

Managing the Academic Library Through Teamwork: A Case Study

By: Susan P. Besemer, Sarah B. Dorsey, Barbara L. Kittle, and Carrie M. Niles

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Article:

If necessity is the mother of Invention, then perhaps desperation might be Inspiration's father. How many useful innovations that seem to others like bright and shiny new ideas are created as the result of a last-ditch attempt to fix a part of the world that had just been noticed to be "out of order?" Perhaps that is not a very romantic view of change, but it often fits experience. And if a new idea works, by bringing about needed improvements, it looks better and better.

In earlier decades, the gradual pace of change led managers to believe that they could cope with reversals by merely modifying and fine-tuning their organizations. But lately in many enterprises, and very recently in libraries, changes have come about so quickly that mere tinkering won't solve the problems.

In organizations where environmental change has disrupted and sometimes overturned the status quo, some managers have used the energy generated by these dislocations as catalysts to forge stronger entities, to pursue new directions, and to leapfrog over old ideas that no longer work to lay new plans that just may work better.

W. Edwards Deming published a book in 1986 which was to become a handbook or manual for change in organizations inspired by his leadership. *Out of the Crisis* described Deming's method for saving American businesses through a transformation of management that included the use of work groups or teams. These work groups did problem-solving on topics close to their interests, improving quality in manufacturing and in service industries.¹

Crisis can be the catalyst that forces a transformation. Managers who are achieving expected levels of productivity and meeting their goals and those of others have no need for changing the status quo. When sudden changes in the environment rock the foundations of the organization, looking for new ways to cope often occurs just one step before panic.

The literature of management has discussed the use of teams in organizations since the 1960s,² with many important books appearing in the 1970s and 1980s.³ Several articles with a team "flavor" appeared in the library literature early in the 1980s giving encouragement to the idea of "collegial management."⁴⁻⁶ The concept was worked out in a practical sense at Dickinson College, where earlier goals of mere "participative management" were overturned by a new shared management concept. This structural reorganization was stimulated by the search by the librarians at Dickinson for a new and appropriate librarian status, distinct from that of administration or faculty.

The literature of librarianship slowly began to reflect interest in team organization in the middle to late 1980s.⁷⁻
¹⁰ It was not until library managers recognized that they simply couldn't cope with present and emerging problems under the then-existing traditional organizational framework that they began to question the basic

premise of the organizational structure of the academic library. Excellent articles discussing the theory and practice of team management in libraries have been seen more frequently since 1990.^{11,12}

A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

What were some of the issues that began shocking academic libraries in the mid-1980s that continue to confound us today? Let's start by considering changes in the external environment. Lower levels of budgetary support for higher education by government, combined with sky-rocketing inflation in the serials publishing industry were changing the character of our collections, while we stood by and helplessly watched our ability to buy an adequate number of monographs dwindle. The value of the dollar on the world market further complicated our love-hate relationship with already-costly serials published abroad. Automation was an accomplished goal for large libraries, but some managers were unhappy with the quality and level of access that early systems provided, and were looking forward to migrating to more powerful and flexible user-friendly applications. Meanwhile, small and mid-sized libraries were still trying to plot a course toward their first automated systems. Students began to be more assertive in their demands for improved services, and faculty were outspoken about their needs from the library, pushed by increased institutional pressure to perform and publish research.

The internal environment of the academic library was also stressed by change. The hierarchical and bureaucratic library organization was a maze which library users had to navigate to get the services they needed. Sometimes library faculty and staff were stuck in positions with job descriptions written eons ago, while the need for additional staff to attend to tasks emerging from technological changes went unmet because of static or reduced budgets. Middle-level managers, the heads of divisions, were sometimes relegated to bureaucratic tasks that challenged only their tolerance for boredom, while other librarians might sit in positions for twenty years with no clear career path to promotion or to upward and outward mobility. Staff patterns were sometimes rigid, with areas assuming petty territorialities which related neither to need nor logic, but only to history and ego. Add to the mix the changed expectations of staff brought about by technology. Who really knows enough to transform our services to deal effectively with the complex universe of information that libraries must master now and in the future?

The true and simple answer to this question is to say that we do. Collectively, we know or can learn everything we need to know, although individually we may have areas of weakness as well as strength. The only truly unlimited resource in this challenging world is our talent, for that grows to meet opportunity and expands exponentially when nurtured by a supportive work environment.

FREDONIA'S EXPERIMENT

Pushed by the external environment and shoved by the internal one, we at the SUNY College at Fredonia's Reed Library embarked early in 1987 on a planning and problem-solving process that would result in pursuing an experimental new pathway. Our staff of fewer than thirty persons felt the environmental pressures acutely. These were most often experienced as a need for additional staff members to take on new technology-related tasks. But the fiscal climate did not encourage optimism for new personnel lines. Like other organizations that experienced pressure to change, we looked upon our situation as not altogether discouraging, but as an opportunity to try something new. Other libraries were confronting similar situations,¹³ but we did not know that team experiments were also beginning in other institutions.

With two retirements of senior librarians, we at Reed Library seized an opportunity to reshape, and perhaps transform, our environment to make it a more effective agent for service and to allow it to be more supportive of our individual and collective professional and personal growth. We began with a task force to consider the issue and ended with a new management structure built around two teams of library faculty and staff.

Is our structure new? It depends on who is asked that question. Does it work? We think so, but whether or not it works better than a traditional structure is not easy to say. Some evidence will be presented later that suggests that it is working well. Our experiment will conclude in another year, and we'll decide then what we want to do next. In the following pages we'll describe our structure and share how it feels to work in the team environment.

(See Appendix A for Reed Library's Team Structure at a Glance.) Our authors are all practicing librarians at Reed Library, using the team structure to get the job done. We do not see everything the same way, but we all share a commitment, for now at least, to making the system work for us and for the best service of our clientele.

How can we describe the structure? Although it can be diagramed, our structure looks more like the inter-linking loops of a bangle necklace than the stepladder of a traditional library, since so much of our work takes place working in small groups with interlocking relationships with other groups.

A TEAM STRUCTURE

The real work of the Library takes place at service points including those in Technical Services. In these units, library faculty and staff meet regularly to discuss work flow, problems, new ideas, and to encourage one another. The librarian in charge of each area then takes the issues emerging from her or his area to the weekly Team Meeting for either the Technical Services Team or the Public Access Team. Each team is composed of five or six librarians and the Library Clerk III from the clerical support staff of either Technical Services or Public Access. At the team level, ideas are discussed, debated, and policy recommendations are brought forth from the team. The Team Leaders (appointed by the Director for two-year nonrenewable terms) then meet weekly with the Director to discuss news, problems, and solutions coming from the teams. Minutes of these meetings are kept and distributed as soon as possible to all staff members. The Director uses this weekly meeting to report to Library staff information which she has gathered from meetings with the College administration, problems that have surfaced from patrons, and ideas that she has had or that others have shared. The occasional policy change is a decision made at these meetings by consensus among the Team Leaders and the Director. Most meetings are information sharing and problem solving sessions, as are those at the unit level.

Team Leaders play a critical role in the organization. They are practicing librarians who take on administrative duties as an overload, and for a stipend equivalent to that given to academic department chairs. Assuming this challenging role provides professional development and learning experiences unlike those available in any other way. One of our authors will comment on her experience as a Team Leader for a two-year term. The position may be likened to that of a Head of Technical Services, or Head of Readers' Services, but it is not a "life sentence" as is the more traditional position. All Team Leaders to date have been eager to shed the mantle of team leadership at the end of their terms, but it is possible that this experience could encourage a budding manager to envision himself or herself as a director or another administrator. At the very least, former Team Leaders have become much more sensitive to the exigencies of library management, and have become more understanding both of the Director and of colleagues on their own and on the other team.

CARRIE NILES: A TEAM LEADER'S VIEW

"One of the biggest challenges leaders face today is translating their vision or mission into reality and persuading people at all levels of the organization to pull together to achieve common goals."¹⁴ We at Reed Library have been experimenting with team management for the past four years in an effort to improve communication, adapt to increasing use of computers, and improve service to our patrons. The following is a summary of my reaction to this style of management from the point of view of team member and former Team Leader.

The idea of a team organization was presented to the staff by Susan Besemer when she became our Director after she consulted with librarians and other staff members. This frankly appealed to me because I have participated in teams all my life and know from experience that more can be accomplished with a team effort than can be accomplished alone. As a kid in grade school, I had a "gang" of boys and girls of various ages who played sandlot baseball, kick-the-can—all the street games in a small town in upstate New York. I sang in church choirs and school choruses and I played intramural softball, volleyball and basketball in Junior High. I acted in Children's Theater and in school plays. As a college student, I team-studied with other students, discussing ideas and receiving feedback and support. As an adult, wife, mother, teacher, church and community worker, I enjoyed the results of group work and suffered from "trying to go it alone" at times.

The method Sue encouraged us to use was to define our own roles within the framework of the team structure. Our team consists of the acquisitions/serials librarian, bibliographic control librarian, systems librarian, special collections professional and the head clerk in Bibliographic Control. Though we are not strictly Technical Services, that is our title: the Technical Services Team. We spent the first few months determining how to function as a team, what relationship the team has to the Team Leader and to the Director, what relationship our team has to the Public Access Team. We discussed meeting times and places, what to bring to the team and what to solve in our own areas. Our first Team Leader had the difficult role of presiding over all of this agonizing. He was very busy facilitating discussion, and clarifying us to the Director and the Director to us. It was a dynamic, if frustrating, first two years.

I was chosen as the second Team Leader and brought my own ideas to the role, encouraged by the Director to do so. I read the literature and attended management workshops, sharing the information learned with my colleagues. Some of the librarians met with me periodically on a volunteer basis so we could get to know each other individually. We were given the task of establishing a five-year plan as part of a campus-wide assessment-based-planning activity. Using the brainstorming technique, we created plans for each of our areas and, in cooperation with the Public Access Team and the Director, for the whole Library. We also implemented the use of consensus in our decision-making.

One of the hardest tasks each of us seemed to have was in sharing problems and problem-solving. Our hierarchical background made it difficult for us to give up autonomy in our own departments. We worked hard to overcome this and to be honest with each other—supportive, but honest. This is not to say that we didn't have some vigorous disagreements, but we worked them out together.

One current example of team problem-solving is the issue of staffing our Special Collections Room in the Library during the times when the archivist is not on duty. Both teams have met to determine procedures, hours, and people to provide service. An example of successful teamwork across team lines is the group that does the planning to implement our automated library system. This group, which I chair, is primarily for problem-solving and meets weekly to work out procedures and problems arising from our online system, PALS. My own department, Bibliographic Control, meets weekly to iron out difficulties and set goals and priorities. We often meet with other area groups to solve inter-area problems, such as Circulation and Acquisitions/Serials. At these meetings, the Chair is the facilitator and everyone has a chance to express opinions and ideas. Each is respected for his or her contribution and expertise. This is a far cry from the old hierarchy.

However, we are not without problems. Many of us still haven't accepted the team approach and some still say "nothing has changed." I have noted that these are the ones who do not participate without being forcefully encouraged. They are still using the old "send a memo" approach or "just tell me what it is you want me to do and I'll do it" line. We also have some who "hate meetings" and resist attending and when they do attend do not participate. These folks have plenty to say "off the cuff," but not where it can be examined. This is not to say that these people don't do their jobs or contribute in many ways. They just haven't learned that a team works only if you work it.

The future looks promising, however, and those of us who believe in the teams are working hard to bring the others in. We are working hard, also, to respect each other for what we can contribute. As far as the actual organization of the Library after the five-year experiment is concluded, I don't know. Many ideas have been kicked around: making one big team (because we have a very small staff and maybe we shouldn't be separated), hiring an assistant director and keeping the small groups and eliminating the large teams, or reorganizing the teams to include different members. There are many possible solutions. Choosing one is our next step in this continuing process of learning to manage ourselves and our Library.

BARBARA KITTLE: A TEAM MEMBER'S VIEW

As a member of the Public Access Team from its inception, I have been able to watch and participate in the development of this managerial concept. I have had no interest in becoming a Team Leader and am content to

be “just” a team member. Being “just” a team member is not an easy task as team members play a crucial part in the success or failure of the team.

Over the last four years I have served under three Team Leaders. As in any group of people the personalities of its members play an important role in how the group works. The same is true for teams, and especially the personalities of the Team Leaders. There are, as you would expect, many differences among them. Therefore, my first job as a team member is to adjust to each Team Leader as they begin their term.

The three Team Leaders I have worked with have approached their jobs with different expectations of what they were supposed to do and what was expected of the team members. For example, let’s look at minute taking at the meetings of the Public Access Team. We started out with the first Team Leader rotating the task of taking and distributing the minutes of our weekly team meeting with all team members taking turns. The next Team Leader decided that he would take the minutes himself and then the team decided that it didn’t want to take minutes at all. The third Team Leader was appointed and started her term with a new strategy: agendas instead of minutes. Right now we are not taking minutes or doing an agenda. The other team, the Technical Services Team, has always taken minutes of their meetings and would very much like the Public Access Team to do minutes as well. It is hard to predict what the next Team Leader will do.

Another very important aspect of working with a team is the need for communication. As a member of a team I depend on the Team Leader to convey news and information to me. The Team Leader has direct contact with the Director and the other Team Leaders and needs to pass on pertinent information to the team. Minutes of the Team Leader Meetings are the most effective method of passing this information on to others. If, when we read the minutes, we find something interesting or noteworthy, we can bring it up for discussion at the team meeting. We depend on the Team Leader to tell us what’s going on. When this doesn’t happen, there is the feeling of being left out in the cold.

It is also a good idea to make sure that the team understands its role in the structure of the Library. The team structure had been in operation years before it became clear to me that the teams make recommendations; they do not make policy decisions. An example of this was the Public Access Team’s recommendation that the Library be open regular library hours on Easter Sunday. When the hours were announced for that semester the hours for Easter were not the regular Sunday hours. Somewhere the hours were changed and the team knew nothing about the change until it was published in the campus hours bulletin. The need to make sure that the role of the team is well defined and that the lines of communication between the Team Leader and the team are open and ongoing should be made clear very early in the formation of the teams.

Participation in groups other than the team is another very important aspect of the Library’s organization. There’s a staff meeting covering almost every area of library operations; reference, collection development, library faculty, and circulation, to name just a few, all have regularly scheduled meetings through the week or month. These groups also make recommendations to the Director as well as decisions on non-policy matters. My supervisor signs my time sheets, not the Team Leader. It’s the Collection Development Committee that decides the fate of new serial subscriptions and the library faculty has input on personnel decisions. But the team is where discussion and recommendations come for requests for travel moneys in support of attendance at conferences and workshops. It is the Director who has final say on how much travel money is given each request. The Director and each librarian meet once a month to discuss anything on their minds. If I didn’t have this monthly meeting with the Director there would be very little direct contact between myself and the Director.

As a member of a team it is important that you actively participate in the team to ensure that decisions and recommendations coming from the team are made with input from all involved. Realize that you do have a say in what goes on in your library even if you do not make the decisions. The most useful means of communication has been the minutes of the Team Leaders Meetings, especially when a Team Leader does not bring something up for discussion himself or herself. Without the objectives and responsibilities of the team clearly

defined your team will not function as the group was intended to function. And lastly, I see the Team Leader as the key to the team. The Team Leader will not be permanent so you will have to adjust to a new Team Leader regularly. The personality and leadership style of each Team Leader has a definite effect on the team. Without quality leadership and a Team Leader who is working for and with the team this concept will not work as it was envisioned to work.

SARAH DORSEY: A NEWCOMER'S VIEW

I am a believer in communication in any and all relationships, be they personal or work related. The number of interpretations of any given situation is at least as great as the number of people involved. It can only help in the long run if people feel free to make comments and observations and know how their statements are being received by others. Smooth operations in an environment as multilayered as a library can only occur when these layers are in constant contact with one another. The right hand needs to know what the left hand is doing.

In work situations there is a built-in inequality between supervisors and their workers which must be carefully offset with constant vigilance. This inequality or "power differential" can cause a breakdown in communication. Then small misunderstandings can grow into large problems and bring operations to a standstill or simply make the work environment unpleasant and tense.

One of the major benefits of any experiment in management should be either a maintenance of good communication lines or their improvement. It is my observation in my year at Reed Library in Fredonia that communication has increased and I theorize that this is, in part, due to the management experiment now in progress called team management.

You have just read various points of view and observations relating to our experiment. Sue Besemer, Carrie Niles and Barbara Kittle have been involved with team management from its inception. My reason for being included is to provide a fresh point of view. My position at Reed Library is unique in that, as Music Librarian, I have reasons to deal with both Public Services and Technical Services and attended both team meetings for a short time. I soon realized that I did not have time for any extra meetings, but it did allow me to see both teams in operation and compare them.

I arrived in the middle of a move from the old building into the temporary headquarters in our new addition. Anyone who remembers his or her first month on a job will remember the thrill of every day feeling like five days, and every moment a new surprise being revealed to you. So, I was ready to mix into my personal chaos the added anarchy of a move. My new colleagues, however, although having planned as well as possible were surprised by the amount of emotional and physical energy necessary to uproot themselves from an area some had known for twenty years. Suffice it to say that there was an unusual amount of stress on all employees especially when you add the anxiety of dealing with disgruntled patrons whose study areas have been disrupted.

After asking what the teams were all about, I was given a document which outlined the set-up of the new structure and encouraged questions. After reading the document, I asked various colleagues what they thought the teams were all about and got a variety of answers. Some of the discrepancies between answers depended on which team they were on, but most showed a general fuzziness of definition.

One of the problems with the teams as they are now is that they perpetuate an old worn out line of division in libraries between technical and public services. Ideally, that wall will ultimately be broken down and free exchange will occur. With this flaw in mind, I will now compare the two teams.

As far as meeting protocol goes, in the team to which I belong, the Public Access Team, there was no agenda and no minutes were taken. In the Technical Services Team there was no agenda, but minutes were taken. Each member of the Technical Services team was asked if they had anything to discuss before the meeting, a sort of on-the-spot agenda. The agenda for the Public Access Team seemed to be going over the most recent Team Leader Meeting minutes and whatever got mentioned before the meeting ended.

I sensed frustration and lack of openness on the Public Access Team whereas the Technical Services Team felt more like an open forum. There were loud and often spirited exchanges in the Technical Services Team, but I felt people were generally satisfied with the discussions and felt their views were heard. The Public Access Team, however, was loud with unspoken issues which clouded conversation when it did happen. It seemed that communication was not as free on this side of the Library. It became clear that there was history here of which I was not aware that was affecting the team members' behavior.

When the period for reevaluation of the teams started in January of 1992, a new topic of conversation was humming at Reed Library: the team structure itself; the team make-up; how, after four years, it was working; and how to improve it. Because the teams themselves would be affected, it was thought that the Library Faculty Governance would be a good preliminary forum for discussing the team structure as it is "outside" the structure.

Items discussed at this Faculty Governance meeting included: a team for the support staff, or more representation for them; the use of audio cassette tapes on team building;¹⁵ change in the Team Leader duties; and rearrangement of the team personnel.

Although their styles were different, the two teams reached similar conclusions in their appraisal of the situation. Both teams realized that they were confused about the purpose and definition of the teams. The Technical Services Team worked on examining what the team was. They listened to some of the team building tapes together and discussed them. They brought up issues such as the fact that they felt that a lack of introduction, education and training at the beginning of the team implementation had impeded its progress. They realized that communication was not always clear and confusion arose on what was an appropriate topic for team discussion. Was the team advisory or did it have power to change policy? Again the concern for the support staff representation and input was expressed. There were discussions regarding the meaning of consensus and the possibility of more team lunches to enhance the group's working relationship.

The Public Access Team discussion was more animated and focussed. The issue which emerged was a general frustration with the function of the teams and how they relate to the Director and why they exist. I felt that a flood gate was released at this meeting, that long-held resentments were finally voiced. What emerged was a basic question: What has the team decided in the last four years? As I was not around for this time period, I listened to my colleagues come to the conclusion that very few concrete items had been decided at the team level and a clear definition of the function of the teams was necessary. The Public Access Team recommended that a joint team meeting be held so that both teams could discuss the situation together.

The first of these joint team meetings happened in January. At this meeting both teams agreed that the Director should be invited to the next joint meeting so that she could clarify her view of the teams' functions with both teams present. A number of issues were clarified at this meeting which occurred at the beginning of February. The relationship of the area meetings and team meetings was discussed. Much of what employees thought should be "decided" at the team level were actually area decisions or implementations such as Bibliographic Instruction by the Reference Staff or the implementation of the automated library system which touched everyone on the staff in different ways.

It became clear that the Director's definition of the teams was more of an administrative function than an active function. The actions (or specific "decisions") should come from the areas, not the teams, the Director clarified. The function of the teams is advisory, recommending to the leaders who then recommend to the Director who then (if necessary) recommends to the Vice President. This appeared to be a different definition of the team function from the previous understanding of some of the staff. I did enjoy the opportunity for a shared meeting which broke down the old Technical Services/Public Services wall. We continue to have joint team meetings monthly.

There are still many aspects which need to be clarified in the ongoing experiment, but one concrete advance already accomplished through examination of the teams was the reestablishment of area meetings.

Communication within each library department has increased. Circulation, Reference, Bibliographic Control, and Acquisitions all meet on a regular basis again and this certainly enhances the functioning of the Library. There had been some confusion as to the need for area meetings if the teams existed. This is now clearer.

We are facing yet another challenging time with the renovation on the old building, which is scheduled to be completed by the fall of 1993. With the experience of the first move behind us, we hope to face this time with increased respect for the amount of stress we will all sustain, and be gentle with ourselves and one another. Part of this gentleness is taking the time to hear what others are saying and responding carefully.

The team concept has influenced a variety of staff activities. As far as the reevaluation of the teams goes, preparation for a presentation on team management sparked yet another flurry of discussion about the teams. On a scholarly note, an article published by Barbara Kittle raised our consciousness in this area.¹⁶ In a lighter vein, a "recovering" Team Leader has created a "management tool" based on a recent popular movie. It is called the "Wayne's World Management Matrix" and it traces the origin and path of suggestions through three categories: "Excellent, Party On!" "No Way; Way!" and "Hurl!" We are three fourths of the way through this year of reassessment, and the outcome has yet to be seen. However the teams evolve or whether they even dissolve, the process of examining this management structure has increased communication at Reed Library. There is no other job at which I can remember such openness of discussion on the topic of who our next "boss," or Team Leader, might be, or how we think the organizational structure of the Library might benefit from a rearrangement of personnel. Given that any healthy organization is organic and changing, just as people are, the need to keep in touch will never cease. Perhaps team management can help us communicate more efficiently.

TEAMWORK SUCCESS STORIES: THE DIRECTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

As has been mentioned by others, the team concept has extended far beyond its use in formal management teams. I am especially excited, as Director, by successful projects that operate across team lines. To return to a question posed earlier, and perhaps to the bottom line reason for implementing a team management structure in an academic library, does this system work more effectively for us?

Three short vignettes can serve as modest examples of how the team concept has allowed for more thorough and efficient analysis of problems, and for resolving problems using the input of all of the people involved. In a traditional organizational structure, a manager could have had much less confidence that all people concerned were truly involved in the resolution of the issue. The first example is a problem located only in one team, Technical Services, while the other two instances are examples of library-wide teamwork.

The first example shows how the Technical Services Team solved a small problem on its own. The effective resolution of this problem, however, has important implications regarding the standing of the Library in the College community.

It was noticed that book request cards, completed by faculty members to request purchases, were being returned to the requester much later than the books themselves were on the shelves. Faculty were led to believe that it was taking much longer to acquire, catalog, and process their requests than was in fact the case. The Technical Services Team worked for several sessions, involving librarians and clerks in both Acquisitions and Bibliographic Control to locate bottlenecks slowing return of the cards. Both units reviewed long-standing processes, and without outside intervention found several steps that could be modified to expedite the handling of the cards, to match the speed of the books themselves through the Technical Services processes.

Another example also caused concern because of its possible negative reflection on the apparent effectiveness of the Library. This was brought to our attention by a faculty member in our School of Music. She pointed out that our processing of record discs and CDs was obscuring some of the information included on the record jacket and the label. While this seems like a Technical Services problem, actually it was a situation that also involved the Circulation area, since the placement of barcode and other labels on the materials is of concern to them. A small group from each team, again involving both librarians and support staff sat together and worked

out the details of how to improve our processing of music recordings. In fact, in this instance, we went on to notice a need to amplify contents notes for music materials on our local computer access system. We even found a retired librarian living in the community to take on the project as a volunteer! Without the teams' taking ownership of the problem and making a commitment to work it out, the incident could have caused annoyance and resentment in the minds of faculty and students who need to locate and use sometimes obscure works, identified only on the record jackets or labels of the discs.

The third incident is a happy story about an opportunity that achieved a very positive service reputation for the Library from a grant project on campus. Interdisciplinary researchers from the natural and social sciences came to us with a request for extra service. They needed additional help to achieve the goals that they had established when their grant funding was awarded. They were willing to compensate the Library for the enhanced level of service that they were requesting, if we could meet their requirements in a timely way. They needed intensive bibliographic searching of our own materials and those of research libraries, finding appropriate materials to support this interdisciplinary project, and obtaining articles and other resources through Interlibrary Loan or document delivery services. These extra services had to be prompt, for the time line of the grant was short. The project involved our Reference librarians, Interlibrary Loan, Circulation, and even Acquisitions, since the researchers wanted us to find and acquire some sample issues of periodicals for them to evaluate. We needed to present a high and consistent level of service for them. Several meetings with library faculty and staff who would be likely to be asked by the researchers for assistance got everybody on board. One never knew where or when the researchers might appear: at the Information Desk, in Interlibrary Loan, or at the copy machines. They became familiar faces over the three-month project period. At the conclusion of the Library's portion of the project, the researchers were absolutely gushy in their praise of our services. Only through the coordinated effort possible in a team environment could we have met their expectations. We all profit from such team efforts, and we all share in the glory when our hard work is appreciated.

A key issue of the success of any team structure lies in the increased levels of personal responsibility that are both required and provided under a team approach. Particular jobs are no longer the isolated territory of just one person, even in a small library like ours. Librarians and support staff are growing in their appreciation of their own responsibility and in their respect for the work that their colleagues are performing.

With that increasing willingness to assume responsibility comes an increased trust from others. Trust from colleagues grows as each project is successfully completed, on time. The Director trusts the library faculty and staff to get the job done, and they likewise trust her leadership ability and her judgment. As we've worked together over the past four years, that mutual trust has grown.

The small examples related above give some specific details of how teamwork has helped Reed Library. More profoundly important are two massive projects which would have been impossible without the flexibility, improved communications, and increased level of responsibility generated by teamwork. In the past four years, with a staff numbering fewer than thirty people, we have taken on two important projects to move the Library forward in the provision of information services. We have implemented a long- needed library automation project which is nearly completed. We have also planned and implemented a \$7.3 million building and renovation program also to be completed in 1993. These were challenging projects; ones that elicited professional growth in all staff members, and an increasing reliance upon one another.

When we complete our experiment in organizational structure next year, we may decide to continue as we have so far, to adjust our structure, or to change it altogether. The team structure has served us well during this interval. It has been an agent of change, allowing us to begin the process of transformation from a traditional, highly authoritarian work environment to one where library faculty and staff have the knowledge and self-confidence to know what needs to be done, and the sense of professionalism and responsibility that urges them to go ahead and do their best.

NOTES

1. W. Edwards Deming, *Out of the Crisis* (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Center for Advanced Engineering Study, 1986).
2. Two examples of important books from this decade are: Douglas McGregor, *The Human Side of Enterprise* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960), and Rensis Likert, *New Patterns of Management* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961).
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APPENDIX A

REED LIBRARY'S TEAM STRUCTURE AT A GLANCE

Two Teams:

- Technical Services (5 librarians, 1 clerk)

Acquisitions

Bibliographic Control

Systems

Interlibrary Loan

Archives/Special Collections Senior Library Clerk

- Public Access (6 librarians, 1 clerk)

Circulation

Reference

Music

Collection Development Senior Library Clerk

Team Leader:

- Each Team headed by a Team Leader
- Two year term
- Appointed by Director
- Receives stipend
- Term is staggered with the other Team Leader Meetings:
- Each area (Circulation, Acquisitions, etc.) meets weekly for planning and information sharing
- Team meets weekly, recommends to Director and/or other Team
- Team Leaders Meeting weekly with Director (open to visitors)
- Joint Team Meeting (both Teams) once a month

Director meets:

- Every couple of months with full staff
- Standing appointment monthly with each librarian
- Standing appointment weekly with each Team Leader
- Standing weekly Team Leaders Meeting

What do the Teams do?

- Plan and implement goals
- Share information among areas
- Make decisions on issues which involve the Team's areas
- Make recommendations on policy issues which involve the whole Library