



# Library workforce in a changing environment: from threats to challenges

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# Subjects to be covered

- Maastricht University and its Library
- Changing library environment
- Threats .....and challenges: library strategy
- Organizational development
- Human resource management: new skills and competences
- Competence management
- Result- and customer-orientation; library as a business unit
- Lessons learned



# Maastricht University

- Founded in 1976: youngest Dutch University
- Started life as the 8<sup>th</sup> Medical Faculty
- Problem based learning as ‘trade mark’
- Rapid growth to 12,000 students (many from abroad) and 3,000 staff
- Two sites: old city and new Randwijck campus
- Randwijck campus: Faculties of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences, Psychology; plus Teaching Hospital, University of Midwifery





# University Library

- Incorporates learning resource centre (‘studielandchap’) per faculty to support PBL
- Concentration of facilities: two sites (one on each campus)
- Library, studielandchap and (more recently) computer rooms “under one roof”
- Matrix organisation of departments and faculty librarians
- Funding almost entirely from faculties and other customers, on the basis of service contracts





# Changing library environment (1)

- Demise of paper journals
- E-journals .....and e-mail
- Empowerment of the work place
- (Latest) Information ‘on the spot’
- Researchers and health specialists less inclined to visit the library
- Library services must be at the researchers workbench, and in the clinic



# Changing library environment (2)

- E-journals, e-mail and e-learning: what about the students?
- Laptops, work at home
- Internet and Google: the library under threat
- The library as the students workplace?
- Digital learning environments (Blackboard, etc.)
- Facilitating the student off the campus? The student workbench





# Library strategy (1)

- Library Strategy as integral part of the University's Strategic plan
- Concrete goals in for library's diverse roles:
  - Digital library
  - Traditional library
  - Teaching library
  - Business unit
  - Policy maker





## Library strategy (2)

- Digital library development as spearhead:
  - Library services anywhere, any place
  - New digital library services, for old *and new* customers
  - Library at and *in* the workbench
- Traditional library: develop as “study centre”, as inspiring learning environment
- Teaching library: digital libraries call for more information skills
- Business unit: more output required for less money





# Library strategy (3)

- The library's (new) role as policy maker
- Aims reflect the integration of the library's role in the primary processes of research and education and include:
  - Improvement of study facilities, campus-wide and beyond
  - Further development of the digital research and study environment
  - Research output in the University's digital repository
  - Provision of information services to strategic partners (particularly in the field of health sciences)



# Millennium (2000) problem: libraries at the cross roads

- Make or break; book musea or content managers; buildings or service providers; institutions or business units?
- Low staff turnover; “once a librarian, always a librarian”; traditional values
- Staff with inherent service skills; but need for new skills as well
- Budgetary restraints in education, research and health care; more money for primary processes, less for services?
- Need to rethink, need to refocus





# Changes at Maastricht

- Reorganization of the library (fundament)
- New tasks with new competences
- Assessment as part of selection process
- Result-oriented approach to work
- Quality management and planning cycle
- Processes and products: service level agreements



# Reorganization of the library

- Main aims of reorganization:
  - Professionalizing customer relations: full-time customer librarians with newly defined skills
  - Accent on digital library services: *site-independent* organization, uniform processes
  - Less hierarchy, more focus on work processes and responsibility for such
  - Result-oriented, efficient, and innovative organisation



# Human resource management

- Low turnover of staff: ‘once a librarian, always a librarian’
- Need for new skills and new functions!
- Hence:
  - Invest in personal development and training (most library staff are prepared and equipped to pick up new tasks)
  - Where possible: create vacancies for new functions
  - Define required competences: and let candidates (internal and external) be assessed with regard to these competences
- Managers with coaching capabilities



# Competence management

- Define key competences for all functions
- Both generic competences (3) and job-specific competences (max. 7)
- Generic: result-oriented; customer-oriented, team worker
- Specific: for all functions, including management, on basis of recognized national systems
- Competences as:
  - Basis for assessments for new job vacancies
  - Basis for personal development plans for all staff members



# Result-oriented organization

- Intensive training for all staff (from top to bottom)
- Generic set of terms and values
- Some important features:
  - clear (‘SMART’) goals per department, per group, per individual
  - periodic feedback and readjustment
  - businesslike meetings: clear goals, good preparation, explicit agreement on actions to be taken, ‘live’ appraisal of decision-making process
  - description of the required library *culture* (“what can I expect from my colleagues, and what they can expect from me”)



# Customer orientation

- Funding by main library customers, on the basis of service contracts and service level agreements
- Specialized full-time customer librarians (one for the health science sector)
- Awareness for new needs, new service opportunities and new customers
- Regular consultation: with (faculty, hospital) management, library committees, student panels, etc.





# Innovation

- Customer orientation as ‘motor’ for product innovation
- Process groups as ‘motor’ for process innovation
- Strategic targets and their translation into concrete goals
- Project managers and project organization
- Budget for project innovation (both internal and external funding)



# The library as business unit

- Library as independent business unit
- Annual plans and planning cycles (PDCA)
- For customer librarians, departments, process groups, individuals
- Balanced score cards and quality management (EFQM)
- Strategic and financial targets



# Lessons learned

- Libraries must react to change: threats -> challenges!
- Personnel as capital, as vital ‘ingredient’: inherently conservative but dedicated and talented
- Modify/update the organization and help personnel to develop skills; look for new talent where possible
- Define new tasks and competences: ‘the right person for the right job’
- SMART targets and clear responsibilities



## Lessons learned (2)

- Customer orientation: look for partnership with researchers, specialists, etc.
- Look to innovate, to exploit new possibilities
- Focus on concrete goals and clear responsibilities
- Empower and utilize staff
- Create sound financial base and awareness of cost-benefit
- Develop the library as a professional service organization
- *New millennium: renaissance of libraries*

