Managing Change in Digital Era

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Abstract
For overall progress, the optimum and constant use of information is possible if we provide it the changing environment as per the needs and demands of the time. The most near and dear friend of information is one, who procures, processes and disseminates it in the most profitable manner. Therefore, we the librarians keeping in view our changing and dynamic role, need to learn to live effectively with continual change – to constantly reassess ourselves, our skills and jobs and if we fear change, find it threatening or fail to cope with it then we could sink without trace. We should know the basic skills concerning how to manage change. A variety of methods should be used, because change affects people differently. Other problems that cause change initiatives to fail are lack of training and not measuring whether the change is working. The reality of today is that a library is under pressure, is in continuous transformation and trying to access to all information resources for every member of the community it has to serve and therefore, requires enthusiastic librarians. Every professional should, therefore, deem it as his sacred duty to develop his professional capabilities on ongoing basis. Nothing goes waste; today or tomorrow one will reap the fruit of one's deeds. It is therefore, recommended that the distance learning and self learning mode of training should be adopted for cultivating the right perception and requirements of IT in addition to external training programmes. The curriculum of library schools needs to be extensively restructured keeping in view the present and future demands and attract bright students and faculty.

We have invested and continue to invest very heavily in IT. But we are faced with an avalanche of change, and at a rate which is difficult to absorb. It has profound consequences for us all, which we ignore at our peril. So this investment in IT and its training poses real risks of early obsolescence. A manager should be decisive, consistent and flexible, who can provide a sound framework in which the individual can progress and experiment, who encourages people to face challenges and extend their boundaries by inspiring confidence and encouragement, and can create a powerful and motivated team. He should try to formulate and implement the fixed career policy of his team as is in vogue in Japan. No employee will leave his parent organisation till his hierarchical needs are fully satisfied. In short, resistance to change will be reduced by the development of a culture of life long learning. For developing the new skills on ongoing basis, the paper also outlines a detailed training programme.

Introduction
Librarians faced with new responsibility in the computer dominated electronic information environment. As the change agents responsible for diffusing the new technology, they must bridge the gap between the technology and the end-user in a manner that enables the end-user effectively and efficiently to use available technology. In order to accomplish this proactive role, librarians must be conversant with the technology, provide user education and assist users in addressing information needs and evaluating the relevance of information retrieved. To achieve these ends, librarians must again become educators and not merely custodians of the knowledge of the world.

Change is the fact of life; and is endemic. It occurs in every organisation whether we plan it or not; whether we realise it or not both from the internal and external influences. That is why it is said that all management is the management of change. Technology is perhaps one of the most important specific forces which act as a powerful stimulant for change. Rapid changes in technology and the sophisticated information systems constantly change the nature of work. With the result, there is regular need of widespread changes in the required skills, levels of employees, the daily activities of managers and the organisation's ability to respond to the changing needs of customers.

Need for Change
- Change is the law of nature. Who could have imagined that the whole structure and information
resources of a library and the role of a Librarian will change in a dramatic manner. The recession and the escalation of the pace of technology change has given birth to a virtual library. Therefore, we the librarians keeping in view our changing and dynamic role need to learn to live effectively with continual change—to constantly reassess ourselves, our skills and jobs and if we fear change, find it threatening or fail to cope with it then we could sink without trace.

- We should know the basic skills concerning how to manage change. A variety of methods should be used, because change affects people differently. Other problems that cause change initiatives to fail are lack of training and not measuring whether the change is working.
- The services of the present hybrid library are based as much on access to digital information as on access to physical objects and in particular where users are much more mobile and present their demands at a variety of service points across a network. Services are expected to evolve rapidly, new technology need to be exploited and this is possible by changing the information environment through effective education and training.
- Proper education and training for managing change is sure to help us to attain the status which our counterparts are enjoying in the West and will alleviate the stagnation endemic.
- Users intend to complete their course works only in a library because of its long working hours and relative security and the availability of information, it is obvious home for a computer lab. The presence of these facilities is placing demand on staff to assist in their use. This will also require library staff to have a wide understanding of the use of IT in education in order to provide for adequate collection development and maintenance.

Resistance to Change and How to Overcome it
Library staff particularly older ones, who deem their university degree obtained a decade ago, as a qualification for life, are mystified by what they call ‘the terrifying technology’ and naturally resist it because they see it as a threat to their jobs and status. Moreover, there are staff members who find it difficult to work in an ever changing environment. This is in contrast to the post when work in a library was seen as the quickest job on the earth. The reality of today is that a library is under pressure, is in continuous transformation and trying to access to all information resources for every member of the community it has to serve and therefore, requires enthusiastic librarians. We have no paucity of such librarians but the reality is non-enthusiastic people (better to call them ‘non-professional librarians’) stand obstacles because many libraries are still over dominated by such people. These people are also reluctant to undergo a training programme because they think that after joining back, they will continue performing the same jobs without any promotion avenues. Having job security, nobody can snatch their jobs and can be promoted on the basis of seniority, favouritism etc.

Usually staff members leave the services of their respective parent organisations after getting training and join other organisations for better paid jobs. Thus, the organisation after investing the huge amount and time, is deprived of the skilled manpower and hence the organisations do not like to take such risks again. Experiences have shown that in spite of legal undertakings, people enter into other organisations. On the other hand, some enthusiastic librarians proceed on leave without pay for under going a training and the training and personal costs are borne by them themselves. On joining back, they do not perceive benefits with the result, they join other organisations for better jobs. Therefore, the question that they do not serve their parent organisations is of little importance because wherever they serve, they serve the society.

A good external training course is much time consuming and costly, which every organisation cannot afford. Short duration courses like run by NISSAT and other institutions are no doubt adequate for novice awareness of an individual aspect of new technology or information needs but they are of necessity limited in their scope and level. Similarly, a series of short courses cannot meet the requirements of the emerging trend of IT. These are suited to develop specific skills rather than the broad IT knowledge required by the information world. Full time and longer duration courses may prove effective but the question arises: whether the organisations are ready to borne these expenses and time of the staff?

So far as external training is concerned, we have no alternative but to get a few staff members fully and regularly trained, who in turn will train the whole staff. The senior staff, where managerial skills fail to motivate them to embrace IT, may be left behind for some time with outmoded skills and knowledge to carry on the other works.

Every professional particularly in today’s thrusting, highly competitive marketplace should deem it as his sacred duty to develop his professional capabilities on ongoing basis. Nothing goes waste; today or tomorrow one will reap the fruit of one’s deeds. It is therefore, recommended to adopt the distance learning and self learning mode of training for cultivating the right perception and requirements of IT. More light regarding this will be shed later on.

Most of the Library and Information Schools in India are still producing traditional graduates without any
know-how of IT and other recent trends of Information Science. Many fresh graduates of these schools join private institutions for under going a training in IT. But the most perspective employers know that the holders of Masters’ in Software Engineering from such institutions have virtually no understanding of computing and an extremely limited and obsolete range of skills. A dubious certificate from “American University” that is not legal in the US itself and a cent per cent placement that usually means a job as a data entry operator. Thus, alumnus of such private institutes know that all they got for their thousands of Rupees in fees and hundreds of hours of time was just an unpleasant initiation in to computing.

The curriculum of library schools needs to be extensively restructured keeping in view the present and future demands and attract bright students and faculty. The faculty should have an in-depth knowledge theoretical as well as practical of IT.

The top management also do not realise the importance of education and training and the result is:

- reduction of the budget for training;
- lack of provision for adequate equipment;
- unrealistic expectations of the system;
- lack of sympathy with genuine difficulties; and
- low status and credibility for the staff

Top management should be impressed upon the need and importance of education and training. They need to understand that training is not some thing which we get when we have a problem that needs correction. It should rather be an open door leading to regular re-skilling of our abilities. Ongoing training is real necessity and ignoring this is a false economy.

We have invested and continue to invest very heavily in IT. But as already discussed we are faced with an avalanche of change, and at a rate which is difficult to absorb. It has profound consequences for us all, which we ignore at our peril. So this investment in IT and its training poses real risks of early obsolescence.

This problem can be solved to a great extent if the library selects the most suitable systems, which are easy to upgrade, network, change supplier etc. in order to fulfill the vision of the future. It must however, be noted that the systems should not be unnecessarily upgraded or replaced merely for the sake of change. The systems should be allowed to continue if it satisfies the needs and fulfils the previously defined aims.

Rest of the problems can be solved by the managerial skills. A manager should be decisive, consistent and flexible, who can provide a sound framework in which the individual can progress and experiment, who encourages people to face challenges and extend their boundaries by inspiring confidence and encouragement, and can create a powerful and motivated team. He should try to formulate and implement the fixed career policy of his team as is in vogue in Japan. No employee will leave his parent organisation till his hierarchical needs are fully satisfied.

In short, resistance to change will be reduced by the development of a culture of lifelong learning

**Developing a Training Programme**

Wise are those who learn by the experiences of others and in order to gain from the expertise of others, it is better to talk to other organisations that have worked or are working in similar situations. To avoid tension and conflict; to win confidence and support; and to drive the organisation on the way leading to success, it is recommended to listen to the staff and clients and act upon their valuable suggestions also. Accordingly a training strategy must be arranged for each and every user; and all users be informed and clear about how their responsibilities will alter with the introduction of new work practices.

**Aims and Objectives**

The training programme should be closely related to the mission, aims and objectives and each member of the staff as well as users need to know specific training objectives. Lantz (1987) has identified following aims:

**General**

- permit the library to carry out its obligation to utilise the most appropriate technology in providing cost effective services to users;
- provide library staff with the skills to operate systems appropriate to their jobs;
- provide an appropriate level of computer literacy which will assist all library staff in performing their existing jobs more effectively;
- provide library staff with the new skills which will assist them in achieving career advancement both within the library and externally;
- provide a forum for people to exchange information and ideas on successful as well as unsuccessful applications of IT.

**Technicians**

- provide basic skills in computer communication, maintenance and operation; and
- provide an understanding of the problems faced by novice users of computer equipment to enable them to communicate appropriate operational instructions

**Professional Staff**

- provide an understanding of the range of applications of IT so that they are able both to envisage practical applications and to understand
the scale of the longer term commitment of resources each require to ensure continued development;

- provide an understanding of the use of computers in teaching and learning; and

- provide the basis for good practice in collection development of computer based materials

**Users**
The users, the ultimate beneficiaries of the systems also need training as this will go a long way in increasing the importance of a library and status of library profession. Therefore, every user regardless of his physical location be able to use all information resources available in the library or anywhere in the world. For this purpose, it is recommended that in addition to the training and education of IT, a programme of Information Teaching Skills Should be also started.

**Who Should be Trained ?**
All staff sooner or alter need training. As already discussed, leaving aside for some time those, who resist the change; there are people who wish to drive the organisation forward. Therefore, the organisation should provide support, opportunities, tools and environment to them for affecting the progress. We should identify the skills of such people and establish a written list of skills in short supply and who would best benefit from training in specific essential skills. We can then use this list as a basis for planning training. Hill (1997) has suggested the following ways for identifying the training needs of individuals:

- through appraisal and performance reviews;
- noting errors or short comings;
- introduction of new technology;
- asking individual if there is a specific training that they feel would help them;
- change in procedures or perhaps legislation;
- keeping aware of current issues in information work; and
- changes to job responsibilities or staffing levels.

**When Training be Done?**
The library should make sure that all necessary relevant training is started before the implementation stage, because people need to know what to expect in terms of changed working conditions, job specifications, responsibilities, new relations with colleagues and readers as well as the details of actual day to day use of the projected systems. Burton and Petrie (1991) say that the training period will also provide a further and early opportunity to assess the new systems and its operations, and any new feedback from staff should be studied carefully before preparing the operating system.

It must, however, be noted that initial training programme is not in itself enough: it should be a part of continuous process. It will help the library to keep its staff abreast of the latest techniques and to impart training to the new entrants. Moreover, additional workshops should also be provided as and when the s/w and h/w are updated. It is also recommended that professional staff should be deputed to attend the latest IT exhibitions, conferences, advanced training courses etc. held elsewhere in the country or abroad.

**Internal and Internal Training**
The first stage of the programme should be to develop the trainees. It is better to lit candles with a candle, i.e., to have a few chosen professional staff (trainees) trained regularly and also to give them the training skills to pass on what they have been learning. This is essential because an internal training programme may not have the resources to deal with all topics in new technology, which might be of interest to the library. Secondly, as already discussed, the trainees in turn will train the entire staff. The later objective will prove effective because being already familiar with the personal skills of their colleagues (trainers) and thus will provide active user-centred learning environment.

A trainee will generally be well equipped for his task; he commonly succeeds to tailor information to the needs of the novice and contrary to the external training, he will not appear to reinforce the fears of potential users but he inter acts on a one-to-one basis with trainers, meeting their individual needs and providing remedial help and encouragement as necessary.

There are many specific professional meetings run by associations and their Special Interest Groups such as Computer Applications, Industrial Information, and Informatics etc. We should encourage our staff to belong to these associations and attend their meetings, seminars, conferences etc. The spirit of belongingness to such professional associations will naturally instill the people to take responsibilities for their own personal and professional development.

Some institutes like Academic Staff Colleges, ISTE, INFLIBNET are providing not only free training/refresher courses but also pay TA/DA to the participants. In order to take the stock of such situations, library staff should be deputed to attend these courses. A calendar of training events both of longer and shorter duration is usually available either from the organisations or appear in professional journals and the University News. Moreover, many institutions like IGNOU are providing flexible, distance and open learning courses in the provision of library and Information Sc., Computer Applications etc. for continuing professional development.

**Where Internal Training Should Take Place?**
Training is always better done at the workplace. No doubt, it is difficult to concentrate with phone calls, colleagues interrupting etc. Prior to the practical training, a few lectures are recommended and the
system be illustrated with the help of a multimedia projector, as it can be connected with a PC or VCD which gives a large image for 50-60 people. Every session should conclude with questions.

The training course be supplemented with documentation prepared by the trainees themselves after consulting self-instructional material produced by the product manufacturers. Such documentation are better provided they are clearly written, sensibly laid out and kept up to date. Product manuals are not usually popular because of the unnecessarily complex layout and terminology used. In addition, books teaching the use of such packages should also be consulted both by the trainees and trainers. Multimedia training packages, a/v material can also be used to explain the background concepts.

It is utmost important that the trainees take care of the following consideration:

- at the outset the phobia of terrifying technology be demystified. Moreover, the staff who resist a change need to realise that they possess the ability to achieve the expected standards or to cope up with the changed environment that IT portend;
- in the introductory courses, simple language instead of technical jargon be used; and
- unless trainers achieve a pre-determined standard, he be not relieved from the training programme.

User Groups
It is also recommended that the library staff be also encouraged to set up an IT Working Group within the library and affiliate it with other User Groups at the local, national and international level. Such groups are a useful way of learning from other peoples' experiences. Such groups like that of CDS/ISIS User Group often arrange regular meetings with emphasis on over coming problems.

Review the Programme
Provisions should be made to monitor and evaluate the usefulness of a training programme whether internal or external immediately after its completion and on a continuous basis to check if it is satisfactorily fulfilling the previously defined objectives. It gives an opportunity for new methods to be investigated, time to be changed and new contents introduced. Moreover, training records of each individual may be recorded on his personal file. This will help the trainees to assess who needs training and in what disciplines and skills. These records form a valuable achievement, which can also go a long way towards further funding for training in future.

It is also recommended that every staff member who undergoes a training programme be asked to give a brief presentation about the programme. This presentation will help the people to learn communication and learning skills and will also help other members to keep themselves abreast of the latest developments in the field.

Conclusion
The authors would like to conclude by quoting Medhurst (1995) who says that in the light of the recent developments such as the Internet, the abiguius information super highway and the increasing shift towards end-user access to virtual libraries, we need to ask ourselves: will we still be around in the century and if so what we will be doing? The answer may be positive provided we come out of the four walls of the library and take a more active role in the information gathering processes by continuously and rigorously reskilling our skills. We may supersede others who are supposed to replace us because we possess the knowledge and expertise to offer guidance in the post-industrial society, a society based on effective exploitation of information. Since the services of a library are becoming more and more commercialised, we should develop an adequate awareness of business and other organisations and of the management of the information work. It may also be noted that training is not necessarily just about learning new things, it can also mean having the skills and abilities that have been learned informally (through professional participation and development) reinforced in a formal way.

References