

Documenting and Sharing Managerial Wisdom

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A short story:

- Becoming a new director of a public library
- Current librarian retiring
- More habit than procedure
- Help!



Managing institutional knowledge

...[making] the organization's data and information available to the members of the organization through portals and with the use of content management systems

--Koenig, 2012

The gold in the library's intellectual vault

--Hartman and Delaney 2010

Knowledge management in libraries

- Understanding users' needs
- Competencies
- Intellectual capital
- Information culture or organizational culture
- Reorganization and innovation
- Team learning
- Decision-making
- Organizational structure and cooperation

Concentrate on this in the last 3 – 6 months:

- Special skills
 - Programming
 - Best practices
 - Other expertise
 - Knowledge
 - Complex procedures
 - Connections
 - Legislators
 - Community groups
- --Hartman and Delaney (2010)

Technology and information sharing

Touted as the main method for KM...but how does this apply to small organizations?

We sit down together once a week.

I just tell them what's going on.

Maybe other aspects are important?

- Mentorship
 - Inside and outside of the library
 - education

Research questions

- How do librarians, and especially managers, use KM?
- When a library director steps down and a new director is hired, how does the new person learn to do that job?
 - Is KM an appropriate idea for library leadership transitions?
 - Is KM a good term for leadership education in LIS?

Method

- Survey:
 - Missouri Library Association membership listserv
 - Six questions about KM, succession planning, and communication
 - Four questions demographic
- Interviews:
 - Ten interviews; five upper-level management/directors; four from public libraries
 - All had significant experience in librarianship

How did they learn their jobs?

- Main ideas:
 - Training themselves
 - Working with a mentor
 - Working through a structured transition
 - Turning to communities of practice
- Supporting ideas:
 - LIS education
 - Workshops, conferences
 - Past experience

Sharing knowledge

- Few were working on a succession plan, or it was vague.
- Small libraries have different needs for succession planning and methods for sharing knowledge.

System	Percent Use	Standard Deviation	Respondents
Word-of-mouth, meetings	73%	25.29	24
Policy manuals	46%	33.26	23
Spreadsheets or formal documentation	43%	30.09	22
Post-It Notes	22%	28.40	18

Problem 1: Transparency

- Managers must keep some knowledge to themselves:
 - The curse of middle-management
 - Communicating up and down
- Technology has positives and negatives in this regard:
 - Helps coordinate message to the public and among staff in big organizations

Problem 2: competing systems

- Should we use the system of the larger organization, or one that works for us?
 - Google Docs vs. Microsoft, etc.
 - Ticketing systems
 - the ILS, itself
- How do we coordinate workflows?

Mentoring

- Former director
- Family members/other close mentors
- Most important: the greater community of practice:
 - The ACRL College Library Director Mentoring Program
 - Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries Leadership Fellows Program
 - Public Library Association's Certified Public Library Administrator Program

What does this mean for LIS education?

- Some things can't be taught. They are learned through communities of practice.
 - Mentors can provide what education cannot, both during the program and after they take their first job.
- Collaboration is important!
- Emphasize mentoring, conferences and continuing education

What does this mean for librarians?

- The communities of practice OUTSIDE of the library might offer new ways of thinking.
 - Not everything needs to remain the same; communities of practice can enrich service to the communities.
- Knowledge management doesn't necessarily mean controlling the future—but it can prevent disaster.

Comments and Questions?

Thank you!