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Organisations need to change in order to prosper, but organisations change only when people change.

J.H. Zenger

Abstract

The goal of this article is to describe the process of change implementation in an academic library organisation. Managing change and adjusting the structure of the organisation at the Centre for Scientific and Technical Information at the Lublin University of Technology was intended to present the main areas of the unit's activity within the university structure. It was also intended as a starting point for adopting a modern library management model. The article describes the stages of the change process and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on this process.

Keywords: academic library, change management, change planning, organization culture

Introduction

Strategic management is increasingly applied to the functioning of institutions such as academic libraries. It is an indispensable part of the smooth functioning of an organisation. The process involves a number of stages that take time. Change is an essential element for an organisation both to remain in its field of activity and to grow.

In academic libraries, the processes of organisational change have so far largely concerned technological processes. The focus has been on providing access to the latest technological developments, improving access to electronic sources, promoting search tools and a security system based on the Internet of Things.

Recent years have brought to the fore the importance and indispensability of the systematisation of operational processes in academic libraries. Effective change management is becoming an important skill that determines the development of an institution and the fulfilment of its tasks [Głuszek, 2017].

It should be noted that being deeply entrenched in tradition, the organisational culture of academic libraries can tend to preserve the status quo, thus hindering the implementation of significant innovations that require flexibility and creativity [Atkinson, 2021]. Nevertheless, change is necessary for the development of any institution, including academic libraries, whose role is to support the universities in their efforts to make society grow.

Literature review

Given the multiplicity of definitions and the diversity of change processes in organisations, the authors have chosen to provide what they consider to be the most relevant definitions of organisational change in the context of the academic library and to refer to the most commonly used concepts and models of change.

Change in an organisation can be defined as restructuring, i.e. change in at least one of the three dimensions of the organisation, i.e. its scope of activities, capital structure or internal organisation. Its goal is to increase the effectiveness of the organisation by, among other things, ordering and streamlining its structure and improving the quality of its services [Sapijaszka, 2013].

Change as reorganisation is another closely related term, but it is based on a deliberate action that disrupts the dynamic balance in the organisational structure and/or the processes within it [Ehrlich, Gliński, 2011]. The reorganisation aims to change structures, streamline them or adapt them to changed tasks. The last of these aspects is also foregrounded by other researchers [Mikołajczyk, 2012, Pszczółkowski, 2010], who indicate important factors such as technique and technology in terms of tool adaptation, strategy, culture, power, and static and dynamic structure.

Reengineering, or Business Process Reengineering (BRR), has also moved from business to the organisation management model. Its essence lies in the improvement of the management process, rather than in change introduced for change's sake [Pepperd, Rowland, 2007]. The authors indicate the basic tools used in this process, namely: benchmarking, outplacement and outsourcing. It should be mentioned that these elements are becoming relevant to strategic

management in academic libraries. The library is increasingly seen as an institution with a defined mission, vision and action plans (strategies).

Change in an organisation is often innovation. This understanding is presented by E. M. Rogers, G. Barnett and W. Makalarczyk, for whom innovation is a new idea (novum) perceived by an individual. It is very often associated with a positive outcome, i.e. assessing the changed state of affairs as something positive. While this presupposes a predetermined outcome of change, Z. Pietraszyński, a Polish researcher, notes that this is not always possible.

Over the years, different concepts of change management have been elaborated on [Duffield, Royals, 2021]. The most popular concepts based on the aforementioned definitions are those by Kurt Lewin and John Kotter and the concept of innovation proposed by Prosci, a company that has developed its own change management method.

It appears that the concept that is best known and visible in a number of library processes is Lewin's method. The three-stage model involves shattering old habits and building the awareness of the need for change in the first stage, carefully developing an action plan in order to define the change in the second stage, and returning to the natural state from before the change in the third stage. This process can be summarised with the following scheme: unfreezing – changing – refreezing.

Undoubtedly, this model can be applied successfully in academic libraries in technological changes, such as changing a library system, implementing new search tools or others, where the sense of security is not significantly affected. According to Lewin, any successful transformation involves the belief that the new solution is secure and promoted by the organisation. Participating in and influencing the success of the change depends on the activity of the team, which needs to abandon its current attitudes and behaviours and see the benefits of the change.

Kotter also believes that the effectiveness of change depends on the involvement of team members, effective communication and buy-in for change. As a first step, it is necessary to arouse a sense of need for the change and convince the team to commit to implementing it. Communication within the organisation becomes a central tenet in the model. Kotter has developed an eight-stage change process.

- Create a sense of urgency

- Build a guiding coalition

- Form a strategic vision and initiatives

- Enlist a volunteer army

- Enable action by removing barriers

- Generate short term wins

- Sustain acceleration

- Institute change

Monitoring the change process according to the above stages can have a significant impact on whether the change will be successful, as also noted by N. Duffield and J. Royals.

While Kotter does not address the role of a change leader explicitly, this role is clearly indisputable [Harland, Steward, Bruce, 2017]. In order for the change leader to successfully lead change, they must possess not only management skills but also leadership skills. The stages of leading change proposed by Kotter are not sufficiently operationalised due to transformations in the institution's environment [Głuszek, 2017] and the fact that change in corporations is subject to constant monitoring. In academic libraries, processes are slower, and the outcome depends on the commitment of the change leader and, above all, on the culture of the organisation.

In the culture of libraries, the role of a change leader is played by the director, who creates a vision in line with the university's mission. Obviously, the director always monitors the change process by carrying out corrective actions and, together with the managers of various departments, conducts evaluations and corrective actions. The implementation of change in individual areas is delegated to managers, who often have to act quickly, correct errors on an ongoing basis, and, above all, take care of mutual trust within the team, which becomes the foundation of management in times of instability [Jasińska, 2015]. Communication processes (open communication) and building security based on trust lie at the heart of any successful change. An additional bonding factor is the choice of an appropriate change strategy. It should combine both a people-oriented and an institution-oriented strategy, i.e. the organisation's change strategy. The combination of these actions is supposed to ensure alignment of mission, vision and respect for the people that make up the organisation.

The role of a change manager (Change Manager)

The role of managers and change leaders is one which brings to prominence elements of leading change, designing new solutions and making others embrace the process. In addition, special attention should be paid to the role of controlling the process and its progress. The implementation of change is led by the change manager, who must be open-minded, flexible and have the courage to push forward a new shape of the organisation.

Academic libraries have so far undergone major changes related to their IT development and technological facilities. Nowadays, changes are increasingly dictated by the changing social environment, being influenced by generational change and the transformation of science itself. The growing environmental awareness on the part of library users necessitates a shift away from the traditional form of academic libraries, also in terms of organisational management. The response to new user needs can be seen in the wide range of services offered, which require librarians to become involved in new tasks. The need for change in management, i.e. by abandoning the traditional model in favour of a flexible one that involves people with different skills and competencies, lies at the heart of the coalition for change [Knight, 2017].

Case study

In 2018, the Law on Higher Education and Science came into force, requiring universities to reorganise their structures to adapt them to new needs, including a new evaluation of the performance of academic staff members. The Lublin University of Technology started working on documents and normative acts (Statutes, Work Regulations, etc.), involving employees of individual units in activities aimed at adapting their units and their regulations to the new ministerial regulation.

Structure and Higher Education Reform – Reform 2.0

The Lublin University of Technology Library is one of the university-wide units. Its main tasks include supporting the teaching process, scientific work and research projects requiring specialised writing. The previous structure consisted of 5 departments (Library Collection and Inventory Department, User Services Department, Scientific Information Department, Information Technology Department and Publishing and Digital Library Centre).

Reform 2.0 provided the impetus for changing its structure and clearly defining the tasks that it will carry out. In their publication entitled "Change Management Model in the Scientific

Information Centre and Academic Library (CINiBA)", the authors define the organisational change in the library as: "a set of company-relevant transformations; these modifications or changes to the existing structure of the company in accordance with established procedures may affect different parts of the company. Changes in libraries are significantly influenced by both external and internal factors" [Waga, Koziara, Razik, 2016]. The article argues that it is the pressure of external factors that constitutes the main driver of actions forcing unit managers to conduct self-evaluation and thus to change.

To date, academic libraries have been undergoing quiet, evolutionary changes stimulated by technological change. For the past few years, we have been witnessing deeper and more dynamic, abrupt changes related to a new model of library operation in response to the changes and demands of the academic environment.

The directors of the Lublin University of Technology Library analysed the ongoing needs and identified the strengths and weaknesses of the unit. They took steps to establish a team to prepare a new structure based on the needs of the institution and to clearly define its tasks. The organisational change plan focused on reducing the role of the traditional hierarchical structure in favour of matrix management, aiming to increase the involvement of staff by bringing them together in interdepartmental teams. The work of people with different competencies and specialisations is intended to broaden the scope of activities and encourage staff to develop further and exchange experiences with each other. It is also an opportunity for the entire environment to come together and exchange information about the tasks of individual units or departments.

Establishing a team to implement change

In November 2018, the Lublin University of Technology Library Directors established a team to prepare provisions concerning the library and its tasks and structure in the University Statutes. The team was composed of representatives from key departments so that they could inform their closest colleagues about the direction of the work being undertaken. At this stage, the aim of the change was made clear: to present the tasks of the units through the establishment of three pillars building up the Scientific and Technical Information Centre. It was due to comprise the library, with its core tasks of gathering and making available its collections and scientific information, the Bibliometric Analysis Centre, supporting the university in the process of information evaluation and management, and the Lublin University of Technology Publishing House.

This transformation resulted in a different perspective on the library and its tasks. The unit itself and its role were redefined; its new tasks were named in a literal way. The idea behind the activities was to underline that the academic library is a centre of information, providing access to comprehensive bibliometric tools and services, and publishing activities combined with the implementation of the open access policy for publications and research data.

From January to October 2019, the team members worked on documentation and provisions regarding the place and shape of the unit in the university's structure, the classification of the Centre of Scientific and Technical Information staff, criteria for the promotion of academic librarians, and working hours. They consulted their concerns with the university's trade unions, gaining approval for the actions taken. As a result, the members of the appointed team became change leaders in their respective areas, i.e. in the departments they worked in.

The activities and process of change management at this point followed the models described in literature, starting with the analysis of the requirements for change, change implementation and evaluation of the situation.

Change process and consultation with the unit's staff

The first stage was to communicate the need to implement the change to the staff. M. Kowalska-Chrzanowska writes extensively on the importance of this activity in *Innovation and Change Management in Library Wor*k: "in order to avoid communication disorders already at this stage, information must be communicated in a proper manner, i.e. in such a way that the gist of the change, its objectives and the benefits arising for both the library and its employees can be understood. It is only a proper understanding of the objectives that can generate any commitment on the part of the staff – rejection or acceptance of the changes".

Also, in the case of the Centre of Scientific and Technical Information, the leaders implementing change experienced John Fisher's classic change curve model first-hand. Some colleagues reacted with resistance and frustration at first, their attitude changing only following a number of meetings and negotiations.

The second stage involved a meeting led only by the change leaders, without senior management. The aim was to create an environment for open discussion, without feeling pressured by the presence of superiors, to eradicate communication barriers and to create a situation for free discussion. In order to avoid a situation where the group adopted a sceptical or conservative stance, which could "result in actions to reject change" (Kowalska-

Chrzanowska), the leaders attempted to involve their closest colleagues. The project consisted of preparing a structure and defining one's place in it.

As a result, several projects were developed that, when analysed by the team, confirmed the members' conviction that the change was the right one and that the tasks performed by various units should be defined clearly. The emphasis on task-focus became all the more important as it clearly identified the unit and its activities. It also made it possible to group the staff into task forces, introducing new opportunities for motivation and development.

At the last meeting, the director presented the final project of the new structure to be approved by the rector.

The rector decided to approve the new structure under an organisational regulation (Regulation No. 55/2019 on organisational changes at the Lublin University of Technology in the division of the vice-rector for science). The regulation came into force on 1 October 2019.

It provided for the establishment of the Scientific and Technical Information Centre as a university-wide unit, leaving the Library as the core, and the establishment of the Bibliometric Analysis Centre and the return to the name Publishing House of the Lublin University of Technology.

Once the new structure was announced by the regulation, the change process came into effect, resulting in a re-classification of staff and a change of jobs. It should be emphasised that all these activities were preceded by a preparatory process. Employees were given training and substantive preparation for their new functions in the structure. Each shift was consulted with the employee, and the stages of the change were discussed with the manager and director. The management staff sought to communicate all actions and present the results of the work.

Activities were initiated to embed the change and familiarise staff with their new roles and workplaces. Unfortunately, the change management process was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in incomplete consolidation and awareness of the change objectives.

The change caused by the COVID-19 pandemic

While the outbreak of the pandemic made it impossible to complete the process of one change (the element of stability and evaluation was missing), it also necessitated efficient management and the creation of conditions for functioning in the new situation. It was necessary to introduce new methods of working with students and academic staff members. The organisation of remote working was also a challenge.

Paradoxically, being in the process of change made it easier for staff to adapt to the new situation. Their sense of security was disrupted not directly by the change itself but by the risk to their health.

The staff of the Centre of Scientific and Technical Information shifted to remote working, with unit managers in charge of organising this. Their role was not only to ensure smooth work under difficult conditions (organisation of access to company computers, control over the performance of assigned tasks, reporting), but also to provide a sense of security and support to employees who experienced stress, loneliness and uncertainty about the future. A. K. Koźmiński draws attention to the important role of the leader in a crisis situation as a stabilising factor [Koźmiński, 2004]. He believes that crisis conditions are conducive to short-term actions, but not to thorough changes within the organisation, which are necessary to build a strong enterprise [Grzybowska, 2021].

It is important to emphasise that a crisis situation is a moment conducive to a decline in motivation and commitment among employees. It is also a difficult time for leaders and managers to react quickly and on-demand to emerging problems. Under crisis management conditions, thinking outside the box to find solutions in difficult situations becomes of key importance. Communication becomes a factor for organisational management, being crucial in both change management and crisis management.

The value of communication in organisational management is noted by, inter alia, Liz Clarke [Jasińska, 2015]. According to the researcher, communication serves to build trust and situational awareness, i.e. it conditions the success of the change. It should be part of the change management process. Thanks to it, the leader communicates with the team, which expresses its concerns and feelings about the processes taking place in the organisation and gives a sense of being the owner of the change. The researcher also considers communication to be an antidote to resistance to change, perceiving it as a building block of the new vision that the leader and the organisation are striving for. As regards the Centre of Scientific and Technical Information, the communication process was disrupted by the change of direction imposed by the COVID 19 pandemic.

Once the pandemic had stabilised and the crisis had partially abated, the stalled change process was resumed thanks to the leader – the library director – who communicated the need for an evaluation of the change. The evaluation will be based on an examination of the awareness of the new goals and objectives that the unit is pursuing. Due to the long time it

takes to become aware of change [Walkley Hall, 2015], the implementation process should be monitored and analysed over time. The leader, together with managers, should systematically evaluate each stage and examine the effectiveness of communication within teams or departments.

Implementing change in an organisation, including academic libraries, increasingly resembles project management activities. Project management is characterised by a specific timeframe for taking action, clearly defined milestones for the tasks undertaken and procedures defining the operating model. Making reference to mechanisms involved in project management in the change process allows for control and prompt correction of any undesirable actions that may affect the change process. Also, the use of operating patterns can be helpful in determining the timeframe of change implementation in the library. This is one of the most difficult elements to achieve, as the dynamics of the environment affect the smooth merging of processes taking place in the library. We observe this not only at the level of user behaviour and user needs, but also among librarians themselves. The awareness of the importance of tasks and the responsibility for information and its dissemination/sharing has become the basis of the work. Messages are no longer only directed along the lines of reader-librarian, but based on the need to create opportunities for dialogue, i.e. librarian-reader-librarian.

Summary – Evaluation

Change management is an integral part of strategic management. Academic libraries are increasingly pioneering the introduction of technological solutions for both information and communication. The management model of the institution is also changing, seeking to adapt solutions used in business. It is important to adjust changes to specific needs and activities. Higher education institutions and their libraries have their unique characteristics, playing a specific role in the university, so the changes within them should be based on an appropriate segmentation of services supported by prior analysis. Services should be defined for the different types of users to ensure their satisfaction. In the case of the Centre of Scientific and Technical Information, needs were identified based on surveys, dialogue and the University's development strategy. The final element needed to consolidate the change will be meetings presenting specific achievements of staff from the three segments, i.e. the Library, the Publishing House and the Bibliometric Analysis Centre. It is crucial to show the benefits of effective work made possible by the change, as it embraces the structure and culture of the organisation.

The experience of the pandemic has made us realise that we do not always have influence over the course of change, but being aware of the processes helps us to overcome problems or unexpected situations. Academic libraries need to be able to cope not only with new user needs in terms of services, tools or resources, but above all with the dynamics of their environment and hardly predictable situations, such as a pandemic or war. It can be helpful to have strategic management, a well-informed leader and the ability to use a variety of management tools and methods. It is important to remember that even unexpected changes can become opportunities for growth and a source of tangible benefits. Although arousing concerns, change is always a step forward. The introduction of management methods from the business field is increasingly seen as an asset rather than a threat. It is no longer associated with the dehumanisation of the library, and the pace of life itself necessitates agile processes, clear communication and efficient operations.

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