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Putting Together the Pieces @ Your Library: Your Library is More than the Sum of its Departments

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Your Library is More than the Sum of its Departments

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"And it came to pass that when Kutta the Book God made the first Library she saw that it was good. She called the librarians together and divided them as a herder divides the sheep and goats. To the first group she spoke, saying, 'You shall dwell in the light and serve the readers and your glory shall be great.' Then she turned to the second group and spoke, saying, 'You shall dwell in the darkness. Secret shall be your ways, and hidden your practices. You shall not know the public, neither shall any reader know you. Go forth and classify.' "

S.R. Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science

1. Books are for use.

2. Every reader his or her book.

3. Every book its reader.

4. Save the time of the reader.

5. The library is a growing organism.

A *little historical perspective . . .*

"In the 1940s, university library departments were divided by subjects, and librarians typically served dual functions (reference and technical services) within a certain subject or discipline. This type of organizational model began to fade with advancements in automation, as librarians found new ways to specialize as those who organized information (i.e., catalogers) and those who retrieved information (i.e., reference librarians)."

M. Nathalie Hristov.
"Trends, Issues and Practical Solutions for Cross Training Catalogers to Provide Reference Services: A Survey-Based Study."
Technical Services Quarterly, vol. 23, no. 1 (2005), p. 35-51.

Communication Tools

- E-mail
- Bulletin Boards
- Staff Newsletters
- Staff Forums and Meetings
- Wikis
- Blogs
- Good, old-fashioned face-to-face conversation

Don't forget the positive power of praise!
Kudos and thank-you's improve morale, and good morale can improve communication by making everyone more willing to listen to each other.

Image source: I Can Has Cheezburger?
(http://www.icanhascheezburger.com)
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Three Types of Cross-Training

- Positional Clarification – Telling

- Positional Modeling – Showing

- Positional Rotation – Doing

Elizabeth Blickensderfer, JanisA. Cannon-Bowers, and Eduardo Salas.
"Cross-Training and Team Performance."
Making Decisions Under Stress: Implications for Individual and Team Training.
Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 1998. Pg. 299-311.

The Pearl

Team Performance

Coordination
And Backup Processes

Shared
Mental Models
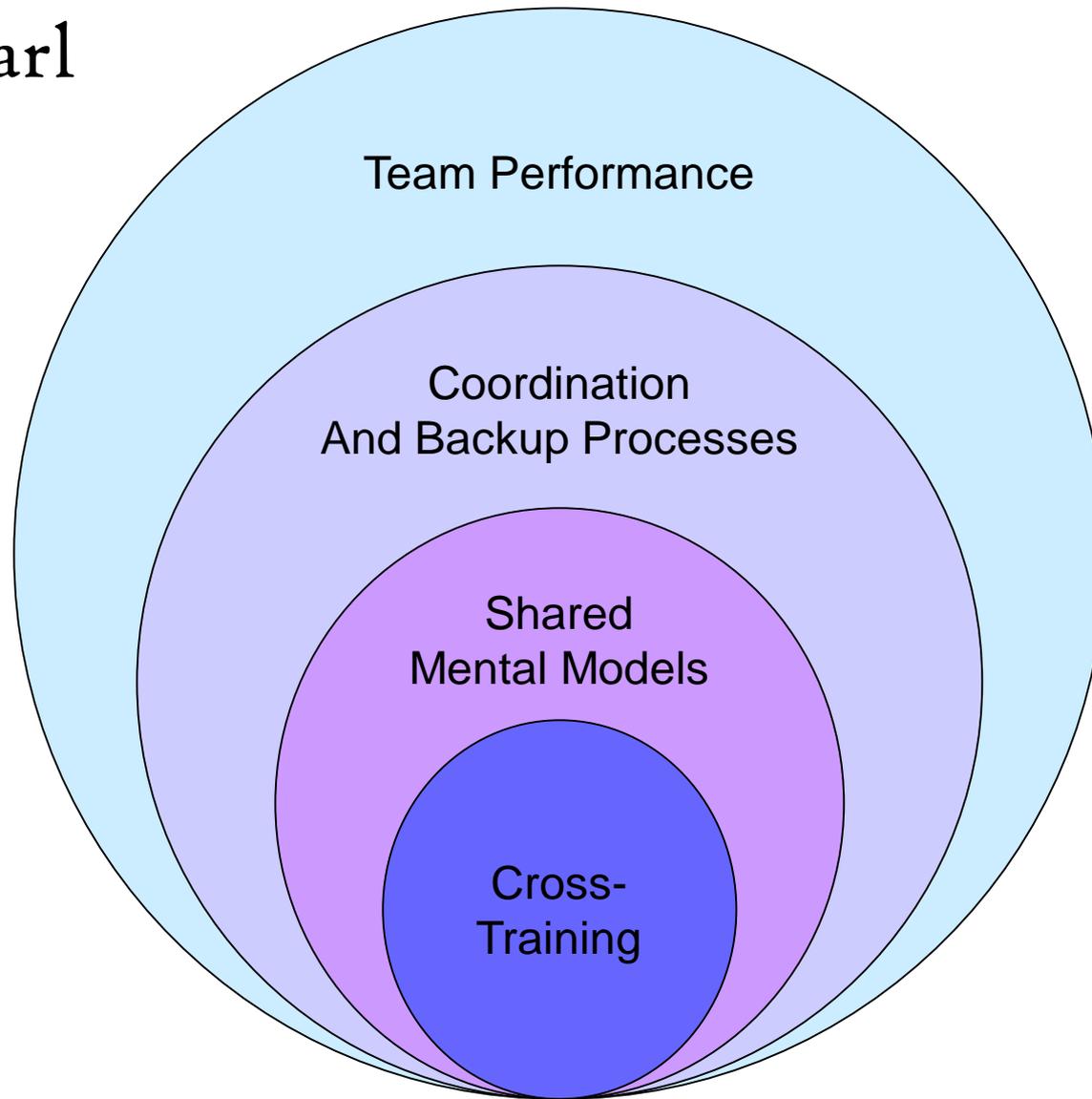
Cross-
Training

Adapted from Michelle A. Marks, et al.
"The Impact of Cross-Training on Team Effectiveness."
Journal of Applied Psychology, vol. 87, No. 1 (2002), p. 3-13.

"When [library employees] do not fully understand the decision-making process of a librarian from another department, they may question the validity of his/her decisions or of implied library policies . . . . Within this milieu of fragmentation, the library's ultimate goal—providing the patron with the best possible service—can be hidden. McCombs postulates that interdepartmental cooperation and the understanding of each other's departmental functions are the keys to actualizing the library's higher goal."

Eleanor Gossen, et al.
"Forging New Communication Links in an Academic Library: A Cross-Training Experiment."
The Journal of Academic Librarianship. Vol. 16, no. 1, 1990, p. 18-21.

Gillian McCombs.
"Public and Technical Services: The Hidden Dialectic."
RQ. Vol. 28, Winter 1998, p. 141-145.

"[W]hile over two-thirds [of surveyed university libraries] used nonprofessionals at the reference desk, 80% provided no formal in-service training."

Thus, the trend toward the "professionalization of the paraprofessional staff" has a dark side, in that "training of paraprofessionals has not kept pace with the use of paraprofessionals."

Frada Mozenter, Bridgette T. Sanders, and Carol Bellamy.
"Perspectives on Cross-Training Public Service Staff in the Electronic Age: I Have to Learn to Do What?!"
The Journal of Academic Librarianship. Nov. 2003. Vol. 29, no. 6, p. 399-404.

"[A]s interdependencies increase, tasks also increase in general complexity. This makes it neither impossible nor desirable to provide full cross-training. . . . We suggest highlighting duties that demand the greatest degree of cooperation and high interdependence among teammates."

Elizabeth Blickensderfer, JanisA. Cannon-Bowers, and Eduardo Salas.
"Cross-Training and Team Performance."
Making Decisions Under Stress: Implications for Individual and Team Training.
Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 1998. Pg. 299-311.

At the University of Auburn Libraries, Alabama, "reference librarians were often baffled about to whom they should report certain kinds of problems, especially those involving databases and electronic journals."

When a problem doesn't get reported, it doesn't get solved.

Antonia Olivas and Henry McCurley.
"Working across Divisional Lines: How One Large University Library Cross-Trains and Works as a Whole."
Library Administration & Management. Spring 2006; 20, 2, p.81-84, 89.

Contacts for Assistance

View Edit Attachments (0) Info

Added by Angela Kroeger , last edited by Angela Kroeger on Sep 11, 2007 (view change)
Labels: contacts EDIT

Who Do I Talk to If . . . ?

The **OPAC** is acting strangely? KAREN HEIN (4-2144)

Bibliographic information in a **serial record** is incorrect or unclear? KELLY WALKER (4-2984) How To Tell If It's a Serial? It has a "LIB HAS" field.

Bibliographic information in a **monograph record** is incorrect or unclear? SUSAN SIEVERS (4-3203)

Bibliographic information in a **federal/state document record** is incorrect or unclear? JIM SHAW (4-2225)

Bibliographic information in an **Afghanistan collection record** is incorrect or unclear? SHAISTA WAHAB (4-2404) or CATHY HAMILTON (4-3203)

Patron wants to view the **Afghanistan Collection**? SHAISTA WAHAB (4-2404)

Want to know when an item will be back from **bindery**? KELLY WALKER (4-2984)

Found a book or periodical that needs to be **rebound/repaired**? KELLY WALKER (4-2984)

LIB HAS statement is incorrect? KELLY WALKER (4-2984)

Found a **blind reference** in the catalog (link says "see" or "see also", but nothing's there)? ANGELA KROEGER (4-3203)

Patron wants item with status of **"In Cataloging"**? ANGELA KROEGER (4-3203)

Patron wants item with status of **"In Prep"**? KELLY WALKER (4-2984)

Patron wants item with status of **"Mending"**? KELLY WALKER (4-2984)

Patron wants information about his or her **thesis**? KELLY WALKER (4-2984)

Couldn't find a **periodical** or **serial** by the title you thought would work? JANICE BOYER (4-3204)

A **thesis** is turned in at Circulation without a Deposit of Thesis Form? KELLY WALKER (4-2984)

A **URL** in a record doesn't work? JIM SHAW (4-2225)

Questions about **OCLC Authorizations**? JAN BOYER (4-3204)

Screen shot of my library's internal wiki.

" 'Library assistants can't do that!' . . . has become something I hear so often I feel like Cinderella when she asked to go to the ball and was told that only princesses were allowed."

Marianne Reynolds.
"Only Princesses are Allowed at the Ball! Removing Limitations Placed Upon Paraprofessionals."
Library Mosaics, Nov./Dec. 2003, p. 18-19.

Tips for Using Strategic Planning Meetings to Foster Communication

(A secondary effect of the planning process which could have lasting, positive effects librarywide.)

- Get people away from their work areas.
- Mix them up with others from different departments.
- Give them an interactive activity that makes them talk and think together.

I don't have a slide to go with restructuring, so please enjoy this moment of Zen.

Radhošt', Czech Republic, October 2005.

"We email what we've done on a computer problem, someone else searches a different way on the Internet, someone else sees the step we missed, someone else remembers that happened before and we did this. Then we document and can find the answer in our 'notes' for the next time. Everyone doesn't have all of the answers, but together we can find them."

Janet Greser, our own Para section web guru and *Keynote* editor, in a private e-mail, Feb. 15, 2008.

Pieces of the
Cross-Departmental Puzzle

- Open conversation with people from other departments

- Formal, library-wide communication

- Cross-training

Your Library is More than the Sum of its Departments

"To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others."

Anthony Robbins

"Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."

Henry Ford

"No one can whistle a symphony. It takes an orchestra to play it."

H.E. Luccock

"The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place."

George Bernard Shaw

"The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn't being said."

Peter F. Drucker

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Presentation notes, PowerPoint slides, and
    bibliography available upon request.