

Change Management in Academic Libraries

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Abstract Change is natural and change should manage properly. Academic Libraries are facing tough times in the modern age due to ever growing social and technological change. In this fast changing environment libraries are adopting new techniques and technologies day by day to satisfy users.

INTRODUCTION

Change is important to the survival and success of any library. Although we cannot eliminate the stress and upheaval of organizational change, we can lessen its impact and take best advantage of the opportunities change offers. Handling change effectively can make library stronger and more resilient. Effectively driving, sponsoring and supporting change is part of every library manager's role.

Change could be defined as something which is new that breaks the old patterns either completely or partially in our life. It could be sudden, abrupt or slow and gradual. It is a general observation that human tendency towards change is that of resistance. In an organization among the staff it is viewed as a threat to one's position. As the saying goes, known devil is better than unknown angel.

This change is not new to the libraries. Dr. S. R. Ranganathan has pointed this change in 1930's and rightly pronounced this as Fifth law of library science "Library is a growing organism." If we think about the recent developments in field of library and information science then we reach to a conclusion that we have not produced anything new to the field but due to adoption of new techniques we served the society in effective and efficient manner. In other words adoption of change makes this possible.

WHAT IS CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Change management is a structured approach to shifting/transitioning individuals, teams, and organizations from a current state to a desired future state. It is an organizational process aimed at helping employees to accept and embrace changes in their current business environment. In project management, change

management refers to a project management process where changes to a project are formally introduced and approved.

Kotter defines change management as the utilization of basic structures and tools to control any organizational change effort. Change management's goals is to minimize the change impacts on workers and avoid distractions.

TYPES OF CHANGE

Change could either be slow or abrupt. If change is unplanned and sudden, it is more probable that it may produce negative results in an organization, hence the need for change management which means a systematic transition from the old to new. It is a process which is planned and continuous and includes best practices in the trade; it could be necessary, or induced for better performance or adopted to cope up with the advances in technology .A gradual change is generally met with less resistance as it allows the individual some time to adapt to the new environment. Thus change management involves the process of implementing changes in an organization in a controlled manner to achieve better results.

GENERALLY THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF CHANGES, NAMELY,

1. Continuous change: This is a necessary part of an organizational life and occurs as a result of adjustment to altered states of internal and external environment. Continuous change is planned and there is some control over the situation and there is ample time for the process.
2. Discontinuous change: This is something which comes as a response to an abrupt change or event in the environment. It could be described as a strategic shock.

E.g. Change in the Government, downsizing as a result of a merger etc.

PHASES OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Phase 1 - Preparing for change: Preparation, assessment and strategy development, form the preparation for change in an organization. Bad strategy will end up detrimental to the organization; i.e it will not be in the best interest of the organization.

Phase 2 - Managing change: Detailed planning is required at this stage and change management implementation will be more effective when there is strong internal communication and strong direct leadership

Phase 3 - Reinforcing change: Data gathering, corrective action and recognition are the important aspects of this stage. It is at this stage that the value of change is reinforced by consolidating and celebrating gains.

WHY CHANGE MANAGEMENT NECESSARY IN THE ACADEMIC LIBRARIES?

An university or college is not only a teaching institution, it is also an institution that supports academic research, as well as other scholarly activities. And the primary purpose of a university library is to support the teaching and research work carried out in the university. Libraries without faculty allies are simply not players on a university campus. As a result, the need for librarians to have good working relationships with their administrative colleagues is simply vital. Meanwhile, the universities are in the midst of probably the most drastic restructuring in their history. At the same time, we cannot avoid change, for it simply invades all of our libraries' activities everyday now. In academic libraries, the two driving forces behind most workplace change are economies and technology. Declines in funding for education and in the purchasing power of libraries, have made it impossible to maintain the former status quo. The rapid growth of new information technology and its potential for radically altering communications and knowledge management, and you have some major the ingredients for some very drastic changes in the libraries. In this century, higher education is being restructured by the recent shifts in strategic planning processes, professional identities and roles, as well as technological capabilities. The developments of electronic resources have not only created new learning patterns, but also a new medium of the library's traditional roles in that continuum, as well as an extension of the library activities. For libraries, innovation is also part of the development, and also part of the field management of change. In fact, many scholars have already predicted the profound and traumatic changes ahead for higher education. The

fundamental problem facing academic libraries today is their inability to maintain their acquisitions and staffing at the present level. Even in many other countries that are relatively wealthy, governments are trying to cut various public expenditures, and since higher education accounts for a significant amount of this, it has received reduced government funding over the last decade or two. At the same time, the rapid changes in the environment of information technologies and scholarly communication, and learning patterns in the new academic environment present both opportunities and challenges for the academic libraries. this paper attempts to provide possible future directions and solutions for the management of change for academic libraries.

PROCESS OF CHANGE

The process of change in academic libraries has the following components:

1. Why should there be any change in the library is to be made clear and thus the purpose should be clear and the goal well defined. For this, the academic librarians have to redefine goals and develop new metrics. Most importantly, assess the scope of change like how big is the change and to which extent it will affect the academicians in the organization and whether the change is going to be fast or gradual.
2. They have to identify services that are no longer relevant or good value propositions or some modifications needed and need to be eliminated.
3. Adoption of innovative new services.
4. Communicate their usefulness and value to their parent institution.
5. Establish good communication channels within and outside the library.
6. Training and orientation for staff and users on new technology and services.
7. Resistance management is very important during the implementation phase of the planned change. Rigidity is one of the important barriers to change. Rigidity may pertain to either employees or the system or the management or the workplace culture.
8. Feedback after new changes have been implemented to further improve the system.

AREAS FOR CHANGE IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

The work of academic libraries has always been organized around the flow of information, generation, acquisition, processing, storage, dissemination, and use are the six stages of information life cycle. Barring the first and the last stages, libraries and librarians are directly concerned with the other four stages of information life cycle. In this context, change must be managed in the following functional areas in academic libraries:

1. Library outreach and Reader services: Adoption of IT, Web2.0 and its services
2. Collection development and management: E-resources management.
3. Library automation and networking.
4. Technical services: Bar-coding, RFID, web site development, etc
5. Library building: Planning of Wi-Fi library campus, information centre with in the library, etc
6. Resource Sharing: RS in terms of Library finance and Library Personnel.

Conclusion: Thus change management in academic Libraries calls for the new role of academic librarians as information managers who motivate and empower people to take their own decisions by adequately training them to the new environment and giving them adequate support. Life is change and growth is optional and one grows in life when change is accepted as part of life and adapts oneself to the new situation with ease and intelligence.

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