Professionalism is integral to effective leadership. There are many aspects of professionalism that early-career librarians must be aware of and master in order to be successful. Learning to function in a political environment, effective change management, successful networking, communicating vision and direction, heightened social skills, communicating effectively, dressing appropriately, recognizing one's own strengths and weaknesses and having the ability to distinguish oneself from others and the ability to respond appropriately in dynamic environments will create a degree of professionalism that will move early-career librarians into leadership positions.

Saying ‘yes’ to your career: Linda Shippert

Linda Shippert is health sciences librarian at Washington State University.

You can take yourself far in your career simply by saying ‘yes’ to opportunity whenever and however it knocks. Serendipity is just as important in your career as it is in the stacks. Say ‘yes’ to volunteer and career opportunities even when they don’t seem interesting – or easy – at the outset. You’ll expand your horizons and improve your employability.

As you pursue committee appointments in your library, institution and professional associations, consider volunteering outside your primary areas of interest. There may be more opportunities for leadership roles in less popular committees, and those in charge of committee assignments will be grateful to get a volunteer. People will notice your willingness to try new things and your flexibility.
in making yourself available, and that will create more opportunities for you and will help you get those critical job references. The library world can be surprisingly small, and the contacts you establish as a student and a new librarian can come in useful in the future.

Committee membership provides opportunities to gain new skills and knowledge, not just related to the purview of the committee, but also in the working of committees and organizations. Gaining an understanding of parliamentary procedure and getting experience chairing committees will provide you with the skills you'll need as you take on more leadership roles in the future. As you explore different aspects of your organization and profession, you will gain a better understanding of the big picture, which will be invaluable to you as a leader.

When you are searching for your first position, especially, try not to hold out for 'the perfect job'. Keep your eyes open for positions that you might not have considered, and be willing to let your career proceed in a different way than you expected. Job descriptions can be so vague that you may not know exactly what you're applying for until the phone interview. Be prepared to take risks with your applications, and then use the interviews to determine how good a fit the job might be. You may discover that there are aspects of the position which are especially appealing to you. Even if the job doesn't turn out to be a great fit, at least you will have broken into the profession and gained valuable experience. Be sure to use your time in any position wisely by saying 'yes' to available opportunities.

As you seek employment and professional development opportunities, saying 'yes', especially to opportunities which are typically unsought or beyond your usual interests, may help you advance in your career. By following the road less traveled, you have the chance to gain leadership skills, make
contacts and discover new interests. Of course, you won’t be able to pursue every opportunity that comes along, but by being willing to take risks or to work on seemingly less interesting projects, you may have the chance to take your career in an unexpected direction. Say ‘yes’ to your career, and see where it takes you!

New librarians – from mentee to mentor: Emily Love

Emily Love is outreach librarian for multicultural services, University of Illinois.
The library profession should be lauded for its continuing support in mentoring new librarians. There are many opportunities for new graduates and early-career librarians to gain valuable skills and experience though involvement in programs such as the ALA’s Emerging Leaders and through mentoring by more experienced librarians who take the time to help new librarians settle into the institutional culture. Early-career librarians can make a difference as well. During the transitional phase from student to new professional, early-career librarians arrive with fresh insight and reflections that can be passed down to student workers and graduate students. If new librarians begin to cultivate and mentor student workers, the profession will likely gain a new group of promising leaders. Considering the anticipated mass exodus of librarians over the next decade, it is essential to help avoid this serious leadership shortage.

Although it is only natural to feel overwhelmed when beginning a career with a heavy workload and an emerging sense of responsibility, new librarians also experience a unique sense of community belonging and accomplishment.