The HKU Scholars Hub   The University of Hong Kong   香港大學學術庫

| | |
|---|---|
| **Title** | **Change in Academic Libraries: As Easy as 1, 2, 3....8?** |
| **Author(s)** | **Sidorko, PE** |
| **Citation** | **Change in Academic Libraries: As Easy as 1, 2, 3....8?. In Academic Librarian: Dinosaur or Phoenix? Die or Fly in Library Change Management, p. 267-280. Hong Kong: University Library System, Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2007** |
| **Issued Date** | **2006** |
| **URL** | **http://hdl.handle.net/10722/121821** |
| **Rights** | **Creative Commons: Attribution 3.0 Hong Kong License** |

# CHANGE IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES: AS EASY AS 1, 2, 3….8?

Peter Edward Sidorko
Deputy Librarian
The University of Hong Kong
peters@hku.hk

## ABSTRACT

**Purpose**:  The purpose of this article is to analyze two libraries' organizational change processes, one in Australia and one in Hong Kong.

**Methodology/Approach**:  The article assesses the two organizational change processes using John Kotter's eight step approach as outlined in his book *Leading Change*.

**Findings**:  While both change processes enjoyed varying degrees of success, it is revealed that both processes used several of the techniques recommended by Kotter in his eight steps, but that neither organization fully utilized the entire eight step process. Questions surrounding the suitability of organizational change models are also raised.

**Research limitations/implications**:  The successful outcomes from the two change processes owe credit to Kotter's model for organizational change.  While models for change may have certain limitations, they are still revealed as useful in the hands of a skillful leader.

**Practical implications**:  Kotter's eight step model is reviewed in the context of two library change processes.  Further analysis of the application of Kotter's model to library change processes may reveal different outcomes.

**Originality/value of paper**:  This paper provides a unique perspective of applying a recognized model for organizational change to library change processes.

**Keywords**:  Organizational change, Library management, Change models, Leadership

**Article type**:  Case study.

## INTRODUCTION

We are constantly reminded that, as members of libraries, we are undergoing a period of dramatic change and that this has been the case for many years now. Changes have been in response to, or indeed in anticipation of, technological advancements, budgetary fluctuations, the need for greater collaboration in an increasingly competitive environment and shifting demands of users to name just a few. Some may argue that within this climate, librarians seek to reinvent themselves in a struggle to continue to maintain their relevance. Irrespective of motives for change, few could argue that changes in libraries over the past 15-20 years have not been dramatic.

If this is truly the case, then why is it that change remains so difficult? There are many recognized theories as to why change processes in organizations fail or do not succeed to the extent desired. Naturally enough, leadership and communication are two characteristics that are often considered key factors behind effective organizational change. But are these two characteristics enough in a library environment where the required degree of change is no longer "fine tuning" or "incremental" but rather "transformational." Practices that prepare an organization for change or facilitate the change process must be seen as complementary to the characteristics of leadership and communication during change.

## KOTTER'S MODEL: REASONS FOR FAILURE AND STEPS TO SUCCESS.

Numerous models for organizational change exist (for example, Buchanan & Boddy (1992), Clarke (1994), Kotter (1996), and Kouzes and Posner (2002)). Many of such models share common features such as identification of a problem, developing shared vision, communication, embedding change and so on. Kotter's model, as elaborated in *Leading Change* (1996), is one such model that emphasizes a logical sequence of actions that can assist with successful organizational change.

Kotter highlights eight reasons why organizational change processes fail. These are:
    1 Allowing too much complacency
    2 Failing to create a sufficiently powerful guiding coalition
    3 Underestimating the power of vision
    4 Undercommunicating the vision by a factor of 10 (or 100 or even 1,000)
    5 Permitting obstacles to block the new vision
    6 Failing to create short-term wins
    7 Declaring victory too soon
    8 Neglecting to anchor changes firmly in the corporate culture.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Kotter's eight steps for successful organizational change are directly converse to his eight reasons for failure. In other words, by ensuring the eight reasons for failure are removed, contained, or at least their impact minimized, successful change will follow. These eight steps can broadly be contained within three categories, namely, preparation (steps 1-4), action (steps 5-7) and grounding (step 8).

## TWO LIBRARY CHANGE SCENARIOS

This article will draw on two examples of organizational change in academic libraries to illustrate some of the techniques adopted, the degrees of success experienced by the two and the extent to which Kotter's eight steps were, or may have been, adopted either knowingly or, and certainly in the case of scenario 2, not. This paper poses the question *how well was Kotter's 8-step process followed*, whether intentionally or not?

*Library 1: Australia*
The first of these change processes, at The University of Newcastle, Australia, was largely transformational. New structures integrating the library, the information technology and learning support departments were created. A single service entity, the Information and Education Services Division (IESD), was formed from the 3 previous departments. The changes affected several hundred people and were largely geared at changing the culture of the affected organizational units. It is worth noting that the Library and the teaching and learning support department had both enjoyed relative stability over the preceding years. The IT department, on the other hand, had undergone several change processes in fairly rapid succession. I will mostly focus on the impact this had on the library. The process began in late 1996.

*Library 2: Hong Kong*
The second process at The University of Hong Kong Libraries was less dramatic, where the changes were restricted to a large department within the Library, the Technical Services department. The changes affected several dozen people directly and were largely restricted to workflows and practices to improve efficiencies and output as well as organizational structure. The process began in early 2004.

## PHASE ONE: PREPARATION
### Step 1 Establishing a Sense of Urgency
The sense of urgency is created from the factor or factors that are necessitating the change. These could have arisen from internal or external pressures or problems that have been identified with the existing organization. It is the responsibility of organizational leaders to ensure that these pressures or problems are well communicated to members of the organization. As such, the urgency is communicated and established. Sheltering staff from such pressures will only lead to rejection, or at best suspicion of related change processes.

*Library 1: Australia*
The sense of urgency was effectively created by the University of Newcastle's CEO, the Vice-Chancellor who, in 1996, asked that better co-ordination in the areas of library, information technology, teaching and learning skills support, educational technology and class room services be investigated. At that time, the initiatives of "flexible learning" or "flexible delivery" were prevalent in the Australian higher education sector. The basis of the Vice-Chancellor's request was the desire for the University to expand its global teaching presence and in particular to attain the ability to "*offer more flexible courses, regionally, nationally and internationally and to re-package modules as fee-based programs through exploitation of information technology*" (O'Brien, et al, 1996). The Vice-Chancellor's decision to ensure a unified and systematic approach to information

and technology delivery as a requisite for such a venture was prudent and well founded. As any meaningful collaboration among these parties was, up until this time, scant at best, certain anxieties among staff became obvious. As the sense of urgency had been created by the CEO, there was little else for the staff of these units to realize but that change was imminent.

*Library 2: Hong Kong*
The economic downturn in Hong Kong from 2002 led to reduced funding for higher education. The University of Hong Kong was not exempt and significant savings were required. Resulting from this was the enticement, by the University, of a voluntary separation package for staff that fit certain eligibility criteria. The Technical Services department, and in particular the Western Cataloguing section, was particularly hard hit by the number and quality of staff who opted for this early retirement. As these staff could not be replaced, due to the prevailing budgetary restraints, it became abundantly obvious to all that changes would be necessary. Furthermore the departure date for these staff was in a short timeframe adding to the overall sense of urgency, once again contributing to raised anxiety levels among staff.

Step 2 Create a Guiding Coalition
Kotter stresses that change directed by a single individual, irrespective of how great a leader they may be, will not succeed. His guiding coalition recognizes that a team approach is needed. Furthermore, this team or coalition should consist of senior staff, managers etc. In other words the coalition must have power which may be identifiable through their titles (existing or newly assigned), their knowledge, skills & expertise, their reputation/credibility and their leadership (essential) and management (less essential) qualities.

*Library 1: Australia*
At The University of Newcastle the guiding coalition was formed from the three department heads who were most affected by the Vice-Chancellor's directive. Namely, the Director, Information Technology, the Director, the Centre for the Advancement of Learning & Teaching and the University Librarian.

*Library 2: Hong Kong*
At the University of Hong Kong the guiding coalition was the Libraries' Senior Management Team. Additionally, the Senior Management Team enlisted the support of an internationally recognized external expert in the field of technical services, and cataloguing, in particular.

In both library change examples the "guiding coalitions" consisted of senior staff responsible for the areas of change implementation. In both cases these teams acted as initiators of the change process, they worked on developing visions, strategies and plans. In both examples, however, what eventuated was that several "guiding coalitions" were established, not necessarily at the same time and with different yet complementary charges that were appropriate to the need at the particular point of time in the change process.

Step 3 Developing a Vision and Strategy
The vision can help to clarify the general direction for the change. Kotter argues that an effective vision is one that is "imaginable, desirable, feasible, focused, flexible and communicable" and such a vision can serve to motivate people to move in the right direction. Furthermore a vision that has been developed by the affected staff, or at least with significant contributions from those staff, will provide greater resonance to those affected.

Strategy, on the other hand, provides the outline for *how* the vision is to be achieved. The strategy is normally detailed in plans which provide specific steps and timetables for implementing the various phases.

*Library 1: Australia*
At the end of 1996, the guiding coalition of the two directors and the librarian developed a report in response to the Vice-Chancellor's request. The report recommended: that an information and educational support unit, encompassing the Library, the Information Technology Division, the Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching, the Medical Communication Unit and Classroom and Theatre Services be established; that a director be appointed; that the director's first duty be to undertake a participative change management process to establish the Division, and; that a mission, goals, strategies, plans, structures and physical location plans be developed (O'Brien, et al, 1996). The extensive report included the rationale for creating such a division including a description of the environment in which the university was operating. It was also foreshadowed that one of the key benefits of such a division would be that it could enable "an *integrated* approach to developing goals and plans for the delivery of flexible learning, information and technology services" (O'Brien and Sidorko, 2000).

The emphasis on integration (and consequently, collaboration) is significant because the success of the new division would be judged on how well such integration (and collaboration) actually occurred. This judgment was not only delivered by those in authority but also by those who were charged to be integrated. A second aspect that dominated the vision was that of partnering with the academic community of the University.

Subsequent to this report, the Director of the Information Technology Division was appointed as Director of the new division. Her credentials were impeccable as she possessed IT skills, had previously trained and worked as a librarian and also had a strong teaching background. Upon her appointment the pace of change was rapid. Numerous workshops and seminars were held aimed at developing a mission, goals, structure and even the name that the division should adopt. Furthermore, these workshops served to develop among staff a shared understanding of the plans and the scope of services offered by the units which were to form the division and they also provided a forum for explaining the rationale for the formation of the new division. In the sprit of the developed mantra of *integration and collaboration* workshops included, as far as possible, staff from all affected units. For many this was an uncomfortable, even painful,

experience. For others it was a refreshing outlook to an organization that had become repetitious to them. For management it was essential that people started to get to know each other and the functions that they performed.

This process continued through to early 1998 when the division had the basic structures in place and it was established as the Information and Education Services Division (IESD). Further fine tuning continued for the following 18 months. Finally, following an extensive consultation process, a mission statement and goals for the new Division, structural principles and a new structure based upon these principles was developed.

*Library 2: Hong Kong*
In Hong Kong the development of both the guiding vision & the strategy were subsequent to a highly consultative process led by the external expert. This process included an introductory presentation setting the scene and outlining the process of consultation. This was followed by several sequences of interviews with key individuals (senior library staff and technical services staff), group interviews and group workshops aimed at addressing issues raised in the interviews. All Technical Services staff were invited to participate in the interviews and workshops. This process was repeated, with some modifications, until a final workshop with the Deputy Librarian and the professional staff from Technical Services, resulted in identification of the vision, the top three priorities for Technical Services and, an action plan for moving the priorities forward.

The external expert then developed a report based on the interview and workshop outcomes. This report was then presented to the guiding coalition, the Libraries' Senior Management Team, for further communication and implementation.

Step 4: Communicating the change vision
A vision for change is often cited as a basic foundation for successful change. Kotter's model does not suggest otherwise as three of his eight steps deal specifically with vision. Kotter's view that the vision must be "imaginable, desirable, feasible, focused, flexible and communicable" seems to suggest that the vision is something that is quite tangible in terms of a cohesive and logical string of words. But is this really the case? Visions that are encapsulated in just a few inspirational words to form a vision statement are generally quite meaningless to staff who are compelled to undertake the identified change.

Kotter explains that the key elements for the effective communication of visions are: simplicity; metaphor, analogy and example; multiple forums; repetition; leading by example; explaining inconsistencies, and; ensuring two-way communication (Kotter, 1996). From this it is obvious that communicating vision is far more than repeated inculcation of a collegially developed mantra or vision statement. As Marcus Buckingham puts it the job of a great leader is to "rally people toward a better future" (Buckingham, 2005) and it is this *rallying* that is the process of communicating the change vision. Such *rallying* can not be encapsulated in a few choice words, albeit inspirational ones.

A further point that is emphasized by Armenakis et al (Armenakis, 1999), is that the specific change actions must be seen as *appropriate* to the desired vision.  While staff may agree with the vision and the desire to arrive at that vision, if they deem the adopted action or actions as inappropriate to facilitate achieving the vision, they will also resist the change, just as much had they failed to accept the vision.

*Library 1: Australia*
The establishment of the integrated division brought together many staff from units that had, until that time, rarely communicated or collaborated at any significant level.  The vision of integration and collaboration was seized upon by the new Director who chose to conduct regular "state of the Division" open forums.  These were conducted cross-departmentally as a symbol of the new integration.  They were often heated, sometimes even hostile, as some staff struggled with their new environment.  Yet the vision that was encapsulated by *integration, collaboration and partnership* was continued to be espoused.

While a mission statement for the Division had been articulated following the workshops mentioned in step 3, it was not necessarily communicated as such nor explained ad nauseam.  What appeared to be more important were the messages that were relayed by the Director and her executive team.  The impact of the symbolism behind the heads of IT, Library and teaching and learning support working together and providing a united front was far greater than a repeated message that was the collaboratively developed mission statement.

*Library 2: Hong Kong*
While the external expert spent considerable time in the workshops developing an innovative vision for what the Technical Services departments sought to become, no vision statement was provided in the final report.  What was more important than any vision statement was the report's observations that the Technical Services staff had a "keen interest in the best practices of other libraries—such as streamlining workflows and making greater use of information technology—as ways to get the same amount of work done with a shrinking staff" (Calhoun, 2004).  There were also views that staff was also interested in "further integrating", "reaping benefits", "collaborating", "improving" and "building on an international reputation as a center of excellence" (Calhoun, 2004).

These high ideals, together with the readily identifiable urgency for change, led to a range of recommendations that would address three key areas, namely workflows, quality control, and leadership and organizational structure.  In a sense, these recommendations provided the vehicle by which the vision could be readily communicated.  In effect it was clearly stated that following this plan will lead us to where we will not only continue to survive but thrive.  This message was also clearly articulated by the University Librarian to all of the Technical Services staff through a series of forums.

## PHASE TWO: ACTION
### Step 5 Empowering Employees for Broad-based Action
It is in step 5 that the processes for implementing changes commence.  It is also at this stage that problems in the form of resistance to change and obstacles to change manifest.

While Kotter identifies that "empowerment" has become something of a cliché (even back in 1996), he still believes that it is a fundamental component to successful change. As he rightly points out that major transformational change can only occur with the conviction of many people but that "employees won't help, if they feel relatively powerless" (Kotter, 1996). He also stresses that empowerment can be difficult because of certain barriers. These barriers to empowerment lie in bosses, people, information systems, structures and lack of skills.

Essentially these barriers represent the resisters to change that are so widely discussed in change literature. In terms of structural and system related barriers, these are considerably easier to remove, or at least rectify, than those involving people. It comes as no surprise that individuals react to change in very different ways. For some "change may bring increased satisfaction as they perceive the change as a chance to grow and learn" (Cole, et al, 2006). For others, however, change is considerably more difficult and this difficulty materializes in the form of resistance, either passive or overt. The difficulty for leaders, and indeed managers, lies in understanding the rational behind such resistance and seeking to remedy it. Given the complexity of humankind, this is no easy task.

*Library 1: Australia*
At this point I need to focus on a more specific aspect of the change at Newcastle, and the part of the process with which I was most familiar. As I have already stated, a significant part of the rationale for the restructure and change process was the need for greater integration, collaboration and partnership. At the forefront of this was the establishment of the Client Services Program, of which I was first a senior member, then shortly after its creation, the Program Manager. This Program brought together library information services, IT help desk services, IT desktop support services and software sales. As one of six Programs and two smaller teams, the Client Services Program was charged to be the service focus point for the Information and Education Services Division (IESD). This involved developing "virtual teams" of staff from all parts of the Division who shared a common interest in providing services to particular client bases, namely the Faculties. The Faculty Librarians were the chairs of these committees and they were expected to play a key communication role between the entire Division and their respective Faculties. This placed them outside of their *comfort zones* as they represented the Division on matters which they previously had little knowledge. The success of IESD was often gauged by the degree of success of the Client Services Program.

At the same time another library related program, the Information Resources Program, was formed consisting of library technical services and all lending related services. Communications between the two Programs was severed through the new structural alignment and relationships became competitive and occasionally hostile.

In order to arrive at this new structure several barriers required removal. Existing structures were removed and replaced with those that would foster integration, collaboration and a service ethic. This was particularly pronounced in the Client Services Program where the librarians enjoyed a well-deserved high reputation for service, while

the IT staff held a less than favourable position among the staff and students of the University.  Service Charters for the entire Division and one for each Program were developed.  Customer service training for all, but in particular the IT staff, was undertaken as were IT skills training for librarians and library support staff.  Certain staff excelled in these areas and it was refreshing to see some even "change sides" as it were, by moving from the library based side of the Program to the IT side.  The converse, however, never happened.

Other barriers were also noticeable but could not be removed by structural or system changes, or training.  These involved staff who had become disaffected.  In the re-organization that created the Client Services Program, and indeed the other Programs, a range of strategies for filling new positions were adopted.  These included secondment, "spill and fill", reassignment etc.  Staff that were unable to find themselves in a position were given six months to relocate to another department in the University or face redundancy.  Many staff chose to find positions elsewhere in the University and beyond and several chose to leave voluntarily.  Through this process many, though certainly not all, human barriers were removed.

*Library 2: Hong Kong*
Following the report from the consultant and several forums, workshops and meetings a new management structure for Technical Services was established.  This new management team did in many ways replace the original "guiding coalition" and they were charged to implement many of the changes.  Among these changes was the introduction of a testing system that was aimed at assessing the degree of quality control of the cataloguers and, when a sufficiently adequate score was attained, releasing them from the extensive checking of their work that was being undertaken by their supervisors.  The new management team also attended to some fine-tuning of functions and processes and to staff redeployments.  Staff movements to new teams also meant that intensive training was necessary and provided to those whose jobs had changed.  In addition to this, and in order to help those technical services staff most affected by the changes, workshops on *change management, communication and team organization* were conducted by a university clinical psychologist.

Step 6 Generating Short-Term Wins
Short-term wins are employed for a variety of reasons.  They provide proof that the efforts are worthwhile, they provide an opportunity to reward change agents, they allow a fine tuning of vision and strategy, to undermine cynics, to keep bosses on board and to build momentum (Kotter, 2006).

*Library 1: Australia*
Short term wins were many and celebrated at Newcastle.  For example, the establishment of the new role for *Faculty Librarians* was seen by the executive as a great achievement and certainly they had started to play a far greater role in meeting faculty needs.  *IT training skills* for library support staff were realized, and celebrated, following a series of training sessions that resulted in certificates awarded by an external body to all who participated.  The development of a Division wide *Service Charter* was also seen as a

major success as it assigned, for the first time, service levels by which all staff in the Division were expected to abide. Perhaps the most defining success, or failure depending on one's perspective, was the introduction of an *integrated library/IT service point* in, at first, one of the major libraries. This was complemented by the creation of a new computer laboratory in the same library. This was the most visible measure by which the Division's success could be judged, certainly by the staff who were involved in providing that service. Both library and IT staff worked this desk and a set of core competencies that both could be reasonably expected to achieve were drafted. This was without doubt the most contentious issue facing the Client Services Program. The clash of cultures was obvious and relentless. Cultural change was slow, painfully slow.

These and numerous other events were celebrated through a variety of means including the Division's newsletter, morning/afternoon teas, certificate ceremonies, launches, barbecues and a host of social based functions.

But the wins that were achieved need to be tempered by the prevailing atmosphere in the Division. The "virtual teams" were a miserable failure as they lacked purpose, structure, commitment and, in most cases, leadership. In many instances Faculties were resistant to the new role of the Faculty Librarians and only consulted them on *library* matters. Many staff remained cynical over the new service ethic and saw the Charter as "the service charter we *had* to have". Many librarians and IT staff objected to the integrated library/IT service point, declaring that they "became librarians/techies to work with books/computers". The two library related programs, Client Services and Information Resources, had developed rifts that were well pronounced and damaging to the longstanding corporate image of the library as a cohesive and service oriented unit.

*Library 2: Hong Kong*
The number of wins and celebrations were fewer in Hong Kong. A celebration marking the overall new structure and the reorganized workplace was held soon after staff had been relocated. Secondly, the quality control testing was a great success and all but one of the cataloguers provided outstanding results. A celebration with certificates for those successful cataloguers was held.

Step 7 Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change
Kotter's step 7 is in response to his 7th reason for organizational failure, namely, declaring victory too soon. And it is by looking at this failure that we gain a clearer understanding of the rationale behind step 7. Indeed Kotter argues that sometimes step 7 is necessary to counterbalance the effect of step 6, generating short-term wins. The celebration of these wins may serve to make people believe that the job is done. That success has been achieved. This in turn allows the previous complacency to sneak back into the corporate culture. He argues that further change is needed to avoid this and that the guiding coalition can now build on its credibility to achieve more change.

*Library 1: Australia*
There was certainly no let up in the change process at Newcastle. Fine tuning continued and was reasonably easy to achieve following the implementation of the major changes.

Staff continued to enjoy mobility around the Division as necessary either through secondment or application. A certain change-weariness, however, remained with the cynics and was adopted by some of the previous change agents.

*Library 2: Hong Kong*
It is probably at this point that our process deviates from Kotter's model. In terms of the changes that were required, these were successfully achieved. This step is essentially saying you should keep on looking for more wins, more opportunities for change, and not let up. Having realized the stated objective it would be difficult to do this in this particular change situation. Indeed such an attitude would be interpreted by staff as change for change's sake, thereby running the risk of destroying the trust and goodwill that had been generated by staff during the previous process.

## PHASE THREE: GROUNDING
Step 8 Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture
Step 8 is the grounding step where changes have become part of the culture, part of the "way we do things around here." Kotter rightly asserts that this anchoring must come at the end of the process and not at the beginning. This anchoring however will only happen when the previous steps have been successful and staff are convinced of the merit of the new ways. As Pfeifer et al put it "culture cannot be manipulated and changed" at the start of strategic reorientation efforts (Pfeifer, et al, 2005) but will only ensue when "employees have recognized the relationship between the new course of action and the improvement in performance" (Pfeifer, et al, 2005).

*Library 1: Australia*
While lesser changes that focused on fine tuning continued for some time, as highlighted in step 7, the University administration announced in 2000 that a major university-wide reorganization would occur. This would involve shrinking the number of faculties (as it eventuated by 50%), and staff, and drawing on a decentralized model of faculty service support through a central and unified service provider, the University Services Division which was to "integrate" *all* university support services. The work undertaken in the formation of the new Division was soon to be dismantled, or at least, significantly realigned. Given the nature of this change, the extent and degree of affect on the staff, it was disruptive to impose new and even more dramatic changes before the previous changes had been sufficiently grounded.

*Library 2: Hong Kong*
As stated in step 7, the Technical Services Department reorganization had successfully achieved its goals. Output was maintained despite the departure of the key staff which led to the urgency for change. In fact output was not only maintained but significant improvements had also been achieved. The new structure, practices and workflows had successfully become "the way we do things around here."

## SYNOPSIS: THE TWO SCENARIOS
Both libraries can claim varying degrees of success through their change processes.

The change processes at Newcastle led to a number of improvements:
- better planning for library and technology across campus through the establishment of an Information Services Committee, charged to provide oversight to both library and technology services, and the linking of budgets to plans;
- skills enrichment schemes that led to IT training for library staff and saw several staff changing professional direction;
- an improved focus on service culture with customer service training, service charters for all services and improved feedback mechanisms;
- integrated library and IT help service points in all libraries;
- despite shrinking budgets[1] and staffing[2], the Library was able to maintain services with university wide surveys showing no decline, in fact improvements, and;
- the University's Composite Student Questionnaire (CSQ) showed significant improvements in IT services following the formation of the Division.

In the Technical Services department at Hong Kong not only had the changes been successfully implemented but several improvements had also been realised:
- long serving, capable staff were relieved of the process of having their work thoroughly checked leading to a boost in confidence;
- the first year saw a 122% increase in the number of titles catalogued this included a 485% increase in e-resources and a 42% increase in copy cataloguing;
- other major projects were subsequently initiated and completed including a major reclassification of our CJK collection, item creation for all bound journals and OPAC hyperlinks for some 60,000 print volumes recently digitized as part of the China-America Digital Academic Library (CADAL) project, and;
- in 2005/06 the Library became the number 1 largest contributor of titles in the world to OCLC's WorldCat with almost 76,000 titles.

Despite significant differences in the nature of change, and to a certain extent the processes undertaken, it can be readily discerned that success was achieved through both changes, albeit to varying degrees. It seems apparent that the change process in Hong Kong was mostly more successful than that at Newcastle.

At Newcastle a number of factors were influential in limiting the degree of success:
- the *urgency* for change was dictated by the CEO and in real terms few people fully drew the connection, or saw the relevance, between an integrated service division and flexible delivery;
- the vastly different cultures of the previous departments was stronger than was first imagined;

---

[1] The Council of Australian University Library (CAUL) ranking statistics showed that the University ranked 22nd in total library expenditure per head of population in 1996 and 27th in 1998 http://www.caul.edu.au/stats/.

[2] The CAUL ranking statistics showed that the University ranked 8th in number of library staff per head of population in 1996 and ranked 16th in 1998 http://www.caul.edu.au/stats/.

- the pre-existing IT department had been through several restructures, many had become change-weary, cynical and resistant to change, the other departments had seen less change;
- *short term wins* were offset by clearly visible failures such as the virtual teams and the obvious tensions between library and IT staff working the integrated service points, as well as between staff attached to the two library related Programs;
- changes had been insufficiently *grounded* when the new major restructure of the entire University was announced;

In Hong Kong different factors were influential:
- the *urgency* created by the soon to depart cataloguers was very real to all staff involved and the implications of their departure was extremely worrisome to the department;
- the Technical Services Department had been through some previous changes largely involving movement towards a more centralized model but these were fairly minor and a good degree of change –readiness was apparent (as opposed to the change-weariness at Newcastle);
- the restructure was significantly less complex than that undertaken at Newcastle as it involved only one administrative unit within one library.

## SYNOPSIS: KOTTER'S MODEL
As suggested earlier, it is uncertain whether Kotter's model was knowingly applied at Newcastle and it certainly was not in Hong Kong. The model has been used merely to identify whether or not lessons may be learnt by analyzing the techniques utilized in the change processes and questioning whether some or all aspects of the model contributed to the change successes.

As I have already indicated neither change process fully utilized the Kotter model. In Hong Kong steps 1 through 6 appear to have been utilized to great effect, but the necessity for step 7 was less obvious. To a large extent step 8 was built into step 6 but the reality may be that this grounding is still taking effect, even three years after the changes. At Newcastle, the final step involving the grounding of changes was disrupted by new changes that were to have an even greater effect. Kotter might argue, however, that these new changes were appropriate and were in line with his step 7, consolidating gains and producing more change.

Kotter makes no concessions to the fact that his model is sequentially ordered. He does concede however that "multiple phases" may be undertaken at once but that the order should be retained (Kotter, 1996). He particularly emphasizes the need for steps 1 through 4, what I have entitled "preparation" but what he calls "warm-up" or "defrosting". It is these crucial planning stages that he sees as most important and as the ones that most organizations fail to adequately address, and consequently, failure in their change efforts ensues. Kotter's model also seems to imply that a conclusion to the sequence of change is achievable and indeed desirable.

While acknowledging Kotter's model as their basis, Pfeifer et al, on the other hand, place greater emphasis on a cyclical process for change, what they call the "control loop of strategic change" (Pfeifer, 2005). They believe that no strategy can remain relevant for too long therefore "a strategy for a change process is by no means finished on completion of its implementation" (Pfeifer, 2005). They place great emphasis on re-examining and redefining the vision during what is their stage 5 and what equates to Kotter's step 7. Yet their emphasis is far more pronounced than Kotter's, as they prescribe a complete repeat of the process from the beginning.

## CONCLUSION: A WORD ABOUT CHANGE MODELS
In the beginning of this article I mentioned a number of change models and suggested that many of such models shared certain characteristics. These represent only a small selection of models available for leaders or managers to utilize to assist them with engineering organizational change. I have used Kotter's 8 step model as the basis for examining two change processes. I have also noted a refinement of Kotter's model as adapted by Pfeifer, et al.

From the two change scenarios I have attempted to illustrate that some of Kotter's steps served both organizations well in facilitating their change processes. I have also indicated, however, that certain steps in Kotter's model were not, in my opinion, applicable to at least one of the change processes and that certain steps were not carried out in the other.

While many models provide a sound basis for successful change (and certainly Kotter's is included in this list), no single model can provide a one-size-fits-all solution to organizational change. One must seriously question why so many varied models exist and why it is found necessary to refine a model (for example Pfeifer) that is so well-established and respected. In his appropriately titled article "[n]o such thing as … a 'one best way' to manage organizational change", Burnes (Burnes, 1996) suggests that so many authors of change models prescribe theirs with an almost zealous affirmation and warning that attempting any other approach is foolhardy. However, he also suggests that "an organization's preferred approach to change stems from its culture and thus cannot easily be amended or replaced" (p15). He also contends that many change processes fail precisely because of these models and managers' inability to follow their prescriptions because they do not fit their organizational needs. In essence, it is difficult to contextualize change models to specific organizational needs at a particular point in time.

Finally, and while I agree with Kotter that too little planning is a major contributor to change failures, I would like to reflect on what I believe to be the truly fundamental basis behind successful organizational change, whether it is in a library or other organization, and that must be leadership. "Rallying" people to a better future, as Buckingham puts it, is no simple task. In order to perform this "rallying", leaders must know the better future, they must know the people they are rallying, they must prepare those people to be rallied, they must believe in the destination they have chosen, they must be capable of visually communicating the better future, they must help the people to visualize the same future, they must expect things to go awry, they must be capable of changing their idealized

course of action without derailing the outcome.  First and foremost, they must be leaders. All else will follow.

## <u>**REFERENCES**</u>

Armenakis, A.A., Harris, S.G. and Feild, H.S. (1999), "Making change permanent: a model for institutionalizing change", Research in Organizational Change and Development, Vol. 12, pp 97-128.

Buchanan, D.A. and Boddy, D. (1992), The Expertise of the Change Agent: Public Performance and Backstage Activity, Prentice Hall, New York.

Buckingham, M. (2005), The One Thing You Need to Know:…About Great Managing, Great Leading, and Sustained Individual Success,  Free Press, New York.

Burnes, B. (1996), "No such thing as … a 'one best way' to manage organizational change", Management Decision, Vol. 34, No. 10, pp. 11-18.

Calhoun, K. (2004), The University of Hong Kong Libraries: Report of a Consulting Visit, 8-12 March 2004, unpublished manuscript.

Clarke, L. (1994), The Essence of Change, Prentice Hall, New York.

Cole, M.S., Harris, S.G. and Bernerth, J.B. (2006), "Exploring the implications of vision, appropriateness, and execution of organizational change", Leadership and Organization Development Journal, Vol. 27 No. 5, pp. 352-367.

Kotter, John P. (1996.), Leading Change, Harvard Business School Press, Boston.

Kouzes, J.M. and Posner, B.Z. (2002), The Leadership Challenge, 3$^{rd}$ ed., Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

O'Brien, L., Little, P. and Linklater, B. (1996), An Integrated Approach to Information, Education and Technology Services, unpublished document, The University of Newcastle, Newcastle.

O'Brien, L. and Sidorko, P.E. (2000), "Integrating information, education and technology services", paper delivered at EDUCAUSE 2000, Nashville Tennessee, October 10-13, 2000, available at <http://www.educause.edu/asp/conf/function.asp?PIN=&PRODUCT_CODE=E00/ED00072&MEETING=e00>

Pfeifer, T., Schmitt, R. and Voigt, T. (2005), "Managing change: quality-oriented design of strategic change processes", The TQM Magazine, Vol. 17 No.4, pp 297-308.