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Motivate, Accommodate, Facilitate:
Human resource management initiatives adopted by the University of
Queensland Cybrary.

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Abstract
Coping with reduced staffing numbers, growing customer service demands and constantly changing technology has placed great demands on staff at all levels. Library management at the University of Queensland has implemented programmes that address these issues, provide opportunities for staff to gain new skills and knowledge and help staff develop personal and professional approaches to deal with increasing complexity. A job rotation scheme, flexible working hours, improved induction, systematic ongoing staff development, management skills development, mentoring and shadowing schemes, staff involvement in planning and projects and a "Wellness program" are some of the initiatives implemented by the University of Queensland Library.

Background
The Library badges its services as the University of Queensland Cybrary, indicating its unique combination of real and virtual information resources, physical facilities and cyberspace and service delivery in person and via the internet. The Cybrary is the largest in the state of Queensland, with over two million items that meet the teaching, learning and research needs of the University. With over 33,000 students, 22% of whom are graduate and 18% international, 7 faculties, 32 schools and 5000 staff, the Cybrary services one of Australia's leading universities.

While the number of printed new book titles remained constant at around 24,000, the print journal collection has contracted to 13,000 titles and the number of e-journals expanded to over 19,000. E-books have also grown in number to reach 296,000 with 600 online databases. The UQ Cybrary comprises 13 branches, several of which are located in major hospitals as well as the various campuses of the University at St Lucia, Ipswich and Gatton, the University archives and several warehouses (to store infrequently used materials). There are 250 EFT staff and an annual budget of A$28 million. The Cybrary has over 1300 computers; centralised planning, information technology, collection management and human resource deployment; the Innopac integrated library management system and a website of over 5,500 pages.

In 1994, shortly after the appointment of the current University Librarian, a review of all library services, organisational structure, goals, staffing and processes was undertaken with the assistance of an external consultant, Margaret Trask. Recommendations related to operational and cultural changes throughout the library were made and then implemented. The report also noted under-utilisation of information and communication technology and inadequate physical facilities. Senior management positions and reporting arrangements, committee structures, and to some extent branch library structures were reorganised to focus on service delivery. The organisation became increasingly client focussed in all aspects of its work. Additional ICT infrastructure was acquired and plans for refurbishment of physical facilities began.

Since 1996 the Cybrary has managed a number of major refurbishment projects. Some library buildings have been re-designed and all library interiors have been remodelled. Using consistent themes and branding in all thirteen libraries branches has made wayfinding easier and assisted users in finding services and using the collections more effectively across the university. In addition staff costs have been contained by changes in layout and design.

In 2000 the Cybrary adopted an AskIT[1] service providing free information technology training and help for all University of Queensland staff and students. The service emphasised the IT skills essential for student life and learning and reflected the increased use of IT and need for at-hand IT assistance that was required in a developed information society.

A set of graduate attributes was developed by the University in 1996 that aimed to specify broad core knowledge and skills for all undergraduate programmes. These were reviewed and revised in 2001. Librarians at the Cybrary are ensuring that the Graduate Attributes of the University[2] and the CAUL Information Literacy standards[3] are implemented in information skills training programmes. In 1998, 25,000 staff and students attended information skills classes in the Cybrary, whilst in 2003, there were 44,000 attendees.

Awards have been made to the Cybrary for its various activities. AUQA (Australian University Quality Agency), in its review of the University of Queensland stated that it "commended the Cybrary for its vision and success in providing high quality services to the UQ community in information access and information literacy skills." When benchmarked against other libraries, the University of Queensland Cybrary has consistently been one of the high achievers.

Achieving successful organisational and cultural change in a rapidly evolving environment demands dynamic and responsive human resources management strategies to ensure that Library staff have the necessary skills to deliver a high standard of service to the range of clients served. The results of the last two Cybrary

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[1] http://askit.uq.edu.au/
[2] http://www.uq.edu.au/hupp/contents/view.asp?s1=3&s2=20&s3=5
[3] http://www.caul.edu.au/caul-doc/InfoLitStandards2001.doc

Customer Satisfaction surveys indicate a very high level of satisfaction with the service provided by Cybrary staff[4].

The Broad Strategy
The challenges to be met relate to constant change and increasing complexity. The client base has new needs. There are computers everywhere with plug-in laptops, printers and multifunctional devices. It is becoming a wireless world. Educational programs emphasise flexible delivery and discovery and life long learning. Costs are increasing and income additions are not meeting the additional costs. Information is available in multiple electronic formats and googleisation has changed the world forever. New work processes and changing staff needs make their impact. It is a family friendly university.

The Cybrary's services, operational environment, policies and procedures are constantly monitored to ensure best practice service delivery to clients. The Cybrary's human resources initiatives are integral to the continuous improvement strategies. The initiatives focus on providing Library staff with essential training and development opportunities to develop new skills at all stages of their association with the Cybrary – from the pre-recruitment stage with web based recruitment information kits, compulsory induction modules for all staff, detailed training plans for each staff member's first year in the Cybrary and ongoing training and development offered to all staff both in house and externally. The challenges for all include rapid changes in the use of technology in the Cybrary and wider environments; changes to the higher education environment including the teaching, learning and research priorities of the University; funding and employee relations environments and a fairly stable workforce with relatively low staff turnover. Many of the staff at the University have been employed for substantial periods of time. The challenge is to ensure staff remain motivated, enthused by their work and highly skilled in the work that they perform and the services they deliver.

Empowering staff to be part of the organisational decision making-processes, providing a flexible and friendly work environment and providing staff with the necessary resources to perform their jobs effectively and efficiently are the motivators for adopting new initiatives and reviewing the old.

Most new initiatives are first trialled before being fully implemented. Some ideas have arisen from tried and tested practices in other professions and from reviewing literature around the world. Other initiatives have been developed on a needs basis and are unique to this organisation.

The Staffing Profile
The Cybrary's 250 staff cross a number of occupational groupings – 211 librarians and library support staff; 22 IT specialists, workstation support and help desk staff; and 17 administrative staff with specialists in the human resources, finance, facilities and promotions and publications areas and support staff. The distribution of staff across multiple service points, operating services up to 84 hours per week provides significant communication and service delivery issues. It is vital that service experiences remain the same for clients who may visit more than one branch. The

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[4] http://www.library.uq.edu.au/about/surveys.html

needs are varied, ranging from assistance with assignments to evidenced based health care. Avoiding the "us and them" syndrome for staff in the branches takes time and effort. A large team of staff work in the engine room of the Cybrary, ordering and processing materials. They too must remain vitally aware of client needs when they rarely see clients. Doing what is possible rather than what is necessary can dominate.

The training, development and personnel needs of these staff are varied and are addressed in a number of ways. Generic approaches are used in some areas but individual needs are also addressed.

The major staffing challenge is to attract the right staff in the first place; the second is to ensure appropriate induction; the third is to provide a stimulating and challenging environment which will motivate all; and the fourth is to seek solutions where none of these has worked appropriately.

Attracting high calibre staff
The Cybrary's services are delivered by well trained, motivated and dedicated staff. Substantial effort is put into recruiting and selecting the best possible staff. Describing the job accurately is vital. Web based recruitment information kits are available to all applicants for Cybrary positions. The position descriptions for all levels of position refer prospective applicants to the web address for kits. Those applicants that are interviewed are expected to have read the information provided in the kit and have a certain level of knowledge about the organisation. Selection processes for Cybrary positions are fairly rigorous with work tests used for all positions to test the skill levels of applicants. Questions are based on previous examples and experiences rather than hypothetical ones. Applicants for librarian positions are required to give a five minute presentation on a prepared topic to the panel to test their ability to prepare and present information to a group of people. Liaison Librarians are actively involved in teaching information skills to clients as part of their role and so must have good presentation skills and the ability to teach others. An academic client is a member of all interview panels for professional librarians and has been central to recruiting client focussed staff.

The Cybrary has developed a web based e-recruitment system for casual staff which has streamlined the work involved in recruiting casual staff for the semester work load peaks. It is advertised on the Cybrary web site and attracts many very capable students and others who put in expressions of interest. The quality of the Cybrary's casual staff is remarkable with emphasis placed on customer service, interpersonal and team work skills and experience, adaptability, flexibility and a high level of commitment to the Cybrary when we select casual staff. The e-recruitment database allows human resources staff to search on a variety of fields including work experience, availability to work and preferred work location.

Induction
In recent years staff induction processes have been reviewed and improved. Prior to commencing work in the Cybrary all new staff undergo a half-day induction reviewing the conditions of service, signing necessary documents, working through Occupational Health and Safety material and videos, understanding the Recognition

and Development Program[5] (the staff appraisal program) and being made aware of training and staff development opportunities in the Cybrary. It is also compulsory for all staff to attend an induction program made up of five modules:

- What are the University and the Library all about?
- Customer Service – linking people with information
- Information Technology in the Library
- Services for you
- Workplace Health and Safety

Each module is competency based with a written quiz to be completed by participants at the end of the session. Modules are run twice during the year, at a suitable time, to ensure staff can attend.

Generic induction and training checklists which set out training courses, tours and information sessions for the first year in a position have been developed for all HEW levels up to HEW 7. Checklists for staff in HEW levels 8-10 positions are customised to the particular role performed in the position.

Information and Communication Technology Training
The Cybrary provides services to clients which are at the leading edge of technology. As mentioned previously the Cybrary is the unique combination of real and virtual information resources, physical facilities and cyberspace and service delivery in person and via the internet. Cybrary staff need to be highly skilled in the use of information technology to provide services to clients and to develop and maintain the infrastructure for the technology used in the Cybrary.

Staff IT Training Program
The Staff IT Training Coordinator runs a program of courses ranging from basic to advanced use of applications like word, excel and powerpoint, webwriting and basic to advanced information retrieval techniques. Staff access these workshops not only to acquire job specific skills but also to develop advanced skills in areas that will assist their career development plans.

LITLO Program
The Cybrary has a training program that equips selected staff with the skills to become Library Information Technology Liaison Officers (LITLOS). These staff work their way through a comprehensive training program of workshops conducted in condensed mode over a week. The training program equips staff with a basic understanding of workstation software and hardware, the networked environment and problem solving techniques enabling them to perform first level troubleshooting in their branch library or section. More complex problems are then referred to central ICT support staff. Given the extended opening hours, equipping staff with coping skills has been essential. The LITLO Program is extremely popular with more staff wishing to do it than can be accommodated. It is a great opportunity to acquire highly marketable IT skills and staff have been promoted after its completion. Completion is marked by the award of a certificate and a celebratory session.

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[5] http://www.uq.edu.au/current-staff/index.html?page=10607&pid=8388

Training and Staff Development Opportunities
Ongoing staff development has been a keystone of successful service. All staff are encouraged to attend various staff development training workshops and activities. There is a central Staff Development Committee for the University which sets general policy and oversights programs. TEDI[6] (Teaching and Educational Development Institute) delivers programs across the university and develops a central calendar for all programs. TEDI offers various workshops and courses including occupational health and safety, workplace skills (customer service, project management, etc) and equity and diversity. Additional funding was dedicated to staff development in 2001 and has continued.

Cultural awareness workshops have been beneficial for staff, providing them with skills to adapt to a growing international student population. All staff working in service areas are encouraged to attend customer service skills workshops to provide additional training and to reinforce existing skills to assist them in their work in a busy customer-based environment. Some staff have taken the opportunity to develop their management skills through various workshops run by TEDI on campus[7]. Supervisory and management skills training is compulsory for staff working as supervisors or managers.

External providers are also utilized for staff development purposes, particularly for management skills development. Providers include the Australian Institute of Management, ATEM, the Australian Vice Chancellors Committee and the Queensland University Libraries Office of Cooperation (QULOC). QULOC includes all Queensland University Libraries as well as the Darwin University and Southern Cross and University of New England libraries. It plays a vital role - providing various management training programs to Library staff from member institutions. The modules in the Management Skills Development Series have been developed by members of the Staffing Issues Group and are targeted specifically at Library staff.

Regular internal update sessions are presented on such areas as ICT and on new developments in the Library. Many staff teach extensively. Internal and external programmes (Graduate Certificate in Education, Certificate IV in Workplace Training and Assessment and Train the Trainer) provide staff with skills and knowledge.

Staff development outside of the university is also encouraged. Many staff have attended local, national and international conferences, finding out about the latest developments in information science, IT, management and library practices. Some have shared their knowledge and skills to others by presenting papers on innovative initiatives and design at the Cybrary.

Planning and Review
Employees are the most important asset in any organisation. Library management at the Cybrary realise that "organizational knowledge is power"[8] and have involved all staff members in its annual planning and review sessions for a number of years. Each session is run four times to ensure all staff are able to attend and have the opportunity

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[6] http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/
[7] http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au/sdh/
[8] Michelle Neely Martinez, "The collective power of employee knowledge," *HRMagazine* 43, no. 2 (1998).

to contribute. A facilitator assists staff rethink what they are doing, explore the unknown, review the achievements of the year, and position the Library for the future. Priority areas for the new year are determined. Groups are formed to address issues and prepare possible implementation strategies. Membership of the taskforces is open to all staff. Throughout the next year each group addresses a priority area as part of the continuous improvement program implementing new services and improving existing ones. Many initiatives now in place originated in these planning and review sessions.

Rotation
Rotation emerged as a priority from the annual planning sessions in 2002. The introduction and implementation of a job rotation scheme between the sections and branches encourages cross fertilisation of ideas, skills and knowledge. Staff are able to rotate into another area of the Library for a fixed period of up to 12 months or do a short-term placement of one or more days per week for a specified period in another area. The scheme was successfully piloted in 2003 and has continued in 2004 with great success.

The evaluation of the program by participants and their managers has been overwhelmingly positive. Participants have commented on the friendliness and helpfulness of the staff in the areas they went to and generally appreciated the opportunity to develop new skills and experience different environments.

Managers commented that the scheme enabled the participants to see how their own work fitted into the larger operational picture. Some of the reported benefits were:

- "Mental stimulation and increased job satisfaction."
- "Excellent way to foster good working relationships and improve understanding between different library units."
- "Working in IAS allowed me to understand what happens to Cybrary materials in the wider library context."
- "The new skills I have acquired have given me the ambition to apply for, or be transferred to, any future positions where my broader understanding would be an advantage to the Cybrary."

Future Focus and Library Wellness Programs
In 1999 the Cybrary commenced the Future Focus program that has introduced innovative processes and practices to Cybrary staff. Speakers are from various professions and industries but all have some relevance to libraries and/or universities. Past speakers have come from within the university, from other education institutions both national and international and from non-education related companies and organisations. Topics have ranged from emotional intelligence to developments in library design.

A Wellness Program was introduced in 2001 to assist staff with knowledge and skills to achieve physical, mental and social well-being. This program was developed in response to suggestions from staff groups at the annual planning and review sessions held in November and December 2000. These programs have been effective in the USA as many organisations provide their employees with health care benefits and the

programmes have helped to reduce health care costs[9]. For the Cybrary the motivation to develop such a program was the desire to promote a healthy workplace and assist staff with life/work balance issues by providing them with access to sessions – both informative and practical – about health care initiatives and wellness strategies. Past programs have included stress management, voice projection & protection, relaxation techniques and body awareness, healthy ageing, positive parenting and cancer awareness. All have been well attended and appreciated. The Cybrary is in the fortunate position of being able to tap into the wealth of health related expertise within the various faculties, schools and centres of the University and its teaching hospitals.

Management Skills Development Programs
In 2002 the *Management Skills and Mentoring Development Program* was developed and implemented with formal management training sessions on "The Role of the Manager" and "Project Management Skills" provided to the senior staff of the Cybrary – the 7 Up Group. This in house training supplements formal management skills training accessed through other providers. The program consists of several streams – a "shadowing" of the Executive Managers for a period of time, an exchange of positions with another senior staff member, formal management training and participation in project management activities. The target group are HEW 7-9 staff.

The Learning Outcomes for participants of the Program are:
- enhanced knowledge and awareness of the University, the Library and the wider information environment
- increased awareness of leadership, innovation and management strategies
- the development of a "strategic" mindset and the ability to work within the "big picture"
- successful transition from being one of the team to leading the team
- recognition of the importance of establishing new allegiances

Several staff have been involved in the shadowing of Library Management Group members thus far with all remaining participants to be scheduled for the shadowing stream in 2004. Participants will be asked to nominate for the other streams of the program – project management activities and job exchanges over the next two years. The expectations of participants and their managers are documented prior to the commencement of one of the "streams" and then evaluated at the completion of the activity.

Another program assisting staff to develop management skills and the mind set necessary to make the transition to a management role is in the development stage. The "*So you want to be a Seven – developing new skills for the transition to management program*" targets base grade Librarians (HEW 6) with several years of professional experience.

The draft program has been circulated for comment to managers and the target group of staff. The program consists of several streams – formal management skills training, participation in recruitment and selection activities and exposure to human resource

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[9] Don R. Powell, "Characteristics of successful wellness programs," *Employee Benefits Journal* 24, no. 3 (1999).

issues, Library project activities and a "shadowing" of HEW 7/8/9 Coordinators and Managers.

The Learning Outcomes for participants of the Program are:
- enhanced knowledge and awareness of the University, the Library and the wider information environment
- increased understanding of self and the individual participant's strengths and limitations
- increased awareness of the role of managers in leading staff or coordinating functional areas
- the development of a "strategic" mindset and the ability to work within the "big picture"
- successful transition from being one of the team to coordinating and managing the team
- recognition of the importance of establishing new allegiances

Comments and suggestions received from stakeholders will be reviewed and incorporated into the program. It is hoped that the program will be implemented in 2004.

Team Review
The Cybrary uses the TMS Team Management Index Profile (TMI) instrument for some staff and organisational development activities. The Human Resource and Staff Development Coordinator is accredited to use the TMI and has been involved in several organisational development activities utilizing the TMI instrument and the *Projectivity* game. She has worked with a number of staff groups across the Library system. The purpose of the sessions is to understand the work preferences of other group members using their TMI Profiles and to review the performance of the team. The *Projectivity* board game is based on the Types of Work wheel developed by Team Management Systems. The team evaluates its performance across all types of work and discusses the areas that they, as individuals and as team members, rate as highly satisfactory and those areas that require improvement. An action plan is devised by team members to address those areas of the team's performance identified as requiring improvement. This strategy has been very successful particularly where specific team problems have been identified.

Communication
The Cybrary is a decentralized organisation spread across the various University campuses and the major teaching hospitals. It also has staff located in regional hospitals in Toowoomba and Rockhampton. Communication with staff in such an environment can be especially challenging. To keep staff informed about developments in the Cybrary and the wider environment, the higher education and information services the University Librarian addresses all staff twice yearly with her Staff Update sessions. These are scheduled at least three times at the St Lucia campus and once at either Ipswich or Gatton. To ensure all staff (including casual staff) have access to this information future sessions will be videotaped. The Cybrary has recently used Microsoft Producer software to synchronize videoed presentations and Powerpoint slides so that presentations can be viewed from a staff member's workstation.

Other communication mechanisms employed by the Cybrary are a fortnightly staff newsletter, LINKS, email discussion and distribution lists, a staff intranet which allows all Cybrary staff to access minutes of meeting, staff publications, policies and procedures, templates for publications and classes, rosters and staff information generally.

Employee Relations Practices
Flexible working arrangements, secondments and transfers
The Cybrary has a large and diverse staffing profile with staff employed under a range of conditions - continuing, fixed term, casual, full and part time. Many staff have family responsibilities for children or aged parents or both. The Cybrary recognizes the need to have flexible working arrangements to assist staff to manage their professional life with their personal responsibilities. The Cybrary retains its high calibre staff by being flexible and accommodating requests for variations in conditions where individual and organisational needs are able to be met. Staff are able to apply for positions in other organisations to gain additional experience and skills. This is facilitated by the QULOC Secondment Scheme which allows staff members to remain the employee of their own organisation thus retaining superannuation and continuity of service benefits. The host organisation is then billed for the salary, oncosts and other agreed costs at the end of the secondment.

One of the challenges for the Cybrary is that because there is relatively low turnover amongst the staff there is a risk of people becoming staid in their approach and less likely to try new approaches. The QULOC Secondment Scheme and the Cybrary's Rotation and Development Scheme encourage staff to take risks and work in other environments. The Cybrary also reserves the right to transfer staff across the system to meet organisational needs. Staff who have been in the same position for some time are encouraged to seek a rotation or secondment.

Workloads Review and Change
Following a reduction in the number of staff at the end of 2000, a program was put in place in 2001 to address work conditions and review staff suggestions related to workloads. Various tasks were targeted for review. Suggestions for improvement were sought from staff and "coffee and cake" vouchers rewarded innovative thinking. The process has continued with the identification of areas requiring improvement. Work practices and streamlining processes have been targeted. A recent initiative replaced the traditional Library Attendant position description with new Service Support Assistant positions. Service Support Assistants are able to perform discharging duties currently also performed by Library Assistants. This followed the shelving review recommendations that the whole process of materials handling be streamlined and performed by the same group of staff. Library Attendant staff have been given the option of transferring to the new position description. Most have elected to do so because it adds variety and interest to their work. Self service options have been put in place and a more effective utilization of Information Technology has reduced staff workloads.

Prevention of Injury and Rehabilitation
The University of Queensland is committed to providing a safe workplace for its employees. It is self insured for the purposes of workers compensation and must meet stringent licensing requirements. The Cybrary is proactive in its approach to

managing workplace health and safety. Staff are involved in the redesign of work areas to ensure those who use the work area are able to put forward suggestions for improvement. A recent example of this is the very successful redesign of the check in area in the Social Sciences and Humanities Library. Work related injuries in this area are now minimal.

The Cybrary is also trialling the use of a break and exercise software application – Workpace – to assist staff to break up their computer based tasks and minimize the risk of injury from intensive computer use.

If staff are unfortunate enough to suffer an illness or injury – whether work related or personal – there is a comprehensive approach to workplace rehabilitation to assist them to return to work as soon as possible. Rehabilitation options include graded return to work programs, altered duties and redeployment within the Library system.

Conclusion

Changes in customer service, the increased use of information technology, greater emphasis on information literacy and changes in organisational structure and management have encouraged the implementation of appropriate human resource initiatives to help staff adapt to an ever changing environment. Library management know the importance of providing staff with opportunities for comprehensive training and staff development, developing effective wellness programmes and promoting human resources initiatives to all staff. Staff have willingly adopted these new programmes and approaches. The Cybrary benefits from attracting and retaining a group of high calibre staff who deliver a high standard of service to clients. Cybrary staff enjoy a healthy, friendly and professional work environment.

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