

X-Change Minutes

Date: February 15, 2010

Location: Midwest City Library

Those in Attendance:

Ann Alliota, Lynda Bahr, Julie Ballou, Kay Bauman, Barbara Beasley, Kellie Bradford, Janet Brooks, Rosemary Czarski, Denyveta Davis, LaVetta Dent, Priscilla Doss, Tim Fisher, Kelley Hoffman, Chris Kennedy, Jack Kinzie, Lloyd Lovely, Candace McDaniel, Donna Morris, Dana Morrow, Todd Olberding, Michael Owens, Jamar Rahming, Pauline Rodriguez - Atkins, Anita Roesler, Diane Sarantakos, Stacy Schrank, Angela Thornton, Phil Tolbert, John Utley, Maria Watkins, Randy Wayland, Jimmy Welch, Fariba Williams, Patrick Williams, John Wood

Guests: Kevin Sendall, Beth Wilson, Evelyn Brown

Welcome

Kay Bauman called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm. Kay welcomed the supervisors to the Midwest City Library and X-Change meeting.

Budget

Lloyd presented an introduction to the MLS budget and sources of revenue.

Cultural Survey Update:

Kay shared the following summary of what has happened so far.

- In March 2009 at X-Change, Cathy McCullough presented the culture survey results. We discussed it in small groups and then were charged with sharing the information with those we supervise.
- In May 2009 at X-Change, we broke up into 5 groups where we each shared about the information we gathered when we had our individual staff meetings. Then we distilled all that information into three areas that would become our system-wide focus:
 1. Increasing staff appreciation
 2. Improving communication
 3. Being more receptive to changeX-Change members volunteered for 3 ad hoc groups that were to:
 1. Investigate root causes and action items
 2. Be liaisons to ensure two-way communication with staff system-wide
 3. Involve staff throughout their process of investigation
- In August 2009 at X-Change, each of the three groups again provided an update with their continued work. The group on being more receptive to

- change reported that a new committee was formed and they will be reporting later.
- During this February 2010 meeting, each of the three groups were to report and include the following information in their presentation:
 - Review the charge
 - Provide background on what the group has done
 - Describe how they gained input and involvement of all staff in order to represent a broad range of opinions and ideas.
 - Provide any suggested action items in as much detail as needed

Committee Presentations

Increasing Staff Appreciation

Stacy Schrank, Denyvetta Davis, Jamar Rahming, Pauline Rodriguez-Atkins, and Roy Ballou

The group met several times and decided they wanted to have an idea of what staff really meant by their original responses on the survey. The group had Stuart create another survey to measure the meaning of the original responses. The majority of the people that completed the second survey did feel appreciated. The system as a whole provides many ways for people to feel appreciated with benefits, a good wage, etc. But there is not a standardized system for supervisors to provide special recognition to staff. During the last X-Change meeting, the group charged supervisors to find ways to provide appreciation. This is not a simple process, because not everyone wants the same type of appreciation.

The charge: How do you teach people to show appreciation?

Every individual knows what they need to feel appreciated and it's something between an individual and their supervisor.

They solicited feedback on this from the three leadership classes and will share their findings at a later date.

The group provided some resources for supervisors on recognition:

- The supervisory series has a component of recognition
- There is a collection of cds in the lending library that has ideas for recognition.
- Metro U can add more classes on recognition as needed

Improving communication

Report attached

Being more receptive to change

Report attached

Ad Hoc Communication Committee

Report to X-Change Meeting 2.15.10

Review of Charge from X-Change Mtg, 5.18.09:

Weaknesses:

- People feel they are not involved in decision-making;
- Cooperation across different parts of organization not encouraged;
- Lack of/Too much communication;
- Communication;
- No internal free flow of information

Root Causes:

- Size of organization makes it more difficult to share information;
- Inadequate communication—explanations not always clear;
- Indirect communication—what's important?
- Disconnected feelings;
- Feeling more valued;
- Info overload;
- Isolation tendency among offices/agencies;
- Too many resources;
- Staff doesn't feel their input is valued;
- Staff feels lack of trust.

Action Items:

- 1) Look at other organizations that are geographically spread-out; how do they share information?
- 2) Automated suggestion box and a FAQ page for departments.
- 3) Investigate a streamlined way to report what teams are doing.
- 4) System-wide action/accountability list;
- 5) Ad hoc committees—gather input on issues;
- 6) More hands-on presence from administration at libraries;
- 7) More positive reinforcement for staff.

Background:

Committee had three meetings, we collected comments through communication@metrolibrary.org, we received 3 emails representing groups (two libraries and one office), and we discussed these comments, root causes, and brainstormed a bit on how to address the issues.

Several members for this group met with Brad Voss, one of the instructors from the Supervisor Skills training whose expertise is Effective Communication, about ways we could improve communication and we reported his suggestions to the group. His suggestions included offering effective communication workshops that were for employees, specific to our needs determined by what we told him, or he could do some observation and determine needs; he could be a consultant to advise us in ways to improve how we communicate, again determined by what we perceive from survey results or by what he observes; communication training supervisor specific. We asked for suggestions on other staff from around the system to join the committee, some individuals agreed, but later had conflicts and had to declined, and we had trouble getting together as a group for a while, but re-convened and wrapped up our discussion and recommendations.

Staff Involvement:

From our brainstorming and research from business/libraries similar in size and being geographically spread-out we developed our recommendations, which include how we hope for the system to gain input and involvement from a broad spectrum of staff from across our organization.

Groups suggested action items:

- 1) Formation of a standing committee (to be formed and function similar to the Tech Support group) to focus on communication issues. This group would research past system activity, synthesize and disseminate the information using a variety of technology methods, about activities of the library system (example our current changes to System Reserves). This would help new employees understand where we have been and how we arrived to actions now being taken. This group could also give status/progress reports periodically to help us keep track of our changes being made and where we are in processes.
- 2) We also recommend that this group find ways to help us use humor to communicate important, but sometimes forgotten information, such as appropriate ways to communicate positively to each other and to our external customers, using "communimericals" and comics/cartoons, etc.
- 3) Find ways for channeling information appropriately using the business model of communication which includes upward communication to administration, horizontal communication, peer-to-peer, and downward communication to staff.

Executive Summary

In September 2009, administration formed a new Change Committee, in response to the results of the Culture Survey, and tasked its members with finding ways to overcome the system's culture of change resistance. In order to achieve this goal, we first reviewed the results of the Culture Survey. Next, we analyzed feedback from across the system to help us interpret these results. Finally, we studied the business and organizational culture literature to find out how other companies have addressed change resistance in the past. Based on our literature review, we developed a plan to help the MLS embrace change. Many of our discussions were based on the book *Ideas Are Free: How the Idea Revolution is Liberating People and Transforming Organizations* by Alan G. Robinson and Dean M. Schroeder.

The majority of literature about change resistance covers strategies for helping employees adjust to changes implemented by management. While the problem of employee change resistance certainly exists at the MLS, as it does in all businesses, we believe it is a phenomenon best addressed by management. In addition, in reviewing the Culture Survey results and speaking to employees, we found that the responses to the Survey focused on management's resistance to change (not employees'), or at least on employees' perception that management is resistant to change.

How can we, as an organization, change our culture of change resistance? And, significantly, why do employees view the system as resisting change in the first place? Through an exhaustive review of survey results and our discussions with staff throughout the system, a strong picture of employee perceptions emerged. Many employees related instances in which they had suggested ideas for change, only to be ignored, put on hold or in some cases criticized. Although these incidents may have seemed trivial to supervisors, they made a major impact on the employees who had suggested the ideas. These employees feel they don't have a voice in the way things are run, their contributions are not valued, new ideas are unwanted and the work they do is unappreciated.

Taking these experiences and pairing them with the business literature, the committee concluded that creating a formal process for responding to employee ideas would be the most practical and beneficial way to address the MLS culture of change resistance. At its simplest, the proposed idea

system (which we are calling "That's a Great Idea!") is "a set of procedures [...] that ensures employee ideas are handled smoothly and fairly" (Robinson and Schroeder, 119). Having a formal idea system does not mean that every employee idea will be implemented, but it does ensure that employee ideas will be heard and that employees will begin to view the MLS as a dynamic system that welcomes employee contributions.

That's a Great Idea!

A proposal for reversing our culture of resistance to change

Change Is Everybody's Responsibility...

The Executive Director will encourage change by:

- inviting staff to submit their ideas for change
- requiring that management responds to ideas in a timely manner
- tracking actions taken to implement selected ideas
- rewarding successful ideas for change

Management will implement change by:

- promptly acknowledging ideas submitted to their libraries or departments
- providing a reason when an idea will not be implemented
- estimating when a good idea can be implemented
- giving praise when an idea is making a difference

Staff will embrace change by:

- examining daily routines and suggesting areas of possible improvement
- submitting ideas to help better serve our customers
- supporting new ideas that have been approved

This Is How We're Going to Do It...

***Ideas are encouraged and welcomed**

The Executive Director's initial invitation to submit new ideas will appear in a prominent location on the Intranet and in ShelfLife.

Managers will explain the new idea submission process, and they will encourage staff to submit ideas online.

***Submitting ideas is simple**

Staff will submit ideas via a user-friendly online form.

The form will appear as a permanent link on the Intranet.

***Evaluation of ideas is quick and effective and feedback is timely, constructive, and informative**

The sender will submit ideas to the appropriate department or person.

The form will have an auto-reply function notifying the sender when it has been opened.

Administration will be notified if the department or person receiving the idea does not respond within 30 days.

The sender will be notified whether or not the idea will be put into action or if more information is necessary.

If the idea is not selected, a thorough explanation will be provided.

***Implementation is rapid and smooth, and ideas are reviewed for additional potential**

Decisions should be made at the local level whenever possible to facilitate rapid and smooth implementation.

There will be an estimated timeline provided for the implementation of accepted ideas.

There will be a database of replicable ideas that can be accessed by all staff for potential use in other areas.

***People are recognized, and success is celebrated**

ShelfLife will feature an idea each month.

The top ideas (chosen by a committee) will be voted on at FOCUS, and the idea with the most votes will be announced at the Staff Recognition Dinner.

***Idea system performance is measured, reviewed, and improved**

Administration will review a summary from each department of actions taken on ideas submitted that quarter.

The committee will reconvene after six months to evaluate the effectiveness of the idea system in overcoming change resistance.

***Bolded headings are borrowed from Ideas are Free by Alan G. Robinson & Dean M. Schroeder**



After the presentations, the supervisors discussed the ideas that were shared. They determined that there were many overlapping points from the three groups and this information could be synthesized in some way. The Ad Team will determine what the next steps will be and will provide an update at the next X-Change on implementation.

Adjournment

After no further business the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.