harvard Business School.
- Pew Research Center (2015, July 20). *Political Attitudes* [Web page]. Retrieved October 6, 2015 from <http://www.pewresearch.org/data/>
- Porter, C. O., Gogus, C. I., & Yu, R. C. (2011, October 1). The influence of early efficacy beliefs on teams' reactions to failing to reach performance goals. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 60(4), 645-669. doi:10.1111/j.1464-0597.2011.00451.x
- Punnett, B. J. (1986). Goal setting: An extension of research. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 71(1), 171-172. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/apl/>
- Robinson, D. & Epstein, J. D. (2015, September 3). Buffalo Niagara economy making a comeback. *The Buffalo News*. Retrieved from <http://www.buffalonews.com/city-region/buffalo-niagara-economy-making-a-comeback-20150903>
- Tetkowski, L. (n.d.). Another voice editorial: 45 and Lafayette. Retrieved from <http://www.buffaloschools.org/news.cfm?story=3479&school=51>
- Thorgren, S., & Wincent, J. (2013). Passion and challenging goals: Drawbacks of rushing into goal-setting processes. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 43, 2318-2329. doi: 10.1111/jasp.12181

- Thomas, G. S. (2014, January 2). Buffalo's poverty rate tops 30 percent, making it America's third-poorest city. *Buffalo Business First*. Retrieved from <http://www.bizjournals.com/buffalo/news/2014/01/02/buffalos-poverty-rate-tops-30.html>
- United States Census Bureau (2014). *State and County QuickFacts: Erie County, New York*. [Web page]. Retrieved October 6, 2015 from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/36/3611000.html>
- Upstate New York cities: Back in business (2012, June 30). *The Economist*. Retrieved from <http://www.economist.com/node/21557797>
- West, R. L., Ebner, N. C., & Hastings, E. C. (2013). Linking goals and aging: Experimental and lifespan approaches. In E. A. Locke, & G. P. Latham (Eds.), *New developments in goal setting and task performance* (pp. 439-459). New York, NY, USA: Routledge.
- Zremski, J. (2015, March 26). Immigrants end the decline in Erie County population. *The Buffalo News*. Retrieved from <http://www.buffalonews.com/city-region/erie-county/immigrants-end-the-decline-in-erie-county-population-20150326>