Chapter XI

Issues for Library Management When Implementing Large-Scale Programmatic Change

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Change, by its very nature, is unpredictable, and often unmanageable, yet an organization's success depends on an ability to predict and control change in some way. To derive maximum benefit from new opportunities and to avoid
reactive situations, it is essential to manage organizational change. Further, as change accelerates, the more difficult and stressful it is to manage. The proliferation of change management literature in the library and information field indicates that these issues are becoming increasingly important as more academic libraries develop a virtual presence (Higuchi, 1990; Lee, 1993; Riggs, 1997; Meyer, 1997; Nozero & Vaughn, 2000). Nearly a decade ago, Dougherty and Dougherty (1993) observed that the current rate of change in the information field was higher than ever before, while libraries’ ability to respond quickly and decisively had never been more constrained. Academic libraries, like other organizations, must respond proactively to their changing environment in order to take advantage of the opportunities for increasing their visibility, restructuring to meet the needs of their users, and achieving their objective of remaining the preeminent source of information within the academy.

This chapter begins with an overview of the theoretical perspectives of change. Using Burke, Church and Waclawski’s (1993) Managing Change model, the authors will discuss the structure of change, the culture of change, and the individual response to change within a case study framework.

THEORIES OF CHANGE

The literature reflects three major areas in organizational change: the structural or planning aspect of change, the cultural aspect of change, and the individual human reaction to change. Lewin (1958) looks at the patterns in the change process and how best to manage effectively large system change, the evolutionary or revolutionary nature of change, and the characteristic patterns that typify change efforts in organizations. His fundamental description of structural change has been incorporated into many process-oriented models of organizational change developed for organizations to better understand and direct the process of systemic change (Tichy, Hornstein & Nisberg, 1977; Schein, 1987).

Cultural change often affects organizational identity. Beckhard and Harris (1987) focus on managing the transition concerning the organizational identity. Members of an organization need to identify a desired future state and describe the new role, function, or structure that the organization needs to adopt. They recommend use of a transition management team and senior management to help move forward and engage in activity planning. They further highlight the importance of communication, leadership and emotional components of change.

Finally, Bridges (1986) is concerned about the experiences of individuals in the change process. He has identified several personal transition stages, including the release of individual identity, ambiguity, and establishing a new beginning.
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