

Satellite Meeting: Recruiting and Managing the New Generation of Employees to Attract New Markets and Create new Services

Date: 21 – 23 August 2019

Location: Pythagoreion, Samos Island, Greece

The Future of Personnel Development in Libraries: An Innovation- and Competence-Oriented Approach

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Abstract

Employees in libraries today have a wide range of opportunities to further their education, but numerous further training courses being booked and attended according to individual interests and less according to the strategic objectives of the library. This is confirmed by a survey commissioned in 2016 by the ZBIW – Center of Further Education and Training in Library and Information Science of TH Koeln. The result was clear: In more than 90% of the cases the initiative for further education came from the participants themselves. Superiors, personnel departments, etc. were rarely involved. Further training primarily serves the employees to expand their own competences and to be prepared for future challenges, i.e. there is also a certain concern about the future. In addition, one wants to learn new things so that one's own work remains interesting in the future.

Above all, however, continuing education must help libraries to remain competitive in the future. Innovation-oriented personnel development therefore considers both sides, the individual employee and, above all, the entire institution. This approach places the strategic goals of the institution in the foreground, and the necessary future core competencies of the employees must be oriented to these goals. This requires, however, that libraries have strategic management and, ideally, systematic innovation management, both of which are geared to the library's objectives and to the medium- and long-term (technological) trends that shape the innovations.

Personnel development includes all planned and targeted measures of training and further education as well as career management for the promotion and professional development of employees. What will be needed in the future will be above all people who, on the basis of their individual attitudes and abilities, show lasting innovative behavior. Constantly new innovations and ever shorter innovation cycles presuppose that employees master the correct handling of the unpredictable and have the ability to adapt existing knowledge to new situations. To this end, libraries must create a personnel and structural framework so that they can adapt permanently to changing requirements.

Keywords: personnel development, further education, library

1 Introduction

Employees in libraries today have a wide range of opportunities to further their education, but numerous further training courses being booked and attended according to individual interests and less according to the strategic objectives of the library. This is confirmed by the survey commissioned by the ZBIW in 2016. The result was clear: In more than 90% of the cases, the initiative for further education came from the participants themselves (Albers, Fühles-Ubach, Georgy 2016, p. 19). Supervisors, human resources departments, etc. played a leading role. Further training primarily serves the employees to expand their own competences and to be prepared for future challenges, i.e. there is also a certain concern about the future. In addition, librarians want to learn new things so that the own work remains interesting in the future (ebd.).

Above all, however, continuing education must help libraries to remain competitive in the future. Innovation-oriented personnel development therefore considers both sides, the individual employee and, above all, the entire institution. This approach emphasizes the strategic goals of the institution, so the necessary future core competencies of the employees must be oriented to these goals. This requires, however, that libraries engage in strategic management and, ideally, in a systematic innovation management, both of which are geared to the library's objectives and to the medium- and long-term (technological) trends that shape the innovations (ebd.).

2 Innovative capability of libraries

In the past, the management of innovations, especially in the service sector, was often reduced to knowledge management and the development of new services. However, a paradigm shift has taken place, which libraries also have to implement. Rather, it is now understood as “[...] a comprehensive integrative ability for systematic development and acquiring knowledge focused on value-added services and sustainable success in potential high-growth markets” (Gerybadze 2004, p. 21 f.). In this context, is also spoken “[...] of the competence for innovation, a dynamic ability to implement and bundle knowledge and technologies to new businesses and to increase enterprise value systematically” (ebd.). These definitions thus follow a holistic approach to innovation management: it determines the way of thinking and acting of the entire institution. Libraries can and must no longer understand innovation as a single action, innovation must take place always and everywhere and must be an integral part of all action. In order to produce innovations in a targeted manner and to be able to continuously maintain the organizational innovation capability, a selective reference to (technical) innovations and corresponding actions will no longer be sufficient in the future.

Therefore, it is necessary to create personnel and structural framework conditions systematically and integratively in the library so that they can be permanently adapted to changing requirements. This will require decision-making guidelines and framework conditions that are to be defined in such a way that all employees of an institution are given a framework within which they can move freely. (Goepel 2014, p. 59 ff.) It is a well-known fact that a large proportion of all good ideas arise outside working hours. Therefore it is no coincidence that more and more innovative companies are providing their employees with a defined percentage of working time for free project ideas and idea generation. This is working time that employees can manage and use themselves, e.g. for further training. Some companies reserve Monday or Friday for this, so it is often called as “Open Monday” or “Open Friday”. The telephony company Sipgate, for example, writes in its blog: “Open Friday? Every second Friday at Sipgate all employees can do what they think is most valuable for the company. In addition, on these days we organize an Open Space – an ad-hoc conference – to make the most of the day: We distribute knowledge, solve problems, collect ideas and have replaced a lot of meetings.” (Sipgate 2016) The principle of slacktime can be used in all industries. Libraries should also experiment with it, because it is also personnel development: slacktime as a form of further education.

3 Personnel development

Personnel development includes all planned and targeted measures of training and further education as well as career management for the promotion and professional development of employees (Holtbrügge 2015, p. 135.). Although about two thirds of the libraries have a training budget – regardless of the type of library – systematic personnel development obviously takes place in very few libraries (ZBIW 2016). This means that the basic (financial) prerequisites for systematic personnel development are available, but the opportunities and chances are used too little. However, libraries must be on the same level as their customers, because competitors of libraries set standards for customers, which they may also expect from libraries. But at least libraries have to react very quickly by creating their own innovative (alternative) offers. Only in this way they will remain a serious partner in the areas of information procurement, advice and competence. Lifelong learning should be a matter of course in libraries today, so that they can change into a learning organization, because only a learning organization is adaptable and able to actively shape its own future. Only with current skills the library can react appropriately and in time to changes and new external requirements. (Düren 2015, p. 17.)

4 Competence models and organizational culture

“Competence is defined as cognitive, emotional and motivational factors, their combination enables a person to cope with demanding and novel situations. An important advantage of the competence construct is that, unlike concepts such as knowledge, skills and qualifications, it describes a kind of ability that can be applied to a large number of situations and problems.” (Weinert 2001, p. 21 f.)

Exactly the application knowledge generates an above-average customer benefit, which is then perceived as such. Moreover, the competences generate a differentiation from the “competition” (produce competitive advantages). If these competences are further expanded and transferred to other fields, they also have a high relevance for future products and services. (Hamel, Prahalad 1995, p. 341.)

Therefore, in the future employees will be needed who are permanently innovative – due to their individual attitudes and abilities. Constantly new innovations and ever shorter innovation cycles presuppose that employees master the correct handling of the unpredictable and have the ability to adapt existing knowledge to new situations. Personality thus becomes the central success factor for the long-term success of innovation processes. This is not primarily a matter of mastering certain techniques, etc., but rather of meta-competencies, which must also be increasingly taught in further training courses. Isolated core competencies alone will no longer suffice in the future. They must be integrated into a corresponding organizational culture: “Which organizational culture is suitable for providing innovation-relevant conditions and resource combinations in the long term [...]?” (Schmitt, Strothmann, Goepel 2014, p. 269) The BMBF program “Working – Learning – Developing Competences. Innovation Capability in a Modern Working Environment” (DLR, DSF n.d.) defines the following subject areas:

- *Work process-integrated competence development for the economy of the future*
Development of individual work and innovation competences and their professional accompaniment and support.
- *Competence management for longer-term employability*
Digital technologies, modern learning formats, specific forms of learning, documentation and recognition of competences acquired in working life as well as potentials of (women, migrants).
- *Concepts for company-specific competence management*
Optimal fit between the demographic structure of the workforce, technological and organizational requirements, and use of skills. These also concern informal learning processes, customers and external business partners as well as social web communities, which can be used to gain competence and innovation.

The thematic focuses listed also make it clear once again that it is not enough to promote competencies related to individuals, but that the entire institution must be considered so that an innovative “corporate culture” can emerge at the same time.

If innovation is understood as the “result of collective action” and culture as an “area of social learning”, then innovation culture is of central importance for sustainable innovation capability (Schmidt, Strothmann, Goepel 2014, p. 269.). This insight is already being taken into account by large companies, however, the potential of an innovation-promoting corporate culture is still not being systematically exploited enough, especially by small and medium-sized enterprises (ebd.). Here, libraries are quite similar to small and medium-sized enterprises, as they have comparable structures in parts (Georgy 2016, p. 85 ff.). It is therefore important to develop competence models that have a long-term and lasting effect even for smaller institutions, also and especially taking into account the framework conditions of the public sector.

A competence model is characterized by the fact that criteria are defined by which an institution can achieve its strategic goals. The prerequisite is therefore strategic management with a clear long-term objective. The competence model should consider all employees of an institution and help to answer the following questions (DLR, DSF n.d.):

- Which competences already exist and are already sufficiently used?
- Which potentials are still underused?
- Which competences still need to be developed?

- Which competences are available and will no longer be needed in the future?
- Which synergies result from the existing and still to be developed competences in the institution?

A competency model must therefore be tailored to the individual needs of a single institution, but not to the individual (ebd.). In the public library Würzburg, for example, a working group drew up a list of competences that the library needs in terms of vision and goals. In addition, roles were defined and each role – not each employee – was assigned the appropriate knowledge. Then the skills were prioritized. This resulted in an individual personnel development plan for each individual, which was not shaped by the individual training wishes of individual employees but by the objectives of the library (Becker, Flicker 2012, p. 279.).

An alternative approach for innovation-oriented personnel development is the Competence-Customer-Value-Matrix, which is developed analogously to a Product-Market-Matrix according to Ansoff (for further information see also Schawel, Billing 2012, p. 22 ff.). In the matrix, customer value is plotted against competence strength (Hobohm 2012, p. 250):

- *Competence strength low – customer value low*
These are the competence standards. Improvements are not very urgent, if necessary the tasks can also be outsourced.
- *Competence strength low – customer value high*
The efforts in this area must be stepped up. Until the competences are available in the own institution, the tasks can be outsourced. In the medium to long term, however, the competences should be available in the own institution.
- *Competence strength high – customer value low*
This situation often occurs when employees have not been trained in time for new tasks / new skills required. Employees stick to old services for a long time and sometimes show exaggerated commitment.
- *Competence strength high – customer value high*
This is the ideal situation for any institution. They must continue to do good work and attract new staff to these areas.

Personnel must be allocated to the procurement market or procurement objects, especially in times of a shortage of skilled personnel: both are upstream of the sales market and the sales objects and are a prerequisite for a successful sales market. For this reason, it is also advisable to prepare a personnel portfolio analysis analogous to the product portfolio analysis, in which the “strategic relevance” is applied against the “availability of the key personnel” on the labor market: if the availability of (highly) relevant competences on the labor market is low and the strategic relevance high, institutions face a major problem because there is a shortage of qualified personnel. Private companies have the opportunity to enter into joint ventures, take over start-ups or other companies or at least reduce this problem by offering attractive salaries / working conditions (worklife balance). Libraries have very little of these opportunities. They have almost no other option than to systematically develop their own staff, and this must be done very quickly, otherwise the institution runs the risk of missing the boat.

5 Training needs and age structure

Many librarians see an increasing or at least constant need for further education and training in the coming years¹, which is mainly reasoned by:

- changes in the tasks of libraries in general,
- innovations in technology / IT,
- new tasks and/or specialization in your own working environment as well as
- the desire for lifelong learning or one's own claim to remain up to date with the current state of knowledge (ZBIW 2016).

When analyzing the continuing education courses attended and desired as part of the ZBIW study, it became apparent that the thematic focal points of continuing education in the field of libraries were predominantly oriented towards the current need, i.e. strongly towards everyday business, and hardly towards the future. The main topics in demand were/are cataloguing/RDA, IT and service- and user-oriented services. According to the 2016 survey, IT and management topics could move more into focus in the future. On the other hand, hardly any new topics were mentioned that were oriented towards the demands of an innovative library. (ebd.)

In addition to the changes resulting from new working conditions (work 4.0), new fields of work, etc., the age structure in the library must also be considered. Every library has to do that for itself. They are recommended to prepare a concrete age structure analysis, which is helpful to answer the following questions:

- In which areas of the [...] [library] is which personnel and age structure and which development can be foreseen?
- Which groups of employees and which functional areas [...] already have a larger proportion of older people? Where must the necessary need for qualifications be secured at an early stage?
- Which knowledge and experience carriers are about to retire, and when? In which areas or for which functions must a timely transfer of (experience) knowledge be ensured within the framework of succession planning? (Institut für angewandte Arbeitswissenschaft 2016, p. 1.)²

This analysis should be followed by an age structure forecast that extends over the next five to ten years in order to be able to derive from this the library-specific need for staff and other needs for action with regard to further training but also, for example, alternative working models. The ZBIW survey showed that people in the 50 plus age group rate their training needs significantly lower than people in other age groups. Thus, the motivation for further education/expansion of competence in this age group is significantly lower and the need for it is estimated to be lower. (Albers, Fühles-Ubach, Georgy 2016, p. 504.) In order to obtain a precise overview of how much continuing training each employee takes up, it is a good idea to record the number of training days per employee by age group in order to answer the question of how much continuing training decreases with increasing age in order to be able to take countermeasures here (Schirmer 2016, p. 31 f.). Today no institution can afford to stop

¹ This assessment is consistent with other surveys outside the library sector. See also TNS Infratest, Studiengemeinschaft Darmstadt 2016, p. 6.

² A tool for an age structure check can be found among others at:
<https://www.perwiss.de/altersstrukturcheck.html>

training staff in the sense of lifelong learning until they retire. While “lifelong learning” only covers the temporal dimension, “lifewide learning” deals with a spatial dimension: it comprises formal learning (institutionalized, structured and certified), non-formal learning (methodological, institution-independent and non-certified) and informal learning, which takes place in everyday life (Europäische Kommission 2001, p. 58.).

The aspects of profiting from the respective (complementary) competences, mutual acceptance and mutual appreciation of age-dependent potentials and changes, as well as a respectful and appreciative interaction with one another, must be fostered in organizations in order to be able to profit sustainably from the age diversity of one's own workforce.

“However, such a corporate culture cannot be bought like a new investment for a company [...], but rather it is necessary to integrate sensitivity and skills in dealing with demographic synergies step by step into personnel development within the framework of a sustainable, transformational innovation culture [...]”. (Wabro 2014, p. 77.) This must be done across the different levels:

- *Single persons*
The focus is on the functional interplay of the characteristics, abilities, motives, and understanding of these people.
- *Teams*
Success depends on how groups are formed, what working climate prevails within and between them, and how great the benefits are through synergies and diversity of perspectives.
- *Organization*
This includes the corporate culture as well as the framework conditions of the structural and procedural organization.
- *Products / Services*
The focus is on innovation with the introduction of new products, services and / or processes.
- *Externes*
Today, hardly any institution can do without integrating external parties into the innovation process (open innovation, crowdsourcing), e.g. customers, other stakeholders, in order to develop customer-oriented products and services and place them on the market. (Meier, Laux 2014, p. 137.)

Personnel development will only be successful if, in connection with the planned and implemented further training measures, framework conditions are developed that participants and the library benefit both equally.

Individual goals, resources, characteristics and needs must be taken into account when implementing (training) measures. This means that the individual characteristics and strengths of each employee must be taken into account. At the same time, however, the participants of the (training) measures must be willing to support changes and to help shape them. However, this is only possible if the participants are already brought “into action” within the measures. It should already be possible to apply what has been newly learned within the framework of continuing education so that it can be internalized beyond continuing education. And the library management must give the possibility to the employees of using the newfound knowledge in the daily working life as directly as possible, because only if new learned can be tested and profitably used, the possibility exists that the new behavior strengthens and

stabilizes. And only then will it contribute to a changed corporate culture. (Schmitt, Strothmann, Goepel 2014, p. 286 f.)

6 Conclusion and outlook

In the future, libraries will also have to devote more attention to systematic personnel development, which must be geared to the requirements of the future in the areas of forms of work and trends or innovations. The result could / should be a transformational culture of innovation that places high demands on both library management and staff. This includes an individual exchange of personal interests, goals and resources as well as mutual support and advice, possibly also in the form of mentoring or collegial coaching. On the other hand, a culture of error must be established that requires a certain tolerance for errors, but also proactive learning from mistakes. This is linked to an open approach to problems and mutual constructive feedback. However, a modern, agile form of business also expresses itself through the active participation of everyone in decisions, through questioning the familiar, combined with the courage to “contradict”, the demand for creative ideas and enquiries, but on the other hand also through the mutual gift of trust and confidence (ebd., p. 283.).

Libraries should and must face these challenges if they are to remain competitive and attractive for the labor market in the future. How big the problem of personnel recruiting is at present is shown by the fact that BID has set up a working group for personnel recruitment, e.g. in order to “convey a realistic and attractive job profile” (Interview Lorenzen 2018).

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