

# Competencies, Training, Sources, and their Strategies to meet the Structural Changes in LIS Professions: A Modern Era

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**Abstract-** According to the document each organizational structure has a defined set of requirements for each particular workplace, including the competencies required by a particular workplace and a requirement for lifelong learning and training. Because each level of responsibility has its own requirements, competence can occur in any period of a person's life her or his carrier. This paper mainly highlights for Competency, Types, Current trends, Basic Tasks in Library Management, Capacity Building for Libraries Customer Care, Changes in Library Services, Seven Lamps, Dimensions of Service Quality, Strategies, Library Manager Skills, and Employee Training, Sources for Competencies Development, Career Development, Personal, Professional, Core Competencies, Challenges, and Value-Adding Activities so on.

**Index terms-** Competency, Library, Current Trends, Seven Lamps, Dimensions of Service Quality, Strategies, Employee Training, Challenges

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Competencies are also what people need to be successful in their jobs. Job competencies are not the same as job task. Competencies include all the related knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes that form a person's job. This set of context-specific qualities is correlated with superior job performance and can be used as a standard against which to measure job performance as well as to develop, recruit, and hire employees. Also, Competencies can distinguish and differentiate your organization from your competitors. While two organizations may be alike in financial results, the way in which the results were achieve could be different based on the competencies that fit their particular strategy and organizational culture. Lastly, competencies can provide a

structured model that can be used to integrate management practices throughout the organization. Competencies that align their recruiting, performance management, training and development and reward practices to reinforce key behaviors that the organization values. Employer's competency frameworks usually contain no more than twelve competencies. The most widely used competencies by employers are;

- Communication
- Customer service
- Leadership
- Problem solving
- Results orientation
- Teamwork

Competencies that librarians employed in academic libraries must have so that the library could provide their mission. The requirements of the scientific community as a dynamic category go towards the achievement of the knowledge society, and therefore they change and improve methods of evaluating its productivity.

### 1.1. Meaning of Competency:

- The person assessed must be able to identify with the purpose of the organization or community and act from the preferred future in accordance with the values of the organization or community.
- The quality of being competent or capable of performing an allotted function. The quality or condition of being legally qualified to perform an act. The mental ability to distinguish right from wrong and to manage one's own affairs. The ability of a cell, especially a bacterial cell, to be genetically transformable. (Dictionary.com).

### 1.1.1. Types of Competencies:

- Behavioral competencies
- Core competencies
- Functional competencies
- Management competencies
- Organizational competencies
- Technical competencies

#### 1.2. Current Trends:

These current trends somehow or rather will have a bearing in shaping librarians and information professionals in the new era. They are summarized as follows;

- A vision towards information and knowledge rich society
- Access role replace custodial role
- Competency- based assessment/training
- Customer-focused/customer-centered, user oriented approach in provision of services
- Globalization of information
- Growth of electronic / internet resources
- Information management recognized as an important discipline
- Information recognized as commodity (information brokerage, information entrepreneurship, fee-based information)
- Information recognized as power/strength/weapon
- Information strongly link to decision-making, strategic management, competitive advantage, innovation, R&D
- Integrated and widespread ICT applications
- Knowledge management – leveraging organization
- Knowledge-based economy – information and knowledge as drivers to boost the economy
- Leadership skills
- Librarians expanded & changes in digital environment
- Librarians is designated as cyber librarians
- Librarians need new management knowledge and skills
- Library functions in information and knowledge-based society
- Mushrooming of information systems – need for Information System Management (ISM)
- New breeds of information professionals: CIO, CKO, Information consultants and analysts

- Revamping of curriculum – redesign curriculum to accommodate changes and new trends
- Role of digital/electronic/virtual library
- Specialized knowledge & skills in library and information management
- Strategic alliances, partnership and collaborations
- Trend to develop digital contents to facilitate access

#### 1.3. What's HOT Today?

- Being connected 24/7
- Blogs
- Cell phones & texting
- Citizen journalism
- Faceted browsing
- Fast delivery and vodcasting
- Folksonomies
- Gaming & virtual realities
- Instant gratification
- Mashups
- Metasearching
- Online photo sharing
- Open source ILS desktop applications
- Open World Cat
- OpenID or one-time
- Plugins, add-ons, & extensions authentication
- Podcasting, screen casting
- RSS feeds & aggregators
- Social bookmarking
- Social networking
- Tagging
- User comments and ratings
- Web applications replacing
- Widgets and gadgets
- Wikis

#### 2. BASIC TASKS IN LIBRARY MANAGEMENT

- Planning the acquisition of materials
- Negotiating borrowing materials from other libraries
- Selection of library materials
- Stacks maintenance
- Fee collection in proper way
- Membership management
- Responding to challenges
- Approving and designing events

- Fundraising
- 2.1. Tasks for Librarians in the Digital Era- (Zhou Futhermore, 2005):
- Describe the content and attributes of items (metadata)
  - Design the technical architecture of digital library
  - Design, maintain and transmit add-valued information products
  - Ensure information security
  - Establish friendly user interface over network
  - Plan, implement, and support digital services such as information navigation, consultation and transmit services
  - Protect digital intellectual property in network environment
  - Select, acquire, preserve, organize and manage digital collections
  - Set up relative standards and policies for the digital library

### 3. CAPACITY BUILDING FOR LIBRARIES CUSTOMER CARE

The following major factors which can be taken into account for e-shaping planning strategy for customer care for small, medium and large libraries. They are;

- Awareness campaign
- Behavior
- Certainty
- Customer participation and care
- Delivery mechanism
- Documentation
- Dynamic feedback and management review system
- Measurement of customer satisfaction
- Reliability
- Speed
- User interface

#### 3.1. Focus on Teaching & Learning:

Librarian is an Information Professional catering to the need of the users of the knowledge resource Centre. So, the whole service should be oriented to teaching and learning in both ways; on the one hand, there should be stress on providing excellent services to knowledge seekers and on the other hand, ample

stress will be given to the staff to equip them with the latest knowledge in the field.

- Ask-a-Librarian
- Conference / Seminar hall
- Deputations in Seminar/Conference/Symposium
- In-House orientation programs
- Participation in UGC Orientation and refresher courses
- Proper In-Service training schemes
- Providing information commons
- Reference assistance
- Round –the – clock service
- Staff exchanges programs at Local/State/National/Regional and International level
- Training in ICT

#### 3.2. Changes in Library Services:

- Database searching
- Electronic reference
- E-publishing
- Information literacy program
- Library promotion and marketing
- Online access to library catalogues, databases and the Internet
- Online circulation service
- Online/offline access to digital resources
- Public relations services

#### 3.3. Seven Lamps of Library Professional Ethics:

- Industry in putting hands, mind in work
- Scholarship
- Service before self
- Split minded
- Sympathetic behavior
- Tact in handling of users with different complexities
- Unbiased

#### 3.4. Dimensions of Service Quality:

- Accuracy
- Consistency
- Courtesy
- Knowledge of Employees
- Responsiveness
- Speed

### 4. STRATEGIES TO MEET THE STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN LIS PROFESSIONS

Information Technology provides both opportunity and challenges also. To meet this major change, the professional has to accept and make use in their services. Some of the strategies are;

- Lifelong continuing education and enhancing and upgrade their knowledge which helps to develop ability, competencies
- Up-to-date knowledge of computers
- Developing services attitude towards active service to users rather than passive services
- Organizing information in an accessible way
- Development of skill for using knowledge based systems in serving the user community
- Practicing co-operative sharing for effective services
- Functioning of library system in the changed newly automated environment

To bring into practice of all the said strategies, the most important required factor is the willingness, taking interest, and then only it is possible to bring the new structure and change in the library environment.

#### 4.1. Strategic Thinking:

- Being creative-moving beyond logic
- Dealing with many inputs at once
- Discriminating between events
- Exploring systematically
- Having a conceptual framework
- Integrating data with theory
- Linking process and output
- Responding to an audience/environment
- Scanning widely
- Seeing the big picture
- Selecting the right data
- Transferring learning from one experience to another

#### 4.2. What Skills are required for Strategic Thinking?

The ability to:

- Apply lateral thinking to different situations
- Challenge current processes, practices and strategy
- Conceptualize complexity
- Initiate innovative ideas
- Integrate concepts, however disparate
- Know the right questions to ask
- Know when to ask searching questions
- See the big picture

- Think horizontally and simultaneously
- Unearth alternative approaches, solutions or methods

#### 4.3. Innovative Strategies:

- An expanded library user education program will include teaching the structure of information, use of new electronic formats, and applying critical thinking to information
- As to methods, instruction should employ short modules that allow self-directed study with more emphasis on instructional content and less on the media used, e.g. online modules and online tutorials
- Emphasis will be on problem-solving and on obtaining and accessing information rather than on ownership
- It must be monitored and evaluated to ensure it is relevant to user's needs
- Library user education should become an integral part, formal if possible, of the curriculum of the university
- LIS Managers should become proactive in teaching information skills; they also must learn to teach
- LIS Managers will have to maximize the use of technology to teach more skills to greater numbers of users
- More complex expert systems will be developed to help users with in-depth use of complex abstracting and indexing services
- Staff responsible for the future management of the user education program, will need to liaise closely with all academic areas, groups and individual users to ensure that it meets the increasingly diverse needs of users
- The program must reflect the varied levels of skills those users
- The system should be one that users are comfortable in using and gives them a sense of control over it
- Those responsible for user education will be expected to appraise and implement national and international developments, if they are appropriate to local needs
- User instruction will need to provide Users with basic, intermediate, and advanced guidance in the use of the library

- Users should receive guidance on which resources are best for their needs, and should feel assured that the system is not difficult and is evolving toward a more efficient, and easy-to-use system

#### 4.4. Special Skills Plan of Libraries:

- Management and Leadership
- Information Technology (IT) and Digitization
- Information Services
- Technical services and E-resources
- Quality Assurance
- Library Research
- Training & Development
- Support Services

#### 4.5. Library Manager Skills-ALA:

- Ability to communicate both orally and in writing
- Ability to exercise initiative and independent judgment
- Ability to make administrative decisions, interpret policies, and supervise staff
- Ability to motivate, establish and maintain effective working relationships with associates, supervisors, volunteers, other community agencies and the public
- Ability to organize job duties and work independently
- Ability to prepare comprehensive reports and present ideas clearly and concisely in written and oral form
- Ability to think analytically and to develop new or revised systems, procedures, and work flow
- Creativity to develop and implement library programs and services
- Demonstrated knowledge of library materials and resources
- Desire to meet and serve the library's user community
- Employs management techniques effectively in directing, planning, organizing, staffing, coordinating, budgeting, and evaluating the library's operation
- Knowledge of computers, the internet, and commercially available library software
- Knowledge of the philosophy and techniques of library service

## 5. TYPICAL TOPICS OF EMPLOYEE TRAINING

- Communications: The increasing diversity of today's workforce brings a wide variety of languages and customs.
- Computer skills: Computer skills are becoming a necessity for conducting administrative and office tasks.
- Customer service: Increased competition in today's global marketplace makes it critical that employees understand and meet the needs of customers.
- Diversity: Diversity training usually includes explanation about how people have different perspectives and views, and includes techniques to value diversity
- Ethics: Today's society has increasing expectations about corporate social responsibility. Also, today's diverse workforce brings a wide variety of values and morals to the workplace.
- Human relations: The increased stresses of today's workplace can include misunderstandings and conflict. Training can help people to get along in the workplace.
- Quality initiatives: Initiatives such as Total Quality Management, Quality Circles, benchmarking, etc., require basic training about quality concepts, guidelines and standards for quality, etc.
- Safety: Safety training is critical where working with heavy equipment, hazardous chemicals, repetitive activities, etc., but can also be useful with practical advice for avoiding assaults, etc.
- Sexual harassment: Sexual harassment training usually includes careful description of the organization's policies about sexual harassment, especially about what are inappropriate behaviors.

#### 5.1. Importance of Training & Development:

- Achieves high service standards
- Achieves learning about new things; technology, products / service delivery
- Consistency in duty performance
- Development of Human Resources
- Development of skills of employees
- Ensuring worker satisfaction
- Health and Safety

- Healthy work environment
- Help in addressing employee weaknesses:
- Image
- Improved quality of services and products
- Improvement in workers performance
- Improves communication & relationships - better teamwork
- Increased productivity
- Maintains qualified products / services
- Morale
- Opportunity for staff to feedback / suggest improvements
- Optimum Utilization of Human Resources
- Organization Culture
- Profitability
- Provides information for new comers
- Quality
- Reduced cost
- Reduces mistakes - minimizing costs
- Reduction in supervision
- Refreshes memory of old employees
- Team spirit

#### 5.3. Training & Development Methods:

- Case Studies
- Classroom Programs
- Coaching
- Distance Learning and Videoconferencing
- E-learning
- Field visit/demonstration
- Group Work and Group Discussion
- Hands on training
- Internships
- Job Rotation
- Lectures
- Management tools
- Mentoring
- Need-based
- On-the-Job Training
- Participatory
- Practical Exercises
- Presentation
- Role Playing
- Simulations

#### 5.4. Sources for Competencies Development:

LIS Professionals have a wide range of channels and ways to develop their professional competencies and

manage changing technologies effectively. The important methods/ways for improving professional competencies are;

- Acquiring formal qualifications
- Affiliation to professional bodies
- Attending induction programs
- Attending professionals meetings, conferences and seminars
- Attending staff training and development courses
- Attending workplace programs
- Distance and e-learning courses
- Participation in specialist groups
- Personal interactions with expert fellow professionals
- Presenting papers in conferences and seminars
- Pursuing doctoral research
- Reading professional literature
- Tours and visits to well managed libraries
- Undertaking research and development projects
- Web resources
- Writing papers in periodicals and books

#### 5.5. Benefits of Trained Employees:

Training is a significant tool for employee development. Training has assumed great importance because of exceptional rate of change in the internal and external organizational environment. The importance/benefits of trained personnel towards organizational development are as follows;

- Employees feel supported and enabled in their work
- Existing skills and knowledge can be enhanced or updated, enabling people to further improve proven strengths
- Improvements in confidence, capability and competence
- Learning is progressed to practice in the workplace
- Learning is shared, enhancing team performance
- Learning is used to improve performance at work
- New skills and knowledge can be acquired
- Trained employees adjust to the job better and there are fewer rates of absenteeism and turnover
- Trained employees become more proficient and, thus, their earning potential increase
- Trained employees can respond and adapt to the changing technology well

- Trained employees can show higher performance by making optimum and best utilization of the materials, tools, equipment's and other resources provided to them
  - Trained employees do not require tight control and supervision as they are well aware of how to perform a job
  - Trained employees enable the organization to face competition from rival firms
  - Trained employees minimize wastages of resources in the organization and work both efficiently and effectively
  - Trained employees produce quality and quantity output
  - Training develops a line of proficient and skilled managers as it prepares employees for complex and higher level tasks
  - Training makes employees more committed to an organization as the employees are provided with growth, advancement and learning opportunities
  - Weaknesses can be addressed or mechanisms put in place to compensate
  - Wider impact in the organization through performance improvements and the dissemination of information, ideas and networking
- 5.6. How to Support Career Development:
- Annually, conduct an individual development plan and career discussion with employees and require other supervisors in your department to do the same.
  - Create job vacancy listings that allow for the most diverse applicant pool while honoring transferable skills.
  - Create programs and activities to provide skill development, such as job rotation, cross-training, mentoring, internships, coaching, and career strategy groups.
  - Hold supervisors in your department accountable for supporting employee development efforts.
  - Recognize that your role includes providing support and/or release time for staff members' development beyond their current jobs. Refer to the Education and Development Leave policy and the Flextime Scheduling: Guidelines and Procedures policy.
- Refer employees to the Staff Internship Program to explore opportunities to apply for career development internships or self-initiate an internship in an area of special interest.
  - Refer to the Employee Development & Training catalog for the career development course listings.
  - See staff members' applications for other positions as a healthy sign of a dynamic workplace.
  - Serve as a role model by participating in career and professional development opportunities yourself.
  - Support lateral moves within your organization.
  - Support requests for alternate work schedules from staff members
- 5.7. Role of the Training Librarian for Staff development:
- Communicate process and relevant documentation to library staff
  - Compile and implement the annual training plan
  - Identify suitable training providers and facilitators
  - Ensure that all nomination forms for courses on the "Generic Learning and Development prospectus" reach the HR L&D department
  - Organize payment of training providers and facilitators
  - Evaluation and assessment
  - Identify ROI (return on investment) strategies
  - Record-keeping and statistics
- 5.8. Professional Skills & Competencies for Marketing:
- Library personnel require the following professional knowledge and skills for marketing information and library services:
- A belief in service and trying to achieve customer's satisfaction
  - A clear understanding of their organization's overall aims and objectives
  - Ability to take criticism, not always constructive
  - An ability to assemble and interpret information for the benefit of the customer
  - Enthusiasm and commitment
  - Good communication skills, both oral and written

- Knowledge of various marketing strategies for promoting information skills
- Perception of user needs and ability to obtain feedback from users
- Technical knowledge, such as ability to use the Internet

These attributes are very much desired for the successful information service providers. Thus, skills, attitude and judgment of the service providers are important while marketing in library and information services.

#### 5.9. Benefits of a Competency-Based System for Employers:

- Career paths
- Clarifies job standards for performance appraisals
- Enables employees to achieve a high level of competence in an efficient manner
- Enables employees to be more proactive beyond their individual roles, by learning additional competencies that are valued by the organization
- Ensures that individual professional development and training milestones are recorded and acknowledged by the organization
- Ensures that organization-funded training and professional development activities are cost-effective, goal-oriented and productive
- Establishes a framework for constructive feedback by management at scheduled training and performance appraisal intervals
- Gives employees insight into the overall strategy of their team, department, and organization, leading to greater engagement and motivation
- Improves communication between employee and management
- Increases internal employee mobility, providing the organization with greater ability scale and flex as needed
- Increases the potential for job satisfaction
- Offers a reference resource for day-to-day requirements
- Outlines employee development and promotional paths within the organization
- Performance management
- Provides a mechanism for the recognition of employees' abilities
- Provides clear direction for learning new job skills

- Records the employee's acquisition of the skills, knowledge, safety and other procedures relating to each task
- Reduces cost overruns caused by poor performance or miscommunication of job expectations
- Selection
- Sets clear performance expectations for employees, enabling them to make better decisions and work more effectively
- Succession planning
- Training and development

#### 6. WHAT SKILLS & COMPETENCIES ARE MOST IMPORTANT FOR LIBRARIANS TO HAVE TODAY?

- Cognitive Skills
- Commitment to Continuous Learning
- Curiosity/Creativity/Innovative
- Customer Service Skills
- Management Skills
- Marketing Skills
- Openness to Change/Flexibility
- Search Skills
- Social Skills
- Teaching Skills
- Technology Skills

##### 6.1. Personal Competencies for Special Librarian:

- Ability to create an environment of mutual respect and trust
- Ability to face challenges and to see new opportunities both inside and outside the library
- Active personal business skills
- Commitment to share knowledge and to service excellence
- Committed to lifelong learning and personal career planning
- Committed to service excellence
- Creates an environment of mutual respect and trust
- Dynamic leadership
- Effective communication skills
- Flexibility and positive attitude in a time of continuing change
- Foresight; sees the big picture
- Good team work

- Looks for partnerships and alliances
- Personal business skills and creates new opportunities
- Plans, prioritizes and focuses on what is critical
- Provides leadership
- Recognition of the value of professional networking and solidarity
- Seeks out challenges and sees new opportunities both inside and outside the library
- Sees the big picture
- Strong interest and belief in partnerships and alliances
- Systematic planning and prioritizing skills, with focus on what is critical
- Unwavering interest in lifelong learning and personal career planning
- Works well with others in a team

#### 6.2. Professional Competencies for Special Librarian:

- Assesses information needs and designs and markets value-added information services and products to meet identified needs
- Continually improves information services in response to changing needs
- Develops and manages convenient, accessible and cost-effective information services that are aligned with strategic directions of the organization
- Develops specialized information products for use inside or outside the organization or by individual clients
- Evaluates the outcomes of information use and conducts research related to the solution of information management problems
- Expert knowledge of the content of information resources, including the ability to critically evaluate and filter them
- Is an effective member of the senior management team and a consultant to the organization on information issues?
- Provides instructions and support for library and information service users
- Specialized subject knowledge appropriate to the business of the organization or client
- Understands and uses appropriate business and management approaches to communicate the importance of information services to senior management

- Understands and uses appropriate information technology to acquire, organize and disseminate information
- Uses appropriate information technology to acquire, organize and disseminate information

#### 6.3. Core Competencies for LIS Professionals:

Unlike assets, which do deteriorate over time, Competencies are enhanced as they are applied and shared. Basic core competencies are listed below;

- Accountability
- Adaptability
- Change management skills
- Charismatic leadership and embrace innovation
- Communication
- Customer focus
- Customer/Quality Focus
- Decision making
- Develop and sustain the library presence
- Development library fund and Strategic investment
- Development scholarly content and hassle free dissemination
- Digital infrastructure and support
- Diversity support
- Dynamism
- Efficient resource planning
- Excellence
- Foster organizational culture and staff development
- Inclusiveness
- Initiative and creativity
- Innovation
- Institution management
- Integrative and global thinking skills
- Knowledge accumulation: education and life-long learning
- Knowledge dissemination: service
- Knowledge inquiry: research
- Knowledge organization
- Leadership
- Library research, public participation and engagement
- Managing and marketing library service
- Managing and preserving resource
- Occupational Knowledge /Technology Orientation
- Open access, leadership and open choice

- Problem Solving/Decision Making
- Professional ethics
- Quality
- Reliability
- Research commons
- Resource building
- Safety watch
- Self-Assessment
- Strategic alliance and scholarly collaboration
- Strategic thinking
- Students' engagement and participation
- Team Focus
- Technological knowledge
- Transformational library leadership
- Work culture
- Work ethics and values
- Working relationships

#### 7. CHALLENGES BEFORE LIBRARIANS OF LIBRARIES

Library Managers are facing various Challenges. Some of them listed below;

- Availability of full-text materials on the Internet
- Better abstracting and indexing systems
- Better document delivery systems
- Changed users information behavior and reading habits
- Collection development
- Concept of 24 hours and 7 days library and information services
- Demand for web based products and services
- Demand for effective monitoring and feedback system
- Demand for quality based library and information products and services
- Demand for the creation of culture for creativity
- Diversity of programs and emerging thrust areas
- Emergence of library networking and networks
- Expectation for resource generation
- Explosive growth of electronic information and products
- Faster direct communication among scientists and researchers
- Impact of ICT on library practices
- Increased and diversified users information thrust and need

- Increased cost of information materials
- Marketing of library and information products and services
- Need for effective and efficient users interface
- Need for interaction with external environment
- Need for the development of information infrastructure
- Need to create specialized databases
- Need to develop sustainable collection building strategy
- New electronic information environment
- New roles and responsibilities
- New tools and techniques of information handling
- Philosophy of information at door
- Resource sharing through networking
- Responsiveness and dynamism in special library systems and services
- Timely delivery of information materials to end-users
- Virtual vs. onsite reference service: push and pull technologies

#### 7.1. Value-Adding Activities:

- Customer Service
- Development
- Distribution
- Final Production
- Intermediate Production
- Marketing
- Procurement
- Raw Material Processing
- Research
- Selling

#### 7.2. Our Mission Should Be:

Based on above discussion and facts, Librarians need to re-orient and re-design their approaches and strategies to achieve the following objectives.

- Capture the Institutional best practices
- Create an institution's output
- Encourage open access
- Help libraries to meet the challenges of the digital world
- Increase an impact of research and development
- Manage learning materials
- Organize digitized collections and services
- Provide value added services to stakeholders
- Raise visibility/prestige of institution

- Utilization of information literacy

## 8. CONCLUSION

New competencies libraries and librarians are required to have to perform their tasks according to the requirements set by users, the most demanding segment of which is the scientific community. These requirements pertain to providing the highest quality library service and can be met by increasing the level of librarians' knowledge. Libraries are essential for the educational process at all levels and are institutions that strengthen democracy by providing different kinds of information so that citizens can make an informed decision. In a country like India, libraries can be viewed as places of opportunity as they can provide the world of information to the rich and the poor alike. Such a vital and significant institution of the society needs information professionals who are skilled in information handling activities. Further, this digital age demands information professionals who are comfortable and creative with technology.

- Librarians, users and systems developers alike must cope with the changing and emerging technological environment to adequately respond to user needs
- Libraries promote reading which results in scholarly communication, knowledge creation and enlightenment.
- Libraries provide an economically efficient method of organizing information and knowledge that are relevant to our needs.

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