Organization and Staff Renewal Using Assessment

GAIL V. OLTMANNS

ABSTRACT

A library that recognizes the need for and benefits of assessment of performance and service presents rewarding opportunities for staff to become more engaged in their work and to identify more strongly with the library's mission and goals. The process and results of both quantitative and qualitative assessment efforts offer possibilities for employees to develop new skills, take on new tasks, and embark on new jobs. Integrating organizational assessment activities into the library's routine helps the library to understand and more fully satisfy customer needs. It also encourages the library to anticipate future needs while remaining flexible enough to manage the organization's response to change easily and effectively.

INTRODUCTION

Libraries have used a number of tools and methods to assess organizational development, performance, and service quality. The Association of Research Libraries' annual statistics survey, LibQUAL+™, and other customer surveys, formal measures of organizational performance such as the Balanced Scorecard, and focus groups have been useful assessment tools. Most of the methods are formal and empirically based. There are also more qualitative and informal ways to assess the organization and make changes that improve the library. The University of Virginia Library has used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to assess organizational change and performance. This article discusses in particular the revitalization of staff members who seek out or are encouraged to take

on new responsibilities and reengineered jobs. An important outcome of any ongoing assessment is for the staff to become more deeply involved in organizational change and performance, to feel free to be innovative and creative in their approach to their work, and to feel more fulfilled and satisfied in their jobs.

What Is Organizational Assessment?

Organizational assessment is a process whereby a consultant, an outside group, or an internal, appointed person or task force examines the organizational structure and workings of the library. The focus may include performance of the organization as well as of the staff. The purpose may be to identify important issues by developing an understanding of the mission and goals of the organization. It should include an effort to become aware of the organizational culture and values; should determine how goals are set, communicated, and achieved; and should discover the barriers to success. The purpose of the assessment is to develop a plan that addresses issues and problems so that the organization will become more efficient, streamlined, productive, and service oriented. Another important result is that employees, through participation, will develop new skills and become more involved, self-motivated, and satisfied with their assigned work. They will learn to think more creatively about their work, take risks by initiating change, and be more receptive to new ideas. The plan might consist of changes or adjustments to the current organizational structure or could result in a major reorganization of the library.

Library employees should be given the opportunity to participate in the assessment of the library as well as the formulation of plans to change the culture and the structure. Employees who participate in some way are more likely to engage successfully in new ways of doing things. They will be less likely to be alienated by change. They will be less likely to feel that change has been imposed on them without considering their informed opinions and suggestions about the work that they take pride in doing.

Some questions to think about when considering the inclusion of staff are

- Should all staff be involved? In what ways?
- How should the process be structured: bottom-up, top-down, some combination?
- How should input that is not useful or helpful be handled?
- Who is responsible? Who will guide the process and follow up?
- Who will communicate throughout the process?
- Who will report and make recommendations?
- Who is responsible for implementing approved recommendations?
- Why do assessment?

Libraries must be responsive to the constantly changing technologi-

cal, political, economic, and social environments. Advances in technology have made it necessary for libraries to look seriously at how they perform traditional functions. Technology has also dramatically changed the way libraries provide service. Libraries have had to respond to these changes with new initiatives that meet the users' changing expectations for access to more online services and electronic media. Users are more computer literate, yet libraries must provide instruction in the use of the new technology to most users.

> Technologies . . . continue to change and evolve at an ever-intensifying pace. On the one hand, these technology changes enable new services and resources that allow libraries to better meet the service and resource needs of their customers. On the other hand, this continual cycle of adoption, change, and new and/or enhanced services and resources creates a number of challenges—including assessment challenges—for libraries." (Bertot and McClure, 2003, pp. 592–593)

The current political and economic environments require libraries to be able to justify their activities and funding to their larger constituencies—the university, or state government, for example. The rising costs of library materials and salaries for recruiting staff, along with the shortage of public funding and the difficulty of raising private funds, make it even more important for libraries to be able to demonstrate their contributions to their users. Issues involving copyright, licensing, freedom of information, privacy issues, and federal regulations regarding affirmative action, for example, all require vigilance and accurate enforcement and reporting. Bertot and McClure make a strong case for libraries to assess performance in order to respond to requests for justifications. They also discuss a number of reasons for reporting widely the results of these assessments. Among the reasons is the need for libraries to "articulate the importance of and need for their services and resources; identify the use and uses of their services and resources; and establish the value, impacts, and benefits that the community receives from the library services and resources" (Bertot and McClure, 2003, p. 592).

A number of social factors have influenced how libraries are changing to provide better service. A more diverse user population and globalization stimulate libraries to examine if and how they develop collections that represent many countries, cultures, and languages, as well as how they provide services to address the needs of diverse groups. The aging population has needs for continuing lifelong learning. Universities have made it a priority to become more involved with their communities by sharing expertise and providing excellent service.

Responding to these environmental factors requires assessment of organizational structure, development, and staffing so that libraries can change to become more efficient and better service providers. Before initiating new activities and new ways of doing things because of the changing

technological, political, economic, and social environments, libraries must assess the organization. Some questions to consider when embarking on such an assessment are

- Is the library organized to respond to changes in an efficient and productive way? If not, how should it be organized?
- What is the library's decision-making process? Is the library positioned to make decisions quickly when changes are necessary?
- How can libraries be restructured to make use of and to capitalize on new technology, to respond to budget cuts, to anticipate changes in the environment, and to address the changing information needs of users?
- How can libraries develop and train employees to be able to respond quickly to change both in terms of managing and embracing change and having the right skills to do the new work?

Methods for Conducting Organizational Assessment

Libraries have been doing assessment for many years to answer questions about collection strengths and weaknesses, how they compare to peers in any number of areas (number of volumes added, serials, reference questions), and how they can be more efficient or productive. The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) statistical measures of input have provided data about library collections, expenditures, staffing, and services that have been used successfully to compare libraries. These data have made it possible for libraries to examine trends and to make assumptions about how services might change in response to use patterns, how resources should be used to better address customer needs, and how libraries compare to their peers in these areas. The data may be used as a stimulus to benchmark with libraries who demonstrate best practices in an area. Some libraries use the information as a challenge to do better or as a justification to seek additional resources in order to improve performance and provide better service to students and faculty.

Hiring a Consultant

Some libraries might find it necessary or useful to hire consultants. Unless the library has access to an internal consultant associated with the university, this can be expensive. Libraries have limited budgets to spend this way, but there are a number of organizations that offer consultants. University administrators can often make recommendations based on their knowledge of consultants in areas related to organizational assessment of performance and work analysis and redesign. Other libraries might be able to recommend consultants who have successfully contributed to their investigations. A consultant can greatly assist a library by taking responsibility for the entire project, including assuring an outcome and a plan for continuing improvement. Some of the responsibilities of a project consultant are

- designing the approach to assessment, including organizational performance, workflow analysis and redesign;
- planning and facilitating meetings;
- designing and delivering training to process participants;
- assessing organizational culture and the readiness of the library to embark on the assessment; and
- fostering collaboration and cooperation among participants. (Hayes & Sullivan, 2003)

Customer Surveys

Conducting surveys that compare customer group expectations with library performance has become more prominent in the past ten years. LibQUAL+™ is an example of a Web-based survey that was introduced in 2001 and looks at service performance gaps after measuring customer perceptions of minimum, perceived, and desired levels of service. LibQUAL+™ is offered by ARL and has had over 400 participants. It is the "first national effort on the part of research libraries to focus directly on the voice of the customer—to move from the inward focus on inputs and production capability to outputs and outcomes" (Phipps, 2001, p. 639). LibQUAL+™ provides data for libraries to learn about best practices and to benchmark services. Libraries can then make changes in their organizations to address specific customer needs that have to do with several dimensions of service.

Focus groups have also been used to generate discussions with customers and retrieve their reactions to services provided by the library. Focus groups can be done quickly with little preparation to get a timely sense of customer reaction. They can also be used as a follow-up to LibQUAL+™ or other surveys to clarify or learn more about customer expectations.

Committees

The library might choose to appoint a committee or task force and charge the group with examining structure, functional areas, and job assignments in the organization in order to assess performance. They might be asked to look at what the library is not doing that needs to be done and what it is doing that no longer needs to be done. The group would be expected to make recommendations and devise a plan for the library to begin to do the new things while phasing out the old in order to better serve users and to become more efficient.

Other Assessment Methods

Some formal methods libraries use to assess and measure the organization's performance include the Balanced Scorecard, process improvement and simplification processes, and benchmarking peer institutions to find best practices. The Balanced Scorecard is a set of measures that reports on actions already taken by the organization. By setting targets in four main areas (financial, customer service, innovation and learning,

and internal business operations) of the library, and measuring progress toward meeting those targets, the library gets a comprehensive picture of overall performance. The Balanced Scorecard includes financial measures, and it "complements the financial measures with operational measures on customer satisfaction, internal processes, and the organization's innovation and improvement activities—operational measures that are the drivers of future financial performance" (Kaplan & Norton, 1992, p. 71).

Requirements for Conducting an Assessment

People who work in libraries generally profess to care deeply about the work they do. Therefore, it is important to plan wisely and proceed cautiously when initiating an assessment project. Conducting a sound and thoughtful assessment provides the background and data necessary to make informed decisions about change. The following are useful steps to follow when performing an organizational assessment.

Establish support throughout the library. Communicate with staff. Articulate in as many ways as possible why the library is examining the organization and how the data and information that are collected will be used. Emphasizing the positive aspects of assessment helps engender support. Stress that the process of assessment uncovers better ways to serve customers and meet the library's goals. Explain how the library will learn more about customers' needs in order to make changes that allow more responsive action. Library leaders should ask the staff to help examine the work and participate in devising more efficient ways to serve customers. They can demonstrate to the staff that change can actually be fun by offering opportunities to staff to engage in new, groundbreaking activities. Share success stories with the staff. Show how some employees who have made innovative suggestions or contributions or who have assumed new, more relevant job responsibilities have become more involved and excited about their work as a result of the change.

Ensure that the library's managers support the assessment and can communicate the rationale to their staffs. Library leaders should discuss thoroughly their plans to conduct the assessment with managers and solicit their input while demonstrating how it will benefit the library and individual departments. Both leaders and managers should engage staff in the process. Strategies that facilitate this communication include the following:

- Providing opportunities for participation by holding open meetings and inviting all interested staff to attend and contribute
- Distributing the e-mail addresses of the people conducting the assessment with invitations to ask questions and make suggestions
- Making presentations and sending updates electronically

It is inevitable that there will be some stress as the library proceeds with a close examination of work processes and functions. Employees feel

committed to their work and take pride in what they do. To alter their work assignments suddenly or even gradually can make them feel less valuable to the library and somewhat insignificant, as though their contributions thus far have not added value to the library's mission. To alleviate some of the stress and concern that arises when the library embarks on this process, leaders should *convince staff that their work is valued and that, even if their work changes, what they have done in the past has been valuable.*

Demonstrate sensitivity during all phases of the assessment. The library has been organized in a way that historically satisfied the needs of its customers. There are often traditions to consider. Organizational culture—the way library employees have learned to approach their work, communicate with their colleagues, and think about the library's purpose—has been established over time and cannot be changed easily.

Library administrators and department heads must *communicate the need for change* and talk with the staff about possible changes. It is important to include the stakeholders who do the work and understand the processes. They can make useful suggestions and will become part of the process.

Foster a culture of assessment and design an overall program of continuous assessment in the library to further monitor performance and success and make necessary changes to improve. A library might implement a formal ongoing tool or identify specific areas that need further study or assessment. Those areas might be targeted for process improvement projects. Staff participation in these projects is critical. Staff must become used to collecting and analyzing performance data so that they can contribute significantly to strategic planning efforts in the library. "Research library organizations must design internal systems that help staff keep current with customer needs, understand the real causes for dissatisfaction, discover what would increase satisfaction, and focus staff efforts on improving services and creating new products" (Phipps, 2001, p. 643). This approach creates an agile organization—one that can respond quickly to environmental changes and pressures. An agile and flexible organization is one that reacts quickly and effectively to events such as a budget crisis, hiring freeze, new technology, a change in higher administration, or a change in the emphasis of courses of study or other factors that have an impact on the library. An agile organization is also flexible with regard to fact-finding and decision-making.

Assign responsibility. Use a consultant, task force, or team to make sure the project stays on schedule. The schedule should be reasonable and determined by the length of time it takes to collect and analyze data, solicit input from staff, write the report, and make recommendations to be considered and approved by the library administration. The team should be responsible for communication and should keep the rest of the staff informed about the progress of the assessment.

Collect data that will help library leaders make informed decisions. Look at the library's stated mission, goals, and strategic plan. Examine the budget

and how resources have been used to learn what the priorities have been. All of this information contributes to a better understanding of the mission and values of the organization. It can also be useful for targeting particular areas of the organization that need further study. The data can help to identify barriers to success. Follow through by distributing results of the assessment and discussing them widely in the library. The recommendations should be thoroughly reviewed and discussed and then approved, revised, or tabled by the library's leaders. Generally a team or individual with the help of a committee and individual stakeholders will work on implementation.

Libraries must be sure to *evaluate the results of assessment.* Consider the reasons the library had for undertaking the assessment and consequent changes. Has the library met the goals and collected all the necessary information? Has the library implemented changes with success? Interview the stakeholders to find out if the assessment has allowed them to analyze the workflow and make changes based on the information they collected. Follow-up is usually the responsibility of an implementation team or the managers of the area. Review the success of the changes after they have gone into effect by seeking information from managers and staff in the areas that have been affected by the assessment. Personal interviews or written reports elicit information about what is working well and what is not working well. If the library has installed formal performance measures, see how performance has changed. Has it improved? If not, what adjustments must be made? By whom? Continue to review findings, and do periodic assessments. Make revisions and further changes as necessary. After this kind of approach is well established, issues and events can be addressed efficiently as they arise.

Continue to plan, test ways to measure and assess performance, and make changes based on the results of your assessment. Continue to employ methods that work: tools such as change management techniques, excellent communication, flexibility, training for future needs, planning, and participation. Continue to develop employees with an interest in and the skills to do measurement and evaluation, analysis of data and results, seeking and interpreting feedback, and change management. Develop employees with an understanding of organizational structure and development, theories of learning, individual and group development, analysis and intervention skills, and leadership development. Keep staff involved in assessment activities and be responsive to their career and development needs.

An example of a system-wide analysis of jobs that led to redesign of work by library staff is described by Hayes and Sullivan (2003) and was conducted by four suburban Chicago libraries—Cary Area Public Library District, Des Plaines Public Library, Ela Area Public Library District in Lake Zurich, and Warren-Newport Public Library District in Gurnee. In this project the library staffs were heavily involved in the outcome; they were trained to conduct the workflow analysis and redesign of jobs themselves.

The library directors shared a goal "to identify a means to create a work culture in which library staff would contribute high-quality performance and in which they would find meaning and purpose in the ever changing workplace" (Hayes & Sullivan, 2003, pp. 87–88). Results of the study include a deeper involvement on the part of staff in designing work and solving problems by looking at how the change will affect customer service. It has stimulated interest in changing work to serve customers better, and staff participate more in decision-making activities in the libraries (Hayes & Sullivan, 2003).

Another example of involving staff in an organizational assessment was done at Harvard College Library. The library conducted a systematic "self-examination with the goal of increasing productivity and innovation and making the work environment more satisfying" (Lee & Clack, 1996, p. 98). The library appointed a Task Force on Staff and Organizational Development and charged it with "diagnosing the current culture by identifying the present state, what elements were well positioned for change in the future, and what elements hindered future adaptation" (Lee & Clack, 1996). The task force encouraged all staff to focus on "the process rather than the content of work and at helping managers and staff become better at diagnosing and solving problems" (Lee & Clack, 1996).

Assessment and Renewal at the University of Virginia Library

It is possible to be successful using a more qualitative rather than strictly quantitative approach to organizational assessment. Libraries too often focus on getting the work done rather than on the needs of customers, the development of the staff, and the anticipation of future needs. Block suggests that there is an "obsession with measurement . . . not everything is worth measuring" (2002, p. 99). He says that there is a need for "flexible structures" to help design organizations that "serve both the marketplace and the soul of the people who work within them" (2002, p. 101).

The University of Virginia (UVA) Library is a practical example of how a library can use qualitative assessment to renew the staff and, consequently, the organization. The assessment process at Virginia successfully combines formal and informal methods of assessment. It includes self-assessment and is a more participatory approach to change.

The culture of the UVA Library has developed from a more conservative, traditional culture (typical of many libraries), in which there was a reluctance to take risks and spend resources on creative and innovative new ventures, into a culture where the emphasis is on customer service, assessment, innovation, learning, flexibility, change, and pride in accomplishment. The expectation among the staff is that things will not remain the same for long. Striving for a "fluid and flexible" organization has become the guiding principle. Innovation and risk-taking are valued and encour-

aged as evidenced by the early development of the Electronic Text Center, the Geospatial and Statistical Data Center, and research and development of the digital library. UVA took risks by dedicating staff and resources from other areas of the library to these efforts during times of financial stringency in anticipation of meeting future customer needs. Not always popular decisions, these actions have paid off by providing excellent service to the local community as well as the world community.

A significant part of the change in culture at UVA has been the expansion of a successful Staff Education and Development program that is forward-looking, addressing both the need for skills necessary to implement new strategies as well as skills needed to position staff for the future. Another significant contribution to the culture change is the unconventional way in which employees are given opportunities to take on new, challenging responsibilities that contribute to the library's goals of excellent service. It is a process in which library leaders identify needs for staffing; assess staff skills, abilities, and potential; and reassign staff to new tasks. The intent is to rejuvenate and rehabilitate employees by assigning new responsibilities in the same department or a different area of the library. It is often a response to an employee who initiates change or asks to be considered for a different job. The program involves recognizing talent and skills, promoting general career development, and mentoring. It evolved from a number of staff opportunities and formal staff development programs offered by the UVA Library since 1980. The earlier programs included staff utilization studies of most departments. These studies featured job analyses and sometimes resulted in moving staff or changing job assignments. As a result of a study of the systems department, for example, library administrators conducted an assessment of systems support needs throughout the library. The most pressing need was for technicians who could troubleshoot hardware and software problems in each department in a more timely way than service was provided with current staffing. The outcome was that the library arranged for or provided in-house technical support training for current employees already assigned to departments who learned to troubleshoot computer problems and install software. These employees developed skills over time that made them qualified for higher-level technology positions as the positions became necessary and available. This program was initiated by the director of Library Human Resources with support from the library's leaders. It eventually grew into a joint effort of the systems area and the library's Training Coordinator.

The University of Virginia's Staff Sharing Program provides another example of a program that capitalized on the experience and skills of staff while teaching new skills. It was conceived by the director of Library Human Resources in the early 1990s as a result of budget reductions, a hiring freeze, and the need to fill positions in critical areas of the library. The program has continued, but the purpose has evolved to provide opportunities for

library employees to fill high-priority needs in different library departments while they learn new skills. The objectives are to

- carry out library-wide priorities as established by the library's department heads and directors;
- provide job enrichment;
- increase staff and organizational flexibility to address staffing needs; increase knowledge of the overall operation and organization of the library among staff; and
- improve interdepartmental understanding and cooperation.

The Staff Sharing Program was preceded by a Job Rotation Program, which gave employees opportunities to learn new jobs by actually doing them part-time as interns. Ryerson University Library provides another example of a more formal approach to job rotation. It is a part of their strategic planning process. They conduct a formal analysis of what needs to be done and who should do it. Making it formal reduces the "stigma attached to anyone wanting to change roles, to get out of an old job, but not necessarily wanting to move up the administrative ladder" (Malinski, 2002, p. 678). It is described as "a library development process with an overwhelming sense of community service that brings the additional benefits of personal job enrichment and job satisfaction" (Malinski, 2002, p. 680). The programs at UVA and Ryerson require assessment of organizational needs and strategic planning to address future needs. Both programs include developing staff to fill current and future staffing needs.

Organizational renewal at UVA is made possible because of the flexibility of the organization. Flexibility has been achieved by changing the culture to one that anticipates and accepts change. Change has become the norm. The organizational structure contributes to flexibility as does the new technology. A program of organizational development that includes staff participation in decision-making, empowerment, the use of teams, and developing the library as a learning organization has also influenced the flexible structure of the UVA Library (Oltmanns & Self, 2002).

The process of renewing the staff in order to keep the organization vital is one of moving people from one job to another temporarily or permanently. The library does not use a rigorous search and screen process in these cases, although consultation with the Equal Employment Opportunity Office occurs on a regular basis. Most of these assignments are made internally. If there is an actual vacant position to be filled, it (or another redefined position) is posted.

THE JOB REDEFINITION PROCESS

An employee who is interested in learning and doing something new might self-select for reassignment by letting the appropriate person (supervisor, director of Library Human Resources, or associate university li-

brarian, for example) know that he or she is interested in a new initiative or assignment. Sometimes the employee has recognized a library need that is not being met because of a lack of staffing or resources. Perhaps the job would require the employee to develop new skills. Sometimes the employee is open to suggestions and will begin to learn new skills on his or her own. Alternatively, a manager might suggest that an employee be moved to another position for any number of reasons, such as the employee is better suited for it, the employee needs to do something more or less challenging, the employee has reached a plateau, or the employee wants to learn new skills. Sometimes a position becomes vacant or redefined, and it is not immediately obvious that there is an internal candidate who would be interested and successful in the role. In that case, the position is posted internally and interested employees may nominate themselves to Library Human Resources.

When managers become aware of employees who want to change their jobs, they should ask the following questions:

- What staffing needs does the library have to fill?
- Who wants to do more?
- Who is capable of doing more?
- How do the skills of the employee match the needs?
- How do the skills match jobs that managers could delegate? (Kanter, 1983)

A position is available for reassignment when needs are not being met in that particular area of the library. It could be an existing position or a newly defined position. Sometimes new positions are defined as a result of an employee developing new skills, embarking on a new initiative, or making innovative suggestions about something new that needs to be done or how to perform a task or service differently. Critical needs in the library or in specific departments, or reorganization of an area, might lead to new opportunities for employees. Sometimes a reassignment occurs as a solution to a problem.

The UVA approach to organizational development is supported by the work of Marcus Buckingham and others. Buckingham, of the Gallup organization, analyzed the workforce using a database of one million Gallup surveys of workers from around the world. His analysis showed that 26 percent of American workers are engaged in their jobs, 55 percent are not engaged, and 19 percent are actively disengaged from their work. The disengaged workers are performing below their potential and looking for new jobs. His conclusion is that the major challenge for the next twenty years will be the effective deployment of human assets. His advice as a result of his findings is to capitalize on the "talent and strengths" of each individual employee rather than on improving weaknesses (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999).

"Job sculpting" is another concept of meaningful work that supports the University of Virginia Library's approach. It is a way of matching employees' deep-seated life interests with particular work responsibilities. It matches people to jobs that resonate with activities that make them happy. It is a deeper exercise than merely matching skills with assignments. It requires managers to attempt to understand the psychology of work satisfaction. It is challenging for both managers and employees because many employees have not yet identified their deepest interests and cannot express what they are (Butler & Waldroop, 1999).

What Is Required of the Employee?

In order to create or move to a new job successfully, an employee must clarify his or her work goals and look for opportunities to learn the skills necessary to advance toward those goals. Clarifying personal goals is equally important. To do this, the employee might ask, What are my life goals? How can they be met through work? Working with the manager to establish appropriate training goals that will provide the necessary background to move into a more challenging position is also important. The employee should talk with the supervisor and others about interests and goals. The employee should find an advocate such as his or her manager or someone in library human resources or the library administration to serve as a guide through the process. This approach has been working at UVA for a number of years.

What Is Required of the Managers?

In order for a program like this to be successful, managers must be mindful of the development needs of their employees. It is helpful if they are on the lookout for opportunities to offer their employees. Managers who listen to what employees like or dislike about their jobs and respect the employees are better positioned to find exciting new challenges to offer them. Managers should

- be attuned to the employee's unique job needs;
- build on strengths and interests;
- show employees that career development and personal growth are important; and
- work together with employees to customize future work assignments.

Following through might mean adding responsibilities or moving the employee to a different position. For this program to be successful, the manager must develop a closer relationship with employees. Library leaders should make sure that managers and supervisors understand this important role. Leaders should emphasize that managers are expected to be responsive to their employees and should seek to find rewarding work for them. Regular discussions with managers about staffing needs and some special

training in listening skills and coaching for improved performance might be useful.

What Are the Next Steps?

Changes in job assignments cannot be made without serious communication with the employee, managers, and anyone else who would be affected by the move. Some of the issues that need to be addressed are the following:

- The position must be identified and defined.
- The time frame must be determined. Will the assignment be temporary or permanent? If temporary, when will the situation be evaluated to see if it is working?
- Are there salary implications that must be addressed?
- Is it a change that is worth making?
- What will the impact of the reassignment be?
- How will this move affect other employees and morale?
- Is there someone else on the staff who might be interested in this job? If there is, that employee should be given consideration as well. A manager might need to interview more than one person who expresses interest and make a decision based on the interview and other information gathered.
- And last, who, if anyone, will do the work left behind?

When an employee takes on different responsibilities, it presents opportunities for library managers to reassign other employees to do the work left behind. Another result is that the library becomes comfortable with the fact that work that cannot be reassigned will not get done for a time or might be phased out.

When a decision to reassign an employee is made, it should be announced to all staff by someone in the library's administration, for example, the dean, associate dean, or director of human resources. The new employee should meet all employees with whom she or he will interact and be scheduled for on-the-job training. More specific skill-based training should also be considered and scheduled, if necessary. Set a date within a reasonable time period to assess how things are going. At a meeting with the supervisor and the employee find out what is working well and what is not working well. Make adjustments as necessary. If the reassignment is not working, find a reasonable solution. Should the employee return to the former position? Always leave an out when making a reassignment by making it "temporary" or having an alternative course of action planned.

What Are the Benefits of This Kind of Program?

A program that acknowledges and balances employees' work-related and personal goals by moving them into positions that better match those goals benefits both the library and the employee. It increases morale and

contributes to the development of motivated, productive, and loyal employees. There is a greater understanding of and appreciation for work done throughout the library by the participants because they are exposed to new functions and services. They are more likely to take ownership of a broader piece of the library's work. The library is more likely to retain valuable employees because they are happier as evidenced by their deeper engagement, interest, and participation in library activities. Employees who are given opportunities to grow in this way have increased value in the organization because of what they learn and their ability to contribute more. Employees who take advantage of opportunities to change jobs show a "reduction in boredom, work stress, absenteeism, and turnover and an increase in innovation, production, and loyalty" (Malinski, 2002, p. 675). A program such as this one allows managers to groom employees to do the work that will be left after the aging workforce retires. (Malinski, 2002).

The guiding principle behind these programs is that the library's "most important asset is the energy and loyalty of its people. And yet, many managers regularly . . . allow talented people to stay in jobs they're doing well at but aren't fundamentally interested in. You must first know the hearts and minds of your employees and then undertake the tough and rewarding task of sculpting careers that bring joy to both" (Butler & Waldroop, 1999, p. 144).

Another supporting point of view is that expressed by Hutchens:

> People learn by doing. The challenge, then, is not how we get employees to learn. Rather, it is how we create a context in which they can encounter their own powerful and innate abilities to experience, reflect, connect and test. Notice the important difference between the two orientations. Organizational learning ceases to be something we "do to" employees. Instead, trainers become stewards of a latent, collective power that may be harnessed and directed towards our organization's shared goals and aspirations. (Hutchens, 2003, par. 27)

Summary and Conclusion

Assessment of organizational development demonstrates the importance of gathering data and using data to support new ways of conducting the library's business. It changes the organizational culture from one where traditional ways of doing things are valued and employees proceed cautiously to examine new trends and technology to one of support for innovation and risk-taking based on assessing customers' needs. Organizational assessment involves collecting data, integrating it into the workflow, and making changes based on empirical evidence rather than what libraries think users need. Assessment assists libraries in identifying specific problem areas. It allows the library to conduct process improvement or process simplification endeavors to address these areas and make changes that will increase productivity and efficiency. Some of the results of following through on

assessments of organizational development are reorganization, reassignment, and reallocation of financial and human resources to accomplish goals. Assessing organizational development facilitates the creation of an agile organization prepared to tackle new problems quickly.

A library with a culture that recognizes the importance of assessment presents possibilities for staff to become more engaged and to identify more strongly with the library's mission and goals. It provides opportunities for employees to develop new skills, take on new tasks, and try out new jobs. It develops employees whose work goals match more closely their life goals and, as a result, are more highly committed to the library's goals.

Incorporating organizational assessment into the library's work allows the library to satisfy more fully the needs of current customers. It also encourages the library to look into the future and anticipate changing needs while being flexible enough to manage the organization's response to those needs. By addressing current and future needs of faculty, students, and staff in the most service-oriented way (focusing on their needs rather than the library's needs to get things done), libraries gain their support and the support of the institution's administration. This could lead to an increase in backing and encouragement, which can lead to new initiatives that make the customers happier.

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