

## 8

### **Organization and Implementation**

#### ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE IMPLEMENTATION OF CHANGE

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Whatever scheme for service might be designed, implementation is unlikely to be, or to remain, successful unless there is a proper political and economic structure of governance, authority, resource allocation, and accountability. Failure to develop satisfactory governance and organizational structures can have very serious consequences. Nevertheless, for three reasons, this area will not be examined in any detail beyond the noting of a few general guidelines:

First, organizational structures and governance tend to be situational: They need to be compatible with the culture and traditions of the larger organization or community that the library serves. Arrangements which might be acceptable in one situation might not be acceptable in another.

Secondly, flexibility and adaptability are important. The characteristics of the Automated Library are different enough from those of the Paper Library to indicate changes in organization. The Electronic Library, in turn, will have its own characteristics which can be expected to lead to additional changes in the management and organization of libraries.

Thirdly, organization and governance should, in a sense, be the last aspect to be considered. This assertion is not meant to diminish their importance but is, rather, a tactical consideration. Different organizational structures lend themselves to different sorts of activities. Manufacturing organizations, for example, tend to function differently from service organizations. In manufacturing, differences have been found in the organizational structures suited for small batch production, for large batch production, and for continuous process production. In service activities, differences have been found in organizational structures between routine services and professional services.

For these reasons any existing structure or any specific structure that might be designed will necessarily be more suitable for some activities and circumstances than for others. In this way "organizational technology" shares the attributes of any other technology: Each approach offers different constraints in terms of the activities for which it is suited. Given the importance of compatibility between activities and administrative structure, to start by assuming or prescribing any given organizational structure is to impose the constraints and limitations of that organizational structure. It would, ideally, seem better to defer administrative considerations and to concentrate initially on the needs of library users and on the potential of available information

technology. After that has been accomplished, then political and economic realities will have to be considered. By deferring that consideration the desired design for service will have been less inhibited, and there would be a better basis for evolving organizational structures consistent with what one is trying to achieve. That might seem the best course of action in theory, but the show has to go on: Governance and organizational structure cannot be suspended.

The organizational structure of a library tends to be relatively complex because it reflects a mixture of technologies: Technical services resemble continuous-process manufacturing; circulation and shelving are routine-service activities; and reference work is a professional-service activity. A library, then, includes three of the five different types of organizational structure distinguished above.

For more general discussion reference should be made to general management texts. Important basic guidelines include:

Responsibility should be matched by authority and resources.

Authority should be matched by accountability.

Accountability depends on effective dissemination of information and on mechanisms for decision-making.

Any structure needs to be compatible with and acceptable to parent organizations.

Cooperative and exchange arrangements should be mutually beneficial.

Flexibility and the ability to adapt enable an organization to evolve.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF CHANGE**

Good planning is a process that leads to consistent anticipatory decision-making. Planning that does not influence decisions is futile. Decision making should be anticipatory in that plans should be ready for events as (or before) events occur. Decisions should be consistent with the mission of the organization and with each other. Bad planning or, more commonly, an absence of planning is reflected in decisions that are taken too late and that are inconsistent: Any good resulting from one decision is liable to be undone by the next.

A plan in the form of a document is not strictly necessary for good planning since planning can be done in the mind. A written plan is a tool usually designed for a specific purpose: to establish consensus, to generate approval, to communicate, or to obtain resources.

With technological change there is often unfortunate confusion between "research and development" and "innovation." Research and development have to do with the *identification* of feasible new options and is a matter of inquiry, investigation, and testing. Innovation is a matter of selecting or rejecting available options and is a management activity. These are quite different activities. Failure to recognize the difference between them leads to the development of options that are not properly considered or to the adoption of impractical or unsuitable innovations.

The management of research and development, the implementation of change, and effective planning are important and widely underestimated skills. There is a large and useful literature on planning upon which one can draw.

*Notes for Chapter 8: Organization and Implementation.*

1. Michael Gorman, "The Ecumenical Library," *The Reference Librarian* 9 (1984):55-64 (1984).
2. Richard L. Daft, *Management*, 2d ed. (Chicago: Dryden Press, 1991). Chapter 10.
3. See, for example, Daft, *Management*; Harold Koontz, Cyril O'Donnell, and Heinz Wehrich, *Management*, 8th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984).
4. For a review of this and other causes of failure in the move from the Paper Library to the Automated Library see Stephen R. Salmon, *Library Automation Systems* (New York: Marcel Dekker, 1975), Chapter 9.
5. For a start, see, for example, Harold Koontz, Cyril O'Donnell, and Heinz Wehrich, *Management*, 8th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984), Chapters 5 and 10; Stanton F. Biddle, *Planning University Library Services* (New York: Greenwood, 1992).