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Managing Change in Libraries and Information Services

Cathryn Gallacher

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Managing Change in Library and Information Services

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Series Editor

Sylvia Webb is a well-known consultant, author and lecturer in the information management field. Her first book, *Creating an Information Service,* now in its third edition, was published by Aslib and has sold in over forty countries. She has experience of working in both the public and private sectors, ranging from public libraries to national and international organisations. She has also been a lecturer at Ashridge Management College, specialising in management and interpersonal skills, which led to her second book, *Personal Development in Information Work,* also published by Aslib. She has served on a number of government advisory bodies and is past Chair of the Information and Library Services Lead Body which develops National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) for the LIS profession. She is actively involved in professional education with Aslib and the Library Association and is also a former Vice-President of the Institute of Information Scientists. As well as being editor of this series, Sylvia Webb has written three of the Know How Guides: *Making a charge for library and information services*, *Preparing a guide to your library and information service* and *Knowledge management: linchpin of change*.

A complete listing of all titles in the series can be found at the back of this volume.

About the author

Cathryn Gallacher is currently Deputy Librarian, Academic Support, at the University of Bristol Library. She obtained her Master of Library Science (MLS) degree at the University of California, Los Angeles, and a Diploma in Management Studies at the University of the West of England (UWE). Cathryn began her career at the UCLA Library, moving to the UK in 1986, where she spent two years in the public library sector before moving to the library at UWE. While at UWE, she held several middle management posts, and managed numerous change projects. In 1997, she moved to the University of Bristol's senior management team.

Cathryn also teaches part-time. For four years she taught Library Management on Bristol University's MSc in Information and Library Management, and currently teaches the Transferable Skills unit on that course. In addition, she has taught Managing Change and Library Planning at Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona, and currently runs short courses on change and project management at libraries in the UK.

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Contents

Introduction

Librarians recognise that rapid change is a way of life in libraries and information services today. Yet in times of rapid and continual change, it is easy to be so absorbed by growing workloads, daily decisions and individual change projects that we lose perspective on the change process as a whole. For this reason, it is important to step back occasionally, and to think about the nature of change in general, and about its effects on organisations and individuals.

Further, it is no longer just senior library and information service managers who must be able to manage change well, but all librarians, and indeed all library staff. Therefore, this guide is intended for all librarians and senior library or information assistants, particularly those who manage staff or budgets, as well as for students of librarianship who may soon find themselves in that role. The book is about the change process itself: why it is necessary, why it can be difficult, and what librarians can do to implement it successfully.

The following chapters will:

- examine the pressures for change in a library or information service
- examine the factors which cause resistance to change, and their effects on the performance of library staff and managers

- examine the conditions which can help to ensure successful change in libraries
- suggest some practical steps that library staff at all levels can take to manage change effectively
- provide an overview of the skills needed to manage change well.

1. Understanding Change in Libraries

Pressures for change

Change today is not only inevitable, but continual. It is unrealistic to expect a break from change, or to count on a period of consolidation. While these statements may be daunting, their truth is apparent when we consider the range of pressures for change which all libraries experience. These pressures come from outside our organisations, originating in the wider environment in which libraries operate, as well as from inside libraries themselves. The pressures include potential threats to our viability and security, as well as opportunities to consolidate our position and to develop.

Most senior library managers today operate in an arena where internal and external pressures are recognised, monitored and used to inform library planning and decision making. However, it is also important that all library managers, if not all library staff, understand these pressures if they and their organisations are to be leaders and beneficiaries of change, rather than victims of it.

External pressures

External pressures on libraries come from changes taking place in the environment in which libraries operate. This environment has a local, national andglobal context. External changes are those which, in general, librarians do not initiate, but which we must foresee and interpret, and which often require us to initiate additional change as a response. These environmental pressures are many and wide-ranging, but include:

- *political developments,* such as local government reorganisation, with major implications for public libraries; new legislation for industry or the health service, with knock-on effects for the libraries which serve them; or government initiatives for lifelong learning, which affect all sectors
- *economic changes,* such as new methods for the government funding of education, which profoundly affect school, college and university libraries; and global or national trends such as recession and inflation
- *social trends,* such as changing populations in the catchment area of state schools or public libraries; the move towards a customer focus in all services, and the demand for services for disabled people
- *technological developments,* such as local and international networks, electronic publishing and the advent of self-service technologies.

Internal pressures

Internal pressures for change come from within the library itself. They originate with our recognition of problems or weaknesses in the library, or of strengths which lead us to consolidate or build on our success.

Weaknesses are evident in situations such as user complaints, a falling-off of use, or poor staff morale, all of which put pressure on us to change our methods if we wish to provide an effective service.

Our strengths can also pressure us to change. For example, a successful service may require us to change our methods in order to meet increased demand and avoid a drop in service quality. Usually, this will mean planning changes in the way the service is run, and/or the way it is funded, even though the present system is working well.

Another situation where our strengths lead us to change is in the recognition of our potential to apply these strengths to new circumstances. For example, a number of public libraries are carrying out Internet searches for their users, or opening 'cyber cafés', capitalising on the information searching and teaching skills of their staff. Developing such services may be useful for income generation, as well as enhancing and promoting our role as information providers or intermediaries, regardless of the medium.

In summary, there is no escape from the pressures to change. Whether these pressures are perceived as threats or opportunities, they cannot be ignored. Therefore, it is important for all librarians to be continually sensitive to their surroundings, to use all relevant tools and techniques to inform themselves of changes in the environment, and to understand the significance of these changes for their organisations.

Resistance to change

At the same time we are subject to pressures for change, librarians inevitably face forces within their organisations which make change difficult. It is important to understand this resistance to change, and to take steps to overcome or minimise it.

Some internal obstacles to change stem from organisational factors, such as unclear objectives, inappropriate structures and change-resistant cultures. Other causes of resistance rest in the nature of the individuals who make up the organisation. That is, most people feel apprehensive in the face of change, and nearly everyone goes through a psychological low point during a significant transition. If these feelings go unrecognised, they can lead to resistance, or even subversion of change.

Fear of change

It is a commonplace to say that fear of change is linked to our fear of the unknown. In fact, it is not the unknown as such that we fear, but the possibility of loss that comes with it. When faced with a new situation at work, many people feel defensive, fearing at the very least the temporary loss of comfortable routines while the innovation is introduced. Greater potential losses include loss of productive and satisfying working relationships; loss of status or authority; loss of expertise, or even ability to do the job; and, in the worst case, job loss.

These fears are natural, and are exacerbated in an economic climate where job loss is common, or in an organisation where change has been badly managed or there is a lack of trust in management. Thefears are also greatest in situations where the benefits of change are not clear, or where the fears are not acknowledged.

Self-esteem and performance

Besides understanding that fear of change is linked to fear of loss, it is also helpful to understand other common reactions to change. Figure 1 below shows one representation of the cycle of our responses to a new situation. This model is based on studies of change and self-esteem conducted by Adams, Hayes and Hopson, and subsequent studies of the relationship between self-esteem and work performance described by Carnall (see Further reading), among others. The model shows two curves, one depicting the impact of change on the way people feel about themselves and their organisations (represented by the solid line), the other showing the effect of these feelings on work performance (represented by the dotted line.)

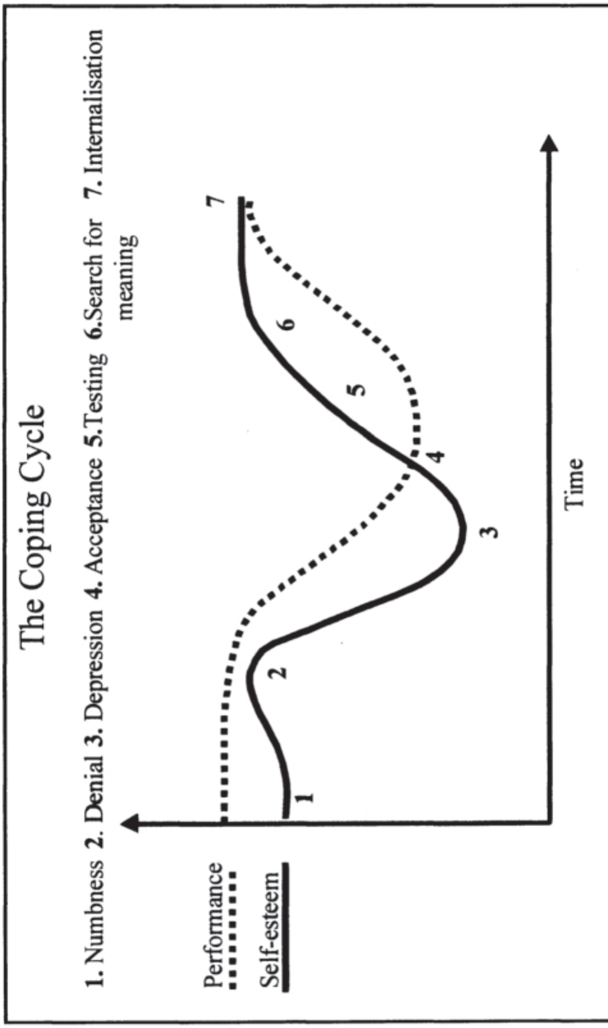

Figure 1—The Coping Cycle

In the representation above, there are seven stages in the cycle of coping with change:

1. *Numbness.* When a change is announced, the first reaction is often numbness, shock or immobilisation. Especially if the change is a major one, or if it is announced suddenly, people may feel overwhelmed and unable to grasp the facts or take in their significance.

2. *Denial.* Once people have had time to absorb the details of a proposed change, a common reaction is to deny the need for, or feasibility of, the new system. This is when we hear the phrases, 'but we tried that before and it didn't work', or 'this is just more change for change's sake'. As the graph shows, self-esteem may actually increase during this stage, as people identify with the good points of the present system.

3. *Depression.* At the third stage, people realise that the change is actually going to happen and will have an impact on their working lives. It is at this point that the fears are strongest, as we contemplate the meaning of the change on our relationships, tasks and routines. Feeling defensive, frustrated or depressed is a natural reaction.

4. *Acceptance.* This stage is also called 'discarding', as it is here we begin to discard the past and focus on the future. As studies have shown, when people accept that a change is inevitable, they begin to look for the good things about the new system—or at least to recognise that it might work—and self-esteem begins to improve.

5. *Testing.* At the fifth stage, people begin to take initiative in making the new system work. In other words, they begin to test themselves in relation to the new system, to adapt the system to their needs and to adapt their behaviour to the system. This process requires a high level of energy and commitment and, in consequence, people sometimes become irritable and angry. For this reason, there may be an increase in organisational conflict at this stage. However, while conflict appears to be resistance to change, it may in fact be part of a natural process of trying to make change work. If there is management support during this stage, some conflict can be a healthy way to relieve tensions and to move things forward.

6. *Search for meaning.* By stage six, new procedures and relationships have been tested, adapted and accepted. At this point, people are able to look back over the process and ask themselves what it has meant for them, how it affects their future and what they have learned, gained or lost.

7. *Internalisation.* In the final stage, the process of change is complete, and the new procedures and relationships have become part of the organisation's normal behaviour.

Naturally, a single individual will not necessarily go through all seven phases in linear sequence. Rather, the model represents the way people in general tend to experience change: from initial shock, to resistance, to testing and acceptance and, often but not always, to incorporation of the new system into their way of working.

As the model also shows, performance is closely linked to change and self-esteem. That is, following closely behind the drop in self-esteem there is a drop in work performance. It is inevitable that while people are learning new skills, forming new relationships and coping with feelings about change, their performance at work will deteriorate.

It is important for library supervisors and managers to recognise that this cycle, including a drop in performance, is a natural and necessary part of incorporating change in an organisation. Managers need not feel guilty when performance drops temporarily, or when we and our staff experience negative feelings for a time. Neither should we dis-approve of apparent resistance when a change is first introduced. These negative feelings are part of a healthy progression towards eventual acceptance of change.

What managers must also recognise, however, is that the rate at which people go through this cycle varies considerably. Some people may never get through the 'denial' stage, while others move forward rapidly, or experience setbacks later on. The duration of the stages, and the depth of the low points, depend on a number of factors, including the significance of the change, the nature of the individuals and, most importantly for practical purposes, *on the way the change is managed*.

Overcoming Resistance

Research has shown that, in general, people with more power to understand and shape a change go through the cycle of responses more quickly. For this reason managers, who traditionally have more control over the process, usually reach the 'internalisation' stage more quickly than their staff.

There are, then, things that library managers can do to ensure that their staff face change without unnecessary stress and anxiety, and to minimise the drop in performance. Just as fears can be reduced by reducing the 'unknown' element—i.e. by informing and reassuring staff—other negative feelings about change can be minimised by involving staff in the whole change process, and by empowering them to lead or shape the change. However, as anyone who practises participative management will know, it is not always easy to consult and involve people, especially when it is necessary to manage the many technical and financial aspects of a change at the same time. For this reason, it is best to start the participative process before a specific change is introduced. While it is never too late to start involving staff, a specific change will be better accepted in a library where the conditions for successful change are already in place.

In general, the conditions where change can flourish are those in which all library staff are able to understand individual changes in a larger context, to play a part in shaping the direction of the library and to respond quickly to new situations. The two following chapters provide a further description of these conditions, and some practical steps that libraries can take to achieve them.

2. A Strategic Approach to Change

In order to manage change well, a library and all those working in it must understand the pressures which make change necessary and desirable, and the context in which individual changes must be managed. At the very least, these pressures and circumstances should be explained to all library staff. It is even better, however, if staff participate in managing change using a strategic approach. This approach involves:

- environmental analysis
- political awareness
- strategic vision.

Environmental analysis

Environmental analysis is the regular process of examining trends and conditions in the library's environment in order to identify pressures for change. This environment includes:

- the 'macro environment' or outside world in general
- the library and information science sector
- the library's 'market' of users and competitors
- the library's parent organisation
- the library itself.

Senior library managers are usually aware of the need for environmental analysis as an important part of the strategic planning process. However, environmental analysis exercises are also a valuable means of raising staff awareness and understanding in order to overcome their fears and facilitate their participation in planning and managing change.

There are a number of useful tools, which can help staff to understand and interpret their library's environment and the pressures for change. For example, a participative planning or training event can include a 'PEST' or 'PEDSTL' analysis, to encourage staff to think about and document 'Political, Economic, Demographic, Social, Technological and Legal' trends. Another approach is to carry out an annual or biennial 'SWOT' analysis, in which all staff participate. As part of a shared planning exercise, a 'SWOT' can give each staff member or department a tool for evaluating the library's Strengths and Weaknesses, in light of external Opportunities and Threats.

The first time a library carries out a participative exercise in environmental analysis, the process might best be led by a senior manager who is accustomed to looking outward, and who is prepared to share this wider view with staff. Alternatively, the exercise could be conducted by an external facilitator, such as a manager or informed member of staff from another library. However, once staff are aware of the issues and techniques involved, librarians at any level can lead or facilitate environmental analysis exercises. For example, some libraries have a named individual or a working group with responsibility for coordinating regular environmental analyses and other planning activities. Another approach is to share responsibilities amongst a number of staff, so that each person is responsible for monitoring and reporting on specific areas of the external or internal environment.

PEDSTL, SWOT and other exercises can help to raise staff awareness of key environmental issues and of the importance of understanding the library in context. Environmental analysis, however, involves more than occasional exercises. Rather, it requires a continual gathering of, and reflection on, information, which is regularly brought together, analysed and used for planning the library's future. Naturally, the quality of the analysis and planning depends on the level to which staff are informed about the environment, and on how well the library as a whole gathers information. Managers can help to guarantee high quality results by ensuring that appropriate information is gathered and readily available to all staff. For example, the library can:

- circulate, or draw staff's attention to, relevant library and information literature, newspapers, statistics about library usage and the user population, user suggestions, and so on;
- enable staff and managers to attend appropriate professional conferences, meetings or other group training and awareness events, both to provide a wider perspective and to establish direct contact with ideas from outside the organisation;

- give staff guidelines for reviewing and analysing their own areas of work or expertise, as well as for keeping in touch with, and sharing external information relevant to those areas.

These and other environmental analysis processes that involve library staff at all levels, can be beneficial in several ways. First, as change management writer Bernard Burnes explains, 'Through this approach, members of the organisation come to appreciate that change is not only inevitable but is being undertaken to safeguard rather than threaten their future.' (Burnes 1996, p. 334.) At the same time, a shared approach to analysis benefits from the views of front-line and operational staff, who help to complete the picture by bringing their experience of trends in daily workflows, and in users' day to day needs and behaviour. Finally, establishing shared processes for regular environmental analysis helps to establish an ethos where both responsiveness and a proactive approach to change are the norm.

Political awareness

The other sort of awareness that is essential for good change management is political awareness. Political awareness is sensitivity to conditions in the library's parent organisation, and an understanding of the library's position and scope for influence within it.

Nearly all libraries are part of larger organisations such as universities, schools, hospitals, companies or local authorities. Librarians and information officers in company libraries, and most senior managers in all sectors, are well aware of their library's position within its parent organisation, and are practised at dealing with that organisation's management. Indeed, their ability to work effectively in that context has a major impact in determining the library's success. Unfortunately, this awareness does not always extend to other staff in libraries. All too often, it is only when staff experience the direct effects of a major organisation-wide change, such as restructuring, merger or financial crisis, that they become fully aware of the library's position within its parent body. In these circumstances, people can feel like victims of change, and see the library's role as one of powerless dependence. Yet this situation can often be prevented. While it is not possible to prevent the effects of major organisational change or to eliminate all the uncertainty associated with it, it *is* possible to *reduce* individuals' uncertainty by increasing their awareness. It is also possible to increase the library's participation in wider organisational change by maximising their sphere of influence within the parent body. These conditions are most likely to be achieved when librarians at all levels have:

- knowledge of important facts about the parent organisation
- an understand of the library's relationship with and accountability to the parent
- sensitivity to the parent's culture

- awareness of the library's and individuals' scope for influence within the parent organisation.

Facts

Understanding some basic facts about the parent organisation and how the library fits into it is a prerequisite for political awareness and effective change management. These facts include the following:

- *The mission, aims and objectives of the parent organisation.* While many environmental pressures for change, such as trends in ICT, affect the library directly, others come to us by way of our parent organisations. That is, our parent's strategy for dealing with pressures from the external environment determines the context in which we must operate, and influences the way we must manage change.
- *Sources of funding, how money is allocated within the organisation, and how the library fits into the overall budget.* In addition to providing procedural guidelines and information about accountability, these facts offer an insight into the library's perceived value within the organisation.
- *The achievements and weaknesses of the parent, how well it is doing in relation to its aims and objectives, and how it is doing financially.* Understanding the position of the parent organisation can help prevent library staff frustration by clarifying why

some things happen and others do not. Even more importantly, however, this understanding enables the library to spot opportunities for helping to solve organisational problems.

- *The organisation's staff and management structure, and how the library fits into it.* In addition to clarifying relationships and responsibilities, these facts can tell us what is expected of us. That is, the way in which a library fits into its parent's structure sends messages to staff and users about our perceived primary purpose. For example, a public library might be seen as supporting primarily leisure, arts or education, and so on.
- *The roles and aims of other departments, and how they relate to the library.* Understanding the roles of departments and how they are similar to, or different from, those of the library can highlight opportunities to serve those departments, to cooperate or share resources with them or, when necessary, to compete with them successfully for funding.

Accountability

It is also important for staff to understand the library's role within the parent body, and the ways in which it is accountable to that organisation.

Firstly, a library is accountable to its users. Yet sometimes managers and other key people within the parent organisation do not use the library, and have only a hazy idea about what we do. Nevertheless, we must remember that they are influenced by what they hear from users. Therefore, every member of staff is accountable, because they must provide a consistently good service to those users, and gather appropriate user feedback for dissemination to managers.

Secondly, libraries are financially accountable. We must use our budgets wisely by delivering appropriate services efficiently and cost-effectively.

Thirdly, we must help our parent organisation achieve its aims and ensure its financial success. To put it bluntly: if they fail, we fail. However, this does not describe a dependent relationship but an integrated one. If our parent organisation succeeds, and we are seen to contribute to their success, we shall succeed. Therefore, the library's aims must be consistent with those of its parent organisation, and all library staff have a role to play in helping to achieve these aims.

Library managers can encourage their staff to understand important facts about the parent organisation and the library's role within it by a number of means. Some suggestions are listed below:

- *Share information.* Ensure that staff have access to and understand the parent organisation's documents, such as plans, budgets, annual reports, newsletters, promotional literature and statistics. Circulate minutes of departmental or senior management meetings when appropriate.
- *Provide training and awareness sessions.* For example, it can be helpful to offer sessions on financial processes. For staff with budgetary responsibilities,

these sessions can provide procedural guidelines; but for all staff, an overview of sources of income, and allocation and budgeting processes can be useful. Senior library managers can also share their knowledge about the wider organisation by giving a 'state of the nation' type address for library staff, or by inviting individuals from key departments to speak at library staff meetings.

- *Involve staff in planning and discussion.* For instance, set up a library planning exercise in which staff discuss the parent's aims and objectives, and how the library might further them. It is best when all library planning is done with this context in mind.
- *Encourage staff to be directly involved in organisational life.* For example, set up formal links between library staff and relevant departments or individuals in the wider organisation. Enable these staff to attend key departmental meetings and ensure they have the necessary background information to participate effectively. Set up shadowing or temporary job exchanges for library staff and staff in other departments.

Culture

To be politically aware, staff need more than just facts or 'hard' information. That is, to manage change well, librarians must also be sensitive to the 'soft' information which defines the organisation's culture. This information includes:

- *Values.* The things which senior managers and other key people in the organisation think are important. These things are often undocumented, but are demonstrated by what people spend their time doing and talking about.
- *Power.* A person's influence within an organisation is not always reflected in the staff structure. It is also important to understand which departments and individuals have informal, but very real, power. That is, we need to know who has the support of management and who does not. This can help us understand whose support we need, and how we might best work with them for mutual benefit.
- *Behaviour.* It is enlightening to observe how the successful people in the organisation behave. What do they know or do that wins them support? What are their incentives and preferences? Are they comfortable with change and innovation, or are they better at preserving the status quo? It can also be helpful to notice the kind of behaviour that does not win support. These observations can suggest some guidelines for our own behaviour, which can help us gain influence within our parent organisation.
- *Language and traditions.* Most organisations have a shared language and set of traditions, made up of jargon, jokes, events from the past and expected ways of behaving. Sharing these things, or otherwise, can make people feel they belong to a group or are excluded from it. It is important

for librarians to learn the language and traditions of the parent organisation if they are to operate effectively within it.

Again, library managers can encourage and help their staff to obtain this soft information by sharing their own observations, and by setting up situations where staff can participate in organisational life. For best results, however, individuals themselves must observe and interpret the culture first hand. Direct observation and participation enables people to pick up subtleties in the organisational culture, and at the same time to extend their personal influence in the organisation.

It is possible to learn a lot about the organisation's culture by reading its documents. For example, minutes of meeting and newsletters tell us what people believe is important enough to spend time talking about. It is also informative to look at the statistics and performance indicators the organisation uses, for as Colin Offor points out, 'what is measured can indicate what the company is prioritizing' (Offor 1993, p. 147).

More important than reading, however, is to be where things are happening, and to learn about the culture by listening, observing and participating. To gain political awareness:

- *Attend appropriate meetings.* Before you go, make sure you are well informed about departmental issues that might be discussed, and be prepared to put forward your own ideas in a logical and succinct manner.

- *Establish relationships.* Make an effort to meet key people in relevant departments. Set up meetings yourself to discuss issues of mutual concern, or to ask for advice or suggestions. Attend informal events, such as lectures or coffee mornings, and invite people to events in the library.
- *Share ideas with colleagues in the library*, to compare observations, and exchange information about what works to improve liaison and participation.

Influence

All this information, hard and soft, provides the background which helps library staff to understand the pressures and context for change, and empowers them to participate effectively in managing that change. When library staff are environmentally and politically aware, the library and individuals working in it can offer the right ideas, at the right time, to the right people, in the right way. This in turn leads to a better image of the library, which will be seen as an integrated contributor to the success of the whole organisation, rather than a drain on that organisation's funds. When librarians at all levels recognise these things, and take the initiative to keep themselves and their colleagues informed and politically aware, the library and its staff will have greater influence in the organisation, and more control over the changes that take place within it.

Strategic vision

Once library staff have an understanding of the pressures and context for change, they are better able to participate in deciding where the library is going and why, and how it plans to get there. This condition is best accomplished when all staff play a regular part in shaping the library's role, direction and priorities by participating in the strategic planning process.

Sheila Corrall describes strategic planning as 'a continuous process', which 'fulfils the dual role of relating an organisation and its people to the environment and providing unity and direction to its activities' (Corrall 1994, p. 3). Continual environmental analysis is at the centre of this process. In addition, strategic planning includes some or all of the elements discussed below.

Vision

A vision is an idealistic view of how the library sees itself, or of what it wants to be in the long-term. For example, some libraries wish to view themselves as the best library of their type in the country, or as providing the most complete resource in their field, or as being at the forefront of innovation and development. As these examples demonstrate, a vision need not be measurable or provable, but it must be inspiring.

Traditionally, it is senior managers that hold a vision of the library's future. However, in times of rapid change, an important part of creating and refining this vision is to discuss and share it with library staff in order to gain their commitment. As Burnes says, 'the vision, like [a] beacon, should shine clearly for everyone in the organisation to see, so that they all know where they are travelling to.' (Burnes 1996, p. 327).

Mission

A mission is a more realistic view of the library's role and purpose. Many libraries have a mission statement which broadly defines their purpose and sets out what they wish to accomplish. For example, the mission of the South Gloucestershire Library Service is 'to sustain life-long individual and community development by offering free access to information and the loan of books and by the provision of other educational and recreational materials and facilities'. Mission statements provide the basis for planning, help to relate the library to its environment, and tell our users what they can expect of us. Furthermore, if staff participate in creating and refining the mission, it can also provide shared motivation and a sense of direction.

Values

Values state our beliefs about what is important, and describe in general terms what we aim to achieve. These values provide the guiding principles for further planning, and underlie our approach to service provision and daily activities.

In libraries, values often include ideas such as service quality, the advancement of learning and research, balanced collection development, approaches to management and the like. Sometimes these values are set down in planning documents as aims or goals. For example, the University of the West of England Library Service lists among its aims: 'To manage the library services with an emphasis on consultation and communication as well as a positive commitment to equal opportunities' and 'To identify, provide and promote the library services most needed by our clients and to deliver them by the most appropriate and effective means'.

Other libraries set down their values in other forms, such as customer care statements or customer charters. Whether or not these values are stated in written form, it is important to discuss them widely within the library. Shared values not only establish our guiding principles, but provide the only constants in the midst of rapid change.

Goals and objectives

Goals are more specific views of the desired future, and set down what the library should be like in order to achieve the outcomes stated in its mission. A library's goals often include standards of performance, service or collections, which provide the means for planning specific changes and assessing future progress.

Objectives are the concrete steps or specific conditions which must be met in order to achieve the stated goals. They provide short, manageable steps which lead us from the situation now, to the desired future state.

In a large library, each department or team might have its own goals and objectives; but these should further, rather than distract from, the goals and objectives of the library as a whole—and indeed, those of the library's parent body. The important point about goals and objectives is that they must be understood and, as far as possible, agreed by all staff if change is to be implemented successfully. This condition is best achieved if all staff participate in creating such goals and objectives.

A discussion of goals and objectives can follow naturally from an environmental analysis exercise. For example, after completing a library-wide SWOT analysis, staff can be asked to list and prioritise the actions which they believe the library, or specific departments within it, need to carry out in order to correct weaknesses, build on strengths, take advantage of opportunities and decrease threats. Depending on the size of the library and the resources available, it would be practical to choose only the top ten or fifteen targets. These targets can then be turned into concrete, measurable objectives by specifying the actions needed to achieve them, the people who are responsible for those actions, the time scale for completing them, and the means by which they can be measured.

Strategies

Strategies are the means to achieve objectives. While values remain constant, and objectives must be achieved within an agreed period, strategies are continually developed and re-developed as circumstances change. They may include separate but inter-related strategies for carrying out ongoing activities such as staffing, finance and acquisitions, as well as strategies for introducing changes. There are usually a number of possible strategies for achieving goals and objectives, and it is important to involve relevant staff and stakeholders in selecting the most appropriate for the circumstances. Selection of strategies for change will be discussed more fully in Chapter 4.

Continual review and development

Finally, an important part of the strategic approach to change is the recognition that the review, planning and development processes are continual ones. Because the environment constantly changes and evolves, continual environmental monitoring must be at the core of the planning process. It is also important to encourage staff to meet regularly to examine their own areas of work and suggest improvements. Many of the resulting changes will be small and can be implemented by the departments affected. However, these small-scale changes must not be seen as an alternative to more radical change when necessary.

3. Flexible Structures, Systems and Cultures

If a library is to manage change well, its staff will not only understand why change is necessary, but will initiate change and feel a personal stake in making it work. However, this understanding and participation does not happen just because library managers decide that it should, or even because they set up activities to facilitate it. In order for shared change management to work, a library must also have supporting structures and cultures to make mutual understanding and participation possible, including:

- staff structures
- human resources systems
- change-oriented cultures.

Staff structures

Participative change management requires a staff structure which facilitates cross-departmental communication and innovation and a flexible response to changing circumstances. At the same time, most libraries need structures which provide sufficient stability for staff to carry out necessary routine tasks, and to build knowledge and expertise in their specialist subject or technical areas. Routine tasks are important in digital libraries as well as traditional ones. Because there are no perfect structures for achieving both these things, libraries must organise their staff in ways which achieve the best possible balance between stability and responsiveness. This will most likely require hybrid structures of some kind. While the form these structures take will depend on the libraries' own needs and circumstances, there are a number of approaches for achieving this balance.

Matrix structures

In a matrix structure, staff members have two roles, one which is functional and concerned with ongoing tasks such as cataloguing or materials selection, and the other which is cross-functional and concerned with developmental activities. For example, in a matrix structure, a member of the cataloguing department might also belong to a department with responsibility for leading library-wide planning processes.

The advantage of a matrix structure is that it allows all staff to participate in cross-departmental initiatives on a regular basis. However, because matrix structures require staff to report to more than one manager and to carry out two different roles, there is a risk that staff will suffer from conflicting priorities.

A representation of a matrix structure is shown in Figure 2 below.

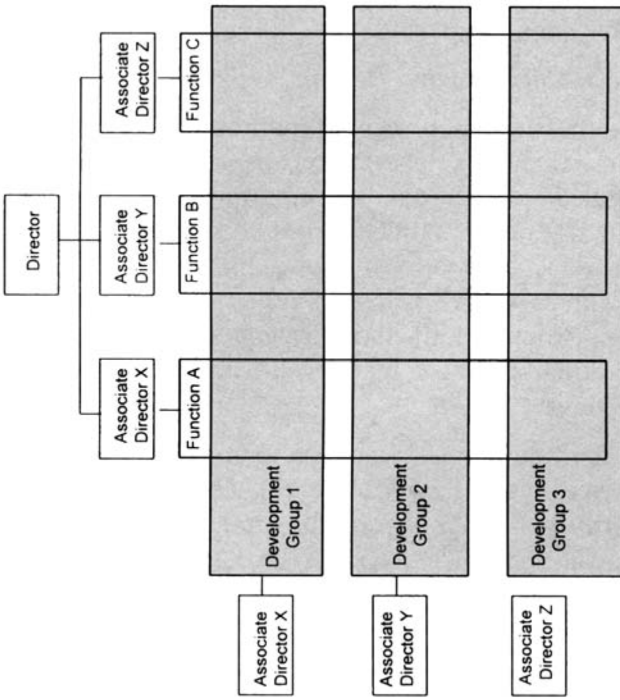

Figure 2—Matrix structure

Coordinators

Another approach to achieving both stability and responsiveness is to have a structure which is based on functional groups, but which also provides built-in coordinating mechanisms to bring those groups together. For example, the structure could designate a member of staff or a team with responsibility for bringing together staff from other departments in order to develop strategies for library-wide change.

The advantage of this type of structure is that every member of staff has one ‘home’ department and one line manager, yet all are able to participate in managing cross-departmental change. The disadvantage of this structure is that staff may feel that developmental activities are not part of their ‘regular’ work, and are therefore low priority. There is also a danger of culture clash between functional and developmental groups.

Working groups and task forces

Many libraries with function-based structures encourage staff to belong to working groups which regularly review and take forward library-wide initiatives. For example, a cataloguer might belong to a staff development working group, and a reference librarian lead a group devising new means of library promotion. Alternatively, a library might prefer to have short-term, ad hoc task forces, which call together staff from several departments to address initiatives of highest priority.

These methods offer the advantage that staff members can choose to join those groups which suit their own skills and interests, and can join several different groups over a period of time. The disadvantage of these methods is that not all staff will choose to join working groups, and some may feel that the activities of those groups are less important than ongoing work.

Review

Whichever model it adopts, a library must monitor and review its staff structure regularly. Firstly, it is important to ensure that the structure is in harmony with the library's mission, priorities and objectives. That is, the structure must help the library to implement change strategies agreed in strategic planning processes, without undermining the ongoing work which is a key part of the library's role.

Secondly, it is important to make sure that:

- staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities in the structure
- the structure does not cause more competition and conflict than cooperation and communication
- the structure enables the majority of staff to participate regularly in library-wide changes.

In order to achieve the best balance between stability and responsiveness, and to ensure that the structure's advantages outweigh its disadvantages, it will be necessary to make frequent adjustments to the way staff and work are organised. Moreover, when rapid change is endemic, a more complete restructuring of staff is likely to be required every few years.

Human resource systems

To manage change well, a library must have staff with the right skills, knowledge and personal qualities. In our professional literature, there is regular discussion about the skills required by today's information professionals. Often, the focus of these discussions is on the technical and work skills required for managing digital or hybrid libraries. Certainly these work skills are essential in information and communication environments. However, of equal importance are the skills and attributes required to manage continual change.

Some of the skills and knowledge necessary for managing change have already been mentioned. For example, staff require knowledge about the library's environmental context, and skills to analyse and interpret that knowledge. It is also clear that participative change management requires staff who can contribute to discussions and work well in groups.

In addition to knowledge and skills, however, staff must have certain innate abilities and personal qualities if they are to manage change well. For example, an innate ability to communicate well is a prerequisite for effective work in groups and meetings. If someone is naturally a poor communicator, it is difficult or impossible to teach him to do these things well. Other abilities and qualities which help people manage change are an ability to cope with uncertainty and a willingness to take risks. These and other change-related skills and qualities are summarised in Chapter 6.

Effective human resource systems help to ensure that library staff have these change-related skills and qualities. Firstly, sound recruitment and selection processes must aim to appoint new staff with the innate abilities and personal qualities which help them manage change. Secondly, good staff training and development methods are required to make sure new and existing staff build specific skills and gain relevant knowledge.

There are a number of means for developing change-related skills and knowledge. Perhaps the most obvious methods are formal ones, such as courses, conferences, workshops and in-house training events. These are effective means of developing both knowledge about environmental trends and specific change skills such as project management, meetings skills, and so on. However, while they can be extremely valuable, these one-off training events can also be misleading if they are not part of a larger process of regular learning and development. For a well-rounded view, it is best for staff to learn change management skills by a variety of different methods, which include activities outside the library as well as internal methods, that create and demonstrate a change-oriented, self-development culture.

It is also possible to use staff structures to encourage and facilitate staff development. Structures which enable staff to carry out a variety of tasks help to broaden their perspective and give them a wide range of skills. In some libraries, for example, every member of staff carries out both backroom tasks and frontline activities involving user contact. In other libraries, staff rotate or swap jobs regularly. Whether these or other methods are used, it is important to take advantage of existing structures and systems to facilitate staff development and encourage flexibility.

The best method for staff to build change skills, however, is for them to develop their own individual learning styles and techniques. Good personal learning habits are essential for managing change. By trying a variety of techniques, staff will come to know which works best for them. In addition, staff must be willing to examine their own behaviour and abilities. As change management writer E.M.Kanter says, 'Just as…athletes must be willing to learn, accept the guidance of coaches, constantly [be] in training and always alert to the possibility of improvement in their techniques, so must [managers] be willing to learn' (Kanter 1994).

Change-oriented cultures

Once flexible structures and systems are in place, it is easier to introduce and implement change. For change to succeed, however, it is also necessary to have an organisational culture where change can flourish.

Realistically, most libraries will require hybrid cultures for the same reason they require hybrid structures. That is, while libraries need people who welcome rapid change and varied tasks, we also need people who enjoy routine work and are keen to build expertise in subject or functional areas. People who excel in routine work require and value stability in their immediate working environment. Therefore, there is a danger that some of these people will resist change generally, especially when they feel that the change requires them to compromise their high standards for the sake of improving overall consistency in service quality, or in order to develop new services or activities.

In spite of the risks, libraries must accept and welcome this hybrid culture, as it offers our best chance of achieving the ideal balance between consistent quality in ongoing work and responsiveness to change. Therefore, a change-oriented culture in libraries can be defined as a hybrid culture in which the majority of staff accept that change is the norm, and in which they behave flexibly, develop personally and professionally, and communicate openly.

It can be argued that because it is not possible to change people, it is not possible to change the organisational cultures which are defined by people's beliefs and behaviour. However, while it is not possible or desirable to change people's natures, it *is* possible to change the way they feel about, and behave in, work. Therefore, culture change should be addressed in the context of a library's strategic approach to change generally. That is, although cultures change more slowly and are more difficult to plan than structures and systems, they too should be monitored and developed in a deliberate way, to ensure that a library's culture will help it to achieve its aims and objectives.

Once a library has identified the kind of culture it needs, it is possible to encourage that culture to develop in a number of ways. The first step is to get the structures and systems right. In addition to facilitating appropriate change, structures and systems give messages to staff about the kind of behaviour and attitudes which the library expects of them. To make sure that these systems and structures are giving the intended messages, it can be helpful to look at them again with a critical eye. For example, it is important to ensure that:

- staff structures help to widen perspective and encourage flexibility
- recruitment and selection processes seek new staff with an ability to manage change well;
- staff development activities build change skills as well as new work skills
- staff meetings enable open discussion and encourage initiative
- money and staff time are used in a way which is proportionate to the agreed balance of developmental and ongoing activities.

In addition to examining structures and systems, change managers must be willing to examine and develop their own behaviour, and to question whether this behaviour demonstrates the values which facilitate change. For example, good change managers:

- take a proactive and creative approach to new situations

- communicate openly, listen carefully and give constructive feedback to those below and above them
- recognise and reward the behaviour of staff they manage when that behaviour facilitates change.

When structures, systems and cultures work in harmony to further a library's mission, goals and objectives, the library is in the best position to manage continual change successfully.

4. Selecting Change Strategies

Once an organisation is on the way towards establishing the conditions where change can flourish, implementing specific changes starts to become easier. However, successful change is possible only when individual changes are also understood, planned and managed well, and when staff and stakeholders are involved and informed. The first stage of this process is to select appropriate change strategies.

One of the reasons why change projects sometimes fail is that organisations fail to assess the feasibility and ramifications of a change, or to evaluate alternative change strategies, before setting the project in motion. While in most libraries and information services there are numerous pressures for change at any given time, many of the desirable changes will be small and can be initiated and implemented by the areas affected. However, when larger changes are necessary, it is important to examine the problem or opportunity in more depth before beginning to plan and implement the change project. This examination involves:

- setting up a change assessment working group
- clarifying the problem or opportunity
- generating a range of possible change strategies
- deciding which strategy is the most appropriate

- understanding the implications and risks of the proposed strategy
- deciding whether the proposed change is feasible and has priority over other changes needed.

While this may sound like a lengthy process, it need not be overly time-consuming. Once the process becomes habitual, it can be carried out quickly if realistic timetables are established from the outset. More importantly, it can save both time and resources in the long run by preventing common mistakes, such as taking on too many change projects at once, unnecessarily overburdening staff or resources, or spending time on a project that is unrealistic. The process also offers the significant advantage that it involves the staff most affected by a change in managing it from the outset, and consequently makes the most of available knowledge and expertise. It also improves staff commitment to the change, and helps busy senior managers make balanced and informed decisions. The steps of this process are discussed below.

Setting up a change assessment working group

The first step of selecting change strategies is to identify an appropriate group of staff to examine the proposed change, generate some possible strategies, and make informed recommendations to senior managers or other decision makers.

A change assessment group should be small, for two reasons: first, small groups often get things done more quickly than larger groups; secondly, it is important not to commit too many resources at this investigative stage. Although there are no exact prescriptions for group size, studies and experience show that working groups are most efficient with no more than seven members, and often three or four will suffice. If the group sets up effective methods to consult those who would be affected by a proposed change, it is not necessary to include representatives of each affected area in the group itself.

Because it is important to keep the working group small, it is necessary to select group members carefully. While there is never a perfect group, it is always important to aim for the right balance of knowledge and perspectives. Ideally, a group should include:

- a member of staff who has a thorough knowledge of the area where the proposed change would take place
- staff with the necessary specialist knowledge required, such as systems staff or subject specialists
- staff from departments which would be particularly affected by the proposed change.

In addition, group members will require particular skills. Decision-making skills are very important, and the group will benefit from both analytical and intuitive styles. Skills in collecting, organising and analysing data are also useful. Also, as in most ventures, communication skills are vital, as the group must be able to consult effectively, and to present the results of the assessment clearly and concisely. This type of cross-departmental, multi-skilled group helps to ensure the widest possible view of the problem, and of the potential effects of any proposed change.

Naturally, not all libraries will have the necessary expertise available in-house, especially if the participative approach to managing change is a new way for them to work. If key skills or knowledge are lacking within the library, the group might decide to include users or other stakeholders who can contribute a valuable point of view, as well as necessary knowledge or skills. Another approach is to provide the change assessment group with means to build the necessary skills as they go along. For example, there are a number of books on project management, decision making and presenting information which offer guidelines which are useful to assessing change strategies. (See Further reading.)

Once the group is established, its first tasks are to make sure that all its members understand the steps involved in assessing change strategies, and to set down its remit. This remit should document:

- the problem or opportunity that needs to be investigated
- the information that needs to be gathered
- the people who would be affected by a proposed change and how they might best be consulted

- a realistic timetable for carrying out the change assessment.

When the group has agreed and written this remit, they should send it to relevant stakeholders, including senior managers and other decision makers, for comment and approval.

Clarifying the problem or opportunity

Once the remit has been approved by library managers, the group can proceed to the next stage of the process. This stage involves clarifying the problem or opportunity which is the trigger for the proposed change. This trigger, identified through environmental analysis or other review processes, might be an apparent problem, such as user complaints about a particular service, or it might be an opportunity, such as a chance to bid for funds. Realistically, the trigger might also be a change imposed by the library's parent organisation, such as a proposed organisational restructuring. All of these situations highlight gaps between the way things are at present and the way the library or its parent body would like them to be.

Often, a library's immediate reaction to identifying a trigger for change is to start looking for a strategy to solve the problem or close the gap. However, if we are to avoid costly mistakes, it is important to be clear about the nature of that problem or opportunity before we start to identify strategies. The purpose of this clarification stage is to:

- show that the problem or opportunity really exists
- define its boundaries
- understand its causes
- help to determine its importance.

Books on problem solving and decision making often refer to a useful rule, which states that problems are like icebergs: no matter how big they appear, 80% of them lies below the surface. (Pokras 1999, pp. 61–2.) Therefore, especially when situations are complex—as they often are in libraries—it is important to break down the problem or opportunity into its component parts in order to get at its root cause.

To get to the root of a problem or opportunity, it is necessary to gather and analyse some information. Naturally it is important to be objective in our methods, so that we avoid using information to prove our theories rather than to depict accurately the nature of the problem. Further, because time is valuable, it is important to think carefully about what information is needed, so that we gather only what is required. For example, if the trigger for a proposed change is user complaints about slow interlibrary loans, we would need to gather the following information:

- *The number of user complaints.* Were there many complaints from a number of users, or only a few complaints from two or three vociferous users?

- *When were the complaints received?* Did they occur regularly over a long period of time, or only at particular times?
- *What is the turnaround time for inter-loan requests?* Is it fairly constant, or is turnaround faster at some periods than others?

Once this information has been gathered and examined, it is possible to see what else we need to know. For instance, if it is apparent that inter-loan turnaround time is fairly constant, and that user complaints occur regularly over a long period, we might find it useful to get some information from other libraries, so that we could compare our turnaround time with theirs. This would tell us whether we are, in fact, slower than others, which would require us to examine our procedures, or if our speed is about the same, which would indicate issues about differences in user needs and expectations.

On the other hand, using the same example, suppose that our data showed that inter-library loan turnaround time was slower at some periods than others, and that user complaints coincided with those slower times. We would then need to ascertain what else was going on at those times which caused inter-library loans to slow down. This example is elaborated further in Figure 3 below.

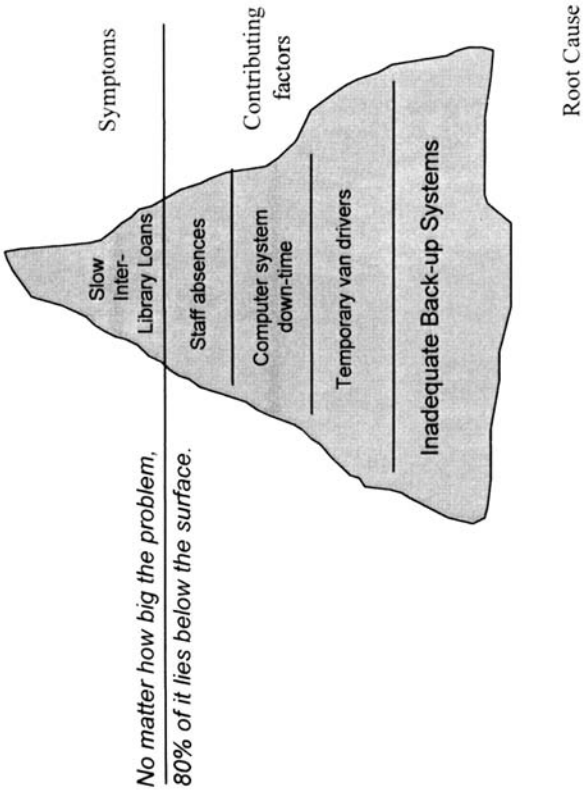

Figure 3—Clarifying the problem

The figure shows that the symptoms of the slow inter-library loan problem are in fact the tip of the iceberg. As we gather more data about the problem, we begin to understand the causes in more detail. The lower levels of the iceberg show factors which contribute to the problem: staff absences and computer-system down time. The root of the problem is shown at the base of the iceberg. That is, the real problem is not slow inter-library loans, as it originally appeared. Rather, the problem is inadequate back-up systems for inter-library loans. Circumstances like this one demonstrate that careful analysis of a situation saves time by ensuring that we are addressing the right issues.

Sometimes, of course, the root of a problem is more complex. There are a number of tools and techniques that can help us to understand and represent these complex situations, and to determine which variables are most significant. (Some of these tools are described in Adair 1985, Drummond 1996, Leigh 1983 and Pokras 1999.) One tool for representing the multiple causes of a problem is a Pareto Chart, shown in Figure 4 below.

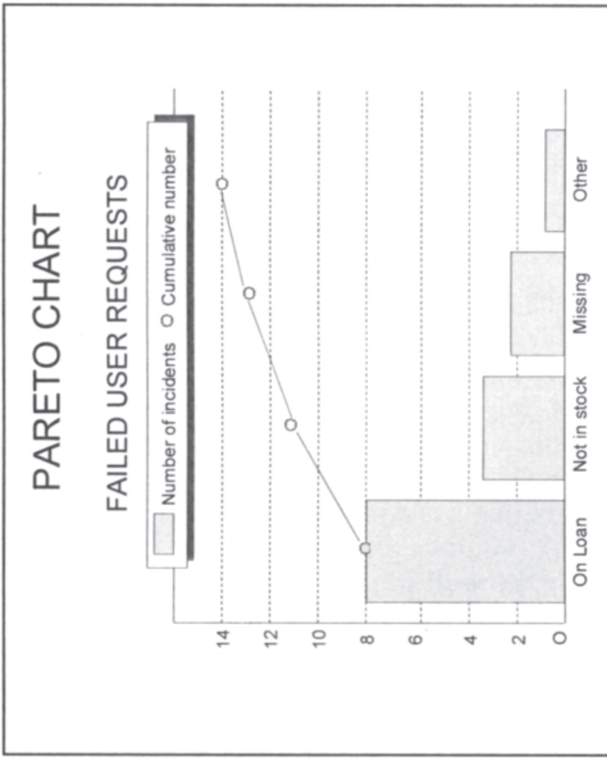

Figure 4—Pareto Chart

Before creating such a chart, it is necessary to collect some information about the problem over a period of time. The example above shows the reasons which users reported for failing to find library materials they need. While this example is fairly simple, it demonstrates the way in which a Pareto chart can be used to represent data in a way that highlights the most significant causes of a complex problem.

If the trigger for change is an opportunity, rather than a problem in the strict sense, it is necessary to follow the same process to determine what exactly would fill the gap between the situation now and the desired future state. For example, if the library had an opportunity to bid for funds to increase space, it would be necessary to gather some information about existing space needs, estimates of future needs and priorities, resources available, constraints such as funding authority regulations, and so forth.

At the end of the process of clarifying a problem or opportunity, it should be possible to state precisely what is needed to solve the problem or take full advantage of the opportunity. This precise statement can help us to:

- reduce complex problems to a series of smaller problems
- focus on key aspects of the situation
- help us communicate the situation to our stakeholders.

Generating alternative strategies

Once the change assessment group has defined the problem or opportunity precisely, it needs to turn its attention to generating a range of strategies for achieving the desired outcomes. This step is the creative part of the change assessment process, where intuition and the 'right brain' approach are most useful.

The aim at this stage is to generate as many ideas as possible, within an agreed time scale, in order to have the best chance of coming up with an ideal strategy. At this stage, the number of ideas is more important than the quality, because even impractical ideas have useful elements. It is also true that one idea, even an apparently ridiculous one, can trigger further ideas which can lead to novel and practical solutions.

The idea generation process may not be as easy as it sounds. Most of us have been trained to think analytically, and it can be difficult to free our minds from a critical approach. However, there are a number of tools that can help us. For example, the brainstorming technique is ideal for this purpose, as it is designed to help us focus on a particular issue, circumvent our critical faculties, and take advantage of the mind's natural tendency to make connections.

Another method to help us generate ideas is to ask each member of the group to write down as many strategies as they can think of in four minutes; or, alternatively, to generate as long a list as possible in forty-eight hours. Whichever method is selected, there are a few rules to help us get the best—that is, the largest number of—results from this process. These rules are:

- do not rule out any idea at this stage, no matter how impractical it sounds
- use past experience. Do not say 'we tried that before and it didn't work'. Circumstances have changed. Look at the idea again, or at elements of it, and let it trigger further associations
- build on other people's ideas. Instead of looking for their drawbacks, spot their strengths, and develop them
- bring as many ideas as possible into conjunction. Because our minds naturally make connections between one idea and another, the more ideas we expose ourselves to, the better our chance of hitting on a creative strategy. Reading, listening to other people with ideas and observing similar situations can all be helpful during this process
- allow adequate time. It is helpful to give the group time to generate ideas together, and also to let people go away afterwards and stop thinking for a day or two. Often, it is when we have stopped thinking about the problem that our subconscious minds produce their best solutions.

Selecting the best strategy

At the end of the idea generation stage, the change assessment group will have a list of possible change strategies. The next step is to select the one which is most appropriate. At this point, the group's analytical abilities come to the fore, while they establish the criteria for selecting the best strategy, and compare each of the options against these criteria.

To do this effectively, it is important to understand:

- results required
- resources available
- constraints which exist.

For example, suppose the library has an opportunity to bid for funds to increase space. From data gathered during the clarification stage, it is clear that:

- *The result required* is space to store 12,000 volumes. If those volumes are stored in their present format, it would require approximately 300 metres of shelving. It would also be desirable to improve storage conditions, and to provide this storage facility within seven kilometres of the library.
- *The resources available,* should the bid be successful, are £2.5 million.
- *The constraints* are that funds must be spent within two years, and that all building projects must be approved by the local council.

Strategy Selection Matrix

Options to consider	Build new library	Extend existing library	Build storage facility	Buy storage facility	Rent storage facility	Alternate storage medium
Essential features						
Maximum capital of £2.5 M						
Completed in 2 years						
Meet council approval						
Accommodate 12000 volumes (300 m)						
Desirable features						
Completed in 1 year						
Improve storage conditions						
Allow expansion/flexibility						
Within 7 km of library						

Figure 5—Decision Matrix

Now the group must compare each of the possible strategies generated against these criteria. Once again, there are tools which can be helpful when situations are complex, or there are a number of options.

Figure 5 above shows a decision matrix which can help us select the best change strategy. Using the space bid example, this matrix lists the essential and desirable criteria down the left side of the grid, with the optional strategies being considered across the top. While the example depicted is fairly straight-forward, it demonstrates how a matrix can help us consider a decision with a number of variables. As long as all the variables have been considered and put into the matrix, it is a simple matter to tick the appropriate boxes. While this method alone is not enough to make the decision, it can help us to consider the options by eliminating any which do not meet the essential criteria, and by showing which of those remaining has the greatest number of desirable features.

While decision matrices and other tools can help us, it is important to remember that decision making is not as easy as ticking boxes. We must also use logic and intuition to make sound decisions. Often, for example, when we ascertain which option has the most ticks on a matrix, our intuition tells us that it is not in fact the best choice. The message here is that tools are only tools. If the apparently logical choice does not 'feel right', this may tell us that we have not documented the evidence accurately, or that we need to give greater weight to one variable than to another. If we are to select the best strategies for change, we must use a range of tools and methods, and make the most of both analytical and intuitive processes.

Understanding implications and risks

Nearly all significant changes have effects which go beyond the area where the change takes place. Additionally, because a change always involves uncertainty, there will inevitably be risks associated with it. For these reasons, once the change assessment group has identified one or more strategies which appear to be appropriate, they must look at the knock-on effects of those strategies, and assess the risks associated with them.

In considering the potential effects of a change strategy, there are several issues which should be addressed. Firstly, it is important to look back at the environmental context for the change to ensure that:

- conditions have not changed in a way that affects the area being investigated or the desired outcomes of the strategy
- the proposed strategy is consistent with the library's values, mission and aims
- the strategy will not adversely affect other changes or actions taking place in the organisation.

Secondly, it is important to take into account any knock-on costs of a proposed strategy, as well as the direct costs which have already been identified. For example, a strategy might require staff time not only from the department affected, but from other departments. There may also be costs involved in training staff to use the proposed system or procedure.

It is also necessary to assess the risks associated with the change strategy. Because all changes have an element of risk, the group needs to know two things about those risks: how likely they are to occur, and how severe their effects would be. For example, if the library is bidding for funds to increase space, but its parent organisation is considering moving its premises, the change assessment group might feel that spending time and money on a new building is too high a risk. Therefore, they may feel that another one of the possible strategies for increasing space is preferable.

Deciding change priorities: the proposed change in context

Once the group has added in the knock-on costs and assessed the risks of potential strategies, they are in a position to decide which of these strategies is the most appropriate. Sometimes this decision is straightforward, because one strategy clearly offers more advantages and fewer risks than the others. Many times, however, decisions are complex, and the final recommendation may be a matter of judgment. In these circumstances, the group may have differences of opinion about which is the best strategy to recommend. For this reason, it is a good idea to have an agreement in advance about how the group will reach its final decision.

For example, the group may agree to choose its final recommendation by:

- consensus
- majority vote
- the group leader deciding.

The final task of the change assessment group is to present its findings and recommend a strategy to senior managers. The recommendation may not always be for a change to take place. In the course of its investigations, the group may decide that a change is too high-risk or too costly, and may recommend that the library does nothing. The group may also recommend that the library continues to monitor the situation before looking at possible strategies again later. In many cases, however—including those in which the trigger was a change proposed by the parent body—the group will recommend that a specific change take place. Whichever option they agree, the group must present this recommendation to senior managers in a concisely written report which includes:

- a definition of the problem or opportunity
- the range of change strategies considered
- the criteria used to make the selection
- the strategy proposed
- the actions required to implement the strategy
- the time required to implement the strategy
- costs, associated risks and knock-on effects.

When the group has completed a draft of this report, they may find it useful to ask other staff they have consulted to check it for logic, accuracy and completeness, before submitting it to senior managers.

The last activity in the strategy selection process belongs to senior library managers or other decision-makers. Using the report presented by the change assessment group, managers are in a position to evaluate the proposed change in the context of other changes also needed within the library as well as ongoing work. They are thus able to make an informed decision to accept, reject or defer the proposed change strategy. Even if a proposed change is deferred or rejected, the change assessment process, as part of the strategic approach generally, can benefit the library by:

- helping busy library managers to make informed decisions
- ensuring that proposed changes are prioritised effectively in the context of other pressures
- saving time and money by ensuring that changes undertaken are realistic
- building staff skills, such as decision making and team skills, that are valuable in all stages of the change process
- involving or consulting the people who are most affected by a change.

5. Planning and Implementing Change Projects

Having agreed that a change should take place, the library is ready to begin the planning and implementation processes.

Many of the principles for managing the continuous process of change, and indeed for good management generally, also apply to managing a change project. For instance, it is important to keep in mind the strategic context for a specific change, including the continually changing environment, and the mission, values and aims of the library and its parent organisation. It is also vital to make sure that everyone affected by the change is informed and involved throughout the project.

In a number of ways, however, managing a specific change project is different from managing regular processes. Firstly, unlike ongoing processes, a change project has an end. It is important to set realistic project deadlines and stick to them. Projects which drag on not only waste time and resources, but prolong the period of uncertainty and lower staff morale.

Secondly, change projects are usually carried out alongside regular work and other projects. It is important to plan and coordinate a project well so that it causes minimal disruption and does not overburden staff or other resources.

Thirdly, a change project often cuts across management structures. That is, staff may be expected to work for the person in charge of a project as well as for their regular line managers. Therefore, roles and responsibilities must be clear to everyone, and sound communication methods must be established to prevent conflict or confusion.

For all these reasons effective management of specific changes relies on existing systems and structures within the library, but also requires us to establish an additional set of methods and processes specific to the change project. These processes include:

- clarifying roles and responsibilities
- communication and involvement
- sustaining the momentum
- review and continual development.

Clarifying roles and responsibilities

An important step in managing change projects is ensuring that everyone affected understands what is expected of them, and what they can expect of others. Naturally, many of the activities that people are expected to carry out will depend on the nature of the project. These activities must be carefully defined by change project managers, and understood by everyone involved in the change. There are other roles and responsibilities which are important in all change projects. These roles are outlined below.

Senior managers

Once senior library managers or other decision-makers have agreed that a change project should go ahead, they can help to ensure that the project is managed well by carrying out a number of subsequent actions.

Select a change project 'sponsor'

If there are several senior library managers or decision-makers, it can simplify communication to identify one of these managers to be the single point of contact for, or 'sponsor' of, the change project. This sponsor can provide a link between the staff working on the change project and other senior managers or decision-makers, including clients or funding bodies for externally-funded projects.

Select a change project manager

Unless senior managers plan to manage the change project themselves, they need to select a member of staff to lead the planning and implementation of that project. Naturally it is important to select a change project manager who has some knowledge of the area in which the change will take place. It is even more important to ensure that the project manager has:

- sound interpersonal and communication skills
- leadership skills
- commitment to, and enthusiasm for, the change project.

Select or agree a change project team

As with change assessment, it is useful if the change itself is led and managed by a cross-departmental group, which includes staff from the area where the change will take place. Working with the project manager, senior managers need to select or approve this group. For purposes of continuity, it can be helpful to include members of the change assessment group, who will already have some knowledge of the actions required to implement the proposed change and a personal stake in implementing it successfully.

Like change assessment groups, project teams must remain a manageable size, while including necessary knowledge and skills. Because change projects usually require more time, tasks and teamwork than change assessments, project team members must have good time management and team skills, in addition to the skills required in change assessment groups.

Give authority to the change project manager

After senior managers have selected a change project manager, everyone needs to know that that person is now responsible for planning and implementing the change. If the project sponsor announces this information to all those affected, it demonstrates that senior management has confidence in the project manager's abilities.

It can also be useful at this stage to clarify where responsibility for subsequent decision making lies. During the course of a change project, there will inevitably be decisions that must be taken. An agreement about whether these decisions should be made by the change project manager, by the project team, by the senior manager, or by consultative or participative processes, can prevent later confusion and conflict.

Provide continuing support for the change project manager

The responsibilities of senior managers do not stop when they delegate authority to the change project manager. During the course of the change, the project manager will be managing workflows, resources and deadlines, and at the same time coping with the emotions of team members and other staff as they experience the inevitable psychological effects of change. Change project managers are not exempt from these feelings themselves. For these reasons, it is important for senior managers to provide continuing support for the change project manager and the team by:

- maintaining a strategic overview of the change in the context of the organisation as a whole and the external environment
- keeping the change project team informed of any changes in the environment that might affect the project
- meeting the change project manager regularly to discuss progress or problems
- keeping the library's parent organisation informed of project progress and successes
- providing promised resources

- being prepared to step in when requested to give advice, lend weight to decisions or help resolve conflict
- recognising and rewarding the work and achievements of the project leader and the team.

The change project manager

The change project manager is the person primarily responsible for the successful planning, implementation and review of the change. These responsibilities are discussed below.

Team-building

The first task of the change project manager is to select the project team, as discussed above. Once that team is selected, the project manager must ensure that all team members understand and agree:

- the context for, and objectives of, the change project
- the benefits and risks of the change
- their own tasks.

The effectiveness of the change project team is crucial to the successful planning and implementation of the change. Therefore, team building is a primary role of the project manager. Team-building includes:

- establishing open and effective communication within the team
- supporting team members when they experience the psychological effects of change by listening

to their concerns, offering reassurance, and managing team conflict positively
- understanding and making the best of team members' skills and strengths
- recognising and rewarding team members' achievements.

Detailed planning

Once the change project team is formed, the project manager's role is to lead them in planning the change project in detail. Good planning is vital to the success of a change project, so it is important to take the time to complete the planning stage before beginning to implement the change. Detailed project planning includes:

- gathering data and consulting those involved to ensure that the team understands the existing system as well as future needs
- defining the work which must be completed to implement the change, and breaking that work down into the individual tasks involved
- identifying the resources needed, including staff, equipment and space
- identifying the actual cost of these resources
- timetabling activities realistically, and preparing a detailed project schedule
- ensuring that everyone involved in the project understands the activities they and the staff they manage must carry out
- planning project communication methods and processes.

There are many excellent books on project management which describe tools and techniques for carrying out these and other project planning activities. (See Further reading, particularly Black 1996, Field 1998 and Reiss 1992.) These project management tools and techniques are invaluable for change managers in libraries and information services.

In planning change project activities, it is important to remember activities which are not directly associated with implementing the specific change, but which are required for managing the change process itself. For example, it is important to allow staff time to get to grips with a new way of working and to develop new behaviour and attitudes as well as new work skills. Activities such as staff training and discussion need not extend the duration of the change project, but should be accounted for along with project-specific activities.

The change project manager must also be aware of other changes taking place within the library, as well as normal peaks and troughs in the library's ongoing work. An essential part of the change manager's role is negotiating with other project leaders and line managers for staff time and other necessary resources. A good change project manager will look for opportunities to cooperate and share resources whenever possible. It is also helpful to document verbal agreements with other managers, and to keep them informed of progress and changes in the project schedule which involve their staff.

The result of the planning process will be a written plan, compiled by the change project manager in liaison with the project team. This plan should include:

- a definition of the change project, which outlines its aims, objectives, scope, benefits and constraints
- a change project schedule, showing the overall picture of the change, including the duration of each activity
- a list of resources required and their cost
- a reporting schedule, showing lines of communication and dates of meetings or reports
- a change project management structure, clarifying roles and lines of communication for everyone who is involved in the project.

In complex or externally-funded projects, there may be other planning documents, such as financial or payment schedules.

This written plan will provide the means to keep the change project on schedule, to clarify roles and responsibilities and to inform everyone who is affected by the planned change. While the change project will inevitably evolve, the project manager must ensure that the plan is as accurate, complete and realistic as possible before beginning to implement the change.

Communication and coordination

During the planning and implementation of a change project, the project manager is the hub of all communication and coordination activities. During planning stages, this communication involves consulting everyone who would be affected by the change, in order to elicit information, opinions and concerns.

Throughout the implementation of the change, the project manager is responsible for keeping the project on schedule and within budget, and for ensuring that the change project itself causes minimal disruption to other library activities. This requires the project manager to:

- establish effective procedures for monitoring activities, including mechanisms which project participants can use to report on the progress of individual tasks
- monitor the environment continually, in liaison with senior managers, to identify circumstances which Will have an effect on the change project or its outcome
- ensure that everyone affected is informed of the project's progress as a whole, and that people are able to express concerns, put forward suggestions and seek reassurance.

Additionally, if the project is a major one, it is a good idea to promote the change within the parent organisation and to other users, highlighting successes and achievements.

Communication methods for change projects will be discussed in subsequent pages.

Completion and review

The change project manager's role does not end when the project is completed.

Firstly, it is often the case that, in spite of careful planning, a few minor tasks remain after the project is essentially finished. For example, after a major building or reorganisation project, there are often a few crates which remain unpacked and stacked in a corner. While minor, these project left-overs can make people feel that the change is not quite over. It is the project manager's job to make sure that every task is fully completed, and that reminders of the disruption are cleared away.

Secondly, it is important to review the change process and its outcome at the end of the project. It is the change project manager's role to lead this review process, involving the team and others who were involved. The review process will be discussed further in subsequent pages.

The change project team

While the project manager is overseeing the change, the change project team will be carrying out much of the work. In addition to completing project-specific tasks to deadlines, the work of the team includes:

- participating in project team meetings
- gathering and compiling information
- reporting to the change project manager
- keeping their line managers informed about work in progress
- generating ideas and helping to solve any problems which arise
- representing the project to their colleagues and users

- helping colleagues cope with the effects of change
- developing their own change and work skills.

In a large change project, team members may also oversee tasks carried out by other participants, or be responsible for liaison with particular stakeholders.

It is the responsibility of change project team members to be clear about their own tasks. For example, if team members are responsible for representing other staff, they must be clear what this representation entails. It is a good idea to discuss and clarify with the project manager during the project planning stage:

- whom, exactly, they represent
- what facts or opinions they are expected to gather
- how they might best gather this information objectively.

Change project participants

In many change projects, people outside the project team will also be required to carry out actions to help to plan or implement the change. These participants may be library staff, staff in other departments of the parent organisation such as finance, computing or human resources, or external participants such as suppliers. It is the change project manager's role to make sure that these participants are clear about the tasks they must complete and deadlines to which they must work.

When change project participants are members of library staff, they must keep the project manager, and their line managers, informed about the status of their tasks, and any problems which arise. These staff can also help to ensure that the change is implemented smoothly by discussing their concerns and giving constructive feedback to the change project manager or project team members.

Others affected by the change

Major changes in a library or information service affect everyone who works in it. Even minor changes can have unexpected ramifications for staff and users outside the immediate area where the change takes place. The change project manager and team need to think very carefully about who might be affected, and have strategies to ensure that they are involved and informed appropriately. The people affected can include:

- line managers in the library or parent body
- other change project managers
- front-line staff who may need to represent the change to users
- key people in the parent organisation
- users.

Difficult people

Almost every organisation has its share of difficult people. Sometimes, these people have a great deal of influence over other staff, not necessarily because of their position in the staff structure, but because of other factors, such as their knowledge and experience, or simply the force of their personalities.

In managing a change, it is not realistic to pretend difficult people do not exist. It is important for project managers to take the time to elicit the views and listen to the concerns of these influential people, who may have helpful suggestions or legitimate fears which can be taken into account. Discussions may also suggest ways in which the project manager can win their support for the change. It is best, when possible, to involve difficult people in a way which uses their influence in a constructive way.

Sometimes, however, influential people are adverse to anything new. When this is the case, these individuals have the potential to make the change more difficult for others by spreading fears or negative messages to more vulnerable staff. In these circumstances, it can be helpful for a project manager to think of difficult people as a potential risk to a successful change project. That is, think about how likely these individuals are to have a negative effect on the change process, and how serious that effect might be. If the risk is high, it might be worth the project manager's time to create a strategy for dealing with the difficult people during the change project. There are several possible elements to such strategies, which include:

- attempting to win them around by offering them incentives and ensuring that they will benefit in some way from the change

- involving them in change-related activities that suit their skills and preferences
- distracting them by keeping them occupied with tasks that are important but unrelated to the change
- providing a safe outlet where they can express potentially negative views without upsetting vulnerable staff
- using peer-pressure and the more formal influence of their line managers to encourage their constructive behaviour
- monitoring their actions with the help of their line managers, and giving them constructive feedback on its effect.

Stakeholder maps

Because roles and relationships within a change project can be complex, it can be helpful to use lists or other tools, such as stakeholder maps, to ensure that no one is overlooked in the crucial communication and consultation processes. An example of a stakeholder map is shown in Figure 6 below.

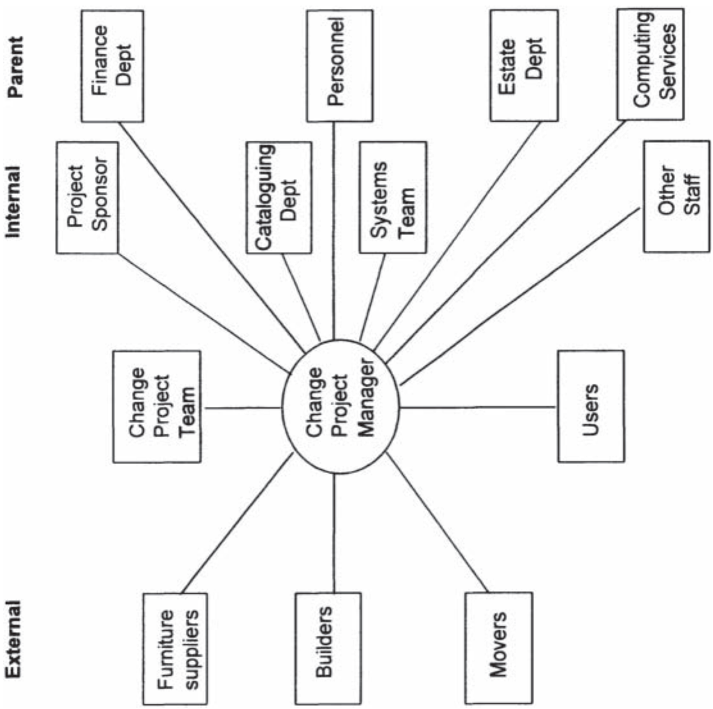

Figure 6—Stakeholder map for a library extension project

Communication and involvement

Communication is arguably the most important factor in managing a change project successfully. During a change, the library will rely on existing communication systems and structures, and will also require additional methods to cope with the special circumstances and cross-departmental structures of the change project.

Designing and overseeing project communication methods is primarily the task of the change project manager but, like all communication in organisations, it is successful only if everyone accepts responsibility for making it work, and for giving prompt and constructive feedback when it does not.

In a change project, there are four essential types of communication. These are:

- communication within the change project team
- dissemination of information from the change project team to all stakeholders
- dissemination of information from stakeholders to the change project team
- open discussion of issues and concerns.

Communication within the change project team

There are a number of practical things that change project managers can do to help the project team communicate effectively.

Project team meetings

Team meetings should be set up in advance, early in the change project, when it is easier to find dates on which busy team members can attend. Each team meeting might include:

- a review of minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising
- a briefing from the project manager, including an overview of the project's progress and any other information that might affect the project
- updates on team members' actions and work in progress
- discussion of potential problems and concerns
- a summary of any decisions taken and actions required.

It is also important to document all decisions taken, as well as subsequent actions required, in team meeting minutes. These minutes, or appropriate sections of them, might also be circulated to other stakeholders for information.

Open discussion and creative conflict

It is the change project manager's role to ensure that every member of the team is able to contribute to project planning and decision making, and to express his or her ideas and concerns openly. Even in a well-managed group, however, some conflict is likely during a major change. This conflict can be healthy if it is managed well. A good project leader can facilitate open, productive discussion and creative conflict by:

- allowing sufficient time for discussion in team meetings
- setting up other methods, such as e-mail groups or online discussion boards, for discussion between meetings
- ensuring that each team member has a chance to contribute to discussions
- asking each team member to justify his or her point of view when there is disagreement
- listening carefully, asking the right questions and summarising discussions to clarify points and ensure general understanding.

It is also a good idea to agree at the outset how project team decisions will be reached if consensus is not possible. That is, as in change assessment groups, the team should agree whether the final decision should be reached by majority vote within the team, by the project manager or by stakeholders outside the team.

Reviews

Because team communication is crucial to the success of a change project, it is good practice to hold regular reviews which examine how well communication is working and how it could be improved. It can be useful to invite an outside observer to a team meeting, and to ask for his or her constructive feedback about the team's methods and processes.

Information from the change project team to stakeholders

At the change project planning stage, the project manager and the team need to think carefully about the information which stakeholders will require from them, and to develop strategies for disseminating that information appropriately. Using a stakeholder map can help the team to remember everyone who needs information.

At the outset of a change project, everyone on the 'internal' side of a stakeholder map, including library users, will need information about:

- the context for the change
- the change project's aims, objectives and scope
- the benefits and risks of the change
- how the change will affect each stakeholder
- what role each person they will play in implementing the change
- the project timetable, including time scales for each activity.

Throughout the change project, all stakeholders will need information about the general progress of the project, and whether it is on schedule. Additionally, stakeholders will need information which is specific to their roles in the change. For example, in a library extension project, everyone will want to know whether the building work is on schedule, but the systems team will also want to know more specifically when they can start installing PCs in the new wing.

For this reason, the change project team should document at the beginning of the project:

- what information each stakeholder needs
- why they need the information
- when they need the information
- how they would prefer to receive the information.

Designing a communication chart can help the change project team to think about these issues. A sample communication chart is shown in Figure 7 below.

Who needs information?	What is their role?	What information do they need?	When do they need the information?	How do they want to receive it?
All library staff	To inform users as needed; to plan ongoing work	Project status; Date of move; Date of opening new wing.	Fortnightly	Email; quarterly briefing meetings
Project sponsor	Strategic overview; communication with senior management and parent org.	Project status	Monthly	Briefing meetings
Systems Team	Install network & PCs in new wing	Confirm installation dates	1 month before installation to commence	Email
Cataloguing Department	Change cat. locations & class. for stock to move	Confirmation of items to move	6 months prior to move	Lists
Estates dept.	Liaise with builders and architect	Status of library actions	Fortnightly	Email; monthly meetings
Libratech	Furniture suppliers	Delivery date	1 month prior to delivery	Post
Public	Library users	Opening date; details of reorganisation	At opening of library extension	Press releases; leaflets

Figure 7—Extract from a communication cnart for a library extension project

It is a good idea to use methods of communication which are already familiar to stakeholders. At the same time, however, a change project offers opportunities to supplement existing methods with new ones. For example, the project team might produce a special newsletter, either in printed or electronic form, to inform staff and users about the progress and achievements of a long-term project. Some libraries have also produced web pages on the organisation's intranet, which give background information about the project as well as regular status reports.

It is also important to consider the timing of communication carefully. There may be periods when most project activities are carried out behind the scenes, and there is nothing of note to report to stakeholders. At the same time, however, it is best to maintain regular communication, so that people are confident that they know what is going on. For this reason, it is better to give a progress report which says simply, 'project progressing on schedule', or 'no change since last report', than to say nothing.

Information from stakeholders to the change project team

During a change project, it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that the project team has the information it needs to plan and implement the change effectively. This information includes:

- *Information for planning the new system or service.* During the project planning stage, it is important for the team to understand the activities in the area to be changed. For example, if the project will automate an interlibrary loans service, the inter-library loans team must contribute accurate information about the existing manual system, such as how many users it serves, how long it takes to complete an inter-library loan request, peaks and troughs in demand, and so on.

- *Information for planning the change project timetable.* The project team needs information about other planned events and projects taking place in the library, so that it can identify and account for potential conflicts, and take advantage of opportunities to share work or resources. The team also needs information about the pre-existing commitments of project participants so that activities can be timetabled realistically.
- *Information for monitoring progress.* During the change project, all participants must report on the status of their project-related activities in relation to the project plan.
- *Information for review.* At the end of the project, the team needs information which will help to assess how well the new system or service is working, and to evaluate how well the project was managed.

The team can facilitate this information flow by setting up standard forms and procedures, such as time sheets for recording information about activities and costs, spreadsheets for collecting data and standard report formats.

Open discussion

Communication is not just about exchanging information. It is also necessary to discuss ideas openly in order to develop sound strategies and make good decisions, and to make sure that people have an opportunity to express their opinions and feelings. Yet this aspect of communication can be difficult to do well. Problems and feelings do not arise at predictable intervals, nor is it possible to create standard forms for gathering them. Therefore, it is important for the change project manager to have a strategy for eliciting this 'soft' information.

Eliciting 'soft' information

The best approach for encouraging staff to speak openly is to use a combination of methods, so that people can choose those which suit them best. For example, the project manager can hold open meetings for purposes of discussion, or allow adequate time for feedback in other types of meeting. It is important to include regular meetings for this purpose in the project timetable, but to be prepared to call additional ones as necessary.

In a major change which affects many people, an open meeting for everyone may not be possible. An alternative is to meet with representatives from each area affected. If the team chooses to use this option, it is important to ensure that representatives are clear about whom they are representing, how they should gather opinions objectively, and what they are expected to report.

In addition to meetings, there are a number of other methods which can help the project manager to elicit feelings and opinions. These methods include:

- *focus groups,* which enable interested people look at issues of concern and discuss possible actions
- *online discussion boards or e-mail discussion lists,* where people who prefer not to speak in public can contribute openly and, if appropriate, anonymously
- *confidential surveys or votes on particular issues*
- *'management by walkabout',* in which the change project manager or other managers pay informal visits to departments affected by the change and encourage people to talk about their concerns
- *'surgery hours'* for the project manager or other named contacts, which can reassure staff that key individuals will be available to hear their ideas and concerns.

The role of whingeing

It may sound surprising that there could be a place for whingeing in a proactive approach to managing change. However, it is important to be realistic. During a change, with its associated uncertainty, conflict and deadlines, it is likely that everyone will need a good whinge at some point. Whingeing can provide a useful outlet for feelings. However, it is necessary to establish some guidelines so that whingeing does not interfere with successful change. There are two essential rules for healthy whingeing:

1. *Have a safe outlet.* Do not whinge where the feelings expressed can influence or upset vulnerable staff, or those who may not understand the situation in context. Find people who understand the value and the risks of a good whinge, and set up a support group.
2. *Know a whinge for what it is.* Feel free to say what you like, but recognise that while whingeing might make you feel better, it won't move things forward. Do not confuse whingeing with giving constructive feedback.

Giving constructive feedback

It is the responsibility of all staff affected by a change to give constructive feedback to the project team about the change project and its outcome. To be constructive, feedback must be accurate, specific and objective, even when it is about feelings. For example, if people are unhappy about an aspect of a change, the project manager needs to know who exactly is unhappy, what they are unhappy about, what the root of the problem is, and what, if anything, can be done to correct it. Constructive feedback facilitates solutions to problems.

Sustaining the momentum

In spite of excellent planning, change projects can drag in the middle or bog down altogether if they are not carefully monitored and managed. It is the role of the change project manager, in liaison with senior library managers, to ensure that these costly and demoralising delays are avoided. Sustaining project momentum involves:

- preventing project lag
- coping if things go wrong.

Preventing project lag

Some suggestions for preventing project lag and maintaining good staff morale are described below.

- *Protect the shape of the project.* One of the common reasons why change projects fall behind schedule is that the project is allowed to change shape during its implementation. While it can be tempting to add small, related ‘extras’ to a project under way, it is important to recognise that *any* changes to a project will require additional time and resources. Therefore, before adding those extras, it is important for the project manager, in liaison with the project sponsor, to weigh up the benefits of the additions against increased costs and delays. If changes are agreed, it is also important to consult stakeholders about the proposed redefinition of the project.
- *Ensure sufficient resources.* It is the project sponsor’s responsibility to make sure that promised resources are delivered on time.
- *Chase progress continually.* It is the role of the change project manager to stay informed of the status of all project activities, and to ensure that all participants carry out their tasks within the agreed time scale.
- *Keep a high profile.* During a lengthy change, it is important to keep the project at the forefront of people’s minds. In addition to providing regular

updates on progress, the change project manager can help to portray an image of success by promoting interim achievements and project benefits.

- *Maintain enthusiasm.* The attitude and behaviour of the project manager and the team have an effect on stakeholders' confidence in the project. Therefore it is important for the team, and particularly the project manager, to demonstrate faith in and commitment to the project.
- *Maintain credibility.* While it is important to portray a positive view of the change, it is also necessary for the project manager to be honest from the outset about risks and any negative effects of the change. Similarly, if unexpected problems arise during project implementation, the project manager must be open about them. The best approach for maintaining both credibility and staff morale is to present problems with possible solutions, and to surround negative facts with positive ones.
- *Reinforce desired behaviour.* Many change projects require staff to behave or work in new ways. Therefore library managers must reinforce this behaviour by providing appropriate support and incentives, such as training and development activities, adequate time and equipment, appropriate working conditions, and recognition of progress and achievements of groups and individuals.

Coping if things go wrong

A change project is, by its nature, unique. Even the best project plans are based on estimates rather than certainty. Therefore, even a well-planned project can have unpleasant surprises. However, while it is impossible to predict everything which could go wrong, it is possible to be aware of some circumstances which commonly cause projects to flounder, and to prepare some strategies for coping if these problems occur.

There are two kinds of problem common in change projects: time and money problems, and people problems. As a rule, books and courses on project management concentrate on strategies for coping with time and money problems. These strategies, like many project management techniques, are highly relevant to library change projects. (See, for example, Black 1996.) Here we will concentrate on managing people problems. Some of these problems, and some practical suggestions for solving them, are described below.

Negative feelings and conflict

As we have seen, some negative feelings are inevitable during a transition, and some conflict is likely. While conflict can be a healthy way to relieve feelings and move things forward, there is always a danger that negative feelings can get out of hand if they are not managed effectively. Therefore, change managers need to be continually sensitive to the feelings of staff affected by a change, and to take action as soon as negative feelings become apparent.

The first step of managing conflict and negative feelings is to allow them to surface. Although it is unpleasant to face disagreement, it is a mistake to stifle it.

The second step to managing negative feelings is to understand the reasons for them. This will require the change project manager or project team members to listen carefully to the staff involved, and to analyse the situation in order to find its root cause, using the processes described in Chapter 4. Although it can be difficult to find time in the middle of a change project, acknowledging the feelings of those involved is crucial to the success of the change project and to staff attitudes about change generally.

Sometimes the cause of conflict is a project-specific issue. Often, however, conflict and negative feelings arise from more general causes, such as fear of uncertainty and loss, or personality conflicts between project participants. These issues must also be acknowledged and addressed by the change project manager, in liaison with senior library managers or other decision-makers.

When staff fear uncertainty and potential loss, change managers can often reassure those staff honestly that their fears are not justified. Realistically, however, necessary changes do sometimes result in a loss for individuals. For example, if a library changes its service priorities in response to environmental pressures, some staff may be required to carry out new tasks which they find less satisfying than their previous responsibilities. In these circumstances, it is important for change managers to discuss the situation with those affected, and to think creatively in order to identify a range of possible compensations and incentives.

When the cause of conflict appears to be the result of personality clashes, the change project manager can help to resolve the problems by changing the make-up of the group. For example, if a project team is unable to agree, and tensions are impeding their progress, outside observers or new team members can sometimes contribute a new perspective which helps to move things forward.

Group think

Too little conflict in groups can be as dangerous as too much. Sometimes key groups such as change project teams get on so well that they do not want to jeopardise their relationship by disagreeing with each other or raising unpleasant problems. This situation results in a failure to appraise situations objectively, and leads to poor decisions. Management writer Charles Handy calls this condition 'group think.' (Handy 1986, pp. 169–70.) To avoid group think, it is important to encourage working groups to be self-critical, and, in a long-term project, to change their membership occasionally, or to bring in outside observers on a regular basis.

High staff turnover

Some staff turnover is normal and healthy during periods of change. However, when a number of change project participants leave in the middle of the project, it creates a lack of continuity which can cause problems or delays. While it is not possible or desirable to prevent staff turnover, it is possible to minimise the associated risks.

The best way to ensure that staff turnover does not cause problems is to establish processes at the outset which will enable new participants to 'hit the ground running' when they join the project. For example, it can be helpful to:

- keep all the change project documents in one place, so that new participants will have quick access to the project plan, stakeholder maps, progress reports and so on
- set up a briefing meeting to welcome new participants and ensure that they are familiar with the project's context, objectives and activities
- encourage the project team to welcome observers and outside contributors throughout the project, so that they will be used to integrating new views and ideas
- appoint project team members to be a mentors for new participants while they become familiar with the project and the work of the group.

The change project manager can also help to smooth the transition for new staff by meeting with their line managers to clarify relationships and prevent unnecessary conflicts in responsibilities.

Multiple problems

Occasionally, one hears about a change project where everything that can go wrong, does go wrong. If the problems become so great that the project is threatened with total failure, or if the costs begin to outweigh the benefits, the best thing to do is to stop work and go back to the beginning. That is, when possible failure threatens:

- review the original objectives of the change project
- redefine the work that must be completed to achieve those objectives
- identify the resources required to complete this work
- identify the costs of those resources
- estimate the time required to complete necessary tasks
- reassess associated risks and knock-on effects.

The result of this process will be a new project definition. Using this definition, the project team, in consultation with senior managers and other stakeholders, can decide whether it is realistic and worthwhile to carry out the project.

Review and continual development

When a change has been successfully completed, the final stage of the implementation process is to review the change project and its outcomes. This review should assess the results of the project, in relation to its stated objectives and in context of the library's overall aims and values. A review of project outcomes must also take into account knock-on effects of the project, including further action required to address them.

It is also important in reviewing a change to give all staff a chance to offer constructive feedback on the change project itself, identifying the processes which went well, and those which could be improved in future changes. In order to manage change well, library staff at all levels must be:

- able to understand and evaluate specific changes in the context of continual, strategic change
- able to learn from experience
- willing to continually develop new skills and techniques for managing new circumstances.

6. Knowledge, Skills and Qualities of Successful Change Managers

The preceding chapters of this guide have referred to the knowledge, skills and qualities which help librarians in all sectors and at all levels to manage change well. This chapter provides a summary and overview of those attributes.

Knowledge

Successful change managers understand the pressures for change and the context in which change must be managed. This understanding requires knowledge of:

- the effects which change has on organisations and individuals, including effects on self-esteem and performance
- facts about the library's external environment, including trends in the library and information science sector, the library's own market, and the world at large
- facts about the library's parent organisation,

including its aims and objectives, sources of funding, staff structures, and financial position

- facts about the library or information service itself, including its values, mission, aims and objectives, strengths and weaknesses, and relationship with its parent organisation
- the conditions which help to ensure successful change in libraries, including flexible staff structures, effective human resource systems and change-oriented cultures
- tools and techniques, including methods for environmental analysis, planning, decision making, managing projects, self-development and coping with stress.

Abilities and skills

In order to manage change well, librarians must have a number of innate abilities and continually developing skills. These abilities and skills include:

- an ability to communicate effectively and to develop skills in:
  - listening actively
  - presenting information orally and in writing
  - negotiating with tact and diplomacy
  - working in groups
  - participating in meetings
  - giving constructive feedback objectively, accurately and succinctly

- an ability to make decisions using both logic and intuition. Specific decision making skills include:
  – gathering and analysing data
  – generating ideas
  – assessing risks.

In addition to the skills listed above, staff who manage change projects must have:

- team-building skills
- project management skills
- time management skills
- an ability to manage conflict
- an ability to summarise ideas and test assumptions.

Personal qualities

As well as knowledge and abilities, successful change managers have personal qualities that help them manage change effectively. These qualities include:

- continuing sensitivity to events, circumstances and feelings
- adaptability, including a willingness to switch from one activity to another and to take risks
- proactivity, which requires an ability to understand the broad context for change, and a willingness to take initiative and find a way forward

- creativity, which enables them to respond in new ways to changing circumstances
- emotional resilience, including an ability to cope with uncertainty, pressure, deadlines, conflict and complexity
- a positive attitude towards self-development
- self-knowledge and an understanding of personal values, strengths and weaknesses and learning styles.

7. Further Reading

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Developing a Records Management Program

Disaster Planning for Library and Information Services

Effective Financial Planning for Library and Information Services

Email for Library and Information Professionals

Evaluation of Library and Information Services

How to Market Your Library Service Effectively

How to Promote Your Web Site Effectively

Information Resources Selection

Installing a Local Area Network

The Internet for Library and Information Service Professionals

Intranets and Push Technology: Creating an Information-Sharing Environment

Job Descriptions for the Information Profession

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Preparing a Guide to Your Library and Information Service

Project Management for Library and Information Service Professionals

Researching for Business: Avoiding the 'Nice to Know' Trap

Strategic Planning for Library and Information Services

Teleworking for Library and Information Professionals

World Wide Web: How to Design and Construct Home Pages