

(Paper written on wiki w group)

Addressing Change: Resources for Managers

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## Addressing Change: Resources for Managers

Managers of libraries and information centers of all types are becoming more acutely aware that emerging technologies and changing service expectations require an almost continuous state of change. Therefore, quite a few questions emerge as managers review organizational structures, staffing, and managerial behavior.

One of the first requirements in coming to terms with the implication of ongoing technological change and the role of library services is identifying the current state of affairs. Managers must first obtain an overview of the prevailing state of libraries and then become familiar with the many predictions of what the future holds for libraries. Information organizations may wish to revisit their primary purpose and mission so that they can prepare themselves for the future.

In addition, managers will need to assess organizational structure and consider whether restructuring is necessary to provide the desired services. Cross-functional teams may be considered, and a review of internal communication systems should be undertaken so that all employees feel properly informed.

Current staffing levels and skills should be analyzed to determine how they meet the new and expected technology and service changes. Technology competencies have been outlined for various types of libraries to use as guides for this process. If the desired competencies are not met in the present, training can be set up so that staff may effectively reach competency in the required components. The manager may need to determine whether current staff members are assigned to the job functions they perform best and in which they receive maximum personal affirmation. Change is a difficult thing for most individuals, so managers need to be aware of the different ways in which people respond to change and how best to encourage personal buy-in from all staff.

Understanding the changing nature of library and information organization patrons is essential, since technology has changed both their behaviors and expectations. Managers may want to consider what type of training to provide for their organization's users to make their experience most effective.

Additionally, information managers may find it advantageous to search out additional strategic partners so that desired services can be provided by the best possible entity. Collaboration is essential to deal with the inevitable change organizations are experiencing.

As a group, we decided that it would be most useful to approach our overarching question in terms of these questions managers might ask themselves. In the annotated list that follows, we provide resources that address each of these subtopics.

### ***Methods***

In creating our resource list and narrative, our group experienced a microcosm of current library challenges. We started out in library heaven, with a strong manager who clearly laid out for us the separate areas where libraries are called to respond to enormous changes. The group utilized email and a relatively new technology – the wiki – for communicating and sharing resources and documents. Using indexes, databases, catalogues, and different search engines in our quest for helpful material, we were able to access a great variety of resources, including print articles and books, on-line journals, posted videos, and PDF lecture files. Then we began our brief visit to library hell—so many sources to prioritize and format; a disparate group of workers to coordinate in cyberspace; the challenges of Web 2.0 and the new school platform. Presaging

the eventual triumph of libraries everywhere, we ultimately coordinated our efforts, mastered our challenges, and reached our goal (maybe at 11:59, though!).

## **Annotated Resource List**

### **Vision of the Future**

Change: always a threat and a promise—these sources remind the library manager that technological and social evolution render literacy both crucial and fragile, at the same time allowing unprecedented access and control to information seekers.

- How can we allocate resources to offer users access to the best available technology?
- What will future libraries provide that users can't find at home?
- What is the mission of libraries in the digital age?

Future-Proof Your Library (2008). *Library Journal*, 133, 13.

A collection of “movers and shakers” identifies the important characteristics which will keep future libraries viable: talent -- backbone -- marketing -- flexibility -- service -- social capital -- relevance -- expertise -- openness -- user-centered -- being a hub -- involvement -- local value -- design thinking.

Shaw, F. (2005). The future impact of technology on management: CIPD Conference 3 June 2005.

Shaw points out that managers must be aware of the impact of technology on employees. The future may hold virtual reality, artificial intelligent entities molecular-sized micro-machines, self-learning entities, etc.; current employment may involve mobile technologies, portfolio careers, and flexible schedules. Shaw offers management advice for mitigating physiological pressures, stress-related illnesses, and the sense of isolation which may result from technological change.

Wesch, M. (2007). Web 2.0 ... The machine is us/ing us [Video file]. Video posted to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6gmP4nk0EOE>

Watch; think; repeat. A sine qua non for library managers still paddling against the digital tsunami.

### **Organizational Structure**

It definitely matters how an organization is structured, and the structure can impact the effectiveness of each individual staff member as well as the organization as a whole. These sources assist the manager in analyzing the current structure and determining the best structure to meet objectives.

- What are the pros/cons of flat structure and hierarchical structure?
- How do we restructure if necessary?
- What type of teams should be formed?
- What is the best kind of internal communication system for our structure?

Lakos, A., & Phipps, S. (2004, July). Creating a Culture of Assessment: A Catalyst for Organizational Change. *portal: Libraries & the Academy*, 4(3), 345-361.

In this article, Lakos and Phipps analyze the new paradigm of building a culture of assessment, and place it in the framework of organizational culture change. The authors suggest that in order to deliver effective and high quality services, libraries have to assess their performance from the customer point of view. They suggest that staff and leaders must understand what is involved in organizational culture change. Managers would find this article useful if they are interested in changing their organizational structure to establish that their services have relevance, value, and impact in the ever-changing environment.

Wamken, P. (2004, July). New Technologies and Constant Change: Managing the Process.

*Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 30(4), 322-327.

In this article, Wamken reflects upon technologies and forces that have made changes necessary in libraries. Wamken considers trends and nature of changes and examines some processes for effective and positive implementation of those changes. The author states that new patterns of interdependence are emerging. As the Web is becoming the accepted "gateway" to information, librarians must better understand patterns of use by students and faculty. A manager interested in how technology changes and how to implement these changes in their organizational structure would find this article useful.

### **Staffing Issues**

Change affects the entirety of an organization from top level management to entry level employees, and effective management of change is a vital component of effective organizational management. The following resources will aid the manager in determining the current competencies of staff and implementing training programs to raise competencies as needed. Tips on how to ensure the successful integration of changes into a staff's daily work process are invaluable to the manager who endeavors to manage change in the best way possible.

- What technology competencies are required for current staff?
- How do we set up training for competencies not yet met?
- How can we help staff adapt to change?
- What (if any) specialties do we need to hire for?
- What kind of feedback systems work?
- How can we realign current staff to most productive/most desired job functions?

### **Technology Competencies**

Core technology competencies for librarians and library staff: LITA Guide #15, Thompson, S. M., ed. New York : Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2009.

This newly published book by the Library and Information Technology Association provides a history and overview of technology competencies for library staff, with chapters written by professionals from all types of libraries. The chapters focus on an inventory of technical skills and management attributes for all levels of library staff.

Mochida, P. & Neufang, R. Teaching Internet skills to information professionals. Proceedings of INET96: Transforming Our Society Now. Montreal, Canada, 24-28 June 1996.

Accessed 4/29/09 [http://www.isoc.org/inet96/proceedings/c9/c9\\_3.htm](http://www.isoc.org/inet96/proceedings/c9/c9_3.htm)

This conference paper describes how the University of Hawaii Manoa Library implemented Internet staff training, and contains insights on how their methods permitted training a culturally diverse staff, allowed each to learn at his/her own pace, and accommodated individual learning styles. The authors contend that trained staff would acquire the confidence needed to increase proficient Internet services and move into additional technological applications.

### **Adapting to Change**

Kennedy, T. (2003, December). The Two sides of change- managing or coping?. *Journal of Hospital Librarianship*, 3(4), 65-72. Retrieved May 2, 2009, from Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts with Full Text database.

Change is inevitable in the field of library and information science, and this article by Toni Kennedy of Lady Davidson Private Hospital Library in North Turramurra, Australis reflects on the impact of change on libraries. There are two methods of dealing with changes – managing and coping. If change is imposed with little to no staff input, individuals can become angry and disillusioned, as Kennedy illustrates, there are ways of mitigating the effects. By taking initiative in adapting to the new situation and ensuring effective communication, the anger and disillusionment caused by change can be successfully mitigated and the changes can progress more smoothly.

Wood, E., Miller, R., & Knapp, A. (2007). *Beyond survival: Managing academic libraries in transition*. Westport: Libraries Unlimited.

While written with academic libraries in mind, *Beyond Survival* reaches beyond the spectrum of academic libraries and into the realm of organizational management from the business perspective. For years the business world has been wrestling with rapid change, increased availability of information, as well as increasing instability and unpredictability. Drawing from the theory of the business world and case studies in the academic library sector, *Beyond Survival* manages to draw connections that illustrate and expand on the anecdotal evidence of the organizational changes taking place in academic libraries. By drawing on business theory and adopting some of the same tools and concepts utilized in the business world, libraries (even those not in the academic sector) can not only survive but thrive by learning to make the most of the available opportunities.

### **Knowing the User**

Libraries provide a wide variety of services to a vast disparity of people. It is important for the manager to understand not only the impact of technology on the organization and the staff members, but also on the users, for this will greatly inform the decisions made in regard to how best to use technology in providing service. These resources are an excellent starting point to knowing and understanding the library's users.

- How has technology changed our users' behaviors?
- How has technology changed our users' expectations?
- What training might be required for our users?

Dresang, E. T. (Fall 2005). The Information-Seeking Behavior of Youth in the Digital Environment. *Library Trends*, 54(2), 178-196.

This article presents research on the information-seeking behavior of young people in the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century who are “growing up digital.” The author discusses the concepts of interactivity, connectivity and access as the major aspects of youth’s interaction with information identified in the literature. Children’s information-seeking behavior in the digital realm has been quite fully researched, but conclusions have been focused on the deficiencies rather than on looking for potential new and different ways of knowing in the digital age. Additionally, Dresang suggests that the use of computers provides great connectivity for social activity. She notes the increased involvement of children in the design of materials is significant in that it provides insight into meeting their needs in ways that make sense to them.

Sadeh, T. (2007, July). Time for a Change: New Approaches for a New Generation of Library Users. *New Library World*, 108(7/8), 307-316.

This paper investigates current trends in information seeking, defines and describes factors that contribute to an up-to-date, user-centric library experience, and examines the movement of vendors and libraries toward such a library experience. The paper identifies aspects of new library interfaces that attempt to satisfy the needs of today's information seekers. As more organizations become concerned about the decreasing use of their library collections, this paper suggests ways in which libraries can adapt to the changing user expectations and maintain the relevance of their collections and services for today's information seekers.

Wicks, D. A. (2004) Older Adults and Their Information Seeking. *Behavioral & Social Sciences Librarian*, 22(2), 1-26.

Technological changes of the digital age affect the behaviors and expectations of more than young people. This study examines the information-seeking behavior of older adults. Findings related to computer use indicate that when discussing older adults it is important to distinguish between different stages of older age, i.e. “young” seniors and “old” seniors, as technology has affected differing characteristics.

### **Strategic Partnerships**

With reduced funding and ongoing technology upgrade needs, managers may look for partnership opportunities outside of the local environment. These resources provide some guidance on seeking out and negotiating library partners.

- What partnerships can we form to maximize the effectiveness of our organization?
- How can we utilize outside resources to facilitate growth within our organization?

Brinkman, S. & Yates, F.W. (2008). Promoting Partnership: Campus and Community Collaboration through Cultural Events. *College and Research Libraries News*, 69(3), 147-151.

In this article, Brinkman and Yates describe one academic library’s success with collaboration via library-sponsored cultural events. These cultural events achieve faculty and staff partnerships, partnerships with administrative units and organizations on campus, connections with students, community outreach, demonstrate a commitment to diversity. The authors also provide tips for success and list other programs and organizations interested in collaboration. A manager interested in exploring strategic partnerships would find this article a useful description of successful collaboration and a valuable reference for collaborative resources.

Holt, G. (1999). Public library partnerships: Mission-driven tools for 21st century success.  
Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Foundation Publishers.

In this paper, Holt provides a thorough overview of types of partnerships, the necessities for their success, and the challenges which must be addressed. Holt gives examples of library partnerships throughout the world as well as a framework for the establishment of public library partnerships. Managers of any information organization would find useful information in this comprehensive exploration of collaboration among public libraries.