



Notes

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Organizational Change: A Work in Progress

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"Every organization has to prepare for the abandonment of everything it does."-- Peter Drucker, 1992

Within a rapidly changing environment, staff development and continuing education are critical to organizational success. March 6, 1996 marked the beginning of a period of fundamental organizational change for the IUPUI University Libraries. This was the date that the University Libraries embarked on the transition from a hierarchical organization to a team-based environment. On that day, staff members asked themselves, "What is a team-based environment and what does it mean for me?"

The transition into a team-based environment is a gradual process, taking years, as teams go through the "forming, storming, norming and performing" stages. As a first step, several librarians traveled to Tucson, Arizona to attend the Living the Future Conference. Librarians from the University of Arizona, the epitome of change in academic libraries, shared their experiences in moving toward a team-based environment. Organizational change is difficult. Change does not come naturally, nor is working as a team instinctive. The librarians who attended the Arizona conference came back convinced that training was the key to success. Training must be a top priority and begin at the top and well as pervade the entire system.

As a result of this belief, the IUPUI University Libraries began a series of training sessions. The first was use of the Birkman Report questionnaire with Senior Management and team leaders. This is an individual questionnaire that provides insight into characteristics such as how one needs to be supervised, how one works in a group setting, and how one responds to and uses authority. For each individual, a coaching sheet, with a short summary on how best to coach the respondent was developed. In June 1996, Mary Ann Weber, a training consultant, presented a workshop for all library staff on working in groups; in August she presented another workshop on Conflict Resolution. During Spring 1997 additional workshops will be held.

IUPUI University Libraries are making strides toward the transition to a team-based environment, but have a long way to go. The training can never end, but must be continued, evaluated and revisited regularly. Today, we continue to ask what being a team member means and we continue to learn. We are, indeed, a work in progress.

References

Drucker, Peter F. (1992) "The New Society of Organizations." *Harvard Business Review* 70(5): 95-104.

Living the Future: Process Improvement & Organizational Change at the University of

Arizona Library, May 1-4, 1996.

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