



Evidence-based Practice: A revolution in library project management

Carol Perryman, TRLN Fellow, PhD Student, School of Information & Library Science, UNC - Chapel Hill, Durham, NC; Patricia L. Thibodeau, AHIP, Associate Dean for Library Services and Archives, Medical Center Library, Duke University, Durham, NC.



Objective:

Health sciences libraries face increasingly complex issues and projects, but planning templates derived from the business world have not always been successfully integrated in library settings. Evidence-based library practices enable libraries to take a fresh look at the planning process. Our objective was to devise a scaleable project planning template for Duke University Medical Center Library which encourages the use of evidence-based methods.



Methods:

Existing project management tools were reviewed, followed by a survey of the library and general business project management literature. This process helped to identify a set of 'common denominator' processes used in project planning, which became the baseline coding set for documentary analysis of two prior and one current library projects. Information needs expressed in task force minutes, emails, and other documentation created during the planning phase were identified, along with the sources consulted in finding answers. Findings were verified by means of retrospective, open-ended interviews with planning task force members, and by participant observation in the current project. A particular focus was the use and evaluation of decision support resources and methods by task force participants. This research forms the basis for the formation of a new template for project management.



Results:

Results of library project analysis revealed that while staff are actively engaged in creative and purposeful research, the current project planning structure led to the following problems: use of external information including published literature was equally limited; project documentation did not encourage follow-up evaluation or dissemination; and reconstruction of projects was difficult due to insufficient documentation and human memory instability. A staff planning retreat underscored the need for a formal planning structure including teamwork guidelines and a project template.

A new project template has been implemented which includes key elements of evidence-based practice along with core components of traditional planning. Elements include searching for evidence to answer important questions; evaluation of existing documentation for relevance and usefulness using an included checklist; and dissemination and benchmarking planning built into the process. The template will be further tested with work groups in practice.



Evaluation of Data Checklist

Please consider the following questions:

1. How comparable is the setting to your own?
2. How reliable is the source of this data?
3. If the data was collected in response to a survey:
 - What was the response rate, and how representative was it of the overall population being studied?
 - Are the results complete and have they been analyzed in an easily interpretable way?
 - What attempts have been made to ensure reliability of responses?
4. Can the results be applied to the local population or setting?
5. What are the implications of the data for this project?
 - In terms of current services?
 - In terms of cost?
 - In terms of the expectations or attitudes of stakeholders?

Evidence-Based Information Practice SPICE -- Forming the Well-Built Question

- ★ **S**etting – in which context are you addressing the question?
- ★ **P**erspective – who are the users/potential users of the service? Who are the stakeholders?
- ★ **I**ntervention – what is being done to/for them?
- ★ **C**omparison -- what are the alternatives?
- ★ **E**valuation – how will you measure whether the intervention is successful?

Evidence-Based Process

- ★ Define the problem
- ★ Find evidence
- ★ Appraise evidence
- ★ Apply the results of the appraisal
- ★ Evaluate change
- ★ Redefine the problem

[Booth & Brice, *Evidence-based practice for information professionals: a handbook*. Facet, 2004.]

Contact information:

Carol Perryman email: cp1757@gmail.com

Pat Thibodeau email: patricia.thibodeau@duke.edu

Poster and handouts available at: <http://www.mclibrary.duke.edu/about/presentations.html>