Achieving Transformational Change in Academic Libraries

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www.chandospublishingonline.com

Chandos Publishing is an imprint of Woodhead Publishing Limited

Woodhead Publishing Limited
80 High Street
Sawston
Cambridge CB22 3HJ
UK
Tel: +44 (0) 1223 499140
Fax: +44 (0) 1223 832819
www.woodheadpublishing.com

First published in 2013

ISBN: 978-1-84334-724-8 (print)
ISBN: 978-1-78063-390-9 (online)

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data.
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Typeset by Domex e-Data Pvt. Ltd., India
Printed in the UK and USA.

For Brenda, with all my love

List of figures

List of abbreviations

CSF	critical success factor
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ILL	inter-library loan
KPI	key performance indicator
LCDP	Leadership and Career Development Program
LEOS	Library Employee Opinion Survey
LIS	Learning Information Services
LLDP	Library Leadership Development Program
LLI	Library Leaders Institute
MBO	Management by Objectives (system)
MIS	management information statistics
NSS	National Student Survey
OD	organizational development
PID	project identification document
RFID	radio frequency identification
TQM	total quality management
UEOS	University Employee Opinion Survey
VLE	virtual learning environment

Acknowledgements

I have received help, support and guidance from a great many people throughout the process of writing this book.

Particular thanks go to my colleagues Dr Jessica Gardner, Kathy Baro and Carol Giles for their advice and encouragement, and to all of my staff, without whom there wouldn't be much of a story to tell.

I am especially grateful to Vicki Williamson and Jeremy Andrew who have added a world of richness and reality to the book through their excellent case studies.

Special appreciation must also go to my publishers, Chandos, for their faith in the project, in particular to George Knott and Jonathan Davis, whose guidance and encouragement have been invaluable, and to my excellent copy-editor Geraldine Lyons, who has helped to make the whole process a pleasurable, interesting and rewarding experience, and to Rachel Oakes (indexer extraordinaire) for saving what's left of my sanity.

Finally, and most importantly, to my wife Brenda, for her endless patience and support through all the highs and lows, and to my children Chris, Mattie and Joanne for their encouragement and interest throughout. I have a feeling that all those jobs that have been on the back burner will soon come back to haunt me ...!

About the author

Stephen Mossop had a full and interesting career in furniture design, retail management and shopfitting and until the early 1990s was CEO of a UK-wide shopfitting company. Then a recession in the building industry offered the opportunity of career change, and he decided to transform himself first into a mature student – graduating from Lancaster University with an honours degree in English, followed closely by an M.Sc. in Information Studies from Leeds Metropolitan University and an MBA from the University of Central Lancashire – and then into a fully-fledged librarian.

Joining the University of Central Lancashire as a part-time, temporary shelving assistant, he quickly progressed to become Head of Technical Services. His major accomplishments there were the introduction of library pre-registration, designing the integration of the university's library management and finance systems, and the library's migration to RFID.

He is currently Head of Library Services at the University of Exeter, where he leads an award-winning team providing a first-class customer experience across all library sites. He retains strong external interests, being a previous member of the influential BIC/CILIP 'RFID in Libraries' UK Standards working party, a regular conference speaker, a book reviewer and a case study contributor. His latest projects include leading the library's migration to RFID and increasing the integration of key systems and services.

Introduction

I heard a joke once about an elderly street cleaner whose new manager called him in for a 'getting-to-know-you' chat. Asked why he enjoyed his job, the cleaner smiled and said, 'Because it never changes. I like coming to work every morning, knowing that I'll be brushing the same streets as I brushed yesterday, pushing the same barrow and using the same brush and shovel I was given on my very first day. My tools and I have sort of grown up together, and they're as good as new.' His manager was filled with wonder, and asked, 'How on earth have you managed to keep your equipment in such good order after so many years? I'd have thought your brush would have worn out by now!' The street cleaner, glad to have impressed his new boss, said, 'Oh that's easy – I get a new head every spring, and a new handle every autumn!'

'Change' is a relative term. It means different things to different people. Some will seek it out, while others will avoid it like the plague; some will welcome it, while others will resist it as hard as they can; some will initiate it, while others, like the street cleaner in the joke, will scarcely realise it's happening. Like most people, I've been involved in change my whole life, in one form or another: moving houses; changing schools; changing jobs; getting married; having children and grandchildren; losing parents ... the list is endless. While some are more welcome than others, of course, such changes are natural – just part of life and part of living. Isn't it strange, then, that work-related change seems to provoke so many heightened passions, so many emotive responses, and, given the number of books and articles on the subject, so much academic thought and practical advice? It is only 'work', after all! So, why does it provoke such responses? Because 'work' is a very personal thing. What 'work' means to individuals can be as diverse as the individuals themselves: for some, it is a strong part of 'who they are'; for others it is simply 'what they do'. It can provide their reason for getting up in the morning, or it can be just a way of putting bread on the table at night. For most, it's probably a bit of both. It follows, then, that 'change' will mean different things to different people, and that their response to it will be dictated largely by their individual attitudes and needs. Will the change threaten their sense of ownership over what they do, and how they feel about their role? Will it threaten their ability to feed their family? There are varying degrees of change, of course, and varying degrees of 'threat' to individuals and benefit to organisations.

All academic libraries undergo episodes of strategic change, reflecting the constant need to adjust direction and momentum to best meet the needs of those they serve. Often, this has more to do with 'realignment' and 'refocusing' than 'redirection', although of course it can involve elements of all three. Transformational change is something fundamentally different, something very much more radical. It has its roots in the need to realign and refocus an organisation in the face of external influences, but it goes much deeper to remodel the fixed and limiting internal mindsets that influence its openness to wider strategic change and its ability to continuously adapt and improve. Often involving deep-seated cultural change, the results can be dramatic and disturbing at an individual level – but removing inherent logjams can prove vitally beneficial at a strategic level. On a scale between 'intervention' and 'cure', if approached in the right way, this is definitely 'cure'.

Drawing on experiences at the University of Exeter and elsewhere, this book explores the nature of transformational change and its effects, and discusses the benefits and limitations of its place in an academic library setting.

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So what is 'transformational change'?

Abstract: This chapter explores the nature of transformational change in the context of organisational culture, and its relationship with and difference to other change management styles; and considers the motivation, skills and behaviours of those who would act as change agents to bring about organisational transformation.

Key words: transformation, transformational leadership, organisational culture, organisational change, change management, charismatic leadership, strategic leadership, strategic vision.

Defining transformational change

Language is a powerful medium, and its meaning is in constant flux. In common with many such terms, 'transformation', 'paradigm' and others have been diluted by overuse, since their adoption for use in management circles, to the point where they are in danger of losing their strength and usefulness, in the context of strategic change, as descriptors of fundamental shifts in understanding and dramatic movements in organisational behaviour and direction. As Tosey and Robinson (2002) demonstrate, these once grand concepts are commonly paraded by management consultants and business advisors as their stock in trade, often being 'posed as an imperative, a necessity for survival and the only alternative to corporate oblivion' (p. 100), to the extent that they have become the necessary language and claim for almost any change programme. Little wonder, then, that when confronted with such terms an unprepared, world-weary and probably unwilling staff might regard them as just so much 'management-speak', and so of little interest or consequence in their experience and circumstances, and regard those who propound them with caution and wariness – as unwelcome troublemakers intent on bringing the misery of change in their wake in their vain attempts to force theory into practice. Surely, in their eyes, such characters are to be distrusted, and the theories they expound treated with contempt and indifference, if not with outright resistance?

Not terms to be trifled with, then, and like any form of language they need to be used with some care when initiating change if the desired end results are not to be scuppered at the outset by a negative reaction instigated simply by the careless use of such inflammatory terminology.

My definition, somewhat cautiously arrived at, given the background described above, would be that while 'transformational change' may well be envisioned from the outset, and will guide and form the central pillar of a full change programme, it is just as often only truly recognised in hindsight, at a moment in time when the current state can be clearly compared to the former state – and recognised as being profoundly different. In reality, there may well be no individual intervention, no single moment in time, that one could point at as having been the point of transformation. It is often, therefore, a hidden goal, recognised only in its achievement.

In nature, we might perhaps offer the life cycle of the butterfly as the supreme example of transformational change.

Here, change and difference are obvious and startling: the dull, crawling insect is transformed into a delicate, graceful, vibrantly coloured flying creature. We can clearly see the former and current states – the actual moment of change – but its nature, however, is hidden in secrecy. We are unable to observe the myriad of changes that take place within the chrysalis, and we certainly cannot see the most fundamental change of all – what it is that both drove and inspired the earthbound insect to fly.

So it is with organisations: ‘transformation’, whether initially intended or realised as a by-product of a wider programme, will have come about almost unnoticed for many participants, through an accumulation of operational and organisational changes, each one building on, influencing and taking sustenance from the others until, looking back, the difference between the way we were then and the way we are now can be clearly seen and recognised. In my view, however, the key factor that moves operational and organisational change, no matter how profound, from the incremental to the transformational has to be the degree to which cultural change has taken place. To stretch the butterfly analogy a little, what makes an organisation fly or crawl is its culture: the predominant attitudes and behaviour that characterise its functioning, and what Denison (1996) asserts is ‘the deep structure of organizations, which is rooted in the values, beliefs and assumptions held by organizational members’ (p. 654).

Where the extant culture is unambitious and overly conservative there is little incentive for staff to seek out and initiate change, and the stagnation that unerringly follows becomes in itself an active disincentive to innovation and entrepreneurialism, leaving the organisation on the back foot and unable to adapt and evolve to meet new challenges and opportunities. The challenge for change agents faced with this caustic combination, therefore, is not just that of designing, implementing and embedding the changes and improvements necessary to allow the organisation to progress; they must first disrupt and change the culture which underpins the *ancien régime*, and which otherwise will threaten the success of any change initiative, and cultivate in its place a more fertile environment in which the seeds of change can take root and flourish.

I would suggest, therefore, that while 'transformation' may be an overused and perhaps even abused term in the general parlance of business gurus and management consultants, it is difficult to find a more appropriate alternative to describe the experience of those organisations that have emerged successfully from episodes of fundamental and wide-ranging organisational, operational and cultural change – nor yet to find such an organisation that could not, in honesty, be described as having been 'transformed'.

How transformational change differs from other change management styles

Porras and Silvers (1994) have it that 'OT [organisational transformation] has emerged over the last decade as a distinct form of planned change. It is an advancement over OD [organisational development] owing to its focus on precipitating more profound change in organizations' (p. 95).

'Change' comes in many shapes and sizes, some more welcome and more palatable than others, and almost always following the three general steps identified by Lewin (1951) of unfreezing, changing and refreezing organisations, where the existing status quo is disrupted sufficiently to allow change to take place before allowing a state of new normality to settle in. How much change takes place, and how deep and radical the unfreezing and change steps need to be is very much a matter of degree and circumstance. By no means does every organisation need to 'transform' itself in order to become or remain competitive (or, in the case of an academic library, to ensure that it meets or exceeds its responsibility to support the institution and its students), and much can be achieved, under the right circumstances, by taking small and measured steps rather than the lurching strides and abrupt change of direction that 'transformation' tends to represent.

I would suggest that there are, essentially, four main types of change:

1. *Organic*: a natural progression from one state to another, often founded on a local initiative rather than centrally directed, and usually linked to but not necessarily always in direct support of an overall strategic direction.
2. *Incremental*: a planned series of mutually supportive changes derived from and in support of an overarching strategic impetus.
3. *Organisational*: strategically designed changes, often involving modifications to staffing structures, and intended to deliver substantial changes in service or to create capacity for new services to be introduced alongside existing ones.
4. *Cultural*: undertaken in order to reinvent or reinvigorate the underlying organisational ethos, to instil a beneficial capacity to accept the need for and actively support a fresh strategic direction.

As described above, 'transformational' change is essentially the result of a planned strategy of change, combining cultural, incremental and organisational change. However, if the underlying organisational culture is already one in which flexibility, innovation and a general readiness to change are in place, great and rapid progress can be achieved without the added disruption and angst that accompanies a fundamental change in culture.

If there is one development in recent years that might be considered common to many libraries, it has been the adoption of self-service equipment to handle their basic issue and return transactions. Indeed, the use of self-issue and self-return machines is now so widespread as to be almost ubiquitous, and it is difficult to imagine how most libraries could operate successfully without them. The experiences of early adopters, however, might serve to illustrate how various styles of change management can affect the pace, if not the long-term success, of a change project.

These two elements, 'pace' and 'success', are, of course, relative terms in their own right. For early adopters of library self-service equipment, the 'pace' of implementation was dependent on several factors, but chiefly the level of investment they were able to make, and the attitude of staff and customers to new technologies. Measures of 'success', on the other hand, were dependent on the strategic objective to be achieved. For many library managers, the concept of self-service was an attractive one. For some, it was simply enough that their library would be seen by others as leading the field, and they themselves as far-sighted investors in cutting-edge library technology. Most, though, took the more pragmatic view that self-service would offer them flexibility for the future, bringing opportunities that might otherwise be very difficult to achieve: either for service improvement, by releasing valuable staff resources to more interesting and rewarding customer-support roles; or for service maintenance in the face of planned savings, by ensuring that basic library 'circulation' functions could continue without the need for traditional levels of staff involvement.

While operational issues, such as compatibility with the library management and security systems, could be tested and eliminated through normal purchasing processes, staff and customer reaction could only truly be judged during the implementation stages. Given the high initial costs involved at that time in terms of equipment purchase, it is clear that creating a self-service environment was not a risk-free proposal. Understandably, in many instances libraries chose to mitigate some of this risk by encouraging change to take place slowly and organically, by maintaining their full complement of staff at issue desks, and assuming that customers would very soon tire of their customary queuing so that a mixture of impatience and curiosity would very quickly encourage a widespread migration to self-service. While initially the lure of technology certainly did attract attention from some of the more inquisitive and adventurous customers, in general the overall experience for many libraries was a little disappointing. The pace of change achieved was too slow to create the impetus needed to ensure success within a reasonable time frame, and while circulation statistics revealed very low usage of the self-service machines, issue desks were as busy as ever, leaving managers frustrated that their expensive investment in the future might be destined to become an embarrassing white elephant.

Better success rates were noted by those libraries that adopted, or migrated to, an incremental approach to implementation. When the University of Central Lancashire, for example, had realised only limited success in encouraging the take-up of self-service through organic change, they adopted a more structured, proactive approach to achieving their goal. Previous experience was not wasted, however, and an analysis of the preceding phase revealed a combination of factors that had conspired to slow the pace and diminish success. It was realised that use of the machines was adversely affected by a low success-rate in achieving fault-free transactions, in that self-service customers experienced an unacceptably higher number of gate-alarm incidents compared with those using the issue desk. This was compounded by the reaction of staff, whose general view, frequently expressed to customers, was that the self-service machines were unreliable, inaccurate and insufficiently secure. Careful observation, however, revealed that the majority of failed transactions were in reality caused by simple user-error, in that books were being incorrectly placed on the machines and so could not be desensitised effectively.

Clearly, much could be achieved through the implementation of training and familiarisation programmes to enable both staff and customers to gain confidence in the equipment. As staff resources were necessarily limited, this was accomplished by reducing issue desk rotas, diverting staff instead to performing a queue-busting role, encouraging customers to use the self-service machines under their guidance. As the number of failed transactions diminished, confidence levels among both staff and students rose; and the effect of a gradual but determined reduction in the number of issue desk staff only served to further encourage and hasten a widespread migration to self-service.

Whereas concerns expressed by staff at the University of Central Lancashire were based largely on their having grown to distrust the accuracy and reliability of their equipment, the ambivalence towards self-service at Exeter was much more philosophical in nature. Here, a vocal and influential minority of staff considered that while selected items of equipment might offer some benefit in terms of background process improvement, in general the advent of self-service was an unwelcome and unnecessary intrusion that could not replace the quality of personal service offered by staff at the issue desk.

As discussed more fully in the case study presented in Chapter 6, however, Exeter had a strong and increasingly urgent need to promote the use of self-service to ensure that staff would be released to adopt more flexible working practices, roaming the library floors to deliver high-quality services to their customers whenever and wherever they needed them. A number of initiatives were introduced to encourage and enable staff to adapt to the new regime, and to arm them with the necessary skills and confidence to work well within it. Encouraging a greater use of self-service, and expanding the suite of services offered under that banner, was achieved progressively, incrementally, but within an envelope of holistic organisational change, complementing and supporting the structural modifications needed to implement and embed the substantial operational and cultural changes required in order to realise an overall vision of enhanced service delivery.

Describing transformational leadership

Many studies have been undertaken to discover what 'transformational leadership' looks like, to analyse what sets transformational leaders apart from other leaders, and indeed to discover what abilities, skills and qualities are required by those working, or called on, to transform organisational behaviour.

Handscombe and Norman (1989) identify the importance of a management 'focus on corporate issues and not functional change' as one of the key capabilities in the formulation and implementation of a strategy for successful organisational change and development: 'top management teams must address the fundamental strategic issues for the business, however difficult the resolution may appear. This must be done on a team basis and not by accepting functionality developed proposals. Opportunity identification and evaluation must be ongoing and not inhibited by bureaucratic procedures' (p. 125). The importance of the organisation's future shape and success, then, clearly overrides any current obstacles. While degrees of incremental change may form part of the overall change management strategy, there is no room here for minor tweaking on a procedural level, nor yet for a sentimental attachment to what has gone before. Existing cultural norms, then, must not be allowed to interfere with the achievement of an agreed future state, and the manner of accomplishing this is clearly differentiated from other types of change management.

As discussed above, however, the difficulties faced by organisations intent on achieving strategic change are found not so much in the creation of change strategies but in their implementation. Creating a vision is one thing – making it happen is quite another. Referring to Kurt Lewin's seminal work on intergroup dynamics and planned change, Dawson (2003: 30) points out that:

> Managing change through reducing the forces that prevent change, rather than through increasing the forces that are pushing for change are central to Lewin's approach and his technique of force-field analysis … [and that he] maintained that there are driving and restraining forces that maintain the status quo and within which organizations generally exist in a state of quasi-stationary equilibrium. Thus, in order to create conditions conducive to change it is necessary to identify the restraining and driving forces, and to change one or other of these in order to create an imbalance … Once an imbalance has

> been created the system can be altered and a new set of driving and restraining forces put into place.

They must first disrupt and change the existing culture (‘the deep structure of organizations, which is rooted in the values, beliefs and assumptions held by organizational members’ (Denison, 1996: 654)) in order to create an environment in which their vision can be enacted: as Sarros et al. (2011) observe, ‘In many instances, the type of leadership required to change culture is transformational, because culture change needs enormous energy and commitment to achieve outcomes’ (p. 294).

Handscombe and Norman’s emphasis on having the management team address the fundamental strategic issues for the business on a team basis is important here. Although the management team might, for strategic planning purposes, distance themselves from the day-to-day, functional operation of the organisation, they are in fact an integral part, if not the guiding embodiment, of its cultural structure, and so must change their own cultural perception before they can cascade their new strategic vision effectively to others. How effectively and consistently they model the new behaviour, and the methods they employ to motivate and influence the behaviour of their colleagues will, of course, dictate the pace and ultimate success of the transformational exercise.

McGuire and Hutchings (2007: 155–6) consider that

> The concept of transformational leadership has altered our notions and understanding of leadership and its effects on individuals and organisations [and modifies] our perceptions of modern leaders from authoritarian decision-makers to instrumental facilitators … The appeal of transformational leadership lies in the ability of the leader to inspire followers to transcend their own interests and work towards the benefit of all.

In addition, Bass (1995) offers a very useful definition of transformational leadership as being composed of four dimensions:

1. *Charisma*: the leader provides vision and a sense of mission; instils pride, faith and respect; excites, arouses and inspires junior colleagues.
2. *Individual consideration*: the leader provides coaching and teaching; delegates projects to stimulate learning experiences; provides for continuous feedback; and treats each follower as an individual.
3. *Intellectual stimulation*: the leader provides employees with a flow of challenging new ideas; motivates followers to think in new ways; emphasises problem solving and the use of reasoning before taking action.
4. *Inspiration*: the leader acts as a model for staff; behaves in ways that motivate and inspire followers by providing meaning and challenge; communicates a vision.

One might add 'trust' to this list, since, arguably, a leader who fails to inspire trust in followers is highly unlikely to have much of a chance to display the other traits and skills illustrated above. Followers, especially those faced with change, need to be able to place trust in their leader even though they might not, initially at least, fully understand or support the need for the proposed changes to take place. This 'trust' might manifest itself in a number of ways: it might take the form of an implicit trust in one who has already guided them successfully through choppy waters on previous occasions, and has clearly demonstrated their own faith in the new direction; or it might be more tentatively offered to one who inspires trust in others by displaying both supreme confidence in their own vision and abilities and in the ability of their followers to accomplish the vision, and (importantly) has described their vision with sufficient detail and clarity to demonstrate clear-headedness in their strategic thinking.

Of course, those who need to rely on the latter approach, perhaps especially in the case of newcomers to an organisation, face the unenviable challenge of needing to remain at least one step ahead of their followers at all junctures. They need to continuously prove that their followers' faith in them and their judgement is not misplaced: phrases such as 'Trust me, I know what I'm doing …' will only last for so long without positive proof that their decisions are the right ones, and that their chosen direction will deliver the vision they have been selling. However earned, trust can evaporate very quickly if followers perceive more than the occasional faltering step, and while tenacity might carry leaders past previously unseen obstacles, their followers need to believe that as many of those obstacles as possible have been foreseen, accounted for and addressed in the grand plan.

Further, if it is important that the leader inspires trust, it is equally as important that s/he gives trust to those who follow her/him. Change, of any nature, is not accomplished by one person alone, but in concert with many individuals, all working together to bring it about. An organisation is made up of individuals who, at all ranks, have a vested interest either in making change happen or in causing it to fail – or at least in watching cynically from the sidelines while a change initiative sinks without trace. People who feel trusted to take forward an element of the change agenda will, if sufficiently stimulated and inspired, work hard to achieve the goal they have been set – those who don't feel so entrusted will be much more inclined to take no further part in the process or, at worst, will work against it, either overtly or covertly. Rumour and doubt spread furthest and fastest among the marginalised, and cynicism can quickly become subversion among the disenfranchised.

Tenacity, as mentioned above, can be a very useful trait in transformational leaders, as can a sense of humour. Almost inevitably, support from followers is unlikely to be unanimous and instantaneous in the early stages. It is also reasonable to assume that those who drive change are already committed to it, and have probably already, in their minds, arrived at the end goal. They are, consequently, eager to see the change put into practice, and it is easy for them to become frustrated at the delay while everyone else catches up – tenacity needs to be tempered by patience and an understanding that people move through change at different speeds, so that at any given time some will be further along the change cycle than others. Transformational leadership is a long game, and an awkward and often difficult one, especially given the necessary but for many quite uncomfortable and disconcerting changes in culture that underpin it. Part of the skill in achieving successful change lies in, I believe, keeping the end goal in mind while observing where colleagues are in the change cycle, and maintaining a sufficient, though probably uneven, forward momentum so that those who are further along than others do not lose their forward impetus while others are encouraged to catch up. A colleague once told me that towards the end of team meetings he would often put forward seemingly fanciful and spontaneous 'What if …?' ideas, announcing them as too far off the wall for serious debate but offered for discussion anyway. The discussions that followed were usually (though not always) light-hearted, and normally ended with his being gently ridiculed for wasting everyone's time. It is interesting to consider how many of those 'What if …?' scenarios later found their way onto the agenda for strategic change, but irrespective of that the discussions had served their purpose, in the medium term, by ensuring that while some at the table had their interests peaked and their imaginations fed, others were either manoeuvred a little further along the parabola of change or cajoled into accepting the inevitability of change. It was important also that these discussions and debates were undertaken within a team setting. As Arnold et al. (2001: 318) comment, ‘Transformational leadership increases trust, commitment and team efficacy … Strong values and norms within a team are still important in that they have an effect on the commitment that is felt within the team.’ To have broken apart the shared commitment and mutual support engendered by membership of the team would have been counter-productive to my colleague’s objectives at that time, as that would have left those individuals who had yet to fulfil their journey through the change parabola feeling stranded, isolated, unsupported and unable to provide the necessary impetus and direction to their own followers. Transformational leadership is a long game, and one best played with patience, tenacity and skill.

Two final questions remain in this section: who are the transformational leaders, and where do they come from? Kelloway and Barling (2000) point out that ‘While there is little doubt that leaders’ use of a transformational leadership style results in positive outcomes, there remains the question of how organizations use this knowledge … [and that] recognizing that most organizations do not have the luxury of replacing all of their leaders with “transformational” leaders’ (p. 356), the central questions for organisations are whether it is possible to train transformational leaders, how this might be done and whether it makes a difference to organisational outcomes. Taking as their measures Bass’s transformational leadership qualities, as mentioned above (charisma, individual consideration, intellectual stimulation and inspiration), their studies show that, through the delivery of 'statistically significant changes in transformational leadership resulting from the training', the answer to the question 'Can you train transformational leaders? … is an unequivocal yes!' and that the 'subordinates of trained leaders became more committed (i.e. loyal) to the organization than were the subordinates of untrained leaders … [also that] Perhaps more importantly, branch-level [performance] increased only in those branches where the manager was trained' (ibid.: 356–7).

Through appropriate training, coaching and reflection, then, leaders are able to develop transformational leadership behaviours, and to display them consistently in their daily transactions. In this, perhaps 'consistency' is the most important key word – consistency of message, and consistency of delivery. While it is important, for example, that a leader should provide an accessible and appealing vision in order to inspire followers, that vision has to be consistently maintained throughout the exercise; a vision which is constantly remodelled is not only difficult to sell but difficult for followers to buy into. Those who have been inspired to follow their leader's 'new future' vision will soon lose faith, both in the vision and in the leader, if their goalposts are frequently moved. Similarly, a leader who one day encourages follower interaction with new ideas, asking for input, feedback and reasoned argument in problem-solving situations, but who then closes down debate on important matters and delivers unilateral decisions on another day, will very quickly disincentivise followers from making a personal investment in the outcome, and from taking any responsibility for its success or failure.

It has been argued many times, quite justifiably, that leaders can emerge at all levels of an organisation, at different times, for different reasons and in different styles. However, as McGuire and Hutchings (2007: 155–6) illustrate:

> The concept of transformational leadership has altered our notions and understanding of leadership and its effects on individuals and organisations … Indeed, research into transformational leadership shows that this leadership style converts followers into leaders and results in the motivational and moral elevation of both followers and leaders … [and that] The appeal of transformational leadership lies in the ability of the leader to inspire followers to transcend their own interests and work towards the benefit of all.

All this, of course, framed within the context of a recognised need for profound change. Perhaps what differentiates transformational leaders from others, then, are three things: the nature, depth and context of the change they need to deliver; the skills they employ; and the consistency of character and behaviour they display in order to deliver the change required of them.

In their 2007 study of Dr Martin Luther King, McGuire and Hutchings offer the following succinct observations on the nature of transformational leaders, drawn from his example:

> Transformational leaders need to demonstrate a capacity to recognise the need for change and devise innovative strategies to enable that change to occur. Through questioning norms and assumptions and encouraging divergent thinking, transformational leaders stimulate increased autonomy and independence amongst followers … By becoming champions for change, transformational leaders can show followers

> the way forward and make them believe that change is both possible and worthwhile … One conclusion is, however, inescapable, namely that transformational leaders retain enormous power to realise substantial ground-breaking change for the benefit of individuals, organisations and society.
>
> (Ibid.: 162–3)

Few could aspire to the transformational impact that Dr King achieved, nor yet the profound moral and societal change he inspired, but whether attempting to change the culture of a society or of an academic library, transformational leaders are children of their time – they emerge in answer to a particular set of circumstances, when profound change is most needed, and they employ their skills and traits of character to excite, challenge, coach and inspire their followers in such a way as to realise a future state that might otherwise have been impossible to achieve.

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Organisational resistance to change: 'I wouldn't start from here!'

Abstract: This chapter examines the reasons why change in any form might be required in an organisation, and, in particular, discusses why transformational change might be the only beneficial option in some circumstances. The chapter discusses the development of a strategic vision and agenda for transformation, debates the merits of performance measurement and performance management, and considers the dilemma faced by managers who are confronted by the need for a radical change in strategic direction, but who find that their aspirations are at odds with an unhelpful or opposing organisational culture.

Key words: drivers for change, strategic development, strategic vision, strategic direction, staff development, performance measurement, performance management, critical success factors, key performance indicators, management information, SMART objectives.

Drivers for transformational change

Change, as discussed in Chapter 1, comes in many shapes and sizes. Dawson (2003: 15) describes a wide range of change drivers, or triggers, both external (including government laws and regulations; the globalisation of markets; major political and social events; advances in technology; organisational growth; and expansion and fluctuations in trade) and internal (advances in technology; and changes in the organisation's primary task (changes in the range or type of trade undertaken), people (changes in human resource management initiatives, skills expansion, etc.) and administrative structures). Many of these drivers may well ring a few bells for those working in academic libraries, and while each or any of them may well have a deep impact on how we work and what we do, individually they would more likely fit the 'incremental change' model described in Chapter 1. Combined together, however, and undertaken alongside, or as a means of enabling, a change of organisational culture, they all have the potential to deliver transformational change.

How often have you sat through strategic planning meetings with your library management team considering the future and trying to carefully envision a path that will help you deliver the changes your organisation needs you to achieve, excited at the prospect of those bright new opportunities you can see in your mind's eye … and all the time thinking about the obstacles in your way, and how much simpler life would be if you could just wipe the slate clean and start over? I have, lots of times. Those are what I call the 'I wouldn't start from here' moments, but, to be honest, while they're quite a natural phenomenon, especially in the early stages of planning, they're actually not terribly helpful to the task in hand – we are where we are, and it's your job to find a way forward. After all, if you don't do it, who will?

Rewind a bit, and consider where this all started – maybe you'd spotted the germ of an idea in a conference presentation somewhere that, if bent and twisted to suit your local circumstances, might very usefully answer a problem that's been niggling at you for ages? Perhaps you arrived at work one morning, all bright-eyed, fully fuelled on caffeine and inspired by a vision that came to you over the weekend, as in a dream … one of those 'Wouldn't it be great if we could …?' ideas? More likely, it might have been brewing for quite a while – you've spent several nights poring over the latest draft of an emerging university strategy, and the task now is to find a way in which the library can best support the wider organisation as it turns its corporate gaze towards the future and plots its course for the next few years. No wonder you needed that espresso! Take a step even further back – maybe you recall the echo of a government white paper, issued months ago, that fleetingly caught your attention because it sketched out vague aspirations concerning the future growth and general directions for higher education. Perhaps that's where it all started, and, filtered and cascaded down through various government departments, funding councils, research bodies and university executive planning sessions, this is where it's ended up – right there on the table in front of you. Now it's your turn to make a difference, to add your weight, and the weight of the library, to the tiller – universities are big ships that take a long time and a lot of effort to turn when a new direction is called for from the bridge. This is turning into a double-espresso day … chocolate may also be required before we've finished …

Now you know roughly what the university would like the future to look like, and, with your team, you've worked out what sort of services the library will need to provide to help make that future a reality. How different does that look to your current offering? How are you going to move from current state to future state? You begin, as the books tell you, with a SWOT analysis, and examining and considering the various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats informs you that, actually, it's not going to be quite as straightforward as you might have hoped. Your strengths might include a dedicated and imaginative management team, and your opportunities should certainly include using their skills and knowledge to create the range of resources and services you're going to need to deliver. However, maybe one or two members of the team take a more conservative view of library services than is helpful to your cause, and their world-view, and that of many of their followers, doesn't sit comfortably with your aspirations. Thinking about it, perhaps that air of conservatism, that culture of quiet complacency, that sense of liking things just the way they are, is something you've been struggling with for a while? If so, you might well find 'culture' writ large on your 'weaknesses' and 'threats' plotter – and if not addressed, and addressed effectively, this will certainly add to the difficulties of driving through your change agenda to a satisfactory conclusion.

Almost certainly, your embryonic strategic plans will include or take advantage of one or more of the internal drivers described above – especially advances in technology, which can both drive and enable quite radical changes in process, procedure, service provision and service development. These would hopefully appear as 'opportunities' or even 'strengths' on your SWOT analysis, but when you come to look at the wider picture, and as you begin to devise the strategic aims and objectives that will enable you to contribute to the university's aspirations, if you have recognised that some degree of cultural change is also going to have to take place in order to allow you to drive forward your strategies then I'm afraid you may well find yourself using the dreaded 't' word – transformation.

Creating a strategy for transformational change

Assuming that you've identified a need to introduce transformational change to underpin the strategic development of your organisation, next you need to define the steps you will take to accomplish it. Clearly your local circumstances will dictate largely what elements you might need to include, what objectives you need to bring to fruition, and local circumstances will certainly dictate the pace you can set in terms of completing the change process. Your strategic aims and objectives don't have to look and feel like anybody else's, but while you prepare you might benefit from reviewing what others have done under similar circumstances to identify any correlation between your problems and theirs; and much can be achieved through benchmarking exercises to note what remedies others have tried in order to fix their own particular issues. For example, you might find that other institutions have defined 'staff development' as a particularly important objective for them, and have therefore designed and implemented some interesting programmes to accomplish this element of their strategy. If you have identified a similar requirement for your organisation, or think this might become an important obstacle in the way of progressing you main objectives, you could do worse than borrow some of their ideas and make sure to build this in to your own strategic plans. The main criterion here, of course, is that while there is always something useful to learn from the experience of others, however appealing their solutions might seem they must always be tested against your own identified needs – a good question to ask yourself is always: 'Would this answer my problem; would this work here?'

However, we're getting ahead of ourselves. Strategies are wonderful, often powerful things. They can be the staff that supports your progress over the bumpy ground of implementation … or they can be a rod for your own back if they're badly designed or too inflexible. They take time, effort and not a little imagination to devise. If they enable you to achieve your vision, they will have been worth the investment – but it is your vision, developed with and shared by your management team, that underpins everything, and which should influence and inspire all of your strategic aims and objectives. So start by creating your vision.

Creating a vision is just that – 'creating'. It's not going to land on your desk, fully detailed and brilliantly coloured, just waiting for you to load into an off-the-shelf 'strategy development' software package. Tempting, I know, but hardly realistic. Creating a vision starts with a rough sketch: perhaps just the vague idea of building a library service that provides excellent resources in a comfortable, inviting environment, with eager, willing, knowledgeable, customer-focused staff who deliver advice, assistance and support where and when students and researchers need it. Armed with the outline, we start adding detail and colour. Expanding on the example above, we now have three basic elements to work with: excellent resources; an appropriate environment; and knowledgeable, customer-focused staff. Now work with the detail, and start to picture what these three elements actually mean – not, at this stage, how they might be achieved, but simply what comprises their various component parts. Taking just one of these – 'knowledgeable, customer-focused staff', for example – pick through what constitutes 'knowledge' and a 'customer focus' in your context. You now have two strands, two constituent parts, of just one of the elements that go to make up your complete vision. You are now in a position to begin developing the various tools you will need to ensure that you will achieve your vision – the tools that will help you to map out the journey between 'where we are now' and 'where we are going'. These fall into several categories: strategic aims and objectives; critical success factors (CSFs); and key performance indicators (KPIs).

Strategic aims are derived from the various elements that make up your vision. If, by way of an example, we work with the three elements described above (the provision of excellent resources, an appropriate environment, and knowledgeable, customer-focused staff), then these three key elements will form the strategic aims. The individual strategic aims need to be as few in number and as concise as you can make them, and must clearly support and feed into the vision they are intended to deliver. One strategic aim, identified from your vision analysis, might be that 'we will create a customer service environment which supports our academic community'. Sounds good, but at this stage it is really just a statement of intent. It needs to be deconstructed into the various constituent parts that will be necessary to achieve it. This process will result in the creation of several strategic objectives. In this case, one objective might involve gaining an in-depth understanding of what your customers expect from your staff in terms of service quality; another might involve ensuring that staff development and recruitment policies are focused upon the delivery of enhanced customer service outcomes; and yet another might involve the implementation of new service delivery models designed to ensure that customer support, and hence customer satisfaction, is prioritised.

For completeness, having carefully deconstructed your vision to draw out a set of strategic aims, and having worked hard to devise the strategic objectives that will deliver them, you'll now need to consider what steps you might take in order to measure progress towards achieving your goal. The two main constructs used by which organisations achieve this are CSFs and KPIs. Although sometimes confused, these two measurement tools are quite different in design, intent and role.

CSFs are, in essence, high-level descriptions of those elements which are absolutely crucial to the successful accomplishment of a strategic vision, aim or objective. Often misunderstood and undervalued, CSFs are in fact vital elements of the strategic planning process – they represent those vital areas in which satisfactory results will ensure successful performance for the project or organisation. They are the few key factors which must be got right in order for the organisation's goals to be attained. These are qualitative (rather than quantitative) measures used to indicate a desired state of achievement rather than to measure progress towards it, and their identification is important as this enables organisations to focus upon what actions and resources might be required in order to meet them. Of course, achieving a CSF is not the same as achieving the vision, but if the CSF has been correctly identified, designed and described, and if it offers an achievable and observable goal which has meaning and substance in terms of the accomplishment of the overall aim, it will contribute greatly to the success of the whole. Indeed, if an individual CSF is not accomplished, nor will be the vision it is intended to help deliver. If it is not accomplishable, either it was erroneously conceived or, more likely, circumstances will have changed so that it is no longer appropriate, in which case the basis on which it was predicated is under threat and it is quite likely that the strategic aims and objectives, if not the vision itself, may need to be revisited, reconsidered and modified in order to succeed.

Unlike strategic aims and objectives, CSFs are not definitively hierarchical in nature, and can be applied at any level – although clearly their construction and content will differ according to use – and they can be applied to prove the success of objectives or aims, or indeed applied even to the vision itself. The grammar used to write a strategic aim or objective is normally in the future tense. The objective – 'We will gain an in-depth understanding of what our customers expect from us in terms of service quality' – supports the strategic aim – 'We will create a customer service environment which supports our academic community.' Neither have yet been achieved (hence they are aims and objectives) but the CSFs that would prove their success should be written in the present tense; perhaps: 'We offer a customer service environment which supports our academic community.' The difference is clear and necessary – the CSF will have been accomplished only when we can speak of it in the present tense. The examples offered are simplistic, of course, and it may be that two or more CSFs need to be satisfied before the objective or aim can be confirmed as successful. Proving the successful accomplishment of the 'staff development' objective described above, for example, might well require a CSF to mark the fact that: 'Our staff are fully trained in the principles of customer service'; another to prove that: 'Our staff consistently deliver high levels of customer service'; and yet another confirming that: 'Our recruitment policies ensure that new staff are able to prove a history of high-order customer service delivery.' Each is important in its own right, and all are necessary to confirm the overall objective as having been successfully accomplished.

KPIs are specific measurements of performance which allow the distance of travel towards the satisfaction of each CSF to be recognised. Normally quantitative in nature, these measures are more commonly referred to in management practice than are CSFs, and indeed (as mentioned above) are often mistaken for them. In reality, as their name implies, KPIs are indicators of performance in key areas, and as such offer valuable insights into the rate and scale of progress towards the achievement of a goal. In this way they support CSFs, either proving their successful completion or revealing what has still to be done in order to do so, but they have quite a different role and purpose – while KPIs track movement and progress, CSFs mark accomplishment. KPI calculations are based on the raw numbers gathered through management information statistics (MIS), and interpret them in ways that will be helpful in understanding how variances in areas of an organisation's day-to-day transactional performance might influence progress towards the achievement of a strategic goal.

For instance, in order to satisfy a CSF such as 'Our physical and electronic collections meet the research needs of our academic community', it would be necessary to design KPIs that will helpfully illustrate progress towards achieving the goal. You might, wisely, take the pragmatic view that you can't please all of the people all of the time, and deem perhaps that '80 per cent of the university's research community is satisfied with the library's physical collections' and '90 per cent of the university's research community is satisfied with the library's electronic resource provision' are conclusions that would provide sufficient indicators of success. The MIS that need to be gathered should then follow naturally. For the above example these might include, among others: the number of members of the research community who use the library, against the number who don't; the number of physical items borrowed or consulted and the number of e-resources accessed; the number of interlibrary loan requests made; and the number of complaints, comments and suggestions for improvement offered. Calculations based on the statistics gathered will then offer a percentage value for the KPI – and thus indicate a current position on the trajectory to success.

As mentioned above, strategies are wonderful, often powerful things. They are, however, only as wonderful and powerful as the thought, work and effort that go into constructing them. The various tools described above are commonly employed in strategic planning to help organisations to progress with a degree of confidence that they are at least following a well-trodden path. They are not guarantees of success, of course – that is entirely dependent upon the appropriateness of the vision to the individual circumstances of the organisation, underpinned by the quality of the planning and implementation methods employed to enact it. A key impetus for the development of CSFs, for example, was the concept that factors that are measured are more likely to be achieved than those that are not; but the factors that do get measured need to be the right ones, those that will offer a meaningful outcome. Similarly, the MIS gathered in support of KPI calculations need to be those which will actually contribute meaningfully to an understanding of performance and progress, rather than simply those which are easy to measure.

It is often useful during the planning and design stages to test embryonic strategic objectives against the reality check provided by the SMART mnemonic, first mooted by Doran in 1981. While there is no definitive consensus on what the individual letters stand for, generally they are referred to as including:

S: Specific (or variously Significant, Stretching, Simple)

M: Measurable (or variously Meaningful, Motivational, Manageable)

A: Attainable (or variously Appropriate, Achievable, Agreed, Ambitious, Aligned, Aspirational)

R: Relevant (or variously Results-oriented, Resourced, Resonant, Realistic)

T: Timely (or variously Time-oriented, Time-bound, Time-specific, Time-limited, Tangible)

As described above, clarity of vision is vital. It must certainly offer an attractive, or at least a realistic and viable, way forward, but above all the vision needs to specifically and clearly describe the future state you want to create. If you intend your strategic vision to be anything of an agenda for change, it will certainly also need to be stretching and will need to describe a significant difference between 'where we are' and 'where we are going'.

Measuring and managing performance

In the broadest sense, the implementation of ‘performance management’ techniques should enable organisations to achieve and sustain success through a continuous process of improvement and development in terms of skills, processes, performance and business focus.

The basic tenet of performance management is that an organisation should be regarded holistically, each element contributing to and affecting the whole, so that the achievement of organisational success in the fullest sense requires, and is dependent upon, a constant striving for excellence in every aspect and at every level of the organisation towards, importantly, a common goal.

At a strategic level, the management of performance offers the opportunity to ensure that the contributions of each of the various elements effectively support and are aligned with the organisation’s overall aims and objectives. Dinesh and Palmer describe this function in terms of Kaplan and Norton’s (1996a and b) Balanced Scorecard approach:

> The objectives and measures for each of the four Balanced Scorecard categories (financials, customers, internal processes, learning/innovation) are directly derived from the organisation’s visions and strategy. Hence the resultant measures are aligned with the strategic direction of the firm. This consistency with strategic goals is expected to apply across all functional areas within the organisation (Hoffecker and Goldenberg, 1994) … as well as through existing hierarchical levels ... (Beischel and Smith, 1991).
>
> (Dinesh and Palmer, 1998: 365)

By using all four categories, the Balanced Scorecard draws together a wide variety of disparate yet important competitive strategic priorities. Further:

> [Kaplan and Norton, 1996a] show that the Balanced Scorecard has evolved into a strategic management system, with organisations using it to manage their strategy over the long term. This is done by using the measurement focus of the Scorecard for the following critical management processes (Kaplan and Norton, 1996b):
>
> - clarify and translate vision and strategy;
> - communicate and link strategic objectives and measures;
> - plan, set targets, and align strategic initiatives;
> - enhance strategic feedback and learning;
> - link measures with rewards.
>
> (Ibid.)

The Balanced Scorecard system, like its predecessor, Drucker's (1955) Management by Objectives (MBO) system, makes use of the theory that employee motivation can be greatly enhanced through his/her early involvement in the setting of individual and team goals, so that the linking of individual and organisational performance appraisal can be a very efficient method of aligning and realigning contributory elements with the overall strategic objectives of the organisation.

The establishment of quality standards, however, adds a different dimension. While the techniques described above can perform an important function in terms of integrating the various elements of an organisation into a cohesive entity, performance improvement can only be truly achievable in a climate which promotes strategically directed development as a basic necessity. Not only do quality standards offer the opportunity for benchmarking against other organisations involved in a similar business, and present customers and potential clients with a clear, measurable and comparable indication of the organisation's reputation in terms of work or service quality, but the effort and processes involved in attaining acceptable assessment levels offer an excellent opportunity to consider, review and improve the structure and character of the various elements of the whole organisation.

The identification of the training and developmental needs required in order to fulfil known quality standards can be achieved through the appraisal process, as part of an overall review programme, and can be further facilitated through such measures as the institutional adoption of continual improvement initiatives, the benefits of which include not only the development of a more acute awareness of the organisation's strategic objectives among staff, but an enhanced sense of ownership of an area of responsibility, a sense of reward through the corporate recognition of worth and, importantly, improvements in processes.

As Armstrong (2000) suggests, 'Performance management involves encouraging people to take charge of their own performance' (p. 52). Moreover, while both the appraisal system and the empowerment of staff through an active involvement in continuous improvement initiatives can provide the basis for identifying areas of weakness in preparation for improvement and development, they can also, more positively, provide '... the information required for career planning and continuous development by identifying strengths to be enhanced as well as weaknesses to be overcome' (ibid.). However, for such empowerments to be effective, staff must also be able to measure and therefore monitor progress towards their goals. As Armstrong and Baron (1998) (quoted in Armstrong, 2000: ibid.) point out:

> Measurement is an important concept in performance management. It is the basis for providing and generating feedback, it identifies where things are going well to provide the foundations for future success, and it indicates where things are not going so well, so that corrective action can be taken. In general, it provides the basis for answering two fundamental questions: 'Is what is being done worth doing?' and 'Has it been done well?'

The measurement of performance must be carefully designed, however, to achieve, as far as possible, a balance between quality of performance and that which is easily quantifiable. As Amaratunga and Baldry (2002) suggest, 'Measurement is not an end in itself, but a tool for more effective management. Results of performance measurement indicate what happened, not why it happened' (p. 218). The temptation, however, as illustrated by Armstrong (2000), is not only to apply too many measures, but to measure '… what is easy to measure. And in some jobs what is meaningful is not measurable and what is measurable is not meaningful.' It was asserted by Levinson (1970) that: 'The greater the emphasis on measurement and quantification, the more likely the subtle, non-measurable elements of the task will be sacrificed. Quality of performance frequently, therefore, loses out to quantification' (p. 53).

Further, emphasis must be placed upon the various criteria for performance measures, and upon their classification. As illustrated by Armstrong (2000: 54–5), the criteria should:

- be related to the strategic goals and measures that are organizationally significant and drive business performance;
- be relevant to the objectives and accountabilities of the teams and individuals concerned;

- focus on measurable outputs, accomplishments and behaviours that can be clearly defined and for which evidence can be made available;
- indicate the data or evidence that will be available as the basis for measurement;
- be verifiable – provide information that will confirm the extent to which expectations have been met;
- be as precise as possible in accordance with the purpose of the measurement and the availability of data;
- provide a sound basis for feedback and action; and
- be comprehensive, covering all the key aspects of performance, so that a family of measures is available.

The criteria should also be classified under the following headings:

- Finance – income, shareholder value, added value, rates of return, costs.
- Output – units produced or processed, throughput, new accounts.
- Impact – attainment of a standard (quality, level of service, etc.), changes in behaviour (towards both internal and external customers), completion of work/project, level of take-up of a service, innovation.
- Reaction – judgement by others, colleagues, internal and external customers.
- Time – speed of response or turnaround, achievements compared with timetables, amount of backlog, time to market, delivery times.

Where performance management systems have failed, this tends to be due more to difficulties in implementation rather than to fundamental flaws in design, although it could be argued that if a system proves impractical at that level then the design is at fault.

Dinesh and Palmer (1998: 366) suggest that problems experienced in implementing the MBO system, for example, might arise because of partial implementation due in large part to a failure on the part of management to fully understand the philosophical concepts which underpin it:

> In summary … MBO's failure may be due to a lack of understanding by management of one of MBO's core philosophies (organisational goal congruence), while at the same time implementing MBO for performance appraisal purposes alone (hence focusing on only one step in the MBO system) … The absence of the human relations model in MBO implementation is supported by some authors who consider MBO to be against total quality management (TQM) principles … TQM is a philosophy based on the human relations model in its focus on collaboration, empowerment, and teamwork. The mismatch of MBO with TQM is explained as too much focus on individual performance (therefore de-emphasising teamwork) and too much focus on quantitative goals rather than the goal of continuous improvement.

They go on to illustrate that the Balance Scorecard system may well succumb to a similar fate, in that while it seems to have been more successful than its predecessor in achieving its purpose in terms of both goal congruence and continuous improvement (possibly due to a wider understanding and greater acceptance of human relations among managers generally), difficulties encountered in implementation due to the increasing complexity of organisations may again lead many organisations to prefer to implement partially rather than fully:

> … one of the main weaknesses is the complexity and time involved in its development. The development of many Scorecards for different levels (and, in some cases, for all individuals) is needed if the Balanced Scorecard is to be carried out as intended. This process is very complex and time-consuming, and … the costs of such a procedure may well outweigh improvements in organisational performance … Partial implementation is likely to be an attractive option for businesses operating in current [fast changing] conditions.
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> (Ibid.: 367)

With regard to systems which primarily promote compliance with regulated quality standards, such as ISO 9000, care must also be exercised to avoid a situation where an overemphasis upon a strict compliance with the 'rules' by which approval is attained might lead organisations to undermine their own performance:

> In every case we studied we have found new activity, put in place because of ISO 9000 registration, making performance worse … Our printer announced that he could no longer supply us with quotations over the telephone. He had become registered to ISO 9000 and this meant that paperwork had to go between us. Even using the fax we found that quotations now took at least four days. We changed printers. The printer argued he was now a better quality company. We (his customer) thought his quality was worse … We call this thinking 'command and control'. Changing our thinking about management is the key to performance management.
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> (Seddon, 1997: 163–8)

Whereas the organisational benefits to be gained through the recognition and maintenance of high quality standards cannot be denied, the restrictive requirements imposed by the regime itself effectively distract attention from the needs of the real business situation and, in fact, may reinforce outmoded and fundamentally flawed management concepts: 'Some managers, and certainly the majority of assessors, believe an organization has "done quality" through having registered to ISO 9000, when nothing could be further from the truth' (ibid.: 168).

While, therefore, the generic intention of performance management systems is, as illustrated above, to allow organisations the opportunity to achieve and sustain success through a continuous process of improvement and development in terms of skills, processes, performance and business focus, with an increasingly high regard for the achievement and maintenance of quality standards, their generic qualities seem to indicate a high tendency towards at least partial failure in one or more key areas. There are a range of possible reasons for this. Many of the problems associated with MBO, for example, seem to stem from a mismatch between the concepts which underpin it and the management philosophies prevalent at the time of its introduction: many managers simply did not fully appreciate the importance of goal congruence in support of organisational success, implementing in preference just those elements which seemed to support the existing style rather than seizing the opportunity for radical change. In the case of the Balanced Scorecard system, a preference for partial implementation may be accounted for in terms of a reasoned management decision based upon avoiding a conflict between the perceived inflexibility inherent with a necessarily complex system and the need to maintain organisational flexibility in a climate of fast and constant change. The problems associated with quality management systems, on the other hand, may be located in their association with externally imposed regulatory control, and in the danger of allowing an over-reliance upon the practices required to maintain full compliance to take the place of managerial and organisational flexibility and self-assessed good practice.

While it seems, then, that there are a range of problems associated with the design and implementation of performance management systems generally, it might be suggested that their overriding beneficial qualities are located in a heightened perception of the contribution made by every aspect and element of an organisation, in the importance of achieving full integration between them, and in the promotion of continuous improvement and development towards the achievement of the common goal.

Creating the vision

We have discussed the importance of performance management and performance measurement in some depth above, describing them as vital components of strategic planning, since there is a strong need to establish clear, manageable stepping stones from which to judge progress towards the desired goal. Again, though, in order to create the capacity for change, very robust inspirational and motivational elements need to be present at every turn if change is to be accomplished to any extent.

Clearly, a vision which is unattainable, or which contains core elements that are unlikely to prevail for known internally or externally driven reasons, is highly unlikely to succeed. It is vital, therefore, that your strategy is achievable, even if not entirely unproblematic. What would be the point, for example, in creating a vision that required a doubling of staff in key areas when no funds have been identified to accomplish it, and when, perhaps, there is arguably no need for such investment in the first place? Appropriateness, therefore, is crucial to success – appropriateness in terms of ambition and the likelihood of executive support, and appropriateness in terms of the need for any given change. Certainly, a strategy that promotes transformational change, for example, whether implicitly or explicitly stated, must be an aspirational one – but it must also, arguably and sensibly, describe an attainable goal.

Similarly, a vision or strategy that has no relevance to the prevailing conditions is probably not worth the paper it's printed on. There is no point in change for the sake of it, nor in implementing services that are neither warranted nor justifiable. There is obviously a need for strategic aims and objectives to be sufficiently resourced (although in reality this might mean identifying resources from within), and if the vision resonates with the ambitions or interests of even a few of your staff, there is a good chance that they will become very helpful champions for your cause.

Strategies are children of their time, developed to answer not only questions raised today but also those anticipated to be of relevance over the period of the strategy's implementation. Most strategic plans are created to follow a short or medium time span, commonly three to five years. There are a number of reasons for this, of course, not least the need to keep strategies fresh and relevant. This is difficult, especially in these times of fast-moving technology-driven change and development. In other circumstances there will be other drivers, perhaps simply to prepare a service to deliver in appropriate ways against foreseen requirements. In the Exeter model, for instance, the various changes that contributed to its transformation were designed to take place over three years, and its cumulative fulfilment timed to coincide with the completion of the Forum building and associated library refurbishment works, the principal drivers for change.

However, whatever the basis for change, it is important that time-sensitive goals are built into strategic plans as these provide a very useful source of impetus and momentum towards the accomplishment of tangible objectives that might otherwise be subject to the drift and delay that would prove fatal to even the best laid, best supported vision.

What differentiates a transformational change strategy from other strategies, then, is not the overall structural shape of the strategy, nor the tools employed to support and realise it, but the content, tone, emphasis and intent. If anything, a vision for transformational change needs to be that much clearer and more vibrant, more descriptive of the future state and of its urgency than might otherwise be the case. The strategic aims also need to be strongly indicative and supportive of the direction that will be taken and the strategic objectives sufficiently robust and resilient to allow flexibility where and when necessary, while at the same time also ensuring that the overall vision will be achieved. Whether transformation is clearly enunciated from the outset as being the ultimate goal, or whether it is realised only later, in its achievement, the content of the strategic aims and objectives will certainly have announced that deep and wide-ranging change would be the necessary and intended outcome and effect. While the KPIs, and the MIS that feed them, will be appropriate to the needs of the CSFs they support, but otherwise without undue controversy, the design and tone of the language used to describe the CSFs will be such that their intention to drive through change is clear and incontrovertible.

In terms of applying testing of a transformational change strategy against the SMART mnemonic:

- while the message would still by necessity be specific, the tone would emphasise its significant and stretching qualities;

- while the importance of measurability in the various strategic objectives and CSFs would be very clear, the language used to describe them would be emphatically motivational and meaningful;
- while the strategy as a whole must of course be attainable and achievable within its lifetime, its tone, language and content would clearly proclaim the programme as ambitious, aspirational and, importantly, both appropriate to the present or future circumstances of the organisation and agreed and supported not only by the management team but by the executive and other influential bodies;
- while the strategy must have relevance to the needs of the service, the programme, while stretching and ambitious, needs also to have its resourcing requirements clearly considered and identified, and to be realistically achievable within a defined time frame; and
- for the reasons described above, while the strategy needs to be appropriate to its time, it will initiate and sustain impetus and momentum by clearly setting out logical, achievable, time-constrained steps that will lead to its successful completion.

The message will certainly be clear to those with an eye to read the signs, and will become even clearer through its implementation if not through staff and team briefings. Doubtless the prospect of change, if not its substance, will prove controversial and unpopular in some quarters; however, if, as described above, the vision is clear, if the strategic aims and objectives have been carefully thought through and are naturally derived from your strategic vision, they should be self-explanatory and justifiable. Initially your staff may not like your vision of the future state, but if it's the right vision it will be worth fighting for. That is when, with the full support and assistance of your management team, you need to employ your charisma, leadership skills and powers of persuasion to begin driving your agenda through; to identify and encourage champions and allies among your staff, to isolate some and encourage others to your cause. For the majority, watching and waiting on the sidelines for a reason either to support you or walk away, the proof of progress offered by the strategically-aligned KPIs, together with, ultimately, the well-documented and well-communicated proof of success offered by the achievement of your carefully designed CSFs, will begin the gradual, but unstoppable, movement towards the construction of a transformed future service.

3

Staff resistance to change: 'That's not how we do things here ...'

Abstract: This chapter explores the nature of staff resistance to both the idea and implementation of change, and the need to change minds and instil staff confidence in the change strategy. It also considers the importance of 'selling' the vision, and the importance of creating a robust, inclusive 'change message' as a means of helping employees through the various stages of denial, resistance, exploration and commitment that they move through when approaching a change scenario. This chapter also explores the relationship between restructuring and employee engagement and participation in the change process; and considers the merits of embedding continuous improvement processes as an aid to creating the opportunity for cultural change.

Key words: strategic vision, change message, continuous improvement, the Pareto Principle, restructuring.

Changing minds

Having spent time with your management team creating and perfecting a bold but appropriate and attractive vision of the future state for your organisation, designing a robust strategy for change and planning the various tools that will help deliver it, the next phase is to put it into practice by creating the opportunity for your vision to become reality, to take root and flourish in the real world outside the boardroom. To do this, you need to very carefully design an implementation plan which will enable your employees to fully understand, appreciate and adopt the concepts you are offering. You've done the exciting bit – this is where the hard work begins. As Elizondo-Montemayor et al. (2008) point out: 'Reading about strategies to facilitate change and avoid resistance is easy. Designing such strategies might also be relatively simple. However, implementing strategies and processes to make change happen is much more complex. It requires planning, time, effort, dedication, commitment, consistency, determination and, most of all, belief and passion' (p. 99). As mentioned in the previous chapter, this really is where, with the full support and assistance of your management team, you need to employ your charisma, leadership skills and powers of persuasion to begin driving your agenda through – but these powers alone won't automatically deliver a successful implementation. Surprisingly high numbers of change initiatives fail to deliver the expected results, largely due to a lack of staff commitment resulting from poor communication strategies during the introduction and implementation stages (Beer et al., 1990; Stanleigh, 2008). You need to use your skills responsibly and carefully, to deliver the right message in the right way, to sell your vision to real people – individuals who have their own concerns, views and agendas, and who will either make your dreams come true or grind them into dust at your feet: 'it doesn't matter if the management consultant or the library director has a great idea – it is not going to work if the staff don't want it to work' (Webster and Gardner, 1975: 18).

The first problem is that, unless your change proposals involve little more than a massive hike in salaries (and, even then, there are bound to be some who would ask where the money is coming from!), the initial reaction from most employees will probably be negative. Most people simply don't like change, and resist it instinctively: 'People don't want to change. They don't believe in the change. They often feel demoralized by change initiatives' (Stanleigh, 2008: 34). The second problem is, of course, that the changes you want to introduce are unlikely to result in an immediate difference to people's pay packets. Instead, delivering your vision will almost certainly involve change, probably quite deep and substantial change, at all levels – directional, structural and individual. As Stanleigh points out, 'leaders develop clear strategies around re-design, restructuring, new efficiencies, and so on, hoping to get everyone to share their vision and create change programs around these strategies. However, more often than not, they end up fighting fires and crises' (ibid.). It is at the individual level that these fires and crises begin, so the first priority is to consider and address individual concerns. Individuals need to be readied for organisational change at an individual level, and helped through the process of changing their first, instinctively negative, reaction into a positive and beneficial one. 'It is people who make up organisations and it is they who are the real source of, and vehicle for, change. They are the ones who will either embrace or resist change. If organisational change is to take hold and succeed then organisations and the people who work in them must be readied for such transformation' (Smith, 2005: 408).

You need to help them change their minds, as much as you need to have them change their practices.

Selling the vision

How often, I wonder, have change agents met with the response, 'That's not how we do things here'? Worse still are retorts such as, 'It didn't work last time they tried something like that here' – with the emphasis on 'they', meaning the management team or their predecessors … somebody 'up there' who tried to make the employees do something they didn't want to do, to make changes they couldn't see the point in, or to work in ways they didn't approve of. This unhelpful division between those introducing a change strategy and those expected to carry it out is indicative of individuals feeling that a change in which they have no personal commitment and investment is being imposed upon them; it is perceived as an unwelcome imperative over which they have little or no control other than to opt out. More often than not, the root cause of employees' failure to understand and connect with a proposed change is caused by, '… leaders' oversight of the importance of communicating a consistent change message. The change message both conveys the nature of the change and shapes the sentiments that determine reactions to the change' (Armenakis and Harris, 2002: 169). Clearly there is a need to ensure that staff reactions to change are, if not initially positive, then at least open to argument and explanation – once ears and minds are closed to a change message it is very much more difficult to restart positive negotiations and to encourage forward momentum. Inertia will surely follow, and, with it, the failure of the project is almost inevitable. As Smith (2005: 409) points out, 'change efforts need to achieve momentum and a sense of urgency. Many change efforts founder on the fact that not enough people in the organisation perceive and/or accept the need for change. Creating a felt need for change is thus an important first step.'

Employees who feel involved in the process at an early stage, and who are encouraged to actively participate in its design and implementation, are much more likely to quickly develop a stronger sense of ownership of the change programme and to take responsibility for making it work. Brookes (2011: 19), explaining the benefits of initiating an early and continuous dialogue with staff, and highlighting the benefits of leaders modelling positivity, confidence and commitment throughout a change programme, points out that:

> Positive change requires a great deal of positive energy and emotions, including confidence, hope, belief, creativity and persistence. By adopting an appreciative approach, I could support the team to create these conditions and transform the ward into a place people are proud to be part of and where they want to work … As a result, staff now report that they feel they 'own the dream'; they have played an active part in creating it, so are positive about embracing change and accepting that things must move on.

The message here, of course, is clearly that dialogue, initiated and conducted in a positive and constructive way, and encouraging inclusivity and participation at all levels, helps to avoid the barriers that employees can erect between themselves and the change agent – and, indeed, the barriers that change agents, perhaps unknowingly, can erect between themselves and their employees. Dialogue can bring with it the added benefit of utilising staff knowledge, detail-level experience and expertise to bring about even better outcomes than might otherwise have been envisaged. As Webster and Gardner (1975) advise, 'It is apparent that staff involvement in a carefully defined decision-making, policy-making, or change strategy leads to better decisions, better policies and new programmes. This is due in part to the quality of ideas generated in such a climate and in part to the staff commitment to solutions that they had a share in designing' (pp. 17–18). Additionally, at the all-important level of the individual, it offers opportunities for colleagues to fully understand and appreciate their part in the change process itself and to explore with their leaders how the future will unfold for them within the changed organisational state: 'Helping people to clearly see their role in the new ways of doing things can build confidence in, and commitment to, the changes before they begin and once they are underway (Smith, 2005: 410).

So clearly, while you might have an excellent product to work with, i.e. your perfectly formed vision, strategic aims and objectives which, while at once ambitious and challenging, realistic and appropriate, and through which the meaning, content, tone, emphasis and intent are crystal clear, you still have to sell it to those who are going to either make it or break it – your employees. How your change message is imparted to employees, then, is critical to success.

For Armenakis and Harris (2002) '… an effective vision must include more than a goal, it must be … presented with passion, emotion and conviction [not forgetting that] effective visions must be salient (i.e. real and persuasive rather than just "words") to individuals … salience is created by three factors: vision articulation, demonstrated shared leadership support for the vision, and the perceived appropriateness of the vision' (p. 180). Stemming from this, they suggest that there are five key change messages that should form an integral part of every change message, every meeting and interaction. These include *discrepancy*, *efficacy*, *appropriateness*, *principal support* and *personal valence*. To paraphrase their definitions of these five themes:

- *Discrepancy*: addresses the sentiment regarding whether the change is needed, and is typically demonstrated by clarifying how an organisation's current performance differs from the desired end-state.

- *Efficacy*: refers to the sentiments regarding confidence in one's ability to succeed – individuals will only be motivated to attempt a change if they have confidence that the change, their leaders and, importantly, they as individuals can succeed.
- *Appropriateness*: the appropriateness of the change is important because individuals may feel that some form of change is needed but may disagree with the specific change being proposed. Such disagreement is well-intentioned and beneficial, meaning that the individual is engaging with the process; it is important to consider that if the change message cannot convince others of the appropriateness of the change, then efforts should be made to reconsider whether the change message, or indeed the change, really is appropriate.
- *Principal support*: change requires resources and commitment to see it through to institutionalisation. Employees may well have seen many change efforts stall due to lack of resources and executive support, and in consequence may have become sceptical and unwilling to support the change until a clear demonstration that sufficient resources are available and that executive backing is strong and unambiguous.
- *Personal valence*: members of the 'change target' (i.e. those employees most affected by the proposed change) are interested in the effects on them as individuals – 'What's in it for me?' It is important for the change leader to emphasise that members of the change target will be intrinsically involved in assessing the distribution of positive and negative outcomes, the fairness of the change and the manner in which individuals are treated. It is important to recognise that if an individual's self-interest is threatened (explicitly or implicitly), a proposed change will likely be

> resisted. Change must therefore be of benefit to members of the change target, so the message must recognise and reflect this. In answer, the benefits of the proposed changes might be described in various ways: intrinsic (for example that they should take pride in what they will have helped to create (perhaps a world-leading organisation)) and extrinsic (for example that there might be the possibility (or likelihood) of increased opportunities for advancement and development for the individuals concerned).

One might add 'timescales' to this otherwise excellent list – after all, this forms an intrinsic part of the SMART mnemonic. Certainly, one of the first questions I would ask as a 'change target' would be when it was proposed that these changes take place – when the axe would fall – and having been on the receiving end of unannounced change, imposed from on high, and having been left with little or no option but to accede, I can vouch from experience that it would have been much more comfortable to have been forewarned, to have prepared myself by taking part in the debate, and, probably, to have reached the same conclusions that led to the change. Resentment, no matter how well disguised, lingers long.

Consider yourself as a change target – what questions would you ask, what debates would you enter into, given the opportunity? Might they include questions around why the proposed change is necessary? Even if you agreed that things could be improved, that some sort of change was necessary, if not inevitable, might you question why the proposed change was particularly appropriate as an answer? Perhaps, having been one of those who had seen similar proposals come and go in the past, each in turn defeated by a lack of substantial executive support, and in consequence an insufficiency in terms of resources, might you question whether such support was actually going to materialise this time? Might you question, overtly or covertly, whether the current leadership could actually pull off what they're planning? Have they really got what it takes to complete the changes they have planned – indeed, have you? Finally, and quite naturally, might you wonder what the benefits or – heaven forfend – the disadvantages might be for you personally? Might there be some bad news on the horizon, or perhaps some sort of reward or recognition to be gained by taking part? If not of monetary value, then might there be at least some sort of enhancement to your reputation and standing, or perhaps simply an appeal to your job satisfaction or sense of vocation? I would wonder – and I'm quite certain I wouldn't be the only one asking such questions.

Conversely, consider yourself as a change target who wasn't given the opportunity to consider, and discuss with your leader, the merits or demerits of a change proposal. You might, among your friends and colleagues, ask the same questions, but, probably, from an entirely different standpoint and with an entirely different conclusion. You, and no doubt your colleagues (and, importantly, anyone else who'll listen), might well come to the conclusion that, since your feedback was too unimportant (or was it perhaps that 'they' just knew you'd ask difficult questions?), you'll take no further part in proceedings. And why should you? After all, they haven't proved to you that the changes they are proposing are either necessary or appropriate, they haven't explained how they're going to pay for them, and you doubt very much that 'them up there' would back them for long anyway – and apart from anything else, why should you bother? You won't get anything for the extra effort, not even job satisfaction. The world will go on, you'll get told what to do and you'll do it because you need the money – and when it all comes tumbling down it won't be you who's to blame …

Nor should it be – the blame will sit firmly and securely on the shoulders of the leader who didn't communicate, or who was afraid to; the leader who imposed change and expected compliance without question; the patriarch (or matriarch) who didn't have time to undertake more than a cursory staff consultation exercise, and who forgot that 'The people in organisations can be either the key to achieving effective change, or the biggest obstacles to success. The price of failed change efforts can be high, including widespread loss of credibility on the part of leaders and managers and entrenchment of employee opposition to future change efforts' (Smith, 2005: 411).

Stark choice, hey? The lesson, I think, is that you must either do it properly and well, or not bother at all. Do it badly, or half-heartedly, and your vision, its supporting strategic aims and objectives, the various CSFs and KPIs you worked so hard to perfect … will all come crashing down on top of you. Probably the most important CSF of all, then, is getting employee support for your dream.

Creating the opportunity for cultural change

Consider the nature of your organisational culture. Is it mostly conservative, comfortable, risk-averse, perhaps at times even imbued with a general air of negativity? Or is it more liberal, forward-looking, positive, risk-tolerant? If it's the latter, then you probably won't have too much to worry about. Your staff will already be used to and prepared for change, if not exactly overjoyed at the prospect; they might argue and debate, negotiate and complain, but they will be involved, confident, positive and, importantly, engaged with the process. They might not like your proposals, but they'll let you know … and with luck and good negotiating skills they will work with you to improve and refine your proposals to create a change programme that you and they can take forward to success.

However, if it's the former, you'll need to work tirelessly to get your staff to listen at all, let alone debate, and their preparedness and commitment will be hard won. This, though, is exactly the sort of challenge that transformational change is all about – manoeuvring the organisational culture, and hence your staff, into a better position to accept, work with and implement beneficial change.

In the majority of cases, it's not so much that the staff can't change, it's more that they don't accept the need for change; if they don't accept the need for change, they'll have no commitment to it; and if they have no commitment to it, they'll have no confidence that change would either be possible to achieve, or would add benefit to the services they already provide. They need help and support to change their minds, to be given time and space to vent their feelings openly and without prejudice, and to, gradually, come to terms with the concept that change is not only needed and justifiable, but inevitable. The various phases that employees move through on their change journey are well-known and documented, and it is recognised that individuals pass through periods of denial, resistance, exploration and commitment in turn. People move through these various stages at their own pace, and it is vital, especially during periods of deep and dramatic change, that they should be allowed to do so. As Stanleigh (2008) comments, 'Too often, management fails to recognize that adjustment to change takes time. They very quickly expect employees to move from the denial phase to the commitment phase and fail to recognize that each individual will go through all of the phases at different paces. It is never uniform' (p. 35).

It is unwise, however, to leave people to make this journey by themselves, without encouragement and support. In this effort, great benefit can be derived from management-arranged, but independently facilitated, 'change awareness' and 'understanding change' seminars, through which affected staff are given the opportunity to compare notes with other affected colleagues, to speak freely, and to come to understand that the various feelings they are experiencing are quite normal and natural, if perhaps not particularly comfortable for them as individuals. Through these seminars, and armed with a better awareness of the effects that change can have on people, and especially armed with the realisation that colleagues are either experiencing the same feelings or have moved on already to a different phase, individuals and teams find themselves better able to understand and support each other through the various stages. Such sessions are very useful indeed, and should support, but not take the place of, a manager's or team leader's accessibility and availability to talk to individuals or teams about their own particular concerns and aspirations. The leader's openness to frank discourse and discussion, throughout the change process, is vital not only as a source of reassurance and encouragement to individuals, but, by confirming employees' sense of inclusion and partnership in the effort, offers an important lifeline for employees as they tentatively move towards exploration and commitment.

Above all, having thrown the cards of change onto the table for all to see, management involvement throughout the change process needs to be consistent and encouraging, and, especially in discussions with both individuals and teams, undertaken with tact, honesty, fairness, openness and foresight. As discussed above, individuals need to know clearly what their role is to be both during and beyond the period of change, and need the reassurance and clarity of this knowledge in order to move past denial and resistance towards commitment. It seems self-evident that an ill-considered remark at this stage, especially if it suggests that an employee's role, or the fate of their team, hasn't been properly considered as part of the overall scheme, will at best delay progress through the change parabola, and at worst do great and widespread damage to the programme. People talk – in team meetings, over the water-cooler, to colleagues in other sections; bad news travels fastest, and the fires of rumour can get out of control quickly – and if their 'What's in it for me?' question receives a negative response, or even an unsatisfactorily incomplete one, this will be interpreted as being either bad news for them, or revealing management's lack of planning, control and interest in their welfare. It won't be long before everyone knows and everyone begins to have their own doubts … confidence, whether personal or corporate, is easily shattered and difficult to recover. Hence the need for very careful, very clear and comprehensive planning at the earliest stage; once an announcement is made, once a strategy for change has been launched, people will very quickly pick up on policies and decisions that seem to have been made on a whim. If a plan is firm, reconciled and complete, let this be known – and stick to it. If there are interim or incomplete elements, or unknown factors that might affect parts of the plan, it's important to be honest and make these transparent also, ideally leaving such areas open for staff consultation, thus providing avenues through which employees can exert influence, and encouraging their engagement with the process through suggestion and feedback.

Widening individual perspectives

From the above, it should be clear that, having devised a brilliant strategy that will enable your service to most appropriately meet the expectations placed upon it, actually getting it implemented and embedded is by far the more difficult phase of any agenda for change – and the deeper into the culture of your organisation you need to drill in order to bring this about, the more challenging it becomes. Time, resources and indeed management energy levels are not infinite, so it is worth giving some thought as to how best to focus your attention in order to create enough impetus and momentum to bring it to fruition within an acceptable time frame.

Most of us will be familiar with variations of the Pareto Principle, the 80/20 rule, which indicates that:

- 80 per cent of sales come from 20 per cent of the sales force;
- 80 per cent of complaints come from 20 per cent of the customers;
- 80 per cent of the work is done by 20 per cent of employees.

A derivative of this principle can be applied to change management situations, and offers a rough, rule-of-thumb means of focusing effort and attention where it is going to have maximum impact. This is commonly known as the 20/60/20 rule:

- 20 per cent of employees will be engaged very quickly with the proposed change, and levels of commitment in this group will be high.
- 60 per cent of employees will neither engage immediately with the change agenda, nor will they immediately resist it. They will sit on the fence, and see what happens.
- 20 per cent of employees will refuse to engage with the programme, and will be very reluctant indeed to show any sign of committing to it.

Many change management experts suggest that there is no need to spend time nurturing those who are quickly supportive of the change, since they need no persuading to engage with it and are already committed to its fulfilment; and that there is no point in worrying about those who refuse to engage at all, since this would be a waste of time and energy. Rather, all attention and energy should be focused on building relations with and persuading the middle 60 per cent, as these, together with those already on board, will offer sufficient weight of numbers to drive the changes through.

I disagree with this view, however, preferring a less extreme response to those in the minority sectors. While I certainly agree that the reluctant few would undoubtedly absorb a disproportionate amount of time and energy in trying to persuade them to alter their rigidly held views, I consider that, since this group may well contain a number of individuals whose expertise and experience might prove invaluable in the future, it is better at the very least to keep them firmly 'in the loop', and certainly to leave a door open for them to join in when they're ready. For some, of course, that day may never come, and there may be a need, at a suitable point, to engage them, if not in the project, then in difficult conversations.

Conversations with those at the other end of the spectrum, of course, are considerably easier and more palatable to hold. Again, rather than ignoring them and leaving them to their own devices, my preference is to engage them even more thoroughly in taking the change agenda forward. As mentioned above, management resources are not infinite, and with the best will in the world it isn't possible to be everywhere at once and to offer everyone as much individual time as they might need and deserve. Better, and more effective, then, is to recruit champions from within the converted, especially those who naturally hold the respect of their peers, to act on your behalf as local change agents, and, by encouraging them to model the new practices, to counter rumour and to influence those in the middle ground by their example and enthusiasm, enlist their help in gaining the impetus and momentum needed to drive change forward.

Deconstructing and reconstructing teams

As discussed above, while organisational change projects may have a compelling vision supported by ambitious, well-designed strategic aims and objectives, and fully focused CSFs and KPIs to track and monitor the progress of change, effective change will not reach a successful conclusion unless employee support, expertise and experience can be mustered and brought to bear to ensure that important details are enhanced, or at the very least not overlooked, at key points throughout the process. This is especially important if, as is often the case, structural change is planned or envisaged as part of, or to facilitate key elements of, the overall change programme.

There is really little point at all in restructuring without sound, arguable reasons linked to and firmly rooted in the strategic aims of the service. To do otherwise, to restructure without a clear strategic mandate and purpose, would be to tinker unnecessarily with the fabric of the organisation, and would send out entirely inappropriate signals to employees, i.e. that management have decided that some sort of change is necessary, but have little real concept of what this change should achieve. Restructuring might be small and local (perhaps to reinforce an important but undermanned team) or universal (perhaps to ensure that a better balance is established between truck sales, car sales and spares – or, more likely in the case of an academic library, to enable the frontline team to better fulfil the library's customer service agenda). It matters not a lot what the particular organisational emphasis is, as long as a restructuring exercise is based firmly on supporting or enabling its strategic aims.

This is important, because, as might be imagined, changes to an organisational structure must necessarily have a deep effect on its employees. Teams may need to be moved from one line management structure to another, and team members may need to be transferred between teams in order to achieve the necessary rebalancing. At each juncture, the effect on individuals can be profound, with loyalties and friendships disrupted, desks moved, and with the potential of additional workload needing to be assumed by former colleagues, or new skills and practices learned.

Few changes can be more disruptive and disorientating for individuals than staff restructuring, and this needs to be recognised, respected and managed well if it is to achieve the desired goals successfully. Exactly the same change journey will apply to this as to any other change, and staff who may have moved on from resistance to experimentation, or even to commitment, might well find themselves back at square one again. However, once clearly demonstrated as having a sound basis in the strategic development of the organisation, restructuring exercises also present some excellent opportunities for staff involvement at the design and implementation stages. At appropriate levels, this might include participation ranging from taking responsibility for the design of an optimum staffing structure to meet the revised organisational requirement, to the purely logistical movement of people and desks etc. Whatever the level of involvement, it is the act of involvement that matters here as much as anything else. Importantly, of course, and depending on local circumstances and the nature of the individuals involved, some well-planned, timely and well-executed team-building exercises will often have a very positive effect – getting used to working with a new set of people, even if they've been coffee-time colleagues for some while, can be quite unsettling, and individuals may well benefit from this type of intervention in order to bring a new team together as a functional unit. Employee involvement in the change process, as discussed previously, is a vital contributory factor to the overall success of the project.

Embedding a 'continuous improvement' philosophy

As discussed above, strategic organisational development projects, great or small, have a defined lifespan, often between three and five years. There are a number of good reasons for this, including, importantly: the need to fulfil a particular externally promoted change in direction within a given time span; and the difficulties involved in second-guessing market trends, developments in technology and changes in external requirements which might well facilitate new directions in the delivery of services, or influence the very nature of services delivered in the future. For example, who would have imagined, five years ago, while RFID (radio frequency identification) in libraries was still in its infancy, that many of the 'off-the-wall' ideas and dreams of those then helping to pioneer its development and implementation might actually come to fruition and present real possibilities for the development of new library services today (Mossop, 2008), as many have, with the development of a standard national data model (ISO 28560-2) and manufacturers rising to ever more ambitious customer demand? Who, five years ago, would have imagined that student fees might more than treble, leading to an increasing awareness of the need for enhanced customer service skills within universities? A lot can change in five years, and the next five years will bring still more change.

Academic libraries clearly need to prepare now for changes they can't yet envisage, increasing the importance and urgency of acquiring new levels of flexibility and change-readiness in order to seize opportunities and respond to new demands as they present themselves. Strategies and structures developed now, if thought through and designed well, will serve for the medium term, but managing how the changes they will bring now are implemented will, if done well, ensure that both management and employees are ready, willing and able to respond to new challenges and changes as they arise. To achieve this, it is vital that programmes of continuous improvement form an integral part of the current change agenda. A continuous improvement process is a means by which an organisation can ensure that strategically influenced change agendas can be extended by creating and sustaining a culture of continuous review, assessment and improvement past the formal lifetime of the current strategy. In this way, an organisation deliberately seeks to create a positive and dynamic working environment, encouraging cross-team problem solving and a shared responsibility for maintaining a wide and continuous market awareness to ensure that the validity, quality and appropriateness of its services are optimal at all times. Based on the theory that small, incremental changes maintain both change-readiness and service currency, a continuous improvement process involves all members of staff in a continuing process of self-review, team review, observation, idea generation and service improvement concept generation which, as the ideas come from the employees themselves, is likely to be less radically different to the current state than those ideas generated during once-in-five-years' major strategic reviews, and so easier, less time-consuming and less expensive to implement.

While, clearly, some coaching and training, to appropriate levels, in the more technical aspects of process review and project management, together with active encouragement in the form of staff reward and recognition schemes, might be necessary initially to ensure that staff have sufficient confidence and incentive to proceed, the attractions of initiating a forward-looking, proactive culture of continuous improvement in place of what might previously have been a static, conservative and reactive one far outweigh any difficulties that might be encountered in its implementation.

Better, perhaps, is to guide organisational growth and development by encouraging the organisation to improve and rejuvenate itself on a continuous basis, largely from within, rather than face the pain of reinventing, re-inspiring and transforming it every five years. Though, of course, to make that possible, you need to have transformed the organisation already into one that is flexible, change-ready and forward-looking – one that doesn't think, as its first response: 'That's not how we do things here'!

4

It's all about the people

Abstract: This chapter explores the role of leaders in engendering staff support for a change agenda, and the need to instil in individuals at all levels the confidence to trust both in the overall vision and direction and in their own ability to initiate beneficial change at a local level. The chapter discusses the roles of innovation and intrapreneurialism in creating a culture in which new ways of thinking are actively encouraged as a means of ensuring a continuing state of change-readiness, and goes on to consider the importance of focused recruitment, staff development and motivation policies, the maintenance of high levels of operational environment awareness and the need for planned periods of review and reflection.

Key words: change leadership, entrepreneurs, intrapreneurs, innovation, recruitment, reward, staff development, market awareness, review, reflection.

Challenges to change

Probably the greatest challenge to an organisation's change agenda, but at the same time its greatest asset, is its people. Clearly, this starts with the management team, since the quality of their vision, their strategies and, importantly, their change message, will necessarily affect not only the nature of the changes required to bring their vision to life, but also the very quality and longevity of those changes. Fundamentally, though, while service change might well be the overall aim of the programme, and modified systems and processes will almost certainly emerge as by-products and enablers throughout the effort, it is the people who need to change first. With them, almost anything is possible. Without them, nothing else will happen, so, as discussed at length in Chapter 3, 'The leader must strive to motivate and empower followers to accept change, to buy-in into shared vision and undertake challenging goals' (Francis-Nurse, 2007).

Accepting, rather than denying, that change is necessary and beneficial, and accepting, rather than rejecting, the fact that change is inevitable, will be enabled through discussion, debate and through the influence and advocacy of colleagues. Getting people to take their first steps towards experimenting with the new regimes, however, rather than hankering after the old, requires both encouragement from outside and confidence from within. Confidence, in this context, is multifaceted; in individuals, it comes from interaction with their peers, observing the positive attitude of colleagues towards change; from understanding their own role in taking change forward and embedding it; from simply knowing what they're supposed to be doing and how they're supposed to be doing it, which is especially important where new roles are to be assumed and new skills practised; from having confidence both in the new strategies and in management's ability to bring them to a successful conclusion; and from having confidence in their own capacity to fulfil what's expected of them and to find satisfaction in doing it.

However, 'Confidence isn't something easily manufactured. A politician pleading for confidence in his party or a business leader asking the same for his firm or even a bishop for his church won't get very far simply by seeking confidence in isolation. Confidence grows through good decisions made or visions clearly set out. The building of confidence takes time. And confidence in institutions is rare without trust in people'

(James, 2012). Employees need to trust that their leaders will support them through the process of change, that they will ensure that they are given appropriate training to enable them to acquire the new skills they need. Employees also need to trust that they will be given time to adapt to the new regime, to practice their new skills and to grow into their new roles in a safe and encouraging environment that understands that honest mistakes are inevitable and forgivable, and that experience takes time to accumulate and assimilate. Similarly, the management team needs to have absolute confidence in the rightness of their vision, to believe that it is the most appropriate way forward for the organisation, and that their strategic aims and objectives will fulfil the vision. They need also to have confidence in their people, to believe that with appropriate training and development, encouragement and support, they will engage fully with the strategy and bring it to fruition. They need to trust in their own ability to create a change message that will motivate as well as reassure, encourage as well as excite, and inspire as well as challenge – and to trust that the initial impetus offered by their change message, supported by well-timed, strategically aligned training and development exercises and continuous encouragement, monitoring and feedback, will give their followers the confidence they need to rise to the challenges set for them, and to change.

While they might seem on the surface to be all-encompassing and complete in their own right, large change programmes are in reality made up of lots of smaller changes, usually interlinked and often interdependent, which, when viewed together, bring about the holistic entity. Designing how these smaller elements fit together and support each other, and in what order they need to occur, is clearly the function of the strategic planning process. The design detail for these smaller parts, however, is often more effectively managed at a local level, where the process or function expertise lies, and it is here that teams and individuals can make a real difference to the overall success of the programme – and timely, well-placed challenges to solicit engagement at project level can have a profound and beneficial effect on the participating individuals and teams. Even for those employees who might yet harbour strong doubts about the veracity of the strategic plan as a whole, the recognition that their expertise and experience is still valuable, that their contribution is still needed by the organisation, and that they as individuals still have a valid and important role to play, engenders a strong sense of ownership, at least of the project in hand, and with it a determination to bring it to a successful conclusion.

The challenge for their leaders, here, is to ensure that the completed project will contribute effectively to the wider picture – by setting ambitious but achievable project goals and parameters – and is given every chance to succeed, by arranging training and development exercises and facilitating cross-team working as appropriate, and by offering encouragement and guidance throughout. It is also important, however, as part of the staff development process, that project completion is marked and celebrated. While participants might not fully realise the relevance of their contribution in terms of strategic fit and integration, etc. (and may not even particularly care at this stage), individuals at all levels really do appreciate having their efforts and accomplishments recognised. In this context, whether a reward is tangible or ephemeral isn't the point, it's the recognition, the sense of inclusion, and the knowledge of having made a valuable contribution that matters. It's surprising how far even a simple 'Thank you' to an employee will go towards generating confidence in their own ability to overcome challenges, enthusiasm for further change projects and commitment to the programme as a whole.

Encouraging innovation and intrapreneurialism

As discussed previously, ensuring employee engagement with any change process is a vital component to its success. Given that, for most academic libraries at least, financial resources are finite and limited, and yet many of their staff are almost necessarily, by the nature of their work, inquisitive, well-educated and dedicated individuals, gifted in their own right and with skills that too often go unrecognised and unused, it would seem wasteful not to take advantage of this valuable resource both as a means of creating new and improved services and in their delivery, and as a means of focusing employee attention firmly on, and generating their enthusiasm for, achieving the future state.

According to Ross (1987), 'All organizations were founded by entrepreneurs and hence were, by definition, entrepreneurial – at least in the early stages. At this point in organizational life, the strategy, culture, and values are those of the founder' (p. 22). However, as the organisation grows in size and complexity so does the complex network of structures and systems through which it operates, and which exist '… for the purpose of minimizing and controlling risk and ensuring that organizational members perform according to a plan of action. Policies, procedures and plans are established to avoid mistakes in the future' (ibid.: 25). Although necessary, these bureaucracies, focusing as they must upon structure and system rather than people, if allowed to become the dominant culture can cause in organizations '… the loss of what got them big in the first place: innovation' (ibid.: 22). While of course this might seem less applicable to academic libraries, or indeed to many not-for-profit organisations, the main thrust of the argument holds true for all – that following an initial burst of energy and zeal during the foundation years, large, complex organisations, almost by default, to avoid mistakes and to maintain and enhance their increasingly custodial role, become progressively more conservative and risk-averse as they grow and age. As their rules and operating procedures become more complex, so they become more bound to them and bound by them. While this is quite an understandable phenomenon for libraries, given the importance of their role within universities, it can lead in some cases to stagnation and a loss of flexibility with which to respond to new developments.

If stagnation is to be avoided, there is a need for organisations to ensure that their corporate culture both recognises the value of, and actively embraces, change initiatives from within; that its structures and systems are sufficiently flexible to encourage and enable innovative ideas to flourish; and that fresh concepts are not only encouraged but are allowed sufficient time and resources to be fully tested, their potential appreciated and (where appropriate) allowed to contribute to if not influence the organisation's strategic direction. Resistance to change and innovation from within, and the maintenance of a culture in which the harnessing of entrepreneurial energy from within is avoided rather than encouraged, begs the question of what happens to those change-motivated individuals who find that working in an atmosphere in which '… passive and cynical employees are everywhere to be found' (Coulson-Thomas, 1999: 260) is stifling and not conducive for opportunity.

Even where the challenge is accepted, where the need to change and evolve is acknowledged and innovation is encouraged, not all change initiatives succeed. Kotter (1995), in a study of 100 top-management-driven corporate transformation initiatives, concluded that more than half did not survive the initial phases, and according to Peter Senge (1990, 1995), perhaps as many as two-thirds of change initiatives grind to a halt because of their failure to produce the hoped-for results.

Perhaps, then, the important function of management in the furthering of transformational change is, firstly, in creating an atmosphere in which new ways of thinking are actively encouraged from the top down: 'Cultures don't change without a deliberate focus on changing managerial behaviour' (Shays and de Chambeau, 1984: 19). Secondly, in encouraging innovative individuals to come forward with their ideas (since '... self-selection is most important ... nonvolunteers rarely succeed in a major way. Self-confidence, commitment and ownership of the project are always essentials to success' (ibid.)). Thirdly, to champion their cause with sufficient resources, and to encourage a culture in which mistakes are tolerated and disruption expected. The emphasis on allowing people to volunteer to initiate or take part in innovative projects is very important, since not only do people work more effectively in situations in which they have a personal interest, but they may have different agendas, different levels of ability and skill ranges, and respond to a range of different stimuli.

The issue of management's role is described by Ross as crucial in influencing the adoption of a culture which is open-minded and accepting of change and innovation, since 'Pervading the notion of strategy is organizational culture: the ideology, beliefs, rituals and myths, and the value system. Shaping and implementing culture is the prime top management role' (Ross, 1987: 23). Acknowledging the beneficial role of system and structure in the containment of corporate risk, he emphasises the necessity for equal regard to be given to the less conventional processes of governance and methods of operation which must be adopted in order to nurture an atmosphere of innovation and to encourage intrapreneurial activity: 'Like oil and water, innovation and bureaucracy just don't mix … [a forward-looking] strategy and culture will encourage innovation, within bounds, and help reduce the effect of bureaucratic trappings. We need to maintain tight controls, but we also need to be loose enough to allow some autonomy and room to manoeuvre' (ibid.). While the seeds of a good idea, once mooted, may be thought worth pursuing, it is incumbent upon those offering strategic leadership to innovative projects, those who act as champions within the organisation, to ensure that intrapreneurial activity is properly directed and supported in order to maximise return on investment – even if, in the end, it becomes obvious that is unlikely to prove commercially tenable and is, in consequence, given an alternative status as a valuable learning opportunity for both the individual or team concerned and for the organisation. Peter Koen, describing the success of a course aimed at developing corporate intrapreneurs, considers that the key criteria used by the executive champions working with the venture teams concerned, when deciding the merit of proposals put forward, consists of '… corporate strategic fit, market attractiveness to the company, the teams' understanding of the market and the product, the teams' persistence and passion, and the material impact of the project on corporate performance' (Koen, 2000: 3). In addition, that, 'Key obstacles to project success were a lack of a comprehensive business plan, working with an executive champion who was unable to influence the funding decision, and working in an unfavourable corporate environment' (ibid.).

The development of business acumen is an important element in ensuring success, but individuals may also need to acquire additional skill-sets to support their current levels of knowledge and experience, particularly in areas of the project which call for expertise in fields so far unfamiliar to them. Here, intrapreneurs have an advantage over entrepreneurs, particularly in larger organisations, in that they are able to avail themselves of the accumulated expert knowledge of colleagues working either alongside them or in different sections and services.

While not every employee will be willing to put themselves forward in terms of creating innovative ideas, since 'Not everyone will have what it takes to become an intrapreneur. People may lack motivation, inspiration and drive. They may not be ready to think for themselves, make choices or take risks to the extent required by an enterprise culture' (Coulson-Thomas, 1999: 260), it is, as discussed above, important for organisations to create a climate in which the willingness to accept change, if not actively to promote it, is systemic throughout. In order to be successful as an agent for transformational change, therefore, the spirit of intrapreneurship must be absorbed into the very fabric of the organisation. Encouraged and enabled by management policies and intervention, it must pervade the culture and values throughout; and the controls placed upon intrapreneurial activities, in the form of systems and structures, must, within acceptable limits, be sufficiently loose to provide enough flexibility and autonomy to avoid strangling the intrapreneurial spirit with unnecessary bureaucracy.

Recruiting, developing and rewarding staff

All too often, organisations that traditionally experience high or regular staff turnover tend to utilise fairly generic recruitment processes and procedures – job descriptions, vacancy advertisements, contracts, interview questions, etc. There are good logistical reasons for this, of course, in that there would seem little benefit in creating individualised instances for each new member of staff who might be employed at similar grades to perform very similar roles as a number of their peers. However, ensuring that strategically aligned recruitment policies are considered, designed and implemented at a very early stage can have a critical and beneficial effect on the successful outcome of the programme.

If, for example, a key part of an organisation's strategic change agenda is to ensure that staff provide excellent customer service at all times, management would undoubtedly initiate a range of training and development exercises to provide current staff with the skills and confidence that would enable them to perform to the necessary standards. They might also find it prudent, however, to ensure that future vacancies are filled by people with a successful customer service background, even if this meant that some of the more traditional and technical skills required were provided through training after appointment. Whatever the scenario, the point is, of course, that a different balance of skills can often be achieved more quickly and more effectively through the careful alignment of recruitment policies to strategic direction than might otherwise be possible, and avoids the necessity for potentially difficult post-recruitment renegotiation on a case-by-case basis.

Adapting recruitment policies to ensure that the skills and attributes of new staff align with and support the strategic requirements of the organisation will help to reinforce adherence to the new direction, and to ensure a continuing growth in appropriate staff resource skills capacity into the future. However, staff turnover is generally not so high that this will make a sufficiently immediate beneficial impact, so, clearly, alongside this long-term process there is also a very strong need to ensure that current staff skills are recognised and utilised, or, if not already in place, are developed to appropriate levels that will support the strategy from within existing resources.

Universities have long recognised that their staff represent a valued resource whose personal well-being and professional development play an important part in the achievement of the organisation's goals, and that the benefits of ensuring that individuals are enabled to contribute to the best of their ability, and are suitably rewarded for their endeavours, ultimately produces a worthwhile return in terms of the time, effort and capital invested in their development.

Once unveiled of the mystique with which traditionally they have been surrounded, it may be recognised that universities are in reality a strange hybrid of pragmatism and altruism. While it is undoubtedly true that there are approximations of altruism in their unrivalled ability to provide individuals with the opportunity to develop, especially in terms of personal philosophy, to extremes that might otherwise have been difficult to achieve, it is the underlying business of universities to support the needs of the wider community as a provider of higher education. Viewed in this way, they are a business much like any other, and are, essentially, just as pragmatic in the achievement of their business goals. Universities operate in a defined market sector, and their saleable product is knowledge. Since this product is delivered in an educational setting which relies in large part on the transfer of knowledge from one person to another, it is clear that the success of the organisation's business goals is heavily reliant upon the expertise and dedication of its staff. By extension, therefore, it must also be clear that, no matter how well designed, the success or failure of the university's strategies for dealing with such matters as expansion, corporate identity and market position are ultimately dependent upon the quality of its human resource (HR) policies.

The ‘Human Resources Strategy’, for many universities, is designed to expand upon the functions of the previous ‘Personnel Services’ (which were confined largely to providing administrative support and ensuring compliance with proper procedure) by, firstly, placing increased focus upon the effective recruitment and retention of new staff with the skills and qualities desired. Secondly, by ensuring that the existing workforce is given the opportunity and encouragement to enhance their personal skills and attributes in alignment with the university’s present and future requirements so that each member of staff is able to contribute to the best of their ability to meet the university’s challenging goals and objectives.

As this implies, there has been a dramatic shift in emphasis away from what was, in simple terms, a supportive function to ensure that the necessary documentary and legal requirements of recruitment were observed, to one which, derived from a holistic assessment of the university’s strategic requirements, both performs an advisory function and actively drives recruitment and development policies towards the fulfilment of the overall staffing profile. HR has, therefore, gained a very high profile compared to the peripheral position of the former Personnel Services, and now offers a central and important contribution to the overall strategic development of the organisation.

As illustrated above, HR has a far wider brief than the simple performance of recruitment processes, and is equipped with a far wider portfolio of aims and objectives. Wide-ranging HR strategies address the problems of ensuring that the workforce is both fully motivated towards the achievement of the university’s strategies and is adequately equipped with the range of skills required in order to do so.

The philosophy of motivation as a spur to productivity has a long and chequered history, but at each stage of its development the objective has been to maximise work output and quality while at the same time maintaining the level of rewards in balance with the productivity gained. F.W. Taylor's model is, perhaps, one of the most basic, regarding motivation in purely financial terms through which increases in output are intrinsically allied to the use of scales of financial reward for their achievement (Sheldrake, 1996). However, today's HR strategies recognise that motivation can be achieved in a number of ways, and that these must be addressed individually and severally in order to encourage maximum achievement.

Abraham Maslow's theory of human nature proposes that motivation occurs according to a hierarchy of need, and that individuals progressed upwards through this hierarchy as each of the various stages in turn became satisfied and ceased, in consequence, to be a motivational factor. He describes this hierarchy as a pyramid, with 'Physiological' as its base and rising through 'Safety', 'Social' and 'Ego' to its apex, 'Self-actualisation'. Roberts (1997) describes these various layers thus:

- Physiological needs are basic biological needs essential for survival. They include food, drink, shelter, rest, sleep, oxygen.
- Safety and security needs include protection from physical and psychological threats in the environment, such as freedom from fear, and a wish for certainty.
- Social and belonging needs include a need for love, affection, friendship, social interaction and acceptance of others.
- Ego and esteem needs include a need for self-respect, confidence, recognition, respect from others, status, power and competence.
- Self-actualisation includes self-fulfilment, achievement, individual growth and the realisation of potential.

(Roberts, 1997: 551)

Porter and Lawler's model of motivation recognises the importance of pay as one of a set of 'extrinsic rewards' in the relationship between effort, performance and reward (ibid.: 552–3), and several of the aims set out in HR strategies are geared towards establishing a fair system of monetary rewards in recognition of the importance of such matters as a means of attracting and retaining staff with the right skills, interests and qualities to fulfil the university's requirements, and as a means of reward and recognition.

However, as Maslow's theory illustrates, money is not the only motivator and for many people, their basic needs having been met, the upper layers of the hierarchy hold an attraction which has at least an equal strength. These less tangible aspects of motivation need also to be acknowledged as being of high importance in support of the university's wider strategies, and in many places much emphasis is given to the nurturing of a sense of self-worth and the importance of recognising the contribution individuals make to the organisation. Porter and Lawler's model recognises these intrinsic variables as including, importantly:

- Sense of being part of the whole 'value adding' process.
- Belief that they are a valuable member of a team.
- Increased responsibility and autonomy.
- Sense of accomplishment.
- Participation in setting targets and opportunities to achieve them.
- Recognition.
- Opportunities to learn and grow.

(Ibid.)

The introduction of initiatives such as the Continuous Quality Improvement scheme, through which individuals as members of Continuous Improvement Teams are encouraged to review the working practices of a particular function or range of functions with a view to reassessing the viability of traditional procedures and suggesting appropriate improvements wherever possible, offer not only intrinsic value to the individual, but wide-ranging benefits to the organisation. These benefits include, for example: the streamlining of current processes and reduction of waste (in terms of both time and materials); the promotion of both a stronger sense of ownership of the tasks performed by individuals and of the benefits of teamwork; and a greater willingness to communicate and work collaboratively across organisational boundaries. Initiatives such as the Continuous Quality Improvement scheme also offer an opportunity to identify more clearly the skills, behaviours and competencies needed to perform each job successfully; to identify training needs; to form part of the performance review process; and to reshape the relationship and responsibilities of managers and their teams. Importantly, on the wider front, the establishment of continuous improvement, both as a process and a ‘culture’, is essential if universities are to achieve their goals without disproportionately increasing their overhead and administrative costs.

The question of recognition, it will have been noted, has been addressed in several ways: recognition in the form of financial reward (Maslow’s ‘Physiological’ and ‘Safety’); recognition in the form of comparability and parity with a peer group, both internally across the institution and externally across the sector (Maslow’s ‘Social’); and recognition in the form of the establishment of a means of differentiating between peers in terms of individual skills, qualities and the contribution made (Maslow’s ‘Ego’). Recognition can also be offered in the form of assistance in the achievement of self-fulfilment, individual growth and the realisation of potential (Maslow's 'Self-actualisation'), and the identification and fulfilment of training needs can speak very loudly in this regard. While for the employer there are many obvious and immediate benefits to be gained through staff participation in well-organised and relevant training and development events, there can also be a strong sense of achievement and individual growth for the members of staff themselves. The added competence and confidence that arises from the learning process can be equally balanced by the increased sense of self-value which can be read into the initial recommendation for development. Obviously this is heavily dependent upon how the topic is introduced, which in turn is dependent upon the quality of the managers involved.

A critical aspect of staff development is to ensure that the various activities undertaken in pursuit of operational and service improvement are not only strategically aligned, but are encouraged and modelled by leaders at all levels. It is important, therefore, not to simply assume that all leaders will already possess the full range of qualities required to perform this role well, and to ensure that appropriate steps are taken both to understand what qualities will be necessary to deliver the desired outcomes, and to assess what leadership-level skills might need to be enhanced in order to provide them. The need for the development of managerial skills at all levels of the organisation is a matter of great importance for HR departments, since the fulfilment of organisational strategies will depend very heavily on managerial competence. While this might seem an obvious extension to the holistic climate of change resulting from strategies for expansion and modernisation, it is also extremely important that the sense of forward motion is not only felt by management but is seen by all to impact upon every level of the organisation. The impetus already achieved at lower levels would soon falter if it was perceived that managers at every level were reluctant to subject themselves to the same rigours. Transformational change cannot be accomplished solely by the efforts of the workforce, but must necessarily entail a willingness to change on the part of those who design the strategies if the desired improvements are to be effected: 'For example, the "quality" guru Deming argues that about 80% of improvement requires management effort and major change in the work system, while only 20% of improvement can be actioned by front-line employees' (ibid.: 597).

Saskatchewan's Library Leadership Development Program (LLDP) offers an excellent example of how this might be accomplished. As Williamson (2009: 622) explains, 'Our vision to be leaders and innovators in a dynamic information environment … is dependent upon a significant change in organizational culture and the development of a set of leadership skills and competency that will be achieved through LLDP.' Employing the services of an organisational development specialist, who worked in close consultation with the library leadership team to 'form and shape the development of the program' (ibid: 623), resulted in an agreed definition of library leadership as '… being motivated to inspire others through one's actions, behaviours and communication to influence them to pursue common goals or a vision, all for the common good. It is about creating hope and enthusiasm through shared values and beliefs' (ibid: 624). It also resulted in the delivery of a set of modules covering leadership and relationship building; team building; leading change; performance planning and accountability; leadership and organisational culture; and 'personal mastery and organizational effectiveness' (ibid.). Williamson describes further progress on the leadership development programme in the case study in Chapter 7, but concludes in her original article that '… enthusiasm levels from participants in LLDP1 are high and have been from the start. Enthusiasm levels from non-participants are also high and for this reason we have brought the scheduling of LLDP2 and LLDP3 forward and condensed the timeframe for rollout across the University library' (ibid.: 626).

Clearly, the alignment of staff training and development exercises to the achievement of strategic objectives at all levels ensures that effort and resources are fully focused on the delivery of beneficial outcomes. Again, while some aspects of this might well be generic, possibly delivered en masse as part of a campaign of mandatory courses, other, perhaps more intensive or focused, training may be more effectively accomplished on an individual basis. When initiating a wide-ranging change agenda, for example, it might be considered wise to prepare staff, and hopefully mitigate some of the more unsettling effects, by running a series of 'understanding change' sessions to raise awareness of the normal and natural range of statuses that they as individuals are almost certain to experience as they approach and move through the process. Other large-scale development events might include, to continue the 'customer service' example pursued above, those which offer opportunities for employees to gain awareness of and confidence in techniques of: delivering on-demand, direct, non-desk-based support and advice; telephone and email enquiry handling; using different approaches to customers from various ethnic and ability groups; focused, investigative visits to other establishments, etc. Whatever the general theme, however, such large-group sessions need to be very much aligned with 'headline' objectives, and carefully designed to maximise their cumulative effectiveness in terms of widening awareness and appreciation of the strategic direction the organisation is intent on pursuing.

It is just as important that small-scale and individual development opportunities are as much focused on the achievement of a strategic objective as they are to fulfilling the needs of a particular individual. It is often no less difficult to create time for an individual to attend a course or conference as it is to arrange for large groups to do so, so it is important that clear outcomes will be forthcoming which will bring benefit to the organisation. Courses in project management, or the acquisition of particular software skills, for example, might be extremely useful for the accomplishment of a particular project, but might also bring wider benefits if the skills gained can be utilised in other contexts, or cascaded for others to take advantage of. Undertaking regular skills audits and maintaining centralised records of individual training and development activities can prove extremely useful in recognising where knowledge might already be available in-house, and in recognising where unhelpful skills gaps need to be bridged in order to cover particular known or anticipated strategic requirements.

An increasingly popular means of encouraging and enabling individual staff development is the use of virtual learning environments (VLEs). Over the last couple of years, Exeter University, for example, has been rolling out a scheme which allows staff one hour's 'personal development time', during which they are encouraged to undertake mostly desk-based learning, either utilising a growing number of online courses, developed in-house, or guided and agreed web-based research into topics which are of personal interest to them in support of their work. Alongside this provision, which also makes a valuable contribution to the library's induction process, staff are encouraged to take part in schemes to enable them to increase their awareness of the work of other teams and sections by observing and shadowing colleagues on an individual basis. This often includes areas outside of the normal library domain: Student Services and IT help desks in particular, but also, occasionally, the university's museum and Special Collections departments. These have proved very popular and increasingly useful, as the role – and with it the knowledge and awareness requirement – of front-line library staff develops and widens in response to student-led demands for increasing levels of support in locating non-library-specific advice and assistance.

As discussed above, it is important that the closure of projects and the accomplishment of key milestones in the strategic agenda are marked and celebrated, and that individual and team efforts and achievements are recorded and rewarded. For some people, the personal satisfaction of a task successfully completed, of a project put into operation, or a target exceeded, is enough. They ask for no more than that, and would be embarrassed if more was forthcoming. Some people, that is … but I suspect not many. Most people wouldn't feel that their task had been properly completed or that their project had actually produced something useful unless they received an indication from others that it had. As mentioned previously, it can be surprising how effective a simple 'Well done' or 'Thank you' can be, especially if it comes from someone whose opinion is respected, and often that is enough. However, especially during times of great change, it can be particularly beneficial to mark progress in more formal ways – perhaps annually, through the staff appraisal process, or more publicly, to celebrate the end of an especially taxing phase.

Formal events, in particular, can evoke a wide range of reactions: from the thrill of having been nominated for a particular prize – offset by a sense of abject horror at the prospect of being placed in the spotlight; through to absolute delight at the prospect of public recognition of one's hard work and success – tinged, possibly, by the sense of disappointment and embarrassment at not receiving a much-coveted award. However, if approached in the right spirit, and carefully balanced to ensure that the majority are comfortable with the process, formal and public events can be used to good effect not only to highlight particular team and individual accomplishments, but to summarise the journey travelled so far, emphasising especially the lengthening distance from 'where we were' and the shortening distance to 'where we are going'. However it's handled, the importance of celebrating success, large and small, cannot be overstated – there is no better way to encourage positive and engaged commitment through a time of change, and the deeper the change and the longer the process, the more important it becomes.

Listen and learn

On a day-to-day basis, a very valuable source of staff recognition can come from outside the organisation altogether, perhaps in the form of unsolicited notes of thanks from customers, or gleaned from comments gathered through a suggestions scheme. These comments, suitably anonymous and displayed perhaps on wall-boards or in staff newsletters etc., can be used to great effect to celebrate both individual and corporate success, but just as importantly can offer a very valuable insight into the impact of the change programme on customers and stakeholders.

Talking to your staff and customers, maintaining a dialogue with them throughout a change cycle, is probably the only way you'll really be able to judge what impact your strategies are having: with respect to staff, how various aspects of the change programme are affecting them as individuals, and how they as individuals are affecting the change programme; with respect to your customers and stakeholders, whether the objectives you are delivering are in fact moving the organisation in the direction you hoped and planned for; and, overall, whether your original vision is still valid.

Your customers, of course, are fundamental to any change agenda. Their approval of and support for the changes you are introducing will be vital to its success – so there is a strong need to involve them in the initial consultation and planning process, and throughout the change programme. The problem is, however, how do you put this into practice?

Establishing a meaningful, consistent and reliable method of consulting and communicating with the student body, however well intended, is not easy to accomplish. The problem here, of course, is that the student body does not have one head, one pair of eyes, or one pair of ears – it has several thousand, and each one of those will see, hear and understand only what they have time for or are interested in at any given time. Get the timing wrong, or the means of transmission, and you might only reach a small fraction of the intended receivership. Get those things right, but issue a poorly considered message, and almost everyone will know about it instantly and come knocking at your door to complain. It really is a balancing act, but a good communications strategy is a vital asset that is worth the time and effort involved in putting it together. Certainly you will still get complaints from students whose favourite chair has been moved, or who simply can't get on with the new technologies you're introducing, but those will be offset by the positive comments you might occasionally receive from those who are particularly pleased with your efforts on their behalf. Most of the time, if you're lucky, the silence from the majority might indicate tacit approval. Enjoy it.

Many libraries have faced these difficulties, and there are numerous examples of best practice available, but each library will have a slightly different relationship with its students, and will need to design its communications strategies to suit local circumstances. In general, it is useful to employ the various tools and methods recommended by customer service experts. Essentially, the wider the range of communications methods available, and the wider the range of feedback mechanisms used, the more accurate will be the readings when you take the student temperature. Simple comment cards, as long as they are backed up by fast and reliable response arrangements, offer an ideal opportunity for customers to tell you what they think on a day-to-day basis. Short, explanatory news stories on the library website, backed up by tweets at appropriate times, will help to ensure that some people are aware of an impending change – and, importantly, why it's happening. Clear local signage displaying a considerately worded message will probably be noted by those using a particular area – if you've moved that favourite chair or a particular range of books, at least help people find the new home. Well-supported telephone, email and online enquiry services can have a similar effect, as can ensuring that sufficient numbers of well-placed, well-briefed staff are on hand to help, console and sympathise. The point here, of course, is that changes, especially physical changes, need to be flagged well in advance and well-managed locally, on the day – few people might see or take note of any individual form of communication, but its availability, and more importantly how you deal with those individuals who don't see it will have a positive effect accumulatively.

As with staff appraisals, discussed below, many of those who don't contact you otherwise will take advantage of the opportunity to offer their opinion of your services through the less regular, more formal routes offered by the survey devices increasingly employed by libraries. These can be extremely useful, if timed and promoted with care, as they allow libraries to build an understanding of how attitudes and requirements change over time. Often run on an annual basis, such surveys offer an opportunity for customers to respond in detail to a wide variety of focused questions, from which the service can plot and track changes in the user perception of the service, and can respond accordingly. However, as with all such tools, they can leave libraries open to complaint as well as praise, and, as such, a good degree of honesty, openness and care is required in any follow-up communications. If students tell you they don't like the colour of the walls – apologise, thank them for their patience while you're improving the infrastructure, and tell them when you're going to fix it; if they tell you they like the new equipment you've installed, or see a marked improvement in staff-delivered services – celebrate that, and tell them how you're going to make it even better.

There are two important elements here. Firstly, while your customers might be the focus and main driver for the changes you're making, and in fact may even have demanded them in the first place, they, like everybody else, are unlikely to enjoy the actual process of change. Keeping them informed and up to date with progress and, importantly, reminded of the ultimate vision and when you expect the programme of change to reach a conclusion, will both keep them on your side during the process and encourage their support in its completion. Secondly, while their expectations at the start will have been honest, valid and important to them at the time, their views may well have evolved and changed in the interim: maintaining contact with their current views and expectations will help to ensure that what is finally delivered is actually useful and wanted, rather than out of date and no longer valid. As previously considered, your strategy, and possibly even your ultimate vision, may need to evolve to meet current expectations, demands and circumstances – and it is your customers, possibly more than any other body, who will influence its shape and direction, and who will ultimately judge its appropriateness for them.

As discussed above, your staff are probably your most valuable asset – it is they, after all, who are in day-to-day contact with your customers, and who are ideally placed to observe how various changes to working practices, systems and processes are impacting on the customer experience. Allowance must of course be made for the influence of personal preferences and objections on particular issues, but it is usually possible to gain an overview, and to approximate a consensus of opinion that probably isn't too far away from reality. If, for example, everyone seems in agreement that a new course of action is having a negative impact overall on customers, then it probably needs to be reviewed and modified to better fit customer requirements. If the majority of staff report a positive impact, it's probably going alright and you can probably overlook the muttering disapproval of a small cross-section of staff … apart from noting, perhaps, that a review of their individual training and development programmes might be timely.

While reviews of operational progress might be an almost everyday occurrence, more formal contact with staff is usually rather less frequent – but no less important. Most organisations utilise a system of regular one-to-one meetings with line managers, together with an annual (or sometimes biannual) full appraisal. While appraisal interviews are, in their role as reviews of performance and progress, more formal than other meetings, they offer an opportunity for both sides to explore and clarify the organisation's strategic direction, and to consider and agree what role the interviewee will play in support of that. Summarising and discussing past performance is a key aspect in this, but perhaps less influential than the setting of personal targets to be achieved going forward; if well designed, these will clearly describe the projects and operational developments in which the individual will be expected to take part, and highlight what additional skills and experience they might need to gain in order to do so successfully.

How the more regular one-to-one meetings are handled, and how regular they need to be, is, of course, dictated largely by the personal preference of the staff and managers concerned. Some managers prefer formally structured meetings, with notes taken and recorded throughout; others prefer a more relaxed model, perhaps in the form of a face-to-face chat over coffee. Whatever the mode, however, these meetings present an opportunity for the manager to note employees' progress on tasks, to assess how they're feeling about things generally and to offer advice on handling particular current issues. For the staff, the meetings are an opportunity to gain their leader's undivided attention, to discuss problems and to solicit guidance, help and advice. For both parties they present an opportunity to mark and celebrate milestones and successes, and to chart a mutually agreed path through the next section of the maze.

In terms of achieving transformational change, these interactions with staff – maintaining continual contact, listening as much as talking and learning as much as encouraging – are vital. Services might be transformed through the implementation of new processes and procedures, the installation of time- and labour-saving equipment, and complete refurbishments, but the cultural change that is such an integral part of organisational transformation can only truly be realised at grass-roots level. It is the people, and the culture they create and inhabit, who need to be challenged to change.

5

When does it all end?

Abstract: This chapter considers the conclusion of transformational change episodes, including schemes of delegation, and the changing role of leadership as fluctuating between control and facilitation in order to maintain a state of change-readiness. The chapter explores the concept of marketing as a customer-centred philosophy rather than as simple promotion, and the benefits of holistic marketing campaigns that focus variously upon different customer groups including internal stakeholders. The chapter concludes by comparing the characteristics of style, temperament and skills displayed by leaders involved in creating a transformational change environment to those required to establish and maintain appropriate management and supervisory control processes demanded by a steady-state organisation.

Key words: continuous change, continuous improvement, consolidation, reflection, evaluation, change fatigue, change-readiness.

Change is the only constant

I began this book by describing transformational change as a phenomenon perhaps best recognised in its achievement, in that while it might well be envisioned from the outset, and so would act as both a guide and the central pillar of a series of contributing change programmes, it is often only truly recognised in hindsight, at a moment in time when the current state can be clearly compared to the former state and recognised as being profoundly different. The elephant in the room, the question as yet unaddressed, though, is, 'When does it all end?' Just as valid a question might be, 'Does it ever really end?' The answer, of course, is that 'transformational change' ends when the transformation is complete, when the organisational culture has changed sufficiently to allow and enable your strategic vision to be fulfilled ... when the butterfly has taken to the air. Change, on the other hand, does not necessarily stop at that point – and, it might be argued, nor should it. Indeed, if the point of transforming the organisation in the first place was to ensure that it would embody a high degree of change-readiness and flexibility, enabling it to embrace the concept of continual improvement and adaptation, and to respond effectively and with urgency to requirements that might have evolved and changed over time, then the natural extension of transformation must involve continuous change. Conversely, it might be argued that even though the transformation might have delivered an organisation that is thoroughly 'change-ready', it is important to recognise when periods of consolidation are needed in order to avoid driving it into a state of 'change fatigue' – indeed, to recognise that there are times in the cycle when change itself can become excessive.

The temptation for those leading transformational change can often be to use continuous change as a means of ensuring that the organisation is perpetually ready to react quickly and effectively to the next incoming initiative. Continuous change, however, does not necessarily have to mean constant change. As Bolton and Heap (2002) assert: '... improvement cycles must be interspersed with periods of consolidation and reflection. These are also the lock-in periods, when realised gains are themselves consolidated into the baseline performance ... The important issue is that without lock-in, long-term performance is jeopardised' (p. 310). Bolton and Heap's 'lock-in' periods equate to the 'refreezing' element of the change cycle described by Lewin (1951) as unfreezing, changing and refreezing; where the existing status quo is disrupted (unfreezing) sufficiently to allow change to take place before allowing a state of new normality to settle in (refreezing). Whereas Lewin's model is used to describe the change cycle in its entirety, however, Bolton and Heap's emphasis is upon the necessity of purposely ensuring that the wavelength of this cycle allows time for the new state to be embedded before moving forward with further changes.

There might be, then, a number of benefits to be gained by looking upon continuous change more as involving a continuity of changes, rather than embodying a constant state of flux. Periodic refreezing of the changed elements, as mentioned above, allows time for reflection and consolidation as well as the embedding of new skills, processes and services. Reflection should involve reviews both of the nature of the new state and the change programme that brought it about. These review exercises are an opportunity to consider what lessons might be learned from the change process, identifying what was successful and what was not so successful, to ensure best practice for the future; to consider whether the new state achieved might benefit from further improvement and refinement in order to remain appropriate, and to assess whether the changed element might itself present further beneficial opportunities that should be considered for future development. Consolidation and embedding is critical to the successful completion of a change cycle, giving employees a chance to practice new skills, for the organisation both to recognise success and hard work and to derive benefit from the performance and productivity gains that have been made, and for customers to take advantage of the new and improved services provided. How much time is allowed for this refreezing period is, of course, largely dependent on the scale of the change project concerned. While a short period of time might be quite sufficient for small, discrete changes, longer periods might be needed to fully embed more sizeable programmes, and to fully realise their potential.

External factors can impact on this ideal, of course, and while in a programme of internally planned and managed change these periods of reflection would be factored into the planning and timescale of the overall project, there are fewer such opportunities for those working in a context of rapid, externally influenced change. The need for reflection, embedding and evaluation is just as high, though, and their contribution to beneficial change just as important, both for the good of the organisation and for the good of those individuals concerned with implementing change under such volatile circumstances.

The conundrum for management, as discussed previously, is to maintain sufficient momentum throughout the change process to ensure that it is completed within an acceptable time frame. This can be particularly problematic when the programme is complex, and may require several seemingly unrelated processes to take place at the same time. Under such circumstances there is a strong potential for an accumulation of changes to be perceived as excessive, particularly among those charged with implementing them, leading to change fatigue and cynicism which can result in unhelpful reactions in individuals and an undermining of the programme through an increasingly general resistance to change. The problem to a great extent is based on the different perspectives experienced by the various players in the change programme. Falkenberg et al., describing the results of their studies into the phenomenon, summarise this disparity in perception as:

> Top managers described strategic changes in the organization differently to middle managers or lower-level employees. The simultaneous pursuit of different strategies was described as excessive by middle managers and lower-level employees. Top managers described these same changes as a single major change process having different components, rather than several different change strategies. Top managers saw the changes in a holistic manner, a major change to achieve an overall goal ... Middle managers and lower-level employees also defined as excessive those changes that were introduced before previous changes had been implemented. Middle managers and other employees experienced one change project taking over the next, without ever finishing and evaluating previous change projects. Top managers disagreed that the different changes actually overlapped and argued that previous changes had been completed and evaluated.
>
> (Falkenberg et al., 2005: 40)

From the management perspective, then, the overall series and sequence of processes makes perfect sense within the context of a wide-ranging change programme. From the perspective of those managers and employees charged with implementation, however, while the overall change goal itself might be broadly supported and viewed as perfectly sensible, the apparently disjointed and overlapping nature of the individual change processes is the source of confusion and contradiction. At best, the achievement of the change goal might be delayed while a clearer understanding is sought and embedded; at worst, support for the ultimate goal wavers, cynicism about the programme takes root, and faith in management's ability to lead change successfully is undermined. Where implementation begins to break down, the first reaction of many organisations is to apportion blame at the point at which the breakdown is first recognised, and the natural assumption is that those managers who had been charged with implementation simply weren't up to the task entrusted to them. Managers are either moved and replaced, or, if their frustration is sufficient, may choose to leave the organisation of their own volition. Either way, implementation is adversely affected by the change of leadership, while new managers familiarise themselves with the task in hand, assess the problems they have inherited and attempt to engender trust in their new set of employees. Employees, too, lack a sense of direction and begin to show signs of demotivation. Cynicism begins to take root, and although employees may continue stoically to follow their established routines, any previous enthusiasm for change is diminished as they now wait to see what will happen next. Perhaps they expect that the current change initiatives will blow themselves out before they need to get involved again, or that further changes in direction will make their previous effort redundant.

The causes of the problem might be fairly straightforward to understand:

> Because top-level management formulate the change, they have both more information and a more holistic perspective on strategic change. Their focus is often on the overall goal, and the activities that are needed to achieve that goal. Thus they are better able to see the links connecting different elements within a change project or indeed connecting different change projects.

> They are exposed to the changes earlier, which gives them a relatively longer time to adjust to the changes than the rest of the organization. Because of the separation of formulation and implementation, top managers 'let go' of the changes earlier as they push the changes downward in the organization.
>
> (Ibid.: 41)

However, I would argue that responsibility for any negative outcome lies firmly with management. If employees feel that change is excessive it is because management has overlooked the fact that the effects of change are felt sharpest at a local level, and that those operating at this local level do not necessarily see the wider picture as clearly as those above them. They have a clear focus on local issues, but pay only infrequent attention to more global concerns.

In the scenario above, management's lack of a sensitive appreciation both of the timescales involved in implementation and the fact that their employees have a different perspective to theirs with respect to the linkages between the various changes being implemented, has resulted in the change initiative becoming stalled unnecessarily. Having sold their vision effectively, gained support for their strategic aims and objectives, and engendered enthusiasm, confidence and trust in their ability to create a better future, a basic error of judgement in terms of the length of time it would take to bring about the necessary changes, together with a simple failure to communicate clearly and often enough with those who must implement them – constantly reminding colleagues of the various strands of change needed to bring about a holistic vision and of their part in the great scheme – has brought about a potentially damaging chain of adverse circumstances which threaten the successful achievement of the envisioned future state.

While historically the majority of change theorists have concentrated on describing the various processes and interventions that enable planned change to take place, placing a strong emphasis on the benefits of setting clear objectives, timetables and methods to be used to move the organisation from a stable present state to a stable future state, there is a growing recognition that increasingly dynamic modern business environments demand a much more rapid, much less planned approach (Bamford and Forrester, 2003). There is also growing recognition that these fast-moving external influences often require reactions that are not management-driven but made locally, wherever in the organisation the need to change in response to external forces is recognised:

> The rationale behind this is that the pace of change is so rapid and complex, once it occurs, that it is impossible for senior management to identify, plan and implement every action required. The responsibility for change is, therefore, more devolved and, as a result, requires great changes in the roles played by senior management. They change from being a controller to a facilitator.
>
> (Ibid.: 548)

While their role is subtly changed in such circumstances, the responsibility of senior management is not diminished, however, and in a context of rapid and continuous change, the success of an organisation is to a great extent dependent on management having imbued their employees not simply with their delegated authority to act, but with the skills and confidence necessary to make informed, responsible decisions, and to do so as quickly as circumstances dictate.

Under such circumstances, employees need not only to be change-ready and empowered to operate flexibly, but to do so within a framework that enables senior management to understand the context of, and to support, the decisions taken, to monitor performance and take corrective action where necessary, and, importantly, to reflect upon and celebrate success at appropriate intervals. This framework must necessarily also involve high levels of trust and confidence, as discussed in the previous chapter: '... confidence in institutions is rare without trust in people' (James, 2012). Employees need to have confidence in their own abilities to succeed, and, as long as their actions align with set policies and fall within the scope of their authority, to trust that their leaders will support their actions and decisions. Similarly, management need to trust their employees' skills, knowledge and decision-making capabilities, and have confidence in the robustness and resilience of the scheme of delegation they have set in train. Such mutual trust and confidence is certainly achievable in a well-designed, well-understood scheme of delegation, since local decisions are made within known parameters which allow the risks involved to be anticipated, recognised and largely mitigated through robust controls, and since decisions which fall outside of these parameters can be managed as exceptions by higher authorities who, through robust reporting mechanisms, are watchful and aware of the changing wide-scale contexts and thus able to reassess corporate risks and quickly initiate appropriate responses.

Such cultures of mutual trust between management and employees, with their bedrock of flexibility and personal responsibility, do not arise of their own volition in many organisations, but will have come about as the designed outcome of a transformational change programme based upon the embodiment of the concepts discussed earlier in terms of the five essential elements of a successful change message:

- discrepancy
- efficacy
- appropriateness
- principal support; and
- personal valence.

(Armenakis and Harris, 2002)

It will be recalled that 'discrepancy' addresses the sentiment regarding whether the change is needed, and is typically demonstrated by clarifying how an organisation's current performance differs from the desired end-state. Clearly, in this scenario, organisational success in a volatile environment is dependent upon employees at all levels recognising that change is needed, when change is needed, and having the confidence to react quickly and appropriately to ensure that change is enacted in such a way that the desired end-state will be achieved. Similarly, 'efficacy' – referring to an individual's confidence in their ability to succeed and recognising that individuals will only be motivated to attempt a change if they have confidence that the change, their leaders and, importantly, they as individuals can succeed – is a fundamental requirement in an organisation which must rely upon high degrees of mutual trust and confidence. Again, where there is a high reliance upon the 'appropriateness' of any decision made, there must be confidence on all sides that those making the decision have the skills and attributes that will enable them to correctly judge appropriateness at the local level. This confidence must extend to the recognition that, inevitably, mistakes will be made at some point – and when they are, that the organisation's reporting and risk assessment structures will be sufficiently robust to allow errors to be recognised and corrective action taken, and that the response toward the individual will be appropriate and balanced. In terms of 'principal support', Armenakis and Harris remind us that change requires resources and commitment to see it through to institutionalisation, that employees may well have seen many change efforts stall due to lack of resources and executive support, and in consequence have become sceptical and unwilling to support change. In this new culture, then, the executive needs not only to have demonstrated its backing through the provision of sufficient resources, but through its continuing confidence and trust in its employees and their ability to deliver organisational success. Finally, this organisational ethos of mutual confidence and trust needs also to recognise the importance of 'personal valence', in that in order to encourage individuals to give of their best in situations that rely heavily upon their sense of personal responsibility, it is important that the organisation ensures that the contribution made by employees is recognised and rewarded appropriately. It is important to recognise that if an individual's self-interest is threatened (explicitly or implicitly), then their continued support is also put at risk – they are, after all, most interested in the effects on them as individuals ('What's in it for me?'). The benefits of working in such an environment, and the rewards for their continued support and commitment to organisational success, must therefore be explicit from the outset and continuously reinforced. As discussed previously, people are motivated in different ways and for different reasons, but all respond best when they can fully appreciate that reward and recognition are distributed fairly, evenly and appropriately. Importantly, the arguments for encouraging employees' continued support of such a regime must be addressed to them as individuals, must be meant and meaningful, and must be real and persuasive, rather than just 'words'.

But what about your customers and stakeholders? Surely the value of your transformed, newly dynamic library will be self-evident to them? I wouldn't bet on it – your student customers will simply think it is now what it always should have been. Because of natural student turnover, with one-third of undergraduates graduating and another third becoming 'freshers' every year, most students won't ever have known anything different. Unless they're supremely clued in, many of the remainder won't realise how much value the library actually adds to their education and growth as lifelong learners and researchers – and I'm sure that many of your academic colleagues won't realise (if they even think about it) how much library input goes into ensuring that their vital e-journal articles make it to their desktop. As for the executive, their main assessment of the library will probably be twofold – does the academic community appreciate the work the library does, and how much negative impact does the library have on the university's budget? Value is very much in the eye of the beholder, so one of your main priorities going forward really must be to make sure that your customers and stakeholders are not only aware of the library and what it does, but are aware of the value it adds to their personal growth and learning, to the educational landscape and to the reputation of the institution generally. For this, you need to have more than just 'words' for them ... you need a spot of well-designed marketing.

Considering the traditional centrality of the library to university life, it would be easy to suppose that the major challenge for academic libraries would be simply to maintain a balance between supply and demand – to ensure that the courses taught are well supported by a healthy supply of core texts and sufficient supplementary reading materials to encourage individual learning and understanding: ‘The most enduring and flexible learning institution is the library, organised for well over two millennia ... to provide self-paced and self-selected transmission of knowledge’ (Bundy, 2003: 393). However, as Twiss (2002: 4) points out, ‘An overwhelming body of research shows that students do not learn effectively from lectures, and testimony from the field corroborates the literature’, and, from Bundy (ibid.: 394), there has been ‘... a discernible, if very uneven, shift in developed countries to a student centred resource based learning philosophy and practice at all levels of formal education’. Libraries, then, have had to adapt to keep in step with fundamental changes in methods of knowledge acquisition, and at the same time, in order to maintain their traditional place at the forefront of informational stewardship, have had to rise to the challenge to their user base posed by alternative information providers (Coffman and McGlamery, 2000; Gibbons, 2001; Mercado, 1998), and to the increasing shift from elite to mass access to higher education and the trends towards globalisation and e-learning.

Little wonder, then, that the traditional argument of the ‘... inherent and “immeasurable” worth of libraries carries little if any weight in today’s world’ (Hawcroft, 1998: 1), and that ‘Librarians and information specialists now argue that to ensure a prominent position within the future world of academia, library faculty must market their skills, services and resources’ (Neuhaus and Snowden, 2003: 194) (Brunsdale, 2000; Dodsworth, 1998; McCarthy, 1994; Rowley, 1995). The ‘... accent on marketing appears to be a response to the needs of librarians for new solutions to the problems created by ever increasing demand for existing services accompanied by the additional demand to supply new ones; in a climate of increased competition and shrinking resources’ (Hawcroft, 1998: 2–3).

The concept of marketing in libraries is not a new one. However, until relatively recently, few were pursuing marketing other than in the relatively narrow sense of promotion and very few libraries undertake formal marketing planning and prepare marketing plans. Kotler and Levy suggest that the application of commercial marketing principles and strategies to not-for-profit organisations is 'customer satisfaction engineering' (Kotler and Levy, 1969: 10), refuting any misapprehension among librarians that marketing is purely a commercial concept concerned with profit, and that it equates with promotion. Kotler's definition is:

> unmistakably focused upon the customer and upon getting it right for the customer. At the same time, 'engineering' suggests that getting it right is not to be left to chance but will be, instead, the result of a systematic process of planning and implementation based on effective design, measured inputs and defined outputs ... The misconception that marketing is just about selling is to be avoided. Even when marketing is about selling goods for profit, marketing is about not only selling but also the total process of satisfying the customer.
>
> (Hawcroft, 1998: 4–5)

Essentially, while 'Selling ... focuses on resources as the key asset ... marketing puts customers first' (Owen, 2003), so that, rather than simply a means of maximising profit through sales, marketing:

> ... means developing a philosophy ... that puts the customer at the centre of everything one does ... Marketing is not intimidation or coercion. It is not 'hard selling' and deceptive advertising. It is a sound,

> effective technology for creating and influencing behaviour that, when properly applied, must be socially beneficent because its major premise is responding to customer needs and wants.
>
> (Kotler and Andreasen, 1996: 36)

As West (2002) puts it: 'Davies (1998: 336) offers a succinct definition: "Satisfying and maintaining customer needs profitably." If one substituted "effectively" for "profitably", then most libraries could relate to this' (p. 98), and, exploring this concept further, he adds that 'Discovering and understanding customer wishes is a key starting point in the marketing process' (ibid.: 102). He describes the usefulness and importance of customer surveys, pointing out that relatively simple and cost-effective tool kits have been developed to allow libraries to create regular measures of customer satisfaction and needs:

> Essentially, regular surveys of customer needs should be carried out to provide a current and longitudinal view of their:
>
> - satisfaction with the current range of services and resources provided
> - view of the relative importance of these services
> - other, more qualitative, opinions and ideas on additional services needed, and their prioritization of these.
>
> (Ibid.: 101)

West adds that 'Our responsive marketing in libraries has, undoubtedly, improved over the last decade, but how much time do we devote to anticipative and need-shaping marketing?' (ibid.: 103–4).

Marketing campaigns can prove a very valuable means of ensuring that those customer requirements which have been identified through market research may be recognised by the customer and taken advantage of. Marketing techniques and concepts can be very successfully transferred to the benefit of libraries, although some substitution of terms may be necessary to ensure full acceptance within a public service environment. Although the concept of achieving 'profitability' may be unfamiliar in a library setting, the concepts of justifying budgets and value for money are not. There is a need, therefore, to ensure that the library recognises that its customers include not only the student body, which partakes of the services in a direct way (or which does not (McCarthy, 1994)), but also the academic community, which perceives the effectiveness (or otherwise) of the library both as direct users and through interaction with their students, and the university executive, which may or may not recognise the library as a valuable asset worthy of continued high investment. Leisner (1995) illustrates the problems associated with a lack of impact in terms of the funding body:

> If they hear about it often enough they will become convinced that you are running a great library and that you deserve continued or improved funding. If no one ever says anything either positive or negative then the library will remain out of sight and out of the minds of those who provide funding. [They] will only think of you when you come for more money ... Because libraries don't actually sell their services and products they rely on third party funding and it is those third parties that must hear about the library from satisfied customers.
>
> (Leisner, 1995: 3)

As Nicholas (1998: 2) points out, promotion is '... the means of informing your users what you do and what you can do. The benefits for those who promote their library services include: increased usage, increased value in the organization, education of users and changed perceptions.' Branding and image, particularly if, as in the case of an academic library, they reinforce an intrinsic relationship with the parent organisation, can provide a very important means of establishing and maintaining awareness (Graham, 2003), and 'If the point of branding is to make people think of your service first, a striking logo is a great start' (Owen, 2003). However, a brand is only as good as the brand image that it generates in the minds of consumers. Care needs to be taken, therefore, to ensure that the brand image created through publicity is clearly related to and rooted in the core business, and that the emphasis remains upon the promotion of benefits rather than selling (ibid.; and Rowley, 2003).

Of course, while marketing might be undertaken for a number of purposes, as discussed above (the advantages of which can manifest themselves in a number of ways), it is important to ensure that the services offered can in fact be fulfilled satisfactorily. As has been identified above, the emphasis of marketing and publicity in this context should be, with respect to users, on the benefits to be gained from library use, and, with respect to the university, upon the value of maintaining a vibrant, well-maintained resource which is focused upon satisfying and enhancing the current, and upon anticipating the future, requirements of the academic community. To do otherwise would be to have overlooked the concept of the marketing message, and to have ignored one of the most basic concepts of marketing, that of the establishment and maintenance of customer focus (Kotler, 1975, 1997). While the advantages of marketing are clear, as discussed above, the disadvantages must also be considered if a reputation for customer focus and good service is to be maintained. As McCarthy illustrates:

> The dangers are the often voiced fears of being overwhelmed with demand for work. It may be that you are already overstretched and do not want to think about attracting additional users ... Where resources are limited ... the user or potential user has to decide whether the library's service is still useful to him/her ... To give best value to the organization in which the library is based, you need to identify the current use of resources, and identify potential future use of the resources. If you can justify additional resources to fund additional services, this is one way forward. If not, you need to decide which of the potential uses and which user groups have priority. If we do not do this, we risk offering a slow inefficient service, which people may stop using ... Some people may continue to use the service because it is in-house, or because it is free to them ... but it would surely be better if they chose to use it because it provided the best service.
>
> (McCarthy, 1994: 33)

There are, then, clear benefits to be gained from marketing the library, although consideration must be given to the various dangers, as described above, in order for it to be successful. A clear marketing strategy, if thoroughly based upon client orientation, can not only ensure the pertinence and effectiveness of the services offered today but, most importantly, can be of great assistance in designing services for the future. However, as Kotler (1975) illustrates, client orientation is but one element of a marketing strategy, and great skill is required on the part of management to ensure that not only are all parts and members of the organization attuned to achieving customer satisfaction in every sense, but that the range of services offered are in fact those required (now and in the future), that they are available where and when required, and that customers and other stakeholders are fully aware of what is available, and of the benefits of making use of them. The key to a successful marketing strategy, therefore, is the full achievement of a vibrant, well-tuned marketing mix.

Strategies for moving from transformational to transactional leadership

So, you've managed to steer your library through the various whirlpools and past the many rocks and shoals that can cause havoc to those intent on setting a course towards organisational change. You've looked back over the ship's logs and found that, actually, it is now in a markedly different place than when you started – in short, you've achieved transformation. A moment of self-congratulation is probably warranted at this important juncture, but don't overdo it ... there's a little more to do yet. You need to take time to evaluate and reflect on accomplishments so far, to celebrate successes and to ensure that lessons have been learned from those things that didn't go quite as well as might have been hoped. We also need to allow time for bedding in the new processes and procedures, and to get out the crystal ball again ready to start planning future directions and strategies.

Evaluation, as discussed previously, should by now form an important and ongoing element of your business ethic, and it is just as important at this stage of the game as it was when monitoring your performance through the programme of change. Your organisation might look and feel different to when you started, and it might react differently to changing circumstances and challenges, but you now need to evaluate whether the transformation you have worked so hard to achieve has actually fulfilled its promise. Is your organisation actually delivering what is required of it, or is it simply delivering what you thought it should when you began? Has the world changed while you were busy focusing on achieving transformation, and have you simply been pushing through change for its own sake, or have your strategies kept pace with the external changes going on around you? Check back with your customers and stakeholders – have their needs changed over time, and have your strategic aims and objectives been modified to reflect their changing needs? Check back also with your staff. By now they should be at least accepting of the fact that in today's environment change of some kind is inevitable, if not positively welcomed, and they should be able to respond to the next clarion call when need dictates. But how are you going to manage the 'change junkies', those who have been so enthralled by the heady scent of rapid and successful change that they might find it difficult to settle into the coming programme of embedding and refining, of monitoring and planning, and of small and incremental change, rather than the ground-shaking earthquake they've become used to? Perhaps some of these people have been your change leaders, your facilitators, your innovators, your intrapreneurs and entrepreneurs, your vision-deliverers – those who have been so useful in instilling confidence in others, in manipulating circumstances to their and your advantage, and in pushing through your heavy agenda of change to a successful conclusion. However, to parody Winston

Churchill, while they may have helped you win your war, will they have the temperament to help you win your peace?

The problem with change leaders is that their character types, the very traits that help to make them successful, just don't seem quite to fit the job description when it comes to day-to-day management situations. The entrepreneurial spirit that makes them useful in one context makes their usefulness doubtful when that context is removed. Benfari (1991) describes the character of a typical entrepreneur as being:

> usually an extroverted intuitive who loves to scan the horizon for new possibilities ... Most entrepreneurs have high needs for achievement, power, autonomy, change and exhibition ... Their combined needs for change, achievement and exhibition make them very intense, high-energy workers. Following the completion of a job or deal, they either crash or move on to the next challenge. Most entrepreneurs make maximum use of expertise, referent, and information power. When they have strong referent power, entrepreneurs inspire courage and enthusiasm for new projects. Entrepreneurial managers often are charismatic figureheads ... [and although] ... Administration is their weakest suit ... Entrepreneurs foster new innovations and extend the range of human possibilities. We need them. Their positive qualities help us envision the best of the future.
>
> (Benfari, 1991: 135–6)

The disparity is heightened when one compares the skills requirement for one management style against another. As

Bolton and Heap have it: 'The skills needed to unlock potential are complementary to, but different from, those required to lock-in the gains of a change programme. Unlocking skills ... often require[s] creativity and entrepreneurship ... lock-in skills are essentially "control" skills – establishing appropriate (management, supervisory, quality, change) control processes' (2002: 310).

Can your change agents, your entrepreneurs, move seamlessly from their natural state of energetic creativity, innovation and charismatic enthusiasm to adopt the more restricting clothes of the manager and supervisor? Do your change managers have the capacity to manage change in themselves? Benfari (1991: 151) considers that they can and do, given motivation, self-knowledge and will-power:

> We can understand and accept our psychological types. We can modify our types when that is necessary, knowing these modifications are temporary, not permanent. We can recognize our preferred behaviours and respect the dominant functions in ourselves and others. Knowing the importance of our needs, we can seek jobs that fit them. We can even alter or strengthen our needs to some degree. Our conflict styles can be modified because they are conditioned by our culture and past experiences. Collaborative and principled bargaining strategies can be developed. Our influence and power skills can be refined. It is up to us.

Given the discussion above, in the context of continuous change and improvement, you might consider it worthwhile to retain your change managers' talents rather than to discard them, to manage whatever deficiencies they may have in terms of administrative skills in favour of their natural talents for invention and innovation, and to direct their energy and enthusiasm towards ensuring that the spirit of organisational change-readiness, while perhaps temporarily subdued, is never lost. After all, to do so might be easier than having to transform your organisation again. In other words, by all means turn down the gas a bit, but keep stirring carefully and don't let it go cold ... you need to keep that change-ability soup warm, fresh and palatable.

6

Transforming library services: the University of Exeter experience

Stephen Mossop, Head of Library Services, University of Exeter

Abstract: This case study explores the journey taken by Library Services at the University of Exeter in its quest to fulfil its part in bringing to fruition the 'Forum Project', the underlying concept of which, strongly underpinned by a cohesive and integrated 'customer service' ethos, was to provide students with fast and easy access to a comprehensive range of support services under one roof. The case study describes how, between 2008 and 2012, the library effected a full modernisation and strategic realignment of its services, and accomplished deep cultural change through a combination of radical restructuring, new recruitment policies, intensive staff development programmes and the implementation of new customer service and support models.

Key words: customer service, cultural change, strategic development, staff development.

By the time I arrived in Exeter, late in 2008, the Vice-Chancellor and Registrar had developed and set in motion a daring strategy for growth and development that would help them accomplish their vision of placing Exeter at the very forefront of research and teaching excellence regionally, nationally and internationally. Mediocrity most certainly did not feature anywhere in the plans they set out for revitalisation and rejuvenation in every quarter of the university. Massive investments were made available to refresh the infrastructure through new-build and refurbishment projects designed to encourage and embed new ways of working which would underpin programmes developed to deliver the deep structural and cultural change needed to enact the vision (Shoebridge, 2012).

With the worldwide recession, students by now were really starting to take an increasingly businesslike approach to higher education, focusing more strongly than ever upon their employability prospects as the end result. Gaining a good degree from the best university they could get into would be their job for the next three years. The relationship between this new breed of students and higher education was becoming increasingly transactional. They considered themselves to be customers, and the university to be providing education as a service, and the quality of the education they received and the quality of the customer service they experienced would be their joint measures of success.

One important response to this changing relationship was the 'Forum Project', the design for which would link together several of the main university buildings at the heart of the campus and supply, under one roof, access for students to a wide range of central services. 'One-stop shop' facilities have of course been developed by many universities, but in keeping with Exeter's ambitions, this was to be on a grand scale. The Forum was envisaged as the natural home of services ranging from the IT help desk and Student Services (including Registry, Careers, Student Finance, etc.), to shops, PC clusters, cafes and restaurants – and, importantly, the library. The Forum concept was a very appealing one, and involved at its heart the simple notion that, in a converged services environment, while expert help would be available at dedicated service delivery desks and offices, students would be able to seek assistance from any member of customer-facing staff who would then take appropriate action to ensure that the student would quickly and smoothly receive the attention they needed. Clearly, the Forum was destined to become an overriding influence on how the library would operate for the foreseeable future.

In 2007, with the creation of a converged set of Academic Services (including Library and IT Services), staffing models had been developed which would enable a prototype of this centralised customer-service environment to be trialled in anticipation of the building's completion, but had stalled when early attempts to create a new, separate Customer Services structure, formed from the existing front-facing elements of Library and IT Services, proved less successful than might have been hoped. While the creation of a new IT help desk facility had provided a very popular and successful 'front face' for IT Services, and was retained, it was quickly recognised that the move had not delivered the desired service improvement and cultural change within the library. The subsequent reabsorption of Library Customer Services had not been fully completed in the library's management structure, encouraging an unhelpful sense of continued disunity and leaving some with an erroneous understanding that communications with colleagues in other sections of the library were to be avoided. In general, staff morale was very low, with many feeling undervalued, tired and confused. A minority, however, fell into two distinct factions: those for whom the concept of 'student as customer' was an alien and unwelcome one, and who were very distrustful of and resistant to change of any sort; and a smaller number of individuals who had clearly welcomed the new customer service vision and were more than willing to help drive it forward, but who were frustrated at the lack of progress.

Change was, however, both much needed and inevitable. The Forum development, which included a full modernisation and refurbishment of the library's tired infrastructure, would bring its own challenges, but the effort extended in achieving it would be wasted if we didn't take full advantage of the opportunities the new environment would offer by remodelling our practices, processes and policies to meet changing customer expectations.

The Forum was supported by a massive investment of some £48 million overall, which included more than £5.5 million ring-fenced for improvements to the infrastructure of the main library and before that some £2.5 million to refurbish and modernise the two principal satellite libraries (St Luke's and Old Library) which would then become quiet refuges for students during the refurbishment work within the main library building. While I hadn't been involved in the early concept stages of the project, I certainly was heavily involved in the more detailed planning of the library element – and it was plain to see that the future 'Forum Library' would need to work in quite different, and certainly more modern and flexible, ways than it had ever done before. My brief, while working alongside and in coordination with colleagues from the various other services who would eventually join us in the Forum, was to ensure that Library Customer Services would be fit and able to support the overall standards of 'student experience' envisaged. That was the overriding external driver for change within the library. The overriding internal driver was my own desire that we should deliver not merely adequate, nor even appropriate, levels of customer service, but that we should strive to achieve excellence in all possible areas of our work.

While there were notable exceptions, for many of my colleagues the changing relationship with our students was a very difficult one to grasp. Indeed, for some, the very concept of customer service in a library setting was something of an anathema – so, against this background of staff intransigence, the current poor state of the library's infrastructure and the looming prospect of building disruption, improving services and satisfying heightened student expectations was clearly going to be an uphill struggle.

Through a series of one-to-one interviews with my staff I was quickly able to identify those in whom the habit of resistance was deep-seated and immovable. Most others were simply treading water, doing their work but with little ambition or focused enthusiasm. Some, though, were clearly frustrated by the status quo and were struggling to avoid the slough of despondency in which many of their colleagues now floundered. As a body, they needed a sense of identity, a sense of direction and a sense of confidence that their efforts would be recognised, valued and rewarded. I launched a threefold campaign to address these issues which included the creation of a new vision for Library Customer Services, a new strategy which would support and deliver the vision and a new staffing model which would help to force through the various changes and improvements I needed to bring to fruition.

A clear vision statement would form the keystone to the whole enterprise, so through a series of papers, team meetings and presentations I painted a picture that I hoped would allow colleagues to fully understand the changing environment in which we would soon be operating – in terms of both physical infrastructure and of our relationship with our users – and to fully appreciate the fundamental nature of the changes we would need to bring about together. I outlined my concept of technology-rich 'supported self-service' as the basis upon which we would work, explaining that this would enable us both to encourage students to become independent learners and researchers, and to recapture staff time which could then be devoted to helping individuals when and where needed to locate resources and services, rather than waiting for problems to be brought to them. I offered my interpretation of customer service in some depth, with examples of what I considered represented poor customer service in a library setting alongside illustrations of the services and qualities I expected my staff to deliver. As a backdrop to my vision of our work within the library, I went on to discuss our relationship with other services, illustrating how that might manifest itself with the advent of the Forum, and offered an insight into how I saw us developing, alongside our own professional skills, knowledge and reputation, into both a beacon of customer service excellence at the heart of the university and a vital and integral element in the university's relationship with its students.

As might be imagined from my description of the intended audience, this vision received a mixed reception. Reaction varied from outright opposition to curiosity and interest. Accepting that the opposing faction might never be won over, I enlisted the support of the interested to excite the curious. With their help, colleagues began to understand and, in the main, appreciate and support my vision of how we, as a modern university library, would operate.

In simple terms, a decent strategy offers a road map to the future, with a starting position, a goal to aim for and a plan for moving from one position to the other. The strategy for Library Customer Services already had the first two: a starting position, albeit a pretty bleak one; and an end goal – to be fully 'Forum ready' by the time the building and refurbishment work was completed. The plan to get us there would necessarily involve making sure that our people were fully focused on achieving the end results, that they had the skills they would need to deliver the range of new services that would be expected of them, and that they developed the qualities that would ensure that these new services were delivered in the right way – excellently. Alongside that, the strategy would need to deliver the technology-rich environment that would enable our operating model to thrive.

By way of background, the library at this time operated in five different locations – the central main library and four satellites, each variously serving a different community, providing different collections or offering a different study environment. Library Customer Services was (and remains) responsible for providing the front-line services in all of these libraries, across the full range of opening hours. Library Customer Services itself was further comprised of three distinct teams with different responsibilities: one for the main library, one for the site libraries and one for providing 'out-of-hours' support at weekends and evenings. While they all operated the same library systems, in reality the customer experience would often be quite different according to place and time. While appreciating that the local environment, audience or collection would by necessity influence the 'feel' of these various library sites, my ambition was to ensure that the excellent customer service experienced currently in one place or at one time would in future be replicated everywhere and at all times.

In terms of library technology, self-service library equipment was at that time still a relatively new departure for the library, and, although growing in popularity among the student body, was still regarded mainly as an optional means of issuing and returning books. Staff had little faith in the equipment and, having no particular interest or incentive to do otherwise, promoted staffed services as the primary option. In consequence, the issue desk (although much reduced in size and stature) had remained the preference for a large number of users, and a habitual refuge for the staff. To make the new concept work, however, we needed to encourage greater use of the self-service equipment in order to free up staff to help students on the floors.

My strategy, then, followed two strands: staff organisation and development; and the enhancement of supportive library technology.

To reinforce the message that customer service would be of paramount importance as we moved forward, the restructuring of Library Customer Services followed a very simple two-legged design – one leg completely focused on front-line service delivery ('Library Services') and the other focused primarily on fulfilling the more traditional 'back-of-house' functions ('Library Support'). Library Services was given primacy in terms of staff numbers, and became responsible for the delivery of the front-line service across all sites, and across all staffed opening times. Library Support, while fewer in number, became responsible for a wide range of technical and support services including the inter-library loans (ILLs), collections' management and shelving teams, as well as signage, equipment and infrastructure. Responsibility for each these legs fell to a manager and deputy manager, supported by a middle-management tier of library supervisors with responsibility either for a library site or a library function.

While there is a clear structural difference between Library Services and Library Support, and clear areas of responsibility, the two are mutually supportive and operational reality dictates that at peak times expertise and staffing flows between the two in order to maximise service effectiveness. At key points throughout the year, for example at term-end, when enquiry numbers diminish, front-line staff join their Support colleagues to ensure that returned books are re-shelved quickly and efficiently. At other times, for example during open days and other busy enquiry periods, staff from the ILL and collections' management teams support their colleagues at the front line. Similarly, the small ILL team is often bolstered by appropriately trained colleagues from the front line who support them during periods of staff absence, ensuring continuity of this vital service. The principal and overriding emphasis for all staff, irrespective of their primary role and function, is always to ensure that the customer experience of using the library is of an excellent quality – so while the Library Support team might have primary responsibility for ensuring that building infrastructure is maintained to an appropriate level, whoever finds a fault is responsible for making the initial report to Campus Services. Library Support then tracks the report to make sure the fault is fixed quickly and effectively.

Despite occasional operational difficulties when, for example, general staff shortages and conflicting work pressures have required some mediation to establish a set of agreed priorities, working in this flexible way has proved ultimately quite successful. Embedding cross-team working has not always been easy, and high levels of goodwill between the two teams, a willingness to negotiate, a shared sense of purpose and a mutual appreciation of the pressures faced by both sides have been absolute prerequisites to its realisation. Ultimately, however, the effort has been worthwhile and not only have our customers benefited from a much improved overall quality of service, but so have the teams themselves, in terms of improved support and overall resilience.

By itself, simply rolling out a new structure could never deliver the desired result of improved customer service. Simply throwing numbers of staff into the fray and telling them to get on with it wouldn't work either, even if some of them had been inspired by the new vision. When you boil it down, it really is all about the people – they were the key factor in all of this, and they needed to be the right people, armed with the right skills, the right attitude and, just as importantly, the confidence to deliver what we were asking of them.

The first critical appointments were the team managers. For the Library Support Manager I needed someone with technical knowledge, someone who was practised at managing a diverse team, and, importantly, who had the strength of personality to hold their own in a role that would almost inevitably be viewed as being less glamorous than the front-facing position. By this time, of my three inherited managers, one had expressed a desire to retire, and another had opted to move into a different role. My third remaining manager, fortunately, clearly possessed the qualities I sought, and agreed to take on this challenging role. The post of Library Services Manager was, I realised, going to be a difficult one to fill. The right person would need to possess superb leadership qualities and customer service skills of the highest order. I would need to rely heavily upon this manager if we were to bring off the range of changes I needed to within the timescales available, so I could not afford to accept second-best. The pressure would be on from day one, and clearly great strength of character and boundless enthusiasm would be needed to be successful in this newly created, high-profile role. Following a fiercely fought competition, however, my concerns were allayed when the new Library Services Manager assumed the mantle as though to the manor born, leading by personal example from the first day and tirelessly encouraging increasingly higher standards from the front-line team.

Enthusiasm can be infectious, and encouragement can inspire people to attempt great things, but I needed them all to be as self-reliant as possible so that they would assume responsibility for handling customer relations generally and customer enquiries in particular without direct support and intervention from managers and supervisors. To do this they would need to relentlessly display an inherent desire to help others, they would need the skills to handle enquiries in the right way, and they would need confidence in simply dealing with people successfully in a one-to-one situation. In conjunction with new recruitment policies, which placed more emphasis on candidates demonstrating an inherent customer focus and a history of experience in customer service positions than on library skills, we designed some intensive and wide-ranging development programmes that would help staff to gain the skills and experience we needed, and appointed a member of the management team to act as 'Staff Development Champion' to monitor progress and encourage participation.

Development programmes were delivered through a mix of group training, personal coaching and online learning, and included: training in handling enquiries in a roving situation; handling enquiries by email and telephone; identifying enquiries that required in-depth assistance, and methods of referring them on in a customer-friendly manner; sessions to build confidence and awareness in dealing with people from different backgrounds and abilities; together with some very good 'library skills' programmes to ensure that the basics – such as handling library catalogue and online resources' searches – would be delivered to a consistent and high standard. Alongside these, we introduced sessions in assertiveness and change awareness, encouraged colleagues at appropriate levels to enrol in management development programmes and began designing rotas that would ensure that as many colleagues as possible, service requirements allowing, had time set aside to undertake guided personal learning and research on a regular basis.

While the Library Support team was beginning to make radical changes in their staffing profile and business processes, building resilience and flexibility by recruiting students to vacant shelving posts, and implementing a range of technological advances to simplify and speed up the ILL processes, the Library Services team received appropriate guidance and training from the other services sufficient to enable them to handle a range of non-technical PC cluster, printing and photocopier enquiries which previously would have been immediately referred to other services. Now our first response, instead of 'Phone the help desk', was to quickly triage the problem and, if unable to resolve the issue ourselves, to personally contact the experts on behalf of the customer, passing on basic information to help them more quickly resolve the issue and avoid further unnecessary delays. As a result of these improved levels of cooperation and collaboration between key services, staff confidence and job satisfaction grew at the same rate as did customer satisfaction with our effectiveness.

The quickening pace of change, and indeed the strong and growing sense of change-readiness throughout Library Customer Services at this time was a clear indicator that attitudes to change itself had altered beyond recognition. We were at last all walking in more or less the same direction. Colleagues were ready, willing and able to look for ways to improve in every aspect of our work, and to make the changes necessary to bring those improvements to fruition – rather than, as once would have been the case, finding fifty reasons not to. Individuals were now clearly identifying themselves as team members, and were actively working together to deliver, and continuously improve, the services we offered – a phenomenon that was deepened and strengthened overnight when our efforts were recognised by the University with the presentation of the Professional Services 'Outstanding Team of the Year' award in June 2011.

While the cultural changes within Library Customer Services have been profound, our journey has not been a lonely one. Most other areas of the library service have undergone changes and restructuring and realignment during this period that were of at least equal importance, in real terms, to the overall quality of the library experience, if perhaps not always of equal visibility. Major initiatives have been introduced to raise the profile of our already excellent teaching and research collections, with special attention being given to improving methods of resource selection, procurement and funding that are now beginning to have a very positive impact on the academic experience. New outreach initiatives have been deployed to raise the profile, visibility and accessibility of the subject support team, with a renewed emphasis upon strengthening and reinforcing our relationships with the University colleges, including the recruitment of college and student ambassadors charged with streamlining student-led resource recommendation and request processes to ensure that they are even more focused than ever before upon satisfying immediate demands for collection enhancement. Our online presence, via the library website, is undergoing a programme of continual improvement and enhancement not only to improve clarity and accessibility in terms of resource and information location, but to ensure that the 'look and feel' of the website more closely keeps pace with our increasingly web-literate and digitally sophisticated readership. Alongside these, participation in a range of internally and externally funded projects, especially those focused on growing digital research collections and improving visibility and access, has brought wide reputational benefits for the library as well as very positive improvements in terms of our value to the academic community, both in Exeter and, judging by the high level of interest in our achievements across the sector, far beyond.

Of course, every undertaking of this nature needs a method of assessment to measure and understand the effectiveness of the various interventions made. We carefully study and respond to the results of the National Student Survey, the International Student Barometer and other major surveys to gain an understanding of how our customers assess the services we provide. However, the library-related questions asked through such surveys are necessarily high-level and can offer only limited detail with which to work. Requiring a much deeper understanding of customer opinion, we were fortunate to gain University approval to undertake a series of online surveys to achieve this objective. Having previously used LibQUAL+® surveys elsewhere, and having been very impressed at the level of detail and accuracy that could be achieved, I was keen to use this method in Exeter. In November 2010, we began a series of three surveys, and through these we are starting to track a gradual year-on-year progression of improvement in terms of customer appreciation of our efforts in relation to 'customer service', improvements to the depth, quality and accessibility of our collections, and improvements to our physical infrastructure.

A vital component of these LibQUAL+® surveys is the facility for customers to leave free-text comments, and being totally and rigorously anonymous these could be relied upon to offer honest appraisals of our performance from a very personal perspective. These have proved invaluable as a means of gaining a very meaningful and immediate sense of customer opinion. They have certainly provided some very sharp pointers to needed change and improvement. In terms of collections, for example, we listened very carefully to the comments and were able to respond in some very direct and positive ways to make the improvements that were suggested. In terms of the ongoing refurbishments, we noted concerns expressed regarding the noise and disruption which prompted us to take increasingly comprehensive measures to mitigate against the worst effects. In terms of customer service, we were able to refer to both positive and negative comments to illustrate to colleagues where our customers needed us to make improvements. The fact that these observations came directly from customers was vital – it wasn't just we managers who were asking more of our staff, but our customers too – and our staff listened much more closely and attentively because of that difference. More than this, staff were beginning to identify not only with the concept of 'student as customer' but they were beginning to self-assess their own customer-service performance and identify where they would benefit from further training and development – and it was this personal and immediate connection that made all the difference to the level of quality achieved. Our second session of LibQUAL+®, keenly awaited by our staff, revealed a gradual but encouraging upward trend of approval across the board, and brought many more positive comments that have encouraged even greater levels of interest from colleagues in terms of improving how they could 'get it right for our customers'.

As described above, apart from our own desire to provide a better experience for our customers, one of the principal drivers behind the initiative to change the ways we worked was the development of the Forum. The refurbished Forum Library would provide a much improved environment in which our students could work, but by challenging the traditional 'central service delivery point' concept it would force us to develop new ways in which to serve our customers. Importantly, our physical annexation into the

Forum itself would force us to face the emotional and intellectual challenges of moving from a 'stand-alone' relationship with the wider university community to working closely with others as part of a larger team.

We have come a long way through that journey. I remain convinced, however, that it was the shared experience of working together, both as a library service and as part of the overarching Academic Services 'team' towards full Customer First accreditation in 2011, that helped us to make that final leap into the new future. The process of working through the various stringent criteria in order to gain accreditation was fulfilling in itself, and certainly enabled us to focus even more closely on identifying and fulfilling the needs of our customers, but, perhaps as importantly, it enabled us to more fully appreciate the challenges faced by other services and to understand, support and fully participate in the Forum as an intellectual concept. Perhaps as importantly, post-accreditation work to continue the effort to embed more deeply and more permanently the customer-service ethic across Academic Services has proved vital in maintaining not only the impetus towards that goal, but in helping to maintain and sharpen our focus on achieving the Forum Vision. Thus, while by no means the only initiative aimed at developing Academic Services as a vital and cohesive force capable of fully supporting the Vice-Chancellor's far-reaching vision, it has been arguably the most successful. Certainly, from the library's perspective, our early adoption of wide-ranging customer service principals has proved to be one of the chief enablers for the transformational changes that have brought us to the point where, while as yet far from perfect, we could safely claim to be fully 'Forum ready'.

7

Leadership to transform our library: a case study from the University Library, University of Saskatchewan, Canada

Vicki Williamson, Dean of the University Library, University of Saskatchewan

Abstract: This case study of the Library Leadership Development Program (LLDP) at a Canadian research library (the University Library at the University of Saskatchewan) provides an overview of the strategic context for the establishment of an in-house leadership development program. It reports on program content, structure and some practical steps required for implementation and progressive institutionalization of the program. Program evaluation is also discussed.

Key words: leadership development, organizational change, workplace culture, strategic planning, library transformation.

Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.
John F. Kennedy

Background

'Leadership to transform our library' is the phrase which, in recent times, has become a shorthand way for employees at the University Library at the University of Saskatchewan in Canada to describe significant change in the organizational culture of our workforce and our workplace. The roots for this strategically planned and systematic change date back to 2006 when, under the leadership of a newly appointed library leader, library employees, through a highly consultative planning process, developed an ambitious strategic plan to guide the library's development going forward. Leadership was central to the plan.

The launch of the University Library Strategic Plan in October 2006 laid the foundation for many initiatives, all designed to transform library collections, facilities, services and organizational culture. At the heart of the plan, captured pictorially in Figure 7.1 below, was our vision to be leaders

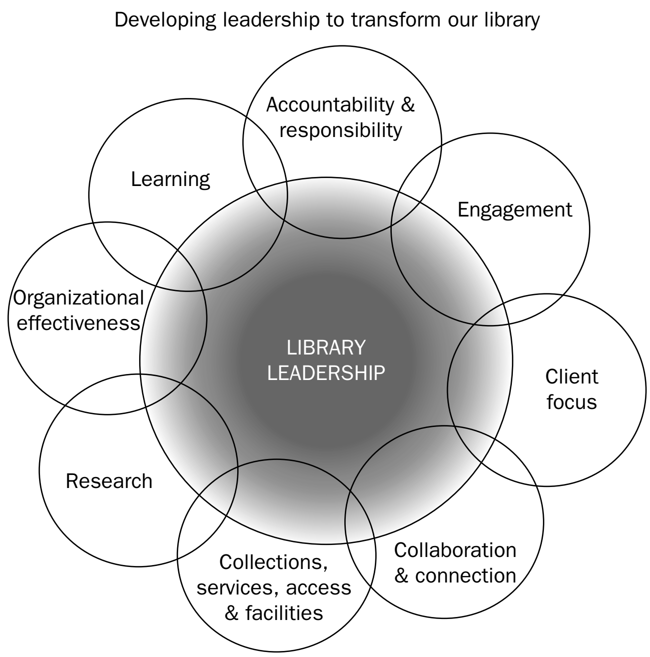

Figure 7.1 **Pictorial summary of the University Library's strategic directions**

and innovators and to create a dynamic learning organization. Integral to the vision was a strong desire to build a workplace culture that was characterized by high levels of employee engagement, with effective communication and leadership at all layers and levels of our library. As our focus on leadership has evolved we have come to think of leadership in our library as using our behavior to influence others to willingly follow an idea, process or vision for the common good. In our definition of leadership, everyone can be a leader, not just by position.

University Library Strategic Plan

Our leadership case study began in 2006 with our planning process, which is strongly based on the principles of systems thinking. Library employees had had previous experience with strategic planning, and indeed those experiences had produced impressive planning documents which had too often fallen short on implementation. By 2006, library employees had come to regard strategic planning as something which the CEO should do in isolation to satisfy institutional requirements; with the day-to-day work of library employees continuing largely unchanged. This large disconnect between the written plans and the workplace realities was indicative of our workplace culture at that time. The launch of a strategic planning process was, therefore, accompanied by a determined belief that a plan is much more than words on paper; rather a plan is a blueprint for change, a way to align resources with priorities and a way to bring a vision to reality.

The vision contained within the University Library Strategic Plan developed in 2006 called for radical and transformative change to library resources, facilities and services. Our plan is updated annually; however, our vision, mission, values and four core strategies as originally conceived have remained largely unchanged (University of Saskatchewan, 2006). Annual priorities aligned with available resources are determined by a core planning group that includes senior library leaders. Embedded in the plan was a realization and recognition that if transformative change to resources, facilities and services was to be realized then an equally radical and transformative change to the organizational culture of our workforce and our workplace would be essential. Indeed, the ultimate success in achieving the vision for the University Library in its second century of development would be dependent on transformative change to our culture and our workforce of 150 library employees working across seven branch locations on the university's central campus in the city of Saskatoon in Western Canada.

Four core strategies were identified to guide the library's transformation. Our strategies as originally formulated were:

- *Learner and Teacher Strategy*. We will transform our services, collections and facilities to contribute to the success of our learners and teachers and ourselves as a learning organization.
- *Researcher, Scholar and Practitioner Strategy*. We will transform our services, collections and facilities to contribute to the success of researchers, scholars and practitioners. As librarians we will intensify our research efforts and productivity.
- *Relationships and Engagement Strategy*. Building and strengthening relationships and connections within the library, within the university and beyond.
- *Operational Effectiveness Strategy*. We will continuously improve our operations by developing and implementing innovative solutions to advance our strategies.

In 2007, when the University Library People Plan was developed to support the people focus within the strategic plan, leadership continued to have a high profile in each of the four People Plan strategies of: Learn and Develop; Relationships and Collaboration; Appreciate and Celebrate; and Conversation and Communication (University of Saskatchewan, 2012).

The context for a leadership program

The priority to establish a leadership development program was one of the original action items, conceptualized against the local context of both our Relationships and Engagement Strategy and our Operational Effectiveness Strategy. Our Relationships and Engagement Strategy sits well with the university's broader and central context of being an engaged university, where to be engaged is to have a sense of common purpose.

The Library Leadership Development Program (LLDP) as it was launched in January 2009 was also conceptualized against the broad national context of Canadian libraries as highlighted through a groundbreaking national study (known as the 8Rs Study) published in 2005, which examined in detail the future of human resources in Canadian libraries. This national study included the collection of extensive data on the eight core elements seen as fundamental to understanding human resources in Canadian libraries: recruitment; retirement; retention; remuneration; repatriation; rejuvenation; reaccreditation; and restructuring (University of Alberta, 2005). The study was the first time that human resource issues were extensively examined across Canada and the results of the study revealed a highly dynamic human resource climate.

At the University Library we have experienced some of the trends identified in the 8Rs Study through our recruitment activities. For example, we have found it extremely difficult to fill senior leadership positions, including those with administrative responsibilities in job assignments such as Branch/Unit Head. In addition to these national trends, we also have some local factors at play within the university, which provide some further challenges to our recruitment of faculty librarians. These include our location as a prairie province in Western Canada, a challenging winter climate and some rigorous standards for tenure and promotion of our faculty librarians.

At the local level, library and university employee opinion survey results also informed the decision to establish the LLDP. A Library Employee Opinion Survey (LEOS), conducted originally in 2006 (in association with our strategic planning process to help identify a number of baseline measures on 11 critical organizational elements), identified "leadership" as a dimension of our organizational culture and performance needing improvement. After launching the LLDP, subsequent LEOS surveys, conducted in 2008 and 2011, showed improved scores on the leadership dimension. A University Employee Opinion Survey (UEOS), conducted in 2005 just ahead of our strategic planning process, highlighted low levels of employee engagement at 54 percent. Subsequent UEOS surveys conducted after the launch of the LLDP showed significant improvement in the library employee engagements scores, which by the time of the 2011 survey results had risen to 72 percent.

The LLDP was conceived not because of a lack of other available leadership programs but rather in direct response to two broad core strategies within the library strategic plan, identified national challenges, and other local conditions. The LLDP is a local solution with national implications.

The LLDP is also potentially appropriate for application in a global context. The inaugural cohort for the first LLDP was launched in January 2009 and the fifth cohort will commence in January 2013.

The LLDP – getting a program started

Getting an in-house program off the ground requires the personal and direct leadership and involvement of an LLDP Executive Sponsor (Williamson, 2009: 619). This role is fulfilled by the Dean of the University Library. In addition, a considerable investment of organizational resources and direct funding is needed. While some minor changes have been made in response to the learning needs of each individual cohort, the decision to keep the content and delivery for all LLDP cohorts consistent has allowed us to realize a considerable return on that initial investment. In getting the first cohort (LLDP1) through the program, we were greatly assisted by a timely and generous gift from a library donor, which we directed towards our workforce and workplace culture initiatives, including the cost of the LLDP. Other resources to support the LLDP came from redirecting resources normally spent on sending individual employees to external leadership programs. For example, we had had previous experience with the ARL Leadership and Career Development Program (LCDP), the Triangle Leadership Program, Library Leaders Institute (LLI) and other leadership programs offered by various providers.

Over the summer of 2008 we recruited an organizational development (OD) specialist with a background and experience in the design and delivery of leadership programs. This OD specialist had work experience in a number of settings, was an experienced OD practitioner and had previously designed and delivered an award-winning leadership development program for a major international mining company. Concurrently, we identified and contracted the services of an OD consultant with deep knowledge of and experience with universities in designing and delivering leadership development programs, as well as some experience working in a consultancy role with academic libraries and library employees. Like our OD specialist, our OD consultant was not a librarian. Over the remainder of 2008, the external consultant worked with our OD specialist to design the content of the program. They used internal focus groups of library employees to help inform and shape the content of the program.

Program content and structure

Eighteen participants including librarians with administrative responsibility, some without administrative responsibility and the University Library HR Manager completed LLDP1. Figure 7.2 summarizes the LLDP cohorts completed between 2009 and 2011.

Figure 7.3 shows the program at a glance and summarizes the topics and content of the program, which is delivered through six modules, each occurring over two days. Modules

	LLDP 1	LLDP 2	LLDP2	LLDP4
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	18 (faculty librarians, professional staff)	16 (professional staff, library assistants)	18 (faculty librarians, library assistants)	21 (faculty librarians, professional staff, library assistants)
DATE OF COHORT DELIVERY	January 2009–February 2010	January 2009–June 2010	March 2010–January 2011	March 2011–December 2011

Figure 7.2 The LLDP cohort summary

LIBRARY LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Module 1	Module 2	Module 3	Module 4	Module 5	Module 6
Leadership & relationship building	Team building	Leading change	Planning & accountability	Leadership & organizational culture	Personal mastery & organizational effectiveness
• What is leadership? • Personal style • Communication • Developing others	• Stages of team development • Team player style • Team effectiveness • Team charter	• Leadership style • Effective change process • Mindset • Impacts • Appreciative inquiry	• Nature of strategic management • Aligning goals & objectives • Defining & developing accountability • Participation	• What is culture? • How does it form? • Creating a learning & service culture	• 360 feedback • Personal growth • Recommendations re: organizational leadership challenge • Ongoing leadership learning plans
Discussion topic: Communication	Discussion topic: Collaboration	Discussion topic: Transformation	Discussion topic: Transparency	Discussion topic: Organizational culture	Discussion topic: Mastery
Assessment tool	Assessment tool	Assessment tool	Assessment tool	Assessment tool	Assessment tool
			Leadership action challenge team status report 1/2 day		

- Individual assignments
- Trios for peer coaching and support
- Team leadership challenges
- Back at work application / information gathering
- Reading and research

Developing leadership to transform our library

Figure 7.3 **Sample program at a glance**

are held, on average, every second month. We deliberately chose to structure the learning over a period of time, rather than an intensive one-off immersion approach. This approach to delivery is intended to help reduce the resource impacts on the participants, provide time in between modules to reflect upon, practice and implement what has been learned, and to provide time to complete reading or practical leadership assignments. LLDP modules take place away from the workplace at an off-campus venue. This reduced the risk of work distractions, provided a pleasant learning environment and fortunately was more cost-effective than using an on-campus venue!

Each module covers a theme, poses key questions, facilitates thematic discussions and provides an assessment tool. For example, the first module theme was "Leadership and Relationship Building." Key questions were: What is leadership? What is your personal style of leadership? How do you communicate as a leader? How do you as a leader encourage the development of others? The thematic discussion topic was "communication" and an assessment tool was undertaken by cohort participants.

In parallel with each two-day, face-to-face module there were individual assignments and readings; trios for peer coaching and support; team leadership challenges back at work; application/information gathering/research on leadership and related topics; and the opportunity to document learning by keeping a journal. LLDP content modules were designed to create a common shared learning experience, including a shared language around leadership and the generation of enthusiasm through shared values and beliefs.

Throughout the program, participants learn through a variety of practical activities. These include their pre-set allocation to trios (teams of three), their self-selection into three teams for Leadership Action Challenges and the writing of a personal reflections journal. The trio and Leadership Action Challenge teams are unique features of the LLDP, and, along with the wider program design, really serve to not only reinforce the learning objectives but also change the way we lead in our library. Journaling is another useful tool to encourage self-reflection and documentation of thoughts, learning objectives, and learning action plans and results. Most participants noted appreciation for these practical activities.

The purpose of the trios in the LLDP is to provide participants with an opportunity to receive peer coaching and mentoring, which reinforces and enhances the learning objectives from the modules. The participants are placed in teams of three, directed to meet back at work on a regular basis, and given questions to discuss. Trio participants are encouraged to share what they have learned in the sessions and during practical exercises with their employees and trio colleagues. They also bring employee/team issues or personal development plans to the meetings to share and discuss options with their trio colleagues. They conduct research on discussion topics and bring ideas or journal articles to the sessions for discussion. Trio participants also relate what they have learned about themselves from the leadership assessments and share ideas to further their development. The trios also provide an ideal opportunity for participants to practice their relationship building and other leadership skills. Trio members will be changed at the halfway point in the program.

The purpose of the Leadership Action Challenges is to have the participants practice their team member and leadership skills in a real work action challenge project. The teams are formed during the second module and conclude their assignments at the sixth and final session. Three key strategic issues are selected from our University Library Strategic Plan and the LEOS. The participants then self-select into three teams of five or six members each to develop action plans, the goal being to resolve real organizational leadership issues to recommend for implementation. The modules have been designed to give the teams support and resources to help them carry out their challenges. The teams prepare project plans, review organizational material, conduct research, develop potential actions and deliver a presentation with their recommendations. After the ideas are discussed we implement some selected actions to improve leadership, engagement, accountability or other goals of the program. Action challenges cover three topics: accountability; leadership competencies; and engagement.

Innovation, implementation, institutionalization

There have been many spin-offs from work initially undertaken by the LLDP cohorts. For example, Action Challenge topics investigated and reported on have fed into strategic priorities and projects. Between 2009 and 2011, topics investigated by Leadership Action Challenge teams covered the following areas:

- engagement and trust
- library leadership competencies
- accountability
- generational differences in the workplace
- team environments
- rewards and recognition
- client-focused quality services
- learning culture
- personal development plans
- fostering collaboration and connections
- service improvement methodology
- creativity and innovation.

As we built a critical mass of LLDP graduates we began to notice obvious changes in our organizational culture. As graduates applied their learning we approached organizational issues by applying the tools and techniques of leadership that had been covered in the LLDP. For example, appreciative enquiry and root-cause analysis became tools used by leaders to "unpack" and understand issues in the library teams. Our employee engagement scores moved closer to those of top performing organizations and the general disposition within the library was generally more optimistic and upbeat.

Another area where the impact of leadership learning through the LLDP is evident is in the library employee engagement scores. Engaged employees are those who say good things about the library, stay to grow and develop their career and strive to do their best (McKinlay and Williamson, 2010). We use the measure of employee engagement as a key performance indicator within the University Library Strategic Plan. Figure 7.4 summarizes library employee engagement scores.

An important component of institutionalizing and sustaining leadership learning required us to supplement the foundation of the LLDP with a more diverse set of leadership learning activities. As the critical mass of LLDP graduates has grown, so too has the range of ongoing leadership activities. For example, we have run follow-up half-day workshops for LLDP

Year	Engagement score (%)
2011	72
2010	71
2009	65
2008	62
2006	60
2005	54

Figure 7.4 University Library employee engagement scores

graduates, a reading club has been established and a formalized Community of Practice on Library Leadership is underway.

LLDP evaluation

Program evaluation by cohort members has been an important component for all learning activities delivered under the LLDP between 2009 and 2011 (Braganza, 2012). Evaluation has been progressive and evolving, including formal and informal, qualitative and quantitative data.

All four cohorts (LLDP1 through LLDP4) were surveyed – using an in-house developed survey instrument – on their satisfaction with the program at three time points during the program: at the start; at the mid-point; and upon completion. No measures of the instrument's validity or reliability were conducted for internal inconsistency or test-retest reliability. Overall, the surveys measured eight areas, as follows:

- learning objectives
- assessment of speakers and organizers
- assessment tools used
- logistics of the program
- assessment of techniques used
- effectiveness of sessions
- discussions and materials
- leadership.

For anonymity purposes, demographic data was not collected. Further, surveys were opened for a minimum of three weeks to a maximum of four months. The response rate for the initial survey was 99 percent, for the mid-point survey 85 percent, and for the completion survey 75 percent between all four cohorts. The response rate for each cohort differed throughout the leadership program.

These evaluations highlight some interesting features about the LLDP and a selection of the evaluation findings are discussed in this concluding section.

Evaluation of learning objectives

At the start, mid-point and completion of the program respondents in each cohort were asked if learning objectives for the session were met. At least 93 percent of respondents in each cohort (other than LLDP2) agreed that the learning objectives were met at each time point in the program (see Figure 7.5). A decline was observed among LLDP2 respondents at both the start (75 percent, n=16) and the completion (82 percent, n=11) of the program (see again Figure 7.5). Additional qualitative observations identified the timing of the leadership program (i.e. a September start date) to be problematic for LLDP2 participants. Managing heavy workload duties in September, in addition to the needs of the program, proposed a challenge for this cohort. One respondent from LLDP2 noted, "September was the worst time of the year to start," while another commented, "Taking time to read over the articles and materials has been too time consuming." Additionally, only 11 respondents from LLDP2 completed the final survey question (a 66 percent response rate) compared to 16 respondents at the start of the program (a 94 percent response rate).

Evaluation of assessment tools used

Participants were provided with six assessment tools at the start, mid-point and completion of the program to help gauge

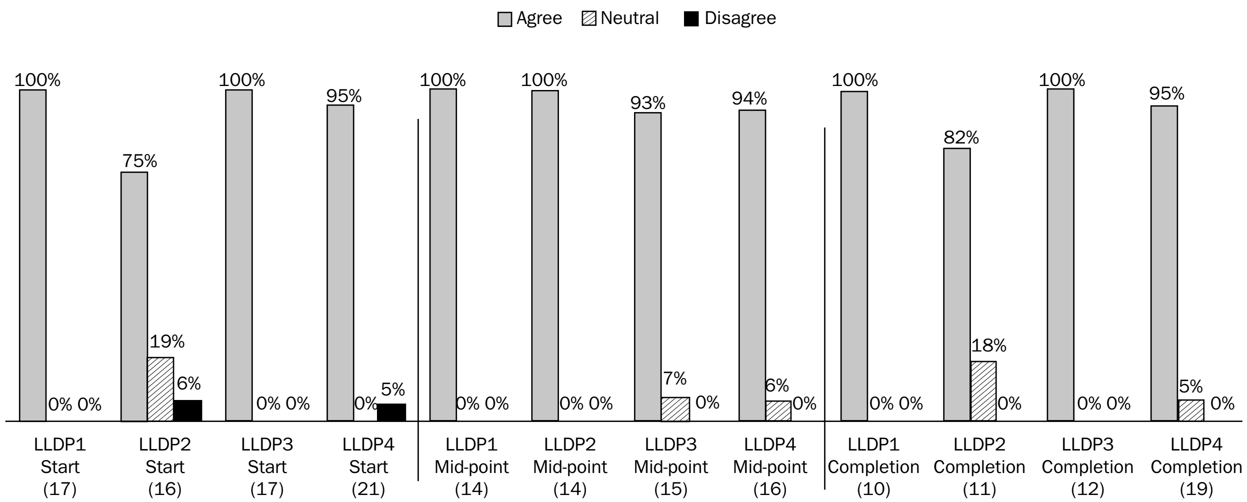

Figure 7.5 **Percentage of respondents in each cohort who agreed or disagreed that the learning objectives for the sessions were met**

leadership and interaction styles, in addition to identifying strengths and weaknesses. The assessment tools were: Situational Leadership Assessment (LLDP1 and 2); or Behavioral Profiles (LLDP3 and 4); Parker Team Player Assessment; StrengthsFinder Assessment; Myers-Briggs Type Indicator; and Leadership Inventory Assessment. Approximately 90 percent of respondents in LLDP1 (n=10) and LLDP2 (n=10) agreed that the assessments provided valuable insight. A slight decrease to 83 percent of respondents in LLDP3 (n=12) made the same observation (see Figure 7.6). This decrease among respondents in LLDP3 was not observed qualitatively, as respondents found Myers-Briggs, Parker Team Player and LPI feedback to be beneficial.

When broken down by assessment type, a higher percentage of respondents agreed that Behavioral Profiles (LLDP3: 89 percent (n=18) and LLDP4: 95 percent (n=21)) were slightly more beneficial than Situational Leadership Assessments (LLDP1: 87 percent (n=16) and LLDP2: 88 percent (n=16)) at the start of the program. At the mid-point, the Parker Team Player Assessment seemed most popular among respondents, with at least 86 percent of respondents (LLDP1, n=14) and a maximum of 93 percent of respondents (LLDP2, n=14, LLDP3, n=15 and LLDP4, n=15) agreeing that this assessment

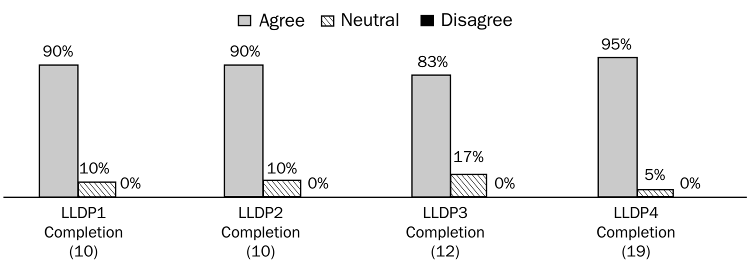

Figure 7.6 **Percentage of respondents who agreed or disagreed that the six assessment tools provided valuable information and insight**

tool provided valuable information and insight. Although the Strengths Finder Assessment was popular among LLDP2 and 3, only 57 percent of LLDP1 (n=14) and 73 percent of LLDP4 (n=15) found this tool valuable.

Evaluation of the assessment of techniques used

Techniques such as coaching groups and reflective journaling were implemented throughout the leadership program. In each cohort, participants were placed into groups of three, called trios, for peer coaching, support, resource and practical exercises. These trios met twice during the module and at least two to three times between sessions. Trio groups changed after the mid-point survey was completed. When respondents were asked if trio meetings will provide/had provided a good learning support, at least 75 percent of respondents agreed with this statement at the start. Other than in LLDP2, levels of satisfaction decreased with the trio groups at the mid-point when 14 percent of respondents in LLDP1 (n=14) and 7 percent of respondents in LLDP3 (n=15) disagreed that the trios provided good learning support (see Figure 7.7). This response was reflected qualitatively when respondents from LLDP1 and LLDP3 noted: "both the personal and trio sides of the program suffered as the team challenge has sucked all my time." Another respondent said they preferred "less in-between meetings and trio sessions." Trio groups changed from the mid-point to completion, and in the survey an increase was observed among LLDP1 and LLDP3 respondents.

Respondents were also asked if reflective journaling was a good learning technique. Overall, respondents in all four

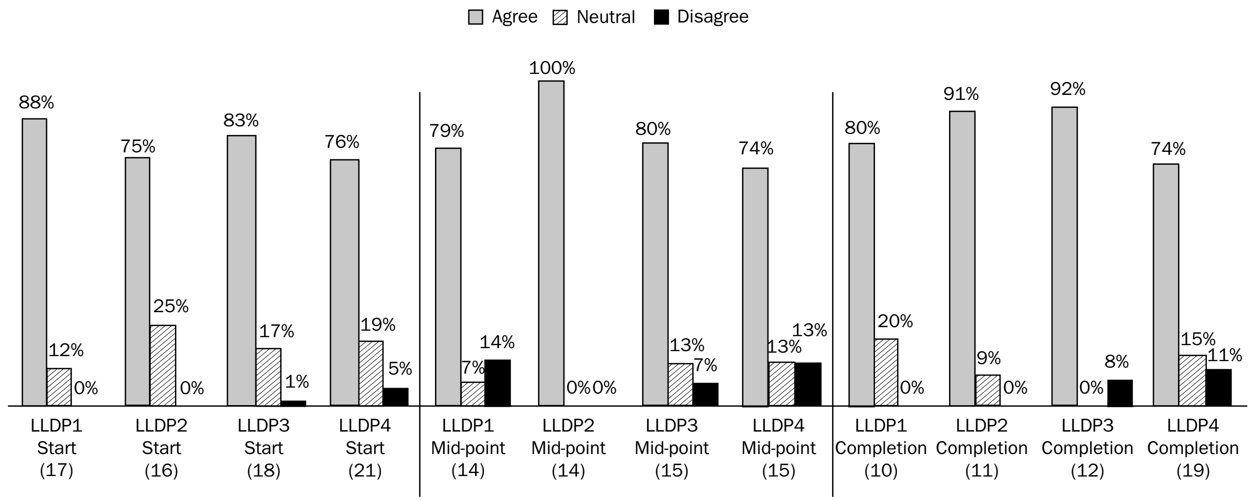

Figure 7.7 **Percentage of respondents who agreed or disagreed that the trio meetings will provide/had provided good learning support**

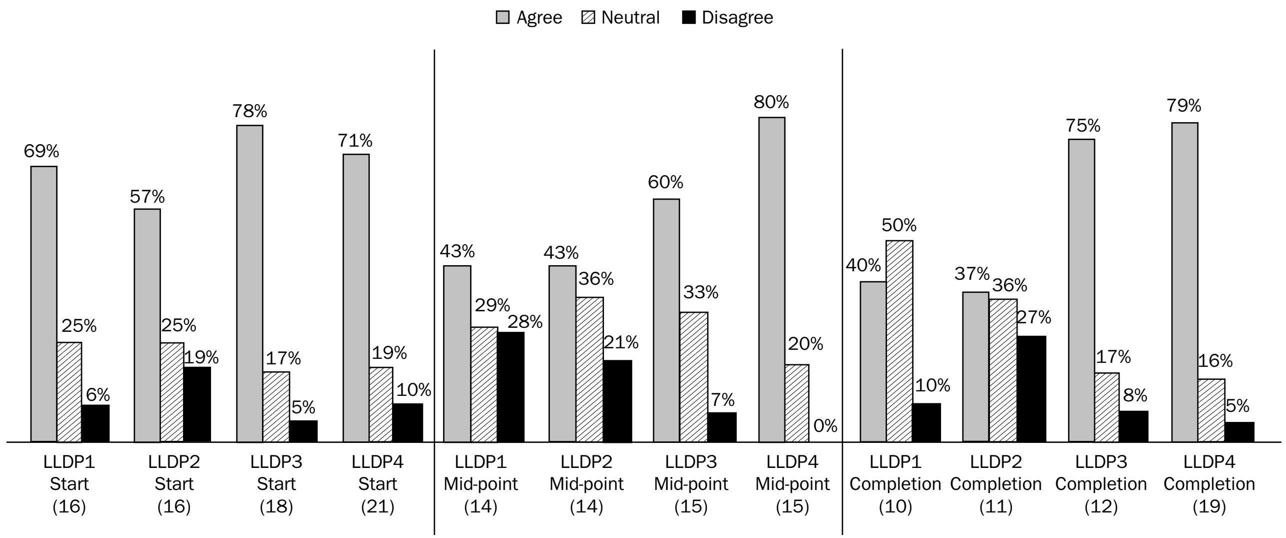

Figure 7.8 **Percentage of respondents who agreed or disagreed that reflective journaling was a good learning technique**

cohorts did not seem enthusiastic about the journaling technique used. From start, through mid-point to completion, a decreasing number of LLDP1 and 2 respondents agreed that reflective journaling was a good technique (see Figure 7.8). Although reflective journaling seemed more popular among LLDP3 and 4 participants, qualitatively, respondents from all four cohorts identified being "unfamiliar," "not keen on the reflective journaling technique," or stated simply that "reflective journaling was not for me."

Evaluation of the effectiveness of sessions

Participants were engaged in multiple sessions including coaching, team-building, change management, appreciative inquiry and in-between practice/assignment sessions. At the start, participants took part in coaching sessions and were later asked if the coaching session and practice provided practical tips and techniques for future coaching sessions. The majority of respondents in LLDP1 (94 percent, n=17) and LLDP3 (100 percent, n=18) agreed with this statement. A lower percentage of respondents in LLDP2 (75 percent, n=16) and LLDP4 (86 percent, n=21) agreed with the same statement (see Figure 7.9). Interestingly, the same trend was observed with team sessions at the mid-point evaluation. Overall, team sessions proved most popular among participants.

At the mid-point, participants were engaged in change sessions and appreciative inquiry sessions. An increasing trend was observed among LLDP1 to LLDP3 participants with respect to change sessions. A majority of respondents across all four cohorts agreed that the change session and practice provided them with practical techniques and tips

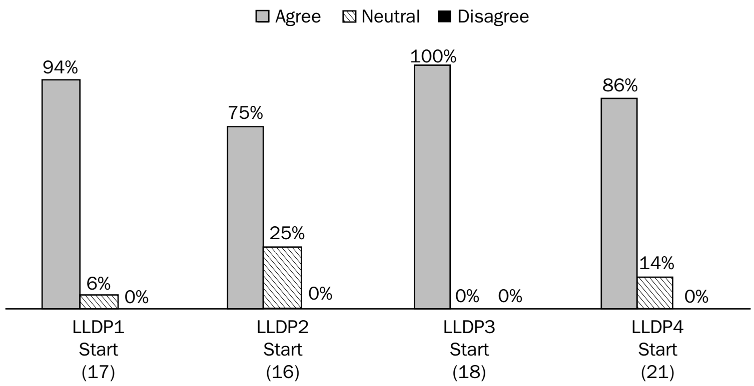

Figure 7.9 **Percentage of respondents who agreed or disagreed that coaching sessions and practice provided practical techniques and tips for future coaching sessions**

for future planning or coaching: LLDP1 (93 percent, n=14), LLDP2 (86 percent, n=14), LLDP3 (93 percent, n=15) and LLDP4 (86 percent, n=14) (see Figure 7.10). Lastly, appreciative enquiry was deemed most ineffective among LLDP1 and LLDP3. However, LLDP2 and LLDP4 respondents, 79 percent and 87 percent respectively, agreed

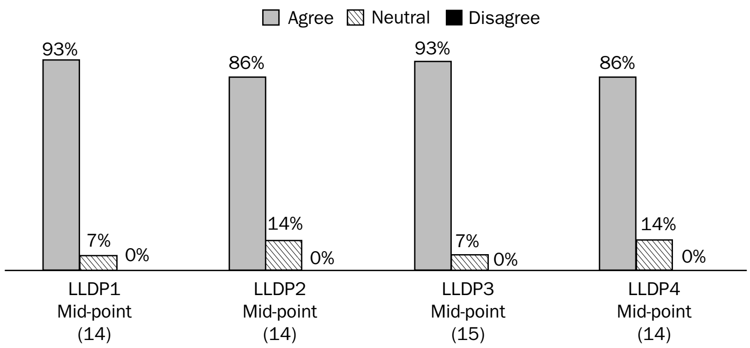

Figure 7.10 **Percentage of respondents who agreed or disagreed that team sessions and practice provided practical techniques and tips for future team building sessions**

that this session provided practical techniques and tips for future planning (see Figure 7.11). Based on qualitative observations among LLDP1 and 3, a more practical application of appreciative inquiry was needed which may have contributed to lower levels of satisfaction.

In-between sessions were unpopular among LLDP1 respondents (n=10), with only 40 percent of respondents agreeing that in-between sessions were effective upon completion. This observation was supported qualitatively, as respondents identified a lack of time "to fully participate in each in-between session." This trend differed among LLDP2 and 3 from start, through mid-point to completion, as additional respondents agreed that the in-between sessions and assignments were helpful. Lastly, although 81 percent of respondents in LLDP4 (n=21) agreed that in-between sessions, practice and assignments would support learning at the start, only 64 percent of respondents in the same cohort (n=15) agreed with this statement at the mid-point. Qualitative observations did not support this observation among LLDP4 participants, as only a few respondents mentioned "time

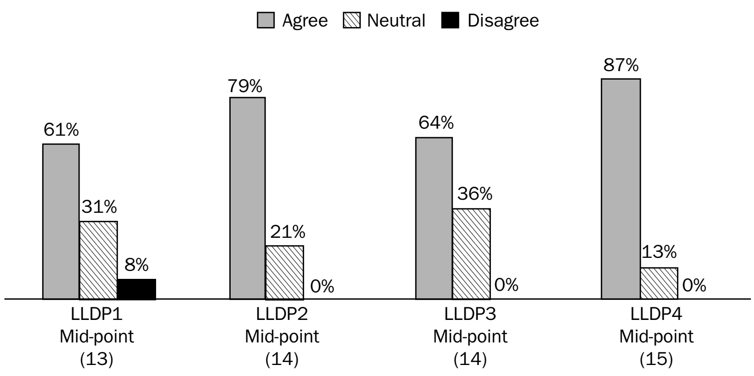

Figure 7.11 **Percentage of respondents who agreed or disagreed that appreciative inquiry and practice provided practical tips and techniques for future planning and team sessions**

commitment" as an issue, whereas a majority of respondents identified being "extremely satisfied" with the program.

Evaluation of the assessment of discussions and materials

Respondents were asked if the group discussions were appropriate and effective in helping them learn the concepts. At least 86 percent of respondents in each cohort (at each time point) agreed with this statement. Similarly, session materials were also evaluated, with at least 82 percent of respondents in the last three cohorts agreeing that the session materials reinforced their learning experience. Significantly, a minimum of 65 percent of respondents in LLDP1 (n=17) made the same observation from start to mid-point (see Figure 7.12). Qualitatively, respondents in LLDP1 identified the material and homework associated with the leadership program as extensive. It is evident that LLDP1 participants did not anticipate the time commitment associated with the

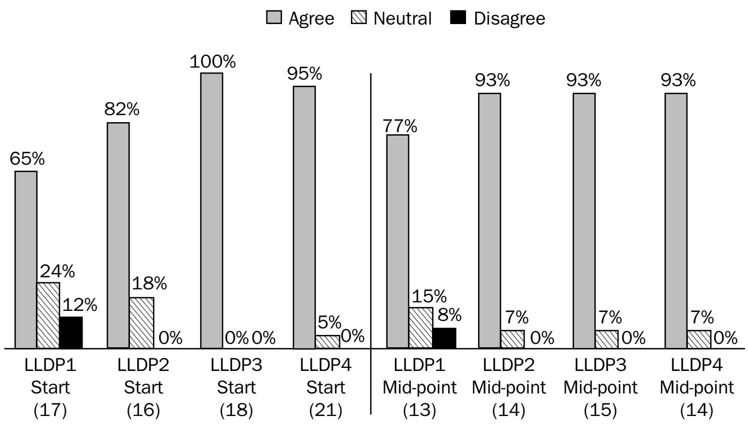

Figure 7.12 **Percentage of respondents who agreed or disagreed that session materials reinforced and broadened their learning experience**

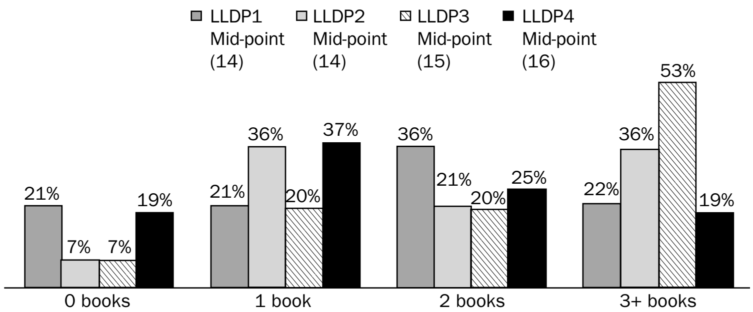

Figure 7.13 **Number of books, journals or other resources read by respondents since the start of the program**

leadership program. Further, when respondents were asked how many books (or journals or other major resources) they had read since the beginning of the program, the most notable response was reported among LLDP3 respondents (n=15) where 53 percent identified having read 3+ books (see Figure 7.13).

Evaluation of Leadership Action Challenges

The focus of the LLDP was to develop employee leadership skills at every layer and level at the University Library. Activities such as The Leadership Action Challenge were essential in enabling participants to practice leadership skills, build teams and make recommendations on their given topics. At the mid-point and completion of the program, respondents were asked if the Leadership Action Challenges were an effective way to practice and implement their leadership skills. With the exception of LLDP1, all cohorts agreed that the Leadership Action Challenges were an effective way to practice and implement their leadership skills. However, LLDP1 participants differed with this statement at the start, mid-point and completion. This anomaly may have occurred due to the demographics of the participants in LLDP1 (i.e. library heads, senior leadership, etc.) as other work-related demands may have impacted on engagement with the Leadership Action Challenge. Qualitative observations from respondents in LLDP1 supplemented this finding as LLDP1 participants identified difficulty in "finding time" in their current workload to complete the Leadership Action Challenge.

In addition, at least 88 percent of respondents (within each cohort, at each time point) agreed that the sessions provided an effective opportunity to begin, continue and renew their leadership learning journey. Further, at least 79 percent of respondents in LLDP 2, 3 and 4 agreed that they were fully engaged in their leadership development (see Figure 7.14). Interestingly, there was an increase from 64 percent (n=14) to 80 percent (n=10) among LLDP1 respondents who agreed with the same statement. However, respondent numbers decreased (from 14 to 10), so we cannot infer that engagement levels increased among LLDP1 participants.

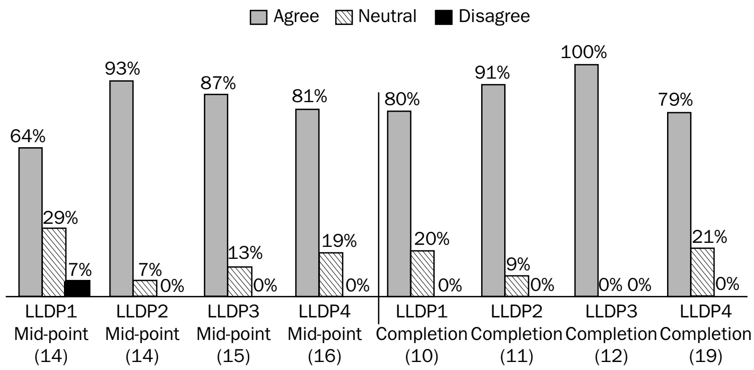

Figure 7.14 **Percentage of respondents who agreed or disagreed that they were fully engaged in their leadership development**

At the mid-point, respondents were asked if they would continue their leadership journey upon completion of the program. At least 71 percent of respondents in each cohort said they would continue the journey for their lifetime (see Figure 7.15). An overwhelming 94 percent in LLDP4 (n=16) noted the same answer. Interestingly, respondents were also asked what their motivation was to attend the program. At least 50 percent of respondents in each of the four cohorts identified an equal mix of external motivation and entirely self-motivation (see Figure 7.16). As expected, almost 50 percent of LLDP3 participants identified their motivation as entirely self-motivated. Furthermore, at least 90 percent of respondents in LLDP1, 2 and 3 were willing to keep leadership development ongoing in the library.

Upon completion of the program, participants were asked if they would rate their leadership development experience as excellent. The percentage of respondents who agreed with this statement increased from LLDP1 (60 percent, n=10) through LLDP2 (73 percent, n=11) to LLDP3 (92 percent, n=12) (see Figure 7.17). For LLDP4, the percentage of respondents agreeing with this statement remained high (79 percent, n=19) but below the high point achieved in LLDP3.

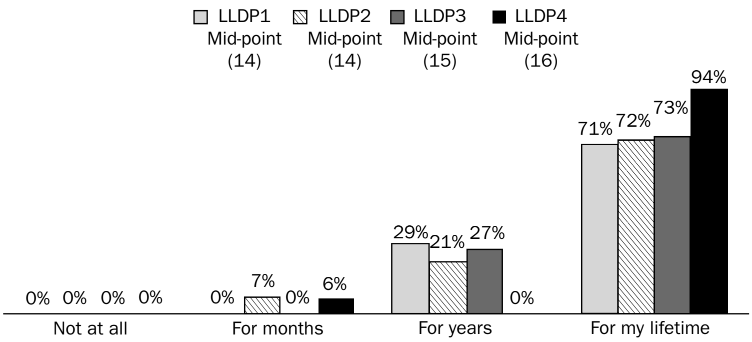

Figure 7.15 **Percentage of respondents who would continue their leadership journey upon completion of the program**

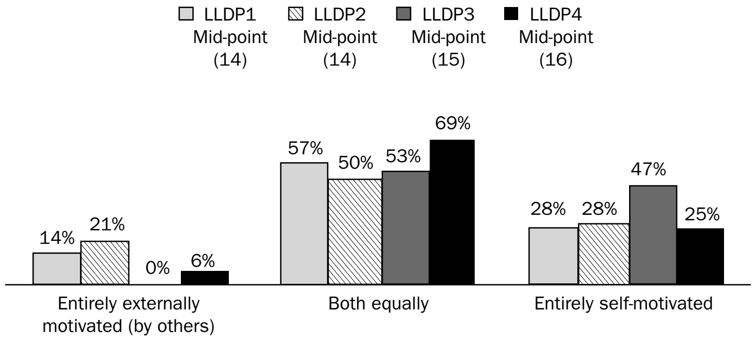

Figure 7.16 Motivation to attend the leadership program, identified by respondents

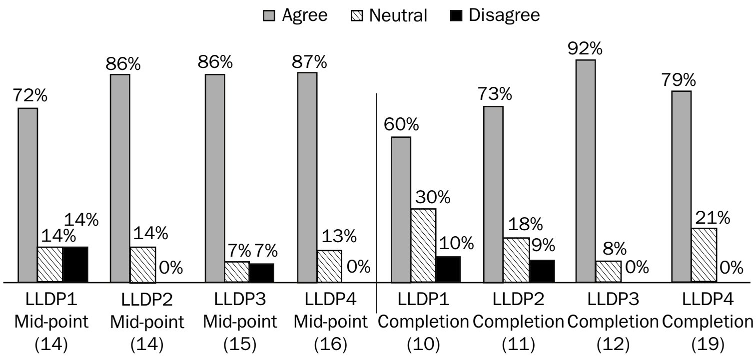

Figure 7.17 Percentage of respondents who agreed or disagreed that they would rate their leadership development experience in the program as excellent

Concluding observations

Overall, both the formal and informal feedback and evaluation by participants in each cohort has been highly positive.

As an innovation (something which is perceived to be new and different and which triggers change), the LLDP has been successfully initiated and implemented by the University Library and has helped us to change our workplace and workforce culture so that institutional and long-term sustainable change is being achieved. In the words of one LLDP graduate, "The LLDP is helping to transform our culture, and it is great to see us putting our learning into action in our teams within the workplace." The LLDP is a practical step in a journey to change organizational culture, build individual and organizational leadership capacity, and address and overcome some local and national trends in one research library in Canada. We hope our development and application of LLDP will help other libraries worldwide who are facing similar challenges and opportunities.

While Proverbs 29:18 tells us, "Without the vision the people perish," I am reminded through the experiences of the LLDP that "vision without leadership is equally doomed to perish."

8

Transforming library services: the University of Central Lancashire experience

Jeremy Andrew, Head of Library Services, University of Central Lancashire

Abstract: This case study outlines the changes made to the library building at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) in Preston between 2008 and 2010, the rationale behind the changes and the processes followed in order to achieve rapid change. It describes how the design of the library was agreed, revised, implemented and, most importantly, received by the academic community, and considers the impact the changes have had on the usage of the library and the subsequent realignment of staffing duties to meet the demands of the new service.

Key words: cultural change, structural change, student participation, 80/20 rule, library building.

The UCLan library was originally built in 1979. It was a two-storey building with 6000 square metres of floor space, and catered for the needs of around 4500 students. In 1995, the library was extended with the addition of a third floor and an extension to the side of the building. This increased the floor space to around 10 000 square metres, and it provided traditional library services for around 12 000 students. By 2008, the student numbers had increased to over 32 000.

The librarian had made several unsuccessful bids to the University Estates Panel for further extensions to the library building and a plan had been submitted, but rejected, for a new library building. In 2004, the university fees had been increased from £1000 to £3000, and, in 2005, the introduction of the National Student Survey (NSS) provided students with an opportunity to rate the services that they received from the university and for universities to compare student satisfaction ratings. The student was no longer someone who should be grateful for the 'free' state education that they received – they had become a valued customer whose views and needs were not only important but critical, as they could now vote with their feet if the university did not provide the services they expected and demanded. As we moved forward to 2012 this became even more important as student expectations of a £9000 a year university and library service far exceed those of a £3000 service. If you bought a car for £3000 your expectations of that car would be far different than if you bought a £9000 car, and similarly the students' expectations of a university and a library service are also higher. The customer/student experience is high on, if not top of, the agenda for every university and library service. In 2008, the customer/student experience was beginning to gather pace within universities and the demands on the library service were focused around additional space for group study, more up-to-date books and more computers. Since their introduction, the NSS results for the library service at UCLan had increased year on year, but when comparing the scores to other higher education institutions we languished in the third quartile of university libraries.

On 1 April 2008 the IT and Library Services merged to create a new service called Learning Information Services (LIS). The new service was responsible for the operational delivery of all IT services, for the development of new IT solutions, for deploying the university business efficiency initiative to improve the use of IT systems, and for all library services. Following an interview process the former Head of the IT service was appointed as the Director of Learning and Information Services. He met with all of his senior managers within the new service to identify priorities, and it soon became clear that the modernisation of the library was top of the agenda. The reason the library was chosen was driven by a number of factors. Recruitment into universities was becoming more and more competitive. Hobsons had recently been commissioned by universities to identify what attracted students to universities. Their findings proved that while the most important element in choosing a university was the course, this was followed by the quality of the university's library and IT services. The NSS and internal student satisfaction surveys at UCLan were highlighting reasonable satisfaction with the IT services, but the library remained firmly within the middle of the third quartile of Higher Education Institutions' (HEI) libraries. The former IT services department had had a very successful external income generation arm, and over the years had generated over £1million worth of income which was available to the Director of Service to spend on the library redevelopment. In addition, he managed to acquire some additional funds for the project from the University Facilities Management department's 'minor improvements programme budget', so that in total we had £1.4 million to spend on the project. The senior managers then began discussions on what improvements we could make to the library with this budget. Given that we were now in the second week of April (2008) we felt the changes would need to be implemented in 18 months' time, ready for the start of the academic year 2009/10. However, our Director of Service had other ideas; he wanted the changes (that we had still to agree) to be implemented and available for the students who were starting in the academic year 2008/09 – in five months' time! 'Mission Impossible' cried some of the former library staff. 'Mission Insanity' cried all of the LIS staff, and in truth most of the university staff agreed with both of these sentiments. The library staff had been used to undertaking projects that were backed by a lot of research, debate, discussion, more research and finally an implementation plan. We were now being asked to forgo most of our time-honoured traditions and working practices and implement a change which, while we all agreed was essential to the future of the library service, we felt in our heart of hearts was impossible to achieve within the ridiculously short time frame: 'Consider it a challenge to your management and motivational skills', we were told by the Director of Service. 'When we complete the task you will not only have transformed the library building for the benefit of the students, but also the hearts and minds of the staff within the service to believe that rapid change is possible.' So, with his motivational speech ringing in our ears, we began the task of transforming the library building within five months.

The starting point was to inform the University Directorate of our plans, firstly to get their approval for the project and then to request a financial waiver so that we could use existing contractors rather than having to go out to tender. We appointed a firm of architects and a construction company as the main contractors for the project. We then appointed a project board and a project team and, using a reduced version of Prince2 project management methodology, created a project identification document (PID) and a draft project plan. The project board consisted of the Director of Learning Information Services, the former Head of the Library Service, two senior managers from LIS, a buildings development manager from Facilities Management, a member of the Students Union and an academic member of staff. Next we began to publicise the project across the university. Publicity throughout the project was, in my opinion, one of the key factors in the success of the project and is something I would recommend should be heavily used within any project. It not only ensures that your customer base is kept informed of progress (or problems), but it is also a key tool to ensure that they feel part of the project. Throughout the project we not only informed our customers about the project status but also used the publicity to request customer input into the project, thus providing valuable feedback through which we could identify changes to the scope of the project. This made everyone feel that they had some ownership and involvement in the project.

Having set up the project teams and assigned the contractors we began a very short, one-month, research and consultation phase. We began by visiting a number of libraries in the North West of England and across the country who had either recently built new libraries, or who had recently altered their libraries to incorporate social learning spaces. This enabled the project team to quickly gather ideas about facilities, services, resources and equipment that we liked, and also to gather an understanding of the issues involved with deploying them into a library environment. At the same time, we began a consultation exercise with our students, researchers, academic staff and library staff to gather their ideas about the library service and the library building. We invited pupils from local sixth-form and FE colleges to participate in the consultation exercise. We felt the former group were important because they would form the next generation of university students, so it was essential that we also considered their ideas and their needs of a library and library service. We commissioned the Sandbox team within UCLan to undertake this consultation on our behalf. Sandbox

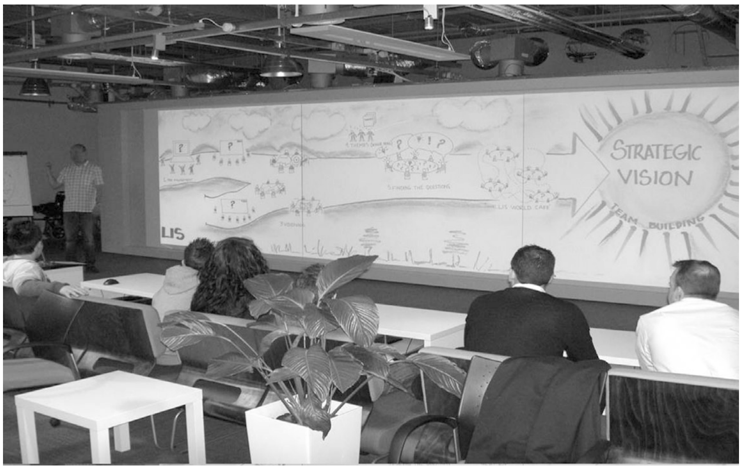

Figure 8.1 Use of Sandbox facility to capture the needs of our customers

is a creative facilitation unit within the university which uses innovative technology to capture user feedback and then, based upon that feedback, propose strategic change to services and companies. They gathered information on current experiences and future expectations of using the library and library services.

Armed with the information we had gathered from our visits to others libraries, and the feedback we received from the Sandbox sessions, we met with the architects to provide them with a general scope of what we would like to see within the library space. Within a week, the architects returned to the university with a number of drawings and plans outlining how we could transform the ground floor of the library from a traditional library space containing an issue counter, RFID self-service units and the journal collection into a new social learning space, create a large open-access PC area on the top floor of the library, and transform the library staff offices into a large open-plan area.

Figure 8.2 Images of the library prior to the changes (1)

Figure 8.3 Images of the library prior to the changes (2)

We again commissioned the Sandbox team to present the plans that the architects had created to the students and the staff. An architect and the project board also attended these sessions. We obtained some excellent feedback on what they liked and more importantly what they did not like about the proposed plans for the ground floor of the library. The architects then revised the plans based upon this feedback, and at the end of May 2008 work began in preparing the library for its transformation. The feedback was very important because the students did not like the proposed colour scheme and the names of the various zones on the ground floor in particular. Originally, the architects proposed very vibrant colours but the students wanted more pastel shades to reflect a quiet relaxed atmosphere. The students also did not like the names of the zones – they hated the use of the word 'social' as they felt this did not reflect the purpose of the library, i.e. a place of study. Once the plans had been agreed and signed off we then needed to identify which journals we needed to keep in the library and which we would place into storage or withdraw completely from circulation. We agreed with the academic staff that we would remove any physical journal if we subscribed to the e-version, and if necessary we purchased back runs of e-journals to ensure the collection remained intact. We created some space on the second floor for those journals that would remain within the library, and offered the remaining titles to the Schools and other universities. If we were unsure what to do with particular journals they were boxed up and placed into a storage space that we rented from a local storage company. We would revisit this after the building work was completed, and most of the titles were subsequently withdrawn or given to the academic Schools. It took two weeks to complete this task and involved most of the library staff. It must be said that this was not a popular decision in all quarters, with a number of academic and library staff complaining that we were devaluing the library collection. While we listened to these arguments and tried to placate people we continued to box up the journals as we could not afford to delay the building work. In the first week of June the construction company moved in to undertake the main building work. This entailed knocking down walls and involved major changes to the mechanical and electrical fit-out in the library. One of the regular complaints that we had received about the ground floor of the library was that it was either too hot or too cold, so while we were undertaking the building changes we also enhanced the air-conditioning units. We also took the opportunity to replace the service lift which had been installed when the building was originally built in 1979, and which over the past few years had become very unreliable. Throughout all of this phase of the project we kept the users informed of progress and used webcams to show up-to-the-minute images of the transformation.

While the building work was taking place the project team were working with the architects to identify the furniture and fixtures and fittings to be used within the learning zone. We again invited students and academic staff to work with us to choose the furniture. Given that we were not entirely sure how the space would be used by the students, we only committed around 70 per cent of the furnishing and fixtures budget. We decided that we would hold back the remaining 30 per cent of the budget, which would be used once the learning zone had been completed and the students were using the space. We would then purchase additional furniture and fixtures based upon what the students preferred and were actually using within the library environment. The work was completed at midnight on a Sunday in mid-September 2008. The new students were starting at 9 a.m. the following Monday morning!

We had achieved what we set out to do, and despite the ridiculously short time frame we completed the project on time but with a small overspend in budget due to unforeseen electrical and mechanical issues. We made a conscious decision to complete the work with the slight overspend and then identify the extra funds we needed rather than delay the project while we found the extra money. We had totally transformed the personality of the library – but would it prove to be a success?

Figure 8.4 Images of the library after the building work (1)

Figure 8.5 Images of the library after the building work (2)

In the first year of operation the usage of the library increased by over 17 per cent, with over 120 000 additional visits to the library. The usage of the books within the library rose by over 5 per cent to more than 1.1 million transactions, and the entry and exit statistics showed that the students were staying on average over an hour-and-a-half longer per visit to the library. The student satisfaction surveys showed an increase of 2 per cent in satisfaction ratings, which in terms of the NSS moved the UCLan library

Figure 8.6 Images of the library after the building work (3)

to the bottom of the second quartile of higher education libraries. It has to be said, however, that the changes proved less popular with the academic staff and with researchers, who did not welcome the more vibrant and at times noisy atmosphere that the change created within the library.

Did we get everything right with the project? No, we didn't. We made changes to the design of the ground floor over the following 12 months. As previously, however, the changes were made in consultation with the students, academic staff and library staff, and we publicised clearly what changes we were making and why we were making them. These changes involved redefining the use of some of the space by creating more group study space, introducing some single study space and reducing some of the relaxation space. We also needed to introduce far stricter policies on noise – students are now warned when they are making excessive noise, and are given an automatic 48-hour ban from the library if they continue to ignore the first warning. In hindsight, if we had delayed the project to allow us to conduct more research we probably would not have made these mistakes. We probably got about 80 per cent of the project right and via live user testing and feedback we got the remaining 20 per cent right over the following 12 months. So should we have delayed the project by 12 months? No, it was most definitely the right decision to proceed with the project within the timescale. Why was it the right decision? Well, we got 80 per cent of it right – which meant that a whole cohort of students reaped the benefits of the changes we introduced, which they would not have done if we had delayed the project by 12 months. The library staff saw clearly the very positive impact the changes had on the student experience, and to a large extent were swept along on the tide of positive feedback the library service was receiving. There was a clear sense of pride (and relief) among the library staff that the project had turned out to be very successful. This was reinforced by the number of visits and requests for visits we received from fellow library professionals who not only wanted to see the changes we had made but also wanted to know how we had achieved it within the timescale. The project really brought out the Dunkirk spirit in the staff. Once the project began there was very little time to stop and draw breath. The success of the project relied on all of the staff meeting deadlines, and no single team wanted to be identified as the one that let the side down so everyone worked incredibly hard for each other. The project also provided a common goal for all of the staff to make a significant impact on the students' experience. Library staff, along with Marks and Spencer staff, are always cited as examples of best practice in providing excellent customer support. They pride themselves on both listening to and genuinely caring about their customers. The chance to work on a project that would have a significant impact on the customer experience certainly helped to focus the minds of the library staff.

Figure 8.7 The library before refurbishment – spot the students

Figure 8.8 The library after refurbishment – spot the students!

The increase in student satisfaction and student usage of the library, and the interest from other universities did not go unnoticed by the University Directorate. They too were very impressed, not only by the impact the changes had on the student experience but also by the way in which the LIS staff had completed the project against seemingly impossible deadlines. The transformational change to the building had also led to the transformational change in the LIS staff. They had developed not only a can-do spirit but also a culture in which rapid cultural change could be achieved within the service without having a negative impact on the service. The university and HE sector was going through, and continues to go through, significant changes, so the ability of the staff to react and adapt to change will in my opinion determine which universities are successful in the future. Internally, the University's Directorate rewarded the LIS staff by approving a £2million redevelopment budget to transform the remaining two floors of the library. The staff saw this as a reward for all their achievements. After years of unsuccessfully submitting bids for library building development work, the Directorate provided the funds despite the work coming at a time of financial austerity and cutbacks within the HE sector.

This second project was no less daunting a challenge than the transformation of the ground floor. Between the end of May and the beginning of September 2009 we had to remove, and then return to different locations, all of the learning resources, some 350 000 items, knock down a number of walls, create 30 group study rooms and a number of specialist PC, Mac and silent study rooms, all while maintaining a library service. The good news is that we did have a longer planning stage for this project, as the project team was formed in January 2009, but right from the off the LIS staff displayed a can-do attitude and at no stage was it seen by the LIS staff as a 'Mission Impossible'-type project. I am pleased to say that the project was completed at around 4 a.m. on the morning that the new students were due to start in the university. It again proved to be a very successful project which further enhanced the student experience of the library and the library service and has led to further increases in student satisfaction in the NSS. The creation of more individual study spaces and silent study rooms also helped to improve the reputation of the library with the university's academic and research community.

What lessons have we learnt from the projects at UCLan? Firstly, that nothing is impossible if all the staff are on board with the project and fully committed to making it work. In order to achieve this it is important that you fully involve the staff in all stages of the project. They need to fully understand the rationale behind the project, and the timescales involved, and also understand the projected outcomes of the project and the implications of not undertaking the project. I also cannot stress enough the importance of communication throughout the whole of the project life cycle. Communication, and active involvement and participation at the project start-up phase, are in my opinion the most important aspects if you want the staff to fully engage with the project. It is also essential that your entire customer base is represented within the consultation phase of the project. Their ideas and opinions are essential to the success of the project, as they will be the end users of whatever service or system you subsequently deploy. It is better to implement 80 per cent of a project than nothing at all. If the project is related to customer experience and services, then surely 80 per cent of something positive is better than 100 per cent of something negative. Some projects fail to get underway because to achieve a 100 per cent successful implementation usually is a 'mission impossible' within a given time frame or resource base. You should consider what the impact of an 80 per cent successful project would be on the user community – if it will have a positive impact it is probably worth doing. The library and library services will always be customer focused, but are we always certain of what the customer expects and wants from a library service? Academic staff and students should always be included within the project team to ensure that the project deliverables remain focused on what is important for the customer. At UCLan we continue to deploy these philosophies within projects, and it is pleasing to report that they continue to have a positive outcome on enhancing the student experience and student satisfaction with the library and library services.

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