Janina Pupelienė
Director, Klaipeda University Library (Lithuania)

Changes in Organisational Structure of Academic Libraries

Организационная структура является важным инструментом прежде всего для самой организации и особенно для эфективного использования человеческих ресурсов. На этом докладе представлен краткий обзор основных направлений по которым развывается организационная структура академических библиотек во многих западных странах а также ситуация по этому вопросу в Литве.

Главный акцент на этом докладе делается на всеобщем выводе о непригодности традиционной иерархической структуры в современных условиях характеризуемых постоянными переменами в обществе а также в системе высшего образования. Многие менеджеры западных академических библиотек старается образовать на практике более гибкие организационные структуры, позволяющие быстро реагировать на перемены. Среди таких структур в докладе представлены матричные, проектные, командные и другие новаторские организационные структуры. В докладе представлены некоторые структурные перемены в пятнадцати государственных университетских библиотек Литвы.

Главные выводы в этом докладе обоснованы анализом литературы по общему и библиотечному менеджменту а также материалом двух опросов проведенных среди директоров Литовских академических библиотек в 2001 и 2004 годах.

Introduction

At the end of the 2001 I have asked my colleagues, directors of Lithuanian academic libraries to answer: "Are their libraries structure correspond the real situation in the libraries?" Nine of the answers from total twelve answered questionnaires have been negative. This year I have asked my colleagues to evaluate structural changes in their libraries during the last three years and asked all fourteen of my colleagues to answer: "Are you satisfied with your library structure?" This time I have got eight negative answers from total ten answered questionnaires.

What main reasons press academic library managers to change structure of their libraries?

What directions the foreign academic libraries are developing their structures? What situation is of Lithuanian academic libraries concerning their organizational structures?

The main aim of this presentation is to try to answer some of these questions. Most of the answers are based on analysis of general and library management literature and on material of two realised surveys among Lithuanian state university library managers.

Management theory on organizational structure (Jay Galbraith's view)

Organisational structure is an important management tool first of all for the organisation and efficient use of human resources in the organisation.

As the famous theoretic Jay Galbraith refers, the organizational structure determines where formal power and authority are located. It comprises the organizational components, their relationships and hierarchy. It channels the energy of organization and provides a "home" and identity for employees. The structure of organizations refers to the formal way in which people and work are grouped into defined units. Grouping activities and positions into organizational units establishes common focus by creating standard processes, access to information, and a common chain of authority. It allows for efficient use of organizational resources and provides employees with an identifiable "home" within the larger organization (Galbraith, 2001).

According to Galbraith, no one structure is best for every organization. The best structure is the one that helps organization to achieve its strategy. Choosing the right structure depends on the particular focus of the strategy, complexity of the business, and size of the organization. The objective in choosing a structure is to maximize as many of the strategic design criteria as possible, while minimizing negative impacts (Galbraith, 2001).

Some directions in development of library structure in foreign academic libraries

Most of the theoretic on library management (Cotta-Schönberg, 1998; Evans E.G., 2000; Martin L.A., 1996; Stueart R.D. & Moran B.B., 2002) indicate following traditional ways of structuring of library organizations:

1. Functional

2. Geographical (territorial)

3. Products (*or Services*)

4. Customer

5. Hybrid

6. Innovative (project, team, matrix, network and others)

Lowell A.Martin in his basic text on library structure points out that the predominant form of internal organization of academic libraries has been functional organization (Martin, 1996). Traditional functions as: acquisition, cataloguing, reference and circulation have been the background for organising academic libraries into the adequate functional departments. In various types and individual libraries the functional

structure has been supplemented to some extent by departments based on subjects, geography, forms of materials, language and etc. (Martell, 1983; Martin, 1996).

Academic libraries have traditionally been hierarchical organizations with three main divisions: technical services (or back services), public services and administration. Each division has been divided into sections organized by function or activity.

Academic libraries for a long time have been managed by the bureaucratic style. Bureaucratic organizations or bureaucracies are structured in the form of a pyramid with several levels, in which each employee has his or her own clearly-defined functions, rights and duties, and is accountable to an immediate superior. Bureaucratic organizations are criticising for the lack of relations with its environment.

The main criticism for bureaucratic structure is an inflexible hierarchy that inhibits the flow of innovative ideas and ignores informal groupings within the organizations. These negative characteristics of bureaucracy by some authors are described as undesirable for service-oriented organizations such as libraries even though they confirm that most libraries are still bureaucracies (Budu, 2002; Mullins, 2001; Olorunsula, 2000; Stueart &Moran, 2002).

Contemporary views of management have come to see organization as a social institution rather than a bureaucratic structure and it functioning as a group process and not a job-task hierarchy (Martin, 1996). Most of the library managers agree that traditional librarians have been dissatisfied with traditional structure what focuses on insufficient flexibility, too little external or client-centred orientation, too little staff empowerment, and specific problems with the management processes (Budu, 2002; Mullins, 2001).

Historically, the growth in the size of libraries and constantly changing environment was the main reason to adopt different organisational patterns. Especially strong impact on organizational changes of all types of libraries has an introduction of computers in their work. As the most recent impact some authors refer increase in students numbers and the diverse needs of them which place new demands on their libraries' administrative and operational structures (Budu, 2002).

During the last decades of the twentieth century there have been introduced several new organizational forms in the practice of world's academic libraries.

While it is generally agreed that there is no ideal library structure there is one popular message that traditional hierarchical structure is no more suitable for modern times and libraries should move towards flatter structures.

Apart from flatter structures, generally, the major themes of the US literature on the development of library structure are participatory management, empowerment and team structure (Cotta-Schönberg, 2000).

For libraries to become more customer-focused, some authors suggest to have more flexible organizational structures to allow library sectors to be more self-directed and more adaptable in responding to internal and external pressures. Libraries will require more effective communication mechanisms, new collaborations among staff at all levels

to stimulate creativity and risk taking, which should result in an increase in innovation and initiative (Mullins, 2001).

The high involvement of staff leads to a flat structure with few levels of management and where decisions are made with the involvement of staff. Some academic library managers accept the viewpoint that the strength of its transformed organization lies in empowering each individual.

Some authors introduced for libraries the temporary separate organizations such as project organization to maintain in academic libraries various innovative projects (Savenije, 1999). Introducing the process of changing traditional organizational model in his library (Utrecht University library in Netherlands) this manager described the main demands for a new organizational structure as: to be flexible; to provide a joint IT infrastructure for all library services of the university; to enhance a professionalism of the staff; to be a flat structure; to strengthen the relation with the distant user; to have innovative capacity (Savenije, 2002).

At the beginning of the twenty-first century knowledge begins to replace capital.

Management is challenged to create an organisational environment what can develop and exploit human expertise to cope with new and rapidly changing organisational context. The emphasis is doing on the high-involvement of staff. Participatively managed organizations maximise involvement of all employees and organizational effectiveness. Organizational transformation has now reached the stage where its human resources management has to be transformed.

How Lithuanian academic libraries are structured

Today higher education institutions of Lithuania are of two types: Universities and colleges - non-university higher education institutions (HEI). Now higher education is provided by 43 HEI: 15 state university level institutions and 15 state non-university HEI, also 4 non-state university level HEI and 9 non-state non-university level HEI. A total of 145 800 students studied in the 2002/2003 academic year in Lithuanian HEI (Lietuvos statistikos metraštis, 2003). According to Lithuanian Law on Education there have to be a library at every educational institution. So the community of academic libraries in Lithuania now is total of 43 academic libraries.

Some establishments of private high education institutions and reorganisation of previous institutions of middle education into colleges could be observed in Lithuania now. Because of continuing organisational transformations of colleges and its libraries it is difficult to make any conclusions about structure of these libraries now. This presentation describes situation only in 15 state university libraries.

In 2001 during the first survey on organizational changes in Lithuanian academic libraries was organized and fifteen library managers were questioned. They have been asked about any changes in their libraries during the last ten years from the restoration of Lithuanian independency in 1991. All respondents of twelve answered questionnaires have positively answered the question: "If any organizational changes could be observed in your library?" The mostly common reasons for changes have been indicated as: computerization of libraries (12 respondents), changes in universities (9 respondents),

financial changes (5 respondents). The most common structural changes in the questionnaire have been indicated as: merging of acquisition and cataloguing departments, growing number of staff in user service area. There were organized new departments with nontraditional title as "Information service department" in two of questioned libraries. There have been dominated IT specialists in the list of desirable positions. Most of managers indicated the lack of such titles in the list of possible positions. Nine of library managers have not been satisfied with their library structure (Pupeliene, 2002).

Our western colleague refers their libraries "riding on the crescent of a second computerization wave" The first wave took place in seventies and "turned manual back-room activities, such as acquiring, distribution and cataloguing into computer-controlled activities "(Savenije, 1999).

According this western colleague's words, Lithuanian academic libraries from 1998 are very fast riding with the first computerization wave. In parallel they are more and more involved into the second wave of computerization which changed traditional nature of library services making them blended with the teaching process and "blurred the borderline between the selection of knowledge and its organization"(Savenije, 1999). Lithuanian academic libraries are becoming main players in organizing and delivering of information literacy lessons, electronic publishing, access to remote electronic databases and other innovative initiatives in their universities.

During this very stressful time the total number of staff in all Lithuanian state university libraries has grown up very little: from 655 in 1998 to 663 in 2003. In the meantime total students number of these universities has grown up from 74 500 in 1998/1999 academic year to 119 600 in 2002/2003 academic year (Lietuvos statistikos metraštis, 2003).

According to data of Library Science Centre (Martynas Mazvydas National Library of Lithuania) at the end of 2003 there were total of 663 numbers of staff working in 15 state university libraries, with 585 of them - professional librarians. A total of 305 (52 %) of these positions are employed by high educated librarians and 164 (or 28 %) with diploma of other high education.

These fifteen academic libraries according their size (number of staff) could be divided into following groups:

- Group 1 (up to 10 employers) – 4 libraries,

- Group 2 (from 20 to 60 employers) – 8 libraries,

- Group 3 (from 60 to 190 employers) – 3 libraries.

This year another survey on organizational changes among Lithuanian academic libraries has been delivered. All fifteen Lithuanian academic library managers have been asked to describe structural changes in their libraries during the three last years since the first survey.

As most typical point for this survey eight from total ten respondents have stressed dependence of successful structural changes on appropriate number, qualification

and payment of staff. Most of respondents stressed the changed nature of librarian's work. Libraries lack of qualified staff with multiple skills what could perform flexible tasks in the library. Libraries, especially smaller one, need more universal librarians. This survey also shows continuing attention of libraries to improvement of user service structures. At the Vilnius Pedagogical University Library previous "Reference department" and "User service department" have been merged into one "User service and information provision department".

Two managers this time indicated the opening of new departments – "Library automation " department (Vilnius Pedagogical University Library) and "Rare books, collections and manuscripts" department (Klaipeda University Library).

Eight of managers have stressed importance of allocation of library space for the library structure. The lack of appropriate facilities, specially built for library purpose they mentioned as the biggest difficulty for reorganization of library to the modern one. No one from fifteen university libraries in Lithuania with exception of one reconstructed building for Vilnius Gediminas Technical University Library has its own building, specially built for the library.

In 2002 – 2003 the most wide structural changes were realized at the oldest and largest university library – Vilnius University Library. There have been liquidated "Department of faculty libraries" and all staff of these libraries have been included in the structure of faculties while some technological processes still left centralized. Because of these changes total number of professional librarians in this library has been shrunk from 166 in 2001 to 127 in 2003. There was reorganized "Periodicals department" in this library as well. In 2003 there were liquidated departmental sectors in this library. Director of this library is still dissatisfied of the structure of library. She would like to organize a new department for projects management and public relations. Director of Vilnius University library has mentioned good internal communication, loyal staff for changes as most important conditions for making changes in larger organizations.

According this survey, eight respondents from ten are not satisfied with their library structure. The most common difficulties making structural changes in their libraries managers indicated as: enough complicated procedure of changes – five respondents, insufficient level of qualification of staff – three respondents, lack of appropriate facilities – three respondents. Two of respondents expressed their concern about the misunderstanding of necessity of library changes by university administration.

Conclusion

One of the colleagues answer could be typical and expresses general opinion of Lithuanian academic library managers: "Library structure needs to be revised and changes from time to time. Otherwise, any structural changes have to be previous seriously analysed, discussed in the organization and strongly motivated".

Successfully operate in a constantly changing environment academic libraries have to be interested in efficient use of human resources in their organisations and constantly improve their organizational patterns.

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