



Introduction to Technical Services

EIGHTH EDITION

G. Edward Evans, Sheila S. Intner, and Jean Weihs



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Introduction to Technical Services

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Sheila S. Intner,
and Jean Weihs

Library and Information Science Text Series



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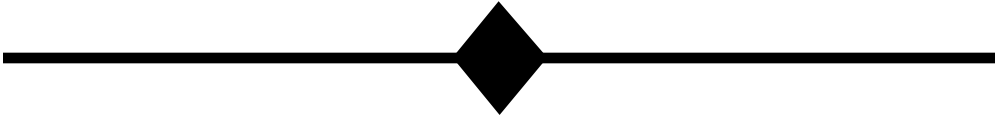
Preface to the Eighth Edition

The first edition of this book was written in 1970 and had a length of 175 printed pages. This edition is 500 printed pages and reflects the dramatic changes that have transformed technical services over the past 40-plus years. The whats, hows, and wheres related to technical service activities bear only the broadest correlation with the activities of the 1970s.

This edition further emphasizes the rapidly changing environment in which technical services are conducted. There are several new chapters: chapter 4, “Technical Service Issues,” includes material related to physical space needs; chapter 8, “E-Resource Issues,” examines how the growth of e-materials affects technical service work; chapter 19, “Copy Cataloging,” reflects the ever-increasing need to be more efficient and to save limited funds for technical service activities; chapter 13, “Overview and Decisions,” addresses the issue of why and how the local OPAC has become a gateway to the universe of knowledge; and finally, chapter 20, “Processing Materials,” covers the activities involved in making sure the items that go into a library’s collection are properly identified as belonging to the library and determining where the item is physically located in the collection. All of the other chapters have been extensively rewritten and updated to reflect 2010 technical service functions and activities.

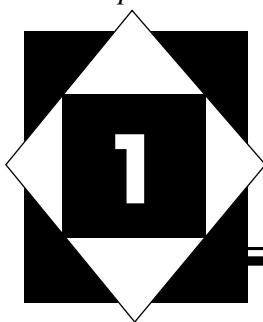
We also thank Jay Lucker for providing an excellent section in chapter 4 on planning physical spaces for technical services.

Part I



General Background

Chapter



Introduction

Because technical services are usually not purchased by end-users, their value for money (or benefit-cost ratio) cannot be directly measured.

—Philip Hider, 2008

Given this daunting but exciting set of circumstances, there is a future for technical services, but it may take on other names (access management and digital and Internet services are two examples).

—Vera Fessler, 2007

Introduction to Library Technical Services, Eighth Edition, may be the last edition with that title, assuming that Vera Fessler's assessment of the future of technical services is accurate.¹ The chapter epigraphs suggest that in the 21st century there will be major changes in what librarians have been calling technical services. We, the authors, both agree and disagree with Fessler's view. In the broadest sense of information service, the traditional functions—acquisitions and cataloging/indexing—will remain but will probably have new names. The fact that technology is causing significant changes in how libraries deliver their services and what they offer does not fundamentally change the goals of the basic functions. What and how we will perform technical service activities in the future certainly will look very different compared with today. Those differences may be even more profound than how things were done when the first edition of this book appeared in 1970, and technology was a mainframe computer. The basic functions and their labels have remained constant for more than 40 years. Who really knows what changes lie ahead over even the next 10 years?

Some individuals may doubt the viability of libraries in general, not just technical services. Certainly, the popular press makes it appear as if anything worth having

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access to is freely available on the Web. There is no question that there is an enormous volume of material on the Web; a simple Google search usually returns tens of thousands of hits. A question that is rarely addressed in the press is, “how do you sort out the useful from the totally worthless?” Librarians and teachers understand that many, if not most, young people seek information in a very different way than in the past. What libraries have been, and still are, good at is assessing, acquiring, and organizing important useful information and helping end-users gain access to that information. Essentially, libraries add value to information materials through the basic functions they perform. Much of that value added arises from the activities that we cover in this book—technical services.

Libraries have a long history—almost 5,000 years—of not only providing society with access to information but also being able to adapt to changing technology. That adaptability will likely continue well into the future. Several years ago Ann Okerson wrote about what she considered to be eight “eternal verities” about library collections and services that are still valid today and that will continue to remain so well into the future:²

1. Content is selectable.
2. Content is collectable.
3. Libraries retain information for the long term.
4. Collections grow and require some type of space.
5. Long-term retention requires preservation of some type.
6. Libraries expect to be around for a very long time.
7. Libraries exist to meet users’ information needs.
8. Today’s information is worldwide and so are libraries to help ensure the worldwide preservation of information/knowledge.

We share these beliefs as her points are not tied to the form or manner of performing an activity.

The epigraph from Philip Hider indicates that placing a direct monetary value on technical services activities is very difficult. However, libraries have been making an effort to demonstrate what their return on investment is to those who fund their operations. One such study, from late 2006, reported that a group of public libraries gave evidence that they provide a 4 to 1 return on investment to their service communities.³ That is to say, the libraries created an annual economic impact on the community that was four times greater than the amount the communities invested in library services. Almost any investor would be pleased with that level of return and would continue to invest in the service. In his conclusion about his survey of a public library in New South Wales, Australia, Hider wrote:

Results from the CV survey indicated that Wagga Wagga City Library provides good value for money, and that its technical services provide especially good value. Given that the library is often visited for its collections (particularly its physical collection), the importance of the technical services operations might come as a great surprise, but the extent to which these operations add value to the collection, making it worth much more than if it comprised a randomly purchased and randomly arranged set of items, is worth emphasizing.⁴

LIBRARIES AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

We don't argue that libraries are a societal good whose value goes far beyond any measure that can be derived by cost analysis or return on investment. However, it is also true that libraries are under enormous pressures to demonstrate evidence of accountability. As Weingand states,

Librarians who flinch at the word *customer* are operating out of an outmoded paradigm. This older paradigm portrays the library as a "public good" with as high a ranking on the "goodness" scale as the national flag, parenthood, and apple pie. As a public good, the library "should" receive public support. However, today's library is in increasingly tight competition for declining resources, and unless it adopts and masters the language and techniques of its competitors, it faces a future of declining support and significance.⁵

In their "Top Ten Assumptions for the Future of Academic Libraries and Librarians," the Association of College and Research Libraries Research Committee listed as number seven, "As part of the 'business of higher education,' students will increasingly view themselves as 'customers' of the academic library and will demand high-quality facilities, resources, and services attuned to their needs and concerns."⁶ Another rationale, from a public-library perspective, is provided by Walters when she states that "good service will result in customers voting for bond elections, contributing private dollars, and volunteering to support libraries. Poor service will result in lost elections and lost funding. It is as simple as that. Good customer service pays."⁷

CUSTOMER SERVICE PHILOSOPHY

As noted earlier, attracting and retaining customers through programs specifically designed to produce loyalty to an organization's product or service became a popular marketing trend in the 1980s. Every organization needs repeat customers to survive, and libraries are no exception. However, customers tend to remain loyal only as long as they are satisfied with the quality of the service or product provided. If these do not measure up or keep pace with changing customer preferences or needs, then repeat use cannot be ensured. As Jurewicz and Cutler observed, "We have seen it in our own lives that as customer habits have changed, savvy businesses have changed their service strategies in an attempt to anticipate customer needs. . . . Too busy to go to the mall? Buy from a catalog online and we'll send it to your door. Need to know when to update your online auction bid? Sign up for our service and we'll notify you. Want to know where your package is? Check our website and we'll track it for you."⁸

Some people, both inside and outside the library profession, seem to believe only public service personnel need to think about customer service and its quality. Nothing could be further from the truth. Service quality begins in technical services.

This is as good a place as any to insert a word or two about words referring to the individuals who access libraries and their services. Words such as *patron*, *client*, *user*, and *customer* appear in library literature as references to such people. The labels have even generated a modicum of heat among the people who use one of the variations.

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“Patron” is one of the longest-standing terms; however, some people think that label is demeaning to libraries and their staffs. (One can view patronage as suggesting that something cannot exist on its own and requires a special person[s] to underwrite its existence). “Customer,” although it is in many ways the most appropriate term—as in “customer service”—is viewed by some in the field as too profit-oriented or commercial to use for a public service/good like a library. “Client” also carries a stigma of commercialism for some—lawyers or brokers have clients, not a library. “User,” for a few people, suggests a person with some bad habits. So, where does this leave us? Based on our years of library and archival experience, we believe either “customer” or “user” best reflects what library services are all about. After some debate, we have elected to employ “user” in this work to refer to the people who come to the library, or access online, library services.

ROLE OF LIBRARY SERVICES

Libraries have a long history of adapting to change, and one of the keys to their longevity has been their focus on service to the primary and secondary user community. We are not suggesting that today’s service philosophy—equal service to all primary users—has been in place all that long. Just as the contents of libraries have changed over time, so has the service philosophy evolved.

For the vast majority of their history, libraries served a very small segment of the people in their societies. The earliest libraries catered to government officers and religious leaders and essentially contained administrative materials (one can imagine how many clay tablets—rarely with more than a few square inches of writing surface—one would need for even a short poem). During the time scrolls were the dominant information technology, the topical range of materials increased (in addition to government data, there were plays, histories, and so on within libraries), as did the number of persons who could read and were given access to libraries. However, that number was still only a small percentage of the total population. The Dark Ages and Middle Ages brought about a narrowing of access—very few people could read, including royalty. Also, books (called a codex)—the new “technology” of the time—were literally chained down in libraries because of their value, both because of their content and because of the cost of producing a handwritten book. Most of the books produced during this time were religious in character. With the arrival of movable type and the printing press, information materials began the explosion that continues to this day.

To understand the importance of excellent library service, you need only go back to the work of S.R. Ranganathan (an Indian scholar/mathematician/librarian) who played a leading role in developing modern librarianship in India. His *Five Laws of Library Science* was, and still is, the most succinct statement about what to consider when creating a collection or service that truly serves the end-user: books are for use, every reader his book, every book its reader, save the reader’s time, and a library is a growing organism.⁹ These laws have a very clear customer focus and are essential to providing economical services. Since its first publication, time and time again Ranganathan’s basic concepts have proven their viability and their applicability to varying areas of the field.

WHAT ARE TECHNICAL SERVICES?

Technical services traditionally handled those tasks associated with bringing materials into the library and making them ready for the general public or service population to use. Public services managed those activities that directly assisted the end-user in gaining access to information in the library's collection as well as from other collections. Later in this chapter we discuss how that pattern is changing. Although the structure is evolving, libraries still need to acquire materials in some manner for the end-user and process the items, be they paper or electronic.

All libraries, regardless of type, perform nine basic functions to carry out their information transfer activities:

1. *Identification*: Locating potentially worthwhile items to add to the collection(s).
2. *Selection*: Deciding which of the identified items to add to the collection(s).
3. *Acquisitions*: Securing the items selected for the collection(s).
4. *Organization*: Indexing and cataloging the items acquired in a manner that will help the end-user locate materials in the collection(s).
5. *Preparation*: Labeling and otherwise making the items ready for storage in a manner that allows for easy retrieval.
6. *Storage*: Housing the prepared items in units that take into consideration the long-term preservation of the items while allowing staff and end-users easy access to the material.
7. *Interpretation*: Helping end-users locate appropriate materials that meet the users' needs.
8. *Utilization*: Providing equipment and space to allow staff and end-users to make effective use of the items in the collection(s).
9. *Dissemination*: Establishing a system that allows for the use of items away from the library.

This book focuses on the first five activities (traditional technical services functions).¹⁰

TECHNICAL SERVICES BACKGROUND

Over the past 50 years there has been a steady shift in the philosophy underlying technical services. Emphasis is increasingly being placed on the end-user. Cataloging activities, which are the underlying core element in providing access to collections and quality service, are dependent on a complex set of rules and codes difficult for non-cataloger librarians, much less the general public, to fully comprehend. The codes and rules are essential in providing consistency when organizing collections. Financial transactions (acquisitions) are also dependent on a set of codes and rules that are almost incomprehensible to anyone without a background in accounting or bookkeeping. Until relatively recently, end-user consideration or input to how the activities operated played almost no role in technical services. As late as the 1960s and early 1970s the

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general opinion was that the public card catalog, the means to gain access to the information about the library's collections, was a tool created by librarians for librarians.

Over time, and with a growing focus on attempting to understand end-users' information-seeking behavior and adjusting library processes and procedures to reflect that understanding, there were efforts to make technical services outputs more user-friendly. An example of the shift in thinking is illustrated in an article by Karen Drabenstott, Schelle Simcox, and Eileen Fenton reporting the results of a study of end-user understanding of public catalog subject headings. In their conclusion, they noted, "It is time for the library community to grapple with the difficult questions about its subject access system and make informed decisions about solving the problem of low levels of end-user subject heading understanding."¹¹

Libraries have tried a number of organizational structures in the hope of breaking the front room (public services) and back room (technical services) view that prevailed in the past and that may still be encountered in some libraries. As far back as the 1940s, Raymond Swank argued that catalogers and bibliographers were the key staff to create a collection that end-users would find valuable.¹² However, for a variety of reasons, he was ahead of existing practice, and it was almost 10 years before anyone attempted to implement some of his ideas. In the mid-1950s, the University of Nebraska experimented with a subject approach to providing end-user access.¹³ The library assigned librarians responsibility for a subject area and for carrying out all the functions outlined in the previous section with the exception of preparation and storage. In theory, a person working directly with the public ought to better understand user needs and behavior, and therefore be able to create collections and access tools tailored to local conditions. Again, the effort was premature, and after a few years the concept was abandoned. The primary reason was that not everyone was equally interested or capable in all areas and end-users suffered the consequences of uneven subject service.

From a practical point of view, there were, and probably still are, issues in applying the concept in the real world. Individuals are usually neither equally skilled nor interested in every functional area of a library, so the person tends to focus on the high-interest areas at the expense of the other areas. As you might expect, that leads to very uneven service within and across subjects. In a statement to the Academic Technical Services Discussion Group session of the American Library Association (ALA), a group devoted to the concept of blending public and technical services responsibilities, Laura Harper correctly noted that you cannot force people to do what they cannot or do not want to do.¹⁴

A common method for achieving some of the benefits of these ideas about blending the two traditionally distinct areas is to have technical services librarians work some hours at the reference desk. (Note: We are not aware of many instances where public service personnel also work in technical services on a part-time basis. Perhaps the work is too technical for less than three-quarter or full-time work.) Libraries take different approaches to that idea, ranging from voluntary to required desk hours. Such requests may, in fact, be a directive; in other instances compliance is truly up to the individual. In the long run, having individuals who want to do both activities will provide better-quality service to users. At the Loyola Marymount University (LMU) Library in Los Angeles, two newly graduated catalog librarians asked if they could have some reference desk hours when they were hired. Both believed working at the reference desk would help maintain their reference skills and enhance their career

options. Fifteen years later, they were still working at the reference desk and had not tested the career development idea. It is likely, if one or both were to leave, that the head of public services would probably want to make desk hours a part of the required duties for their successors, as both catalog librarians have become a true part of the reference team.

There are some disadvantages to consider before implementing such a plan. One is loss of productivity. For example, for technical services personnel an hour spent on the reference desk is an hour not spent on the “real job.” When there is a processing backlog, the sense of what is real work becomes even stronger. Reference personnel also lose some productivity because they must train or update the reference skills of the technical service librarians. When reference work drew solely on printed materials this was not a major concern; today, with ever-increasing dependence on constantly changing electronic resources, it can be a significant issue.

Another issue is the quality of service that part-timers are able to provide, especially if desk hours are required. The LMU Library conducted several faculty and student surveys regarding all aspects of library service as part of an assessment program in preparation for an institution-wide accreditation visit. One of the surprise findings was that the reference staff service overall was very highly regarded by both students and faculty. There were, however, numerous written comments about several librarians who only worked a few hours a week (none of the part-timers works more than four hours). Reference staff wore name tags displaying first names, so users had a sense of with whom they worked. Comments indicated that although the part-timers tried to help and sometimes succeeded, the time required was too high and the degree of confidence in the results of the assistance was low from the user’s perspective.

A third issue is staff perception. When only technical services librarians are asked to cross over (that is, reference staff are not asked to assist in technical services), this sends a message about values—that of devaluing technical service activities. With some administrative effort you can reduce the sense of devaluation but seldom eliminate it. One method for blending the two areas that is not often used is a modified version of the subject approach. Sometimes this is referred to as “matrix teams,” in which several people share a set of duties but allocate their time according to their interest and skill levels. An example might be four persons who share acquisitions, cataloging, reference, and collection development responsibilities for the humanities. They might allocate their work time as illustrated in Table 1.1; notice that both the rows and columns add up to 100 percent.

TABLE 1.1 MATRIX TEAM

	Person A	Person B	Person C	Person D	Total Time
Acquisitions	30%	20%	25%	25%	100%
Cataloging	40%	20%	25%	15%	100%
Reference	15%	15%	25%	45%	100%
Collection development	15%	45%	25%	15%	100%

Clearly, the benefit of this approach is a better use of the skills, knowledge, and interests of each team member. At the same time, team members gain a holistic view of the library's activities and service programs, which in turn should result in improved decision making, at least in terms of end-user needs. It is also clear that a matrix team needs individuals who are not only committed to the concept but also reasonably skilled in all the areas. That type of person is not always available, and developing in-house interest and skills or seeking such breadth during the hiring process takes time.

Knowledge Goals for Staff

The ALA Council adopted a set of core competencies for librarianship in January 2009.¹⁵ Four of the eight competencies identified relate to the areas of interest to this book—information resources, organization of recorded knowledge and information, technological knowledge, and administration/management. Chapters 2 through 11 address information resources, technology, and administration/management. The balance of the chapters examines issues related to the organization of knowledge, technology, and administration/management.

What are some of the specific competencies called for by the ALA? In terms of information resources, there is an expectation that a person understands the basics of information from its creation to distribution and eventual disposal. Also, there is a call for library staff members to have a grasp of the issues associated with creating and managing library collections (all formats) from selection to withdrawal.

For organization of knowledge, a person should know the principles related to ordering and systematically representing knowledge and information. Further, the individuals needs an understanding of the skills required to organize and describe information resources and systems for cataloging, metadata, indexing, and classification of materials. Joy Williams provides excellent information about why all library employees, not just those in technical services, ought to have knowledge of the machine-readable cataloging (MARC) format and its role in online public access catalogs (OPACs).¹⁶

When it comes to technology it is not surprising to read that everyone needs to understand how technology affects all aspects of library service and its daily work activities. Also essential is the skill to assess the cost-effectiveness and potential of existing and developing technologies for library work. It goes with saying that having basic computer skills with productivity software—word processing and spreadsheet for example—is a minimal requirement.

From the administration/management perspective, there are the obvious expectations that staff members have a grasp of the fundamentals of planning, priority setting, and fiscal matters (in technical services accounting and bookkeeping are examples of the fiscal area). Collaborative skills—from teamwork to working with other libraries and organizations—are also needed. Finally, all libraries and component units, including technical services, must be constantly assessing their activities and demonstrating their accountability.

SUMMARY

The technical services function provides both information resources that end-users need and the means of gaining effective and efficient access to those materials. Technology has played an ever-greater role in changing the way in which technical

services departments operate, but it has not changed their basic functions. In addition to technology, general economic conditions have also had a significant impact on the activities performed.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are the eight “truths” regarding library functions according to Okerson?
2. Describe the relationship between quality service and technical services.
3. Discuss the changing philosophy and nature of technical services work.
4. Describe some of the various organizational structures technical services has tried and the pros and cons of the variations.
5. Describe the areas of competency that all library employees ought to have based on the ALA core competencies.

NOTES

The epigraphs for this chapter are from Philip Hider, “How Much Are Technical Services Worth,” *Library Resources & Technical Services* 52, no. 4 (2008); and Vera Fessler, “The Future of Technical Services,” *Library Administration & Management* 21, no. 3 (2007).

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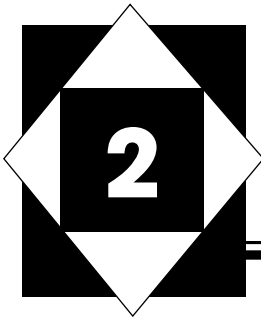
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Chapter



Technical Services Administration

The technical services manager's most important responsibilities, whether or not he or she delegates any part of the managerial authority to another, are ensuring that library policies are properly interpreted and implemented, that work is fairly distributed, and that all the work that is supposed to be done is done well and in a timely and cost-effective manner.

—*Shelia Intner and Peggy Johnson, 2008*

[L]ibrary quality has been synonymous with collection size—an assessment of what the library *has* rather than with what the library *does*.

—*Peter Hernon and Ellen Altman, 1998*

Managing and administration are often used as synonyms, although they have slightly different meanings. In the chapter epigraph, Intner and Johnson identify most of the roles and responsibilities involved in overseeing technical services operations. A slightly more detailed way to view the issue is to think of a manager of technical services operations as someone who is purposeful; makes things happen; accomplishes operations through people; is effective through the use of special knowledge, skills, practice, and experience; is aided by technology but not replaced by it; is accountable for the quality of outputs; and is responsible for the cost-benefits of activities. That is a rather long list, and all the factors are important.

If you had to pick just one of the above factors as the most critical, it would probably be remembering that it takes a team effort (the people factor) to have a successful outcome. Everyone can and should contribute to the outcome, regardless of a person's job description or pay grade. Because there must be some understanding of the managerial aspects of operations for there to be effective team performance, the content of this chapter has value for all categories of staff.

14 2—Technical Services Administration

What are the differences, if any, between the terms “administrator,” “manager,” and “supervisor”? The root meaning of administrator is derived from Latin—*ad* (to) and *ministratio* (give service). Thus, an administrator gives service to her organization. In current usage, the term most often denotes the senior person in an organization or the group of people at the most senior level (the administration). Manager/management generally refers to those who organize and coordinate activities in terms of a set of principles (mission), values, goals, policies, and so on. Supervisors have some of the responsibilities of managers, although at a lower level of accountability. They are responsible for the productivity and actions of a small group of employees. If you think of an organization as consisting of three levels of accountability—top, middle, and bottom—at the top would be administrators and managers, in the middle are the supervisors, and the bottom are the frontline staff.

Given the aforementioned definitions, the head of technical services would be a manager. Depending upon the library’s organizational structure, there may be several levels of managers. For example, a library might have a head of technical services and a head of the acquisitions department, a head of cataloging, and perhaps a head of processing or serials or preservation, all of whom would be managers with probably one or two supervisors reporting to them. The foregoing reflects an older organizational pattern, but one often still encountered. Today, quite frequently there is a flattening of the structure—and fewer layers of managers.

The ultimate key to unit and library success is to have everyone working together (teamwork) to achieve the organizational goals. This applies to both the traditional organizational model (each person working more or less independently) and a more formal team structure (more about teams and team building later in this chapter). Shifting from being an administrator, manager, or supervisor to being a leader is a key factor in achieving effective teamwork regardless of the organizational structure. Some years ago, Gleeson and Miller suggested that managers and supervisors in technical services ought to become coordinators rather than directors of their staff if they want to have units that adjust quickly to changing circumstances.¹ That advice is just as valid today as when it was first offered. Although Lihong Zhu focused on advertisements for head cataloging positions in academic libraries, her finding that the positions have become more multifaceted than in the past applies to almost all positions in technical services, not just heads of cataloging.² One of the newest aspects is the emphasis on team building.

The Tips sections in this chapter will be useful at some point in your working career, perhaps sooner than expected. As Pat Tunstall commented;

In these days of reduced funds and staff cutbacks, it is not unusual for people to be moved sideways into supervisory positions or to have a number of library pages suddenly added to their list of responsibilities. It is often the case that these reluctant draftee managers have no previous experience . . . Who can blame them for feeling anxious about how they will handle their new charges?³

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT

Managing your time will assist you in more ways than just getting more work done. It can help reduce work stress for your benefit (and sometimes for your colleagues as

well). It may also help supervisors and managers delegate activities or reduce the tendency to “put off until tomorrow what you can do today” behavior. These tips are relatively easy to implement; what is more difficult is to follow them long enough to make them habits rather than special activities. Perhaps the least complicated but hardest to follow is avoiding the paper-shuffle game (this also relates to e-mail). In most work situations, there is a steady flow of documents across the desk, via the in basket or e-mail. Some of it is informational in nature and is the easiest to read and toss or delete. Too often, however, there is a tendency to quickly look at such items and think, “I’ll get to this later when I have more time,” and then set it aside in what becomes an ever-growing pile of “when I have time” reading material. For many people that growing pile (mountain) becomes a source of stress because “when I have time” never seems to come. Reading the material when it arrives and taking the appropriate action—filing it for future reference, passing it on, recycling it, or hitting the delete button—will resolve the problem.

Some material may require a response by a given date. Again, responding right away will save time in the long run. There is a tendency to think, “Oh, this is due in two weeks (or whenever); I’ll do this later.” If nothing more, handling the matter immediately saves the review time involved in rereading the material when the response is due. In addition, given that many issues arise unexpectedly, having completed an expected project ahead of time allows for more flexibility in responding to rush projects that suddenly appear. Waiting until later may lead to the item getting mislaid or falling so far down the e-mail list it is overlooked until after the date due, and that can cause an even greater expenditure of time and effort. There are items that require some searching for information or just straightforward time to think about before taking action; a useful method for handling such items is to have a filing system based on action time requirements—start tomorrow, the day after, in three days, and so forth. (This approach also helps organize time, as discussed later.)

A few items are complex or difficult projects that may seem overwhelming. One way to handle those items is to establish a finish-by date that is slightly earlier than the required date and break the activity into small, daily actions to maintain a sense of progress and provide a measure of success.

Perhaps the second most common suggestion for managing time is to create to-do lists. Using a file-folder system (either paper based or electronic) is a sound variation of the to-do list. One simple way to do this is to set up a file for each day of the week, one for next week, two weeks, and three weeks, thus covering a month. The files can hold some of the action items that require time to address thoughtfully. Each day just before leaving work, go into the next day’s folder and set up the priorities for the items in the folder (the next day’s to-do list). It is a good idea to make the first item something of high interest and relatively easy to accomplish; this creates a positive sense of achievement that may carry over into less interesting but necessary activities. At the end of each work week, again at the end of the day, go through the next week’s folder and sort the material into the appropriate folders by the day each item should be handled. Certainly setting up such a system takes some time, as does the daily review; however, as one of the authors can attest, it saves a surprising amount of time in the long run.

Interruptions are one of the most common reasons given for not having enough time at work. “If it weren’t for all the interruptions I’d be fine,” is a lament of many staff members. Interruptions cost time, even when they are warranted, because they

fragment one's activities. It always takes a few minutes to get back to where one left off in a task after the interruption. The three most frequent sources of interruptions are the telephone, colleagues dropping by, and checking to see if one has e-mail. Managing the telephone is easier to handle than workmates, but both can be done without offending people.

With telephone calls, batch the necessary ones and spend a few minutes planning each, asking "What do I need to convey or learn." Make a list for each call and stick to it. Use a large pad of paper to keep all the notes and lists together. (Looking for the lunch napkin, business card, or empty envelope with the needed information is a great time waster.) Time management consultants often suggest that a business call should not require more than three minutes.⁴ If the matter is too complex or detailed to handle in that time, consider some form of written communication. This is a useful guideline for most business calls, but there are exceptions, especially when developing or maintaining a working relationship with someone in another organization, such as a library vendor or bindery firm. It is also good, if not always possible, to batch return calls. A useful approach to handling incoming calls, at least from other library staff members and those with whom you work, is to tell people "the best time to call me is between x and y." Although this does not and should not stop calls from coming in at other times, it does, in time, lead to batching of many, if not most, incoming calls. During that calling time frame, engage in activities that take less concentration, making the interruptions less of a problem. Additional options to consider would be to automatically forward your phone to voicemail or to screen calls via the caller ID function on your phone, if these features are available, or to find an alternative work location if you are in an open office setting. Although these methods should not be relied upon constantly, they may be helpful during times when interruptions would be extremely counterproductive, such as when you are operating under a critical deadline.

E-mail can become almost as big a time waster as the telephone. To remedy this use the same approach to e-mail as to the telephone. Read and respond to these messages in batches. Don't fall into the pattern of leaving your e-mail active all day or frequently checking to see whether there is mail if you want to make the most effective use of your time.

With colleagues, if at all possible, try to establish time frames when dropping by is welcome and times when dropping by is not welcome. For supervisors, it is a little easier to establish times when staff can come by with questions and some time during the day when the door is closed (even if there is no physical door to close). In smoothly running units, establishing such times for everyone is relatively easy. In times of change or uncertainty, creating such time is problematic, but even in those circumstances having some private work time can be beneficial. However, supervisors need to make it clear that a closed-door time does not mean they are unavailable for unusual or emergency situations.

Sometimes a person likes to engage in small talk before and after getting to the purpose of a visit. Frequently these are also people who, if allowed, will spend more time on the informal and social aspects of the visit than on the issue in question. Setting time limits and sticking to them—"I can give you xx minutes"—is a sound method for any interruption, unless of course the person in question is a supervisor. However, a supervisor should be as concerned about effective time usage as the person interrupted and should take no more time than necessary. Finally, there is nothing wrong with asking

people what it is they want to discuss, in a polite way, if they are having trouble getting to the point.

There are many other time management techniques, and several books on this topic are listed in the Suggested Reading section of this chapter.

TIPS FOR MEETINGS

Meetings are related to time management in the sense that they may be effective or a wasteful use of finite work time. Meetings are a given in the workplace. How well the convener structures and runs the meeting determines how useful the meeting will be for the attendees. It is rather common to hear a manager or supervisor say, “All I do is attend meetings.” In a formal teamwork environment, that statement might apply to all team members, as team meetings are essential to team success. Thus, having effective meetings is a key component in having unit productivity.

What makes for a useful meeting that does not waste time? Essentially, you should divide meetings into three broad steps—before, during, and ending. The before aspect relates to planning—(consisting of four Ps: purpose, people, place, preparation). First and foremost, consider what is the *purpose* of the meeting? Everyone has experienced mandatory-attendance meetings and left wondering, “What was that all about?” Without a clear purpose, no meeting will be a success; it is likely to start with vague comments, wander in a variety of directions, and end with no one certain why it was called. Who should attend (*people*) is also part of the planning process. Striking the correct balance between having too many attendees (people with little concern or interest in the topic) and too few (missing a key person) can be a challenge. Some people believe they should sit in on every meeting, regardless of topic, while others resist attending all but the most critical meetings. Where to hold the meeting (*place*) is a frequently overlooked element in the planning process. Meetings are very often held in spaces with no thought to how the space may affect its purpose. One obvious impact is the difference between a meeting in the boss’s office and a meeting in a conference room. Place considerations can also include whether technology is needed at the meeting (to demonstrate a process or function) and whether the locale convenient to all participants. Also important is the furniture arrangement—one arrangement may be conducive to peer interaction and another may convey a power structure, for example. The final P is *preparation*—preparing an agenda, checking the space and any equipment that may be needed, and so on. When setting the agenda be sure to place the most important topic first and have clearly defined outcome in mind. Too often time is wasted on less important topics just because they are high on the agenda. Another key part of preparation is letting attendees know what they should prepare to discuss.

During the meeting there are four Fs to consider—focus, facilitation, feedback, and fellowship. A convener must keep the group on track (following agenda topics only, or gaining group consensus on how to deal with topics that may pop up). When the group loses its *focus*, time is wasted. Conveners must be *facilitators* and keep the group focused. What this means is to ensure that all attendees become part of the meeting, even if it means calling on them. Presumably, assuming the convener addressed the four Ps, everyone in attendance is there because he has an interest or stake in the discussion. Thus, all voices should be heard. One technique for achieving this, without

embarrassing anyone, is to say, “Let’s take a moment to see where we stand. Let’s go around the room and get everyone’s thoughts.” Providing positive *feedback* is a hallmark of a good convener. Even if the convener does not agree with an expressed view, she phrases her response in a way that will not crush further discussion. Some examples of how to respond are to say, “Tell me more; how can we sell that to the boss?” or “Let’s combine our ideas to get the best solution.” Having fun or feeling like a group member (*fellowship*), although not essential in all cases, can often enhance a meeting’s outcome. Lighten up meetings with laughter and humor whenever possible. You will be pleasantly surprised how much more effective the meetings become.

The ending portion of the meeting features the four Cs of completion—consensus, closure, critique, and communication. Gaining group *consensus* on the outcome of the meeting (e.g., actions to take, decisions made) is an essential element in successful meetings. Too often a meeting ends with everyone thinking much was accomplished, but shortly afterward the attendees begin to wonder just what the outcome was. Providing a perceived view of the consensus helps everyone leave with a sense of accomplishment; it also gives the group a final chance to know if, in fact, there is consensus. Clearly, if there is to be consensus there must also be an understanding of the next steps (*closure*). Another challenge for many conveners is getting the meeting to end in the allotted time. If the prior four Ps and four Fs were addressed, however, ending on time should be no problem in most cases. It is when some aspects of planning and flow are poorly thought through that the endless meetings occur. Spending some time, with and without the group, going over what worked and did not work with the meeting (*critique*) will pay dividends for future meetings. The last step is to *communicate*. Part of that process is to have a record of what transpired, not word for word, but in broad brushstrokes. Sending a summary of the meeting to group members may bring to light something important that was overlooked. Finally, informing other interested parties about the outcome will build a sense of shared involvement if nothing else.

TIPS FOR TEAM BUILDING

The term *team* is used in a variety of ways, even when referring to a workplace concept. One definition of a workplace team that appears to capture the current work environment is a “work group [that] is made up of individuals who see themselves and who are seen by others as a social entity, who are interdependent because of the tasks they perform as members of the group, who are embedded in one or more larger social systems, and who perform tasks that affect others.”⁵ Perhaps two more elements ought to be part of the definition—team work groups develop a shared commitment to one another and are empowered to make decisions regarding their activities.

Teams take several approaches in terms of management style—empowered, project, and working are three of the most common types of teams. *Empowered* (or self-managed) teams have a high degree of autonomy in some activity and are more or less permanent in character. An example of such a group might be a retrospective cataloging team, if they have great latitude to determine their work activities. *Project* teams are assembled to carry out a specific task, usually with a target completion date. An example might be a PromptCat implementation team. *Working* teams are developed by supervisors to improve the cooperation or coordination of work activities within

their areas of responsibility and to involve the staff in more of the unit’s planning and decision-making activities. In the first two types of teams, managers often implement a team-selection process that is designed to bring to the team people with the different skills needed to handle the assigned task. Working teams seldom start with a selection process, but over time the supervisor might adjust job descriptions to bring in new or missing skill sets to improve the team’s performance.

No matter what type of team is being considered, most of the elements of good team building apply. Good team building starts with creating two types of matrices: *skills* and *responsibilities*. Even when someone is not in a position to select team members, it is useful to develop a skills matrix to identify the ideal skill sets. That way, if there is an opportunity to select a new person, one can quickly rewrite the appropriate job description. Such a matrix also helps one think about skill sets that exist in the work unit for meeting the existing responsibilities. It may even lead to reassigning duties among the existing staff. Table 2.1 illustrates a simplified responsibility matrix for handling PromptCat.

TABLE 2.1 MINIMAL CATALOGING WITH LIBRARY OF CONGRESS RECORDS

MARC tag	Requirement	Action If Record Not as Required
FF:ELv1	ELv1 is blank, 1 or 4. There is no need to check ELv1 for Prompt-Cat books—only when cataloging on OCLC.	Refer to cataloger. Record is incomplete.
050	050 call number is present. Second indicator is zero.	Refer to cataloger. Needs verification.
	No explicit la is visible in the 050.	Refer to cataloger. Need to choose/complete call number.
	Call number does not begin with PZ or Z5000+.	Refer to cataloger. Usually needs different call number.
245	245 field matches title on title page exactly, except for punctuation.	Refer to cataloger. Needs adjustment or different record.
	245 lc (if present) matches form of author’s name on title page exactly, omitting titles like “Dr.” or “The Reverend.”	Refer to cataloger. Needs adjustment.
	Title does not begin with an initial article in a foreign language (e.g., La, El, Los, Le, Das, Der, Eine, Une).	Refer to cataloger. Needs added title to index initial article. If in doubt, refer foreign language titles to cataloger.
	Different title on spine, or prominent embedded portion of title on title page, is recorded in a 246 field.	Refer to cataloger. Needs added title field.

(Continued)

TABLE 2.1 (Continued)

MARC tag	Requirement	Action If Record Not as Required
250	Edition statement (if any) on the cover, title page, page before t-p or back of t-p, is shown in 250 field.	Refer to cataloger. Needs adjustment or different record.
260	Publisher named in 260 lb appears on the cover, title-page, page before t-p or back of t-p.	Refer to cataloger. Needs adjustment or different record.
300	Height of book in 300 lc is less than 29 cm.	Measure book, rounding to next full cm. Adjust 300 lc to match. If 29 cm. or more, make bib loc and item loc "lml." If book is labeled for Main Stacks, relabel for Oversize.
440/490	Series title (if any) appearing on the cover, title page, page before t-p or back of t-p is shown in 440 or 490 field.	Refer to cataloger. Needs adjustment or different record.
Screenplays	Item is not a screenplay (TV or movie script).	Refer to cataloger. Needs additional title information and subject headings.

MARC = machine-readable cataloging.

Teams in the workplace have been around for a long time in one form or another. They are not a new concept; however, they are playing an ever-greater role in how organizations get things done. Over the past 20-some years, organizations, including libraries, have undergone a flattening of their structures, resulting in fewer layers of management. In many cases, they experienced downsizing or received no increase in staffing, even with increased workloads. As a result of these events, the staff must be more productive, be flexible, learn new skills, and take on more responsibilities. So far, the 21st century has placed additional pressure on organizations and their personnel to be adept at handling rapid change with reduced resources. All of these factors place a premium on flexibility and having a knowledgeable workforce that is more capable of working independently than in the past.

Supervisors must get the best possible performance from their existing staff, and they must depend on team members to operate and solve problems, often on their own. (Fewer supervisors are available, and if work is to progress in a timely fashion, team members must act without waiting for assistance from higher-level personnel.) Although the management fundamentals—decision making, planning, organizing, and so on—remain unchanged, there is a shift in who engages in these activities when true teams exist.

Some of the differences between a true team environment and a traditional workplace are significant from a supervisor's point of view. Teams call for consensus rather than command and control. They require acceptance of the idea that conflict (both

positive and negative) is a normal part of team operations, and those conflicts must be addressed in an open, honest manner. Although not every difference of opinion that occurs in a team will result in negative conflict, time will still need to be spent in meetings to resolve problems or make decisions. Reaching decisions in a team setting tends to be more knowledge based than when it is done on the basis of one person's opinion. In teams, more emphasis must be placed on the whys than on the hows.

Creating a team requires careful thought and an understanding of the work personalities of the potential team members. (Not all workers are comfortable working on a team.) The first step in team creation is determining how big the team should be and whom to select. The second step is to create an environment conducive to teamwork (empowerment and support). Establishing realistic goals is the third step. Providing training and development opportunities for team members is the fourth step—although this step is ongoing in character. The last, and perhaps the most difficult step in using true teams, is for the supervisor/manager to let the team go and only become involved in team activities when asked to do so.

In addition, to setting clear goals and directions and establishing the right team environment, it is important to consider the tasks the team is to perform. The leader must be certain the tasks *require* teamwork. A common mistake, especially in first-time team environments, is creating a team in name only (the team has tasks, yes, but not those requiring teamwork). What happens is an appearance of teamwork, but in reality it is just individuals doing their own independent work. Making this mistake quickly leads to disillusionment on the part of both the team and the manager. Another fairly common mistake is assigning tasks that only occasionally call for teamwork. Although there will likely be times when team members need to work independently to produce a product that is shared by or ultimately benefits the entire team, assigning too many individualized tasks to the team risks sending a mixed message and does not take advantage of the benefits of a team-based structure.

There is also the complex task of assessing team performance. This can be particularly problematic when some staff members, those who are not a team, receive individual performance reviews and team members are on a different system. In the minds of most people, performance reviews and salary increases are closely linked, so some will have difficulty accepting a team assignment knowing the group's efforts will be assessed rather than individual work.

TIPS FOR STAFF MOTIVATION

Motivating staff is an ongoing process, and it seems much more challenging now than in the past. Budget cuts, staff reductions, unit reorganizations, and teams are just a few of the factors making it difficult to keep morale up. Almost any type of change in the work environment can create four stages of staff reactions, depending on the nature of the change:

1. Disbelief, shock, and denial;
2. Anger, rage, and resentment;
3. Emotional bargaining—where anger moves to depression; and finally
4. Acceptance

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During the first stage, people are often shocked that changes might or will take place. They believe the changes cannot or will not work, and some staff may actively work against the changes. Involving the staff and allowing them maximum input will help, as will providing honest and forthright explanations about what is involved in the proposed change. Indicating the benefits is also helpful. If there will be staff reductions, this should first be made clear to the staff involved in a private manner. Trying to hide such facts until later will damage credibility with the remaining staff.

In stage two, the initial denial and shock usually shift to anger, especially if there are to be staff reductions that require layoffs rather than normal attrition. That anger is normally focused on the immediate supervisor rather than the actual factor making the changes necessary. During the third stage, staff members likely to be affected by the change begin to start thinking about their options. Occasionally, some resign before there is any final decision. Often, these are the most qualified individuals who are less likely to lose their positions. Others become depressed, and their work quality and quantity begin to fall. Eventually, there is an acceptance that what seemed unthinkable will in fact take place.

Susan Cartwright and Cary Cooper identified 12 of the most common workplace stressors.⁶ The technical services environment appears to have the potential to experience all 12 factors from time to time. The stressors are

- loss of identity as organizational size changes;
- lack of information, poor/inconsistent communication;
- fear of job loss or demotion;
- possible transfer/relocation;
- loss of or reduced power, status, and prestige;
- disrupted or uncertain career path;
- change in rules, regulations, procedures, and reporting structure;
- change in colleagues, supervisors, and subordinates;
- ambiguous reporting systems, roles, and procedures;
- devaluation of old skills and expertise;
- personality/workplace culture clashes; and
- increased workload.

Some factors are less controllable than others; for example, workload increases are often difficult to control at least in the short term. (Some of the steps to take to reduce the stress were discussed previously.) Providing more information can be very helpful; the word does not always get out as much as one might think, and what does get out is often less than accurate. Keep the communication process open to feedback; make it clear that questions and expressions of concern are welcome. Be as specific as possible about the whats, whys, whens, and wherefores of events or projects that may be stressful. Involving staff in the process as much as possible helps them have a sense of control over their destiny. Work at developing a team approach, if not actual work teams.

The basics of team motivation do not vary much from that of individual employees. An underlying factor in everyone's motivation to work is self-interest, if nothing more than working as a legal means of securing the money one needs to live. It is of course far more complex than that, but self-interest is a factor. Thus, the first difference in the team

environment is the need to keep self-interest to a minimum. Another difference is that the team will likely consist of members from different generations (baby boomers and Generation Xers, for example) who may be more or less inclined toward teamwork.

Monitoring team activities is an essential role for a manager or supervisor. When a team exhibits morale or productivity problems, the manager or supervisor must intervene. If the poor morale is arising from a performance problem as a team, assisting the team with its problem solving to isolate the issue may lead to a solution. That will not resolve the poor morale by itself, but it will stop the performance problem from feeding the morale issue. It may be as simple as the timing of the resources needed for effective teamwork, for example, the flow of material from acquisitions to the catalog department. On the other hand, the issue may be a nonperforming team member. When that is the case, the team may be hard pressed to resolve the matter on its own.

When morale is just starting to decline (moderate to low morale), several things can be done. One step is to model behavior that is positively geared toward success. If a manager can identify coachable areas in need of improvement, it is probably a good time for some serious coaching. Helping the team find one or two small and quick successes almost always boosts morale. Having a team meeting and discussing the vision and its positive values may also make a difference for the better. Demonstrating commitment to the vision and modeling that commitment will help team members buy into that vision. Such discussions may also lead to revelations about what may be causing a decline in morale, assuming you are an effective listener. Listening is a major component in effective communication.

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATION

Given the current work environment, team-based technical services activities that cut across traditional activity lines are more likely to produce positive results and require effective communication. Good teams should have the following characteristics:

- A broad range of skills and cross training
- Strong senior management support
- Greater than traditional latitude in determining work activities
- A commitment to being well-informed

Effective communication—speaking, writing, and listening—is the glue of successful team functionality. Group commitment, decision making, problem solving, conflict resolution, and accountability all rest on the quality of the communication that occurs in the team. Team members who understand and follow four communication rules find themselves, more often than not, on great teams.

- **Rule one: Be open and honest with one another.** This leads to vulnerability; being open and honest almost always generates a greater commitment to one another.
- **Rule two: Be clear and concise.** Trying to show off one's vocabulary tends to turn off listeners and makes the real message harder to identify. Being long-winded does little but eat up valuable team time.

- **Rule three: Maintain consistency.** This does not mean being unwilling to compromise or to admit to being wrong about something. However, constantly changing views or positions raises doubts about a person and may lead to less trust.
- **Rule four: Be civil and courteous and show respect for others and their views.**

Teams that follow these rules in their communication with one another, with the leader, with other units or teams, and with the public are likely to achieve great things.

People often slip into the habit of thinking of communication as a one-way process based on oral and written messages sent and received. To be truly effective, communication must be based on a two-way feedback process to prevent misunderstandings and to clarify points. Even when remembering that communication is two way in nature, people frequently forget the importance of *listening* and thinking *before* providing feedback.

Listening is an art that many people need to practice more than they do and one that some people never seem to develop. One reason is that we tend to forget that we can hear at least four times faster than most people normally speak. so the difference between speaking and listening speeds allows ample time for the listener's mind to wander away from the speaker's message. If in doubt about this difference, take a few minutes to think carefully about the last lecture or speech you attended. Did you really only think about the presentation? Or did you also think about the quality of the presentation? Did you think about what you needed to do after the presentation was over? Did you doodle on the page if you were taking notes? Did you think about the room, the people, or what the weather was like outside? The list could go on and on. The point is that any such thoughts take your attention away from the message and illustrate that listening speed was not taxed to any great extent by the presentation.

Improving listening skills is necessary for effective team performance. Tips for improving listening include (1) thinking about questions the presentation or the speaker brings to mind that need to be raised for clarification; (2) asking for examples or providing paraphrased feedback during the presentation; (3) concentrating on what is new, different, or questionable; and (4) summarizing the key points after the presentation, which is a way of concentrating attention on the message being delivered and not allowing one's mind to wander to other matters.

The communication process has a passive side as well. Nonverbal behavior can be almost as important, if not the most significant part of the communication process. Speakers and listeners both pick up on the nonverbal behaviors or cues and may have very different reactions to those behaviors. Libraries are becoming more and more diverse in terms of staff and the end-users served. Communication is a process highly influenced by cultural and societal factors. Although we are more likely to think about the importance of our word choice in a diverse environment, we sometimes overlook the nonverbal issues.

Three examples illustrate the point about cultural differences and nonverbal behavior. Generally in Western European societies, direct eye contact during a conversation is considered a sign of a listening, open, straightforward, honest person. Lack of such eye contact suggests the opposite. However, in other cultures, direct eye contact is seen as insulting, disrespectful, and even threatening. Likewise, European-based patterns expect

some nonverbal signals that the person is listening, such as nodding in agreement. In some cultures, such behavior is not expected or is even viewed as presumptuous on the listener’s part. Physical space during a conversation is also a factor. Some societies expect people to be up close and personal, while in others such behavior is viewed as pushy and rude. Knowing something about the expected communication behavior of the various cultures represented in the team or workplace can be beneficial for overall working relationships and productivity. (A note about diversity: The Loyola Marymount University [LMU] Library PromptCat team consisted of 11 members of the cataloging and acquisitions departments. In terms of cultural diversity there were two people from the Philippines, one from India, one from Taiwan, one from Japan, one Chinese American, and one Latino, with the balance from Western European backgrounds. Clearly, to work effectively the team had to address different communication styles.)

There are times when personal influence is not enough, and negotiating will be necessary to achieve the desired results. Negotiating should be, both within the group and with other units, a process of give and take. Before starting negotiations it is advisable to have a clear understanding of what the bottom line is for each party involved, that is, what cannot be modified. In the workplace setting, there are usually at least three bottom lines. First is the institutional goal of what must take place—for example, PromptCat *must* be implemented in a cost-effective manner. Second is a goal the staff desires—for example, any new process *must not* result in added workload but rather be a replacement. A third bottom line is that of the manager or supervisor—the outcome *must* be something he can be comfortable with implementing. Following are some negotiating tips:

- Differentiating between wants, needs, and musts is required for all sides.
- Asking high and giving low is expected, but don’t be ridiculous about either end.
- Conceding something, which is necessary if there is to be negotiation, is also expected, but when doing so don’t simply give in.
- Winning something and losing something is the goal of negotiations; no side should leave believing it has lost on every issue

Supervising or administering a unit in technical services calls for the same basic management skills and knowledge as any other unit in the library. However, some of those basic skills are being called upon with ever-increasing frequency as libraries try to adjust to a changing external environment. Some of the skills that need to come into play more often are managing change, fostering innovation and creativity, containing costs, building teams, and motivating staff.

THE “MORE” FACTOR

Some years ago Cecily Johns wrote that the motto for cataloging and technical services is and always will be “more, better, cheaper, faster.”⁷ These are shorthand labels for what administrators of technical services units must constantly address, and they are just as relevant now as when Johns first wrote them.

For most libraries in the 1980s and early 1990s, “more” did not mean a higher volume of books and serials to acquire, catalog, and process. The “more” was the expanding range of material formats that had to be dealt with on a regular basis. A seemingly constantly changing information industry created, and occasionally dropped, new formats for delivering material, which generated pressures on technical services units to keep evolving. Electronic materials quickly demonstrated that libraries had to gear up to handle not only constant change but also very rapid shifts in direction.

As both a library school educator and library administrator for many years, one of the authors, Dr. Evans, has experienced those events from the classroom/conceptual point of view and the “how are we going to deal with this development” practical perspective. The factors noted in chapter 1 as leading to the changing shape of technical services—economic, technological, and financial—make it difficult for practitioners to keep abreast of the shifting landscape of information resources and still get their work done.

Whereas public, school, and community college libraries have a long history of acquiring and building collections of audiovisual and nonbook formats, the same is not true of large academic libraries. With the proliferation of electronic databases, even the largest research libraries are adding formats that 15 to 20 years ago were considered inappropriate for their collections.

THE FASTER/BETTER/CHEAPER FACTORS

Certainly the Internet has contributed significantly to the “more” factor. On the plus side, it has also helped with the faster and better factors. Think of the Internet as just another tool, rather like the machine-readable cataloging (MARC) format, that facilitates more effective use of time and effort.

For example, in the not-so-distant past, libraries often compared working practices and policies by conducting field trips or site visits to neighboring libraries. Although such trips still occur, they are becoming rare. In their place, staff use the Internet, through e-mail systems and discussion lists, to post questions such as, “How do you handle x?” In addition to saving travel time and expenses, responses often come in from around the world, and staff can draw on a much wider range of experience. Furthermore, discussion lists help keep the staff informed about new developments and issues. Technical services librarians and senior paraprofessional staff usually subscribe to several such lists.

Everything covered in this book has one or more Web sites devoted to it. There are URLs throughout the book, but these addresses are likely to have changed by the time you read this—the average life span for a Web site is under 24 months. Still, a good starting point, no matter what library topic is of interest, is the Internet Library for Librarians (<http://www.itcompany.com/inforetriever>).

Although collection development is of only passing interest for this book, a number of Web sites are useful to both collection development staff and acquisitions personnel. These range from information producer Web sites (an example is the Association of American University Presses at <http://aaupnet.org>) to general online vendors such as

Amazon (<http://www.amazon.com>). Looking for an out-of-print title? Try Bibliofind (now a subsidiary of Amazon) at <http://www.bibliofind.com>. Sites like the last two provide links to reviews and other information and have ordering capabilities. A few offer Boolean searching in addition to the expected author, title, publisher, and International Standard Book Number (ISBN) searches.

A specific example of how technology assists in the faster/better side of acquisitions work is in letting end-users know what new titles are ready for use. Years ago, many libraries—academic, public, and special, in particular—issued some type of recent additions or new titles lists. Producing such lists was labor intensive: collecting the slips for recently processed titles, typing the list, verifying that the information was correct, maintaining a mailing list for interested recipients, and producing and distributing the information. By the mid-1980s such lists were disappearing as libraries struggled with budget and staff reductions. End-users voiced concerns about the loss and questioned the factors that led to dropping the lists.

Such lists are making a comeback thanks to technology. Many systems make it possible to run a management report that lists all the titles added to the database between x and y dates. Most allow downloading of the information into a word-processing program where a staff member can quickly format the data for publication. The end product is often a paper list and an electronic version for posting on the library's Web site. Another step can be to e-mail specific information such as the "item is ready for use" to the requestor and others who have an interest in the topic. This is a return to what was part of a service called selective dissemination of information back when there was staffing available for such activities.

Serial publications have always been a challenge for library staff because of their changing nature. (Years ago they were thought to be *the* challenge, but technology has assumed that mantle.) New titles, changing titles, variations in numbering systems, special issues, delays in publications, suspension of publication, and ceasing to exist are but a few of the challenges serials present to libraries. Keeping up to date in a print-only environment was almost impossible, but the Internet makes it *almost* possible. Anyone with an interest in serials should subscribe to SERIALST (<http://www.uvm.edu/~bmaclenn/serialst.html>), an open forum for discussing the perplexing world of serials. Because subscribers are from around the world—more than 40 countries are represented—one quickly learns that many, if not most, of the concerns about serials are global rather than local in character. Electronic journals and/or paper-based titles with electronic editions represent another challenge for technical services. Some vendors have records that can be downloaded, assuming that the integrated library system (ILS) allows for that and can make the necessary links. For many libraries, if the process depended solely on manual inputting, there would be many fewer records for electronic resources.

Cataloging departments and catalogers have been online for longer than most others in the library world. A popular discussion list for catalogers is AUTOCAT (<http://listserv.syr.edu/archives/autocat.html>), initiated many years ago by list owner Judith Hopkins of the State University of New York at Buffalo. Cataloging questions often elicit dozens of responses, sometimes within hours of being posted. Opinions and answers come from all over the world, sometimes with documentation. Some of the most prolific participants work at national libraries, research institutions, or specialized

information centers. The Canadian counterpart to AUTOCAT is the Canadian Library Association Technical Services Interest Group Forum, TSIG-L. It can be located via the Canadian Library Association Web site at <http://www.cla.ca>, or at <http://www3.fis.utoronto.ca/people/affiliated/tsig>.

Catalogers are frequently able to obtain authoritative information, free cataloging advice, selected tools, and other assistance from Web sites maintained by national libraries and bibliographic networks as well as by commercial vendors of cataloging systems, publishers, and other companies. Some of the most useful government and nonprofit organization Web sites are the Library of Congress Cataloging and Acquisitions Web site (<http://www.loc.gov/aba/>), the Library and Archives Canada Web site (<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/>), and the OCLC Web site (<http://www.oclc.org>). Offerings at these Web sites vary from organization to organization and change over time, but typical features include descriptions of the organization's latest activities and projects, lists of publications and online order forms, and e-mail access to persons responsible for answering inquiries or providing additional information. Occasionally, full text of some documents or methods of downloading them free of charge are posted. Early in 2001, OCLC began giving an online course for a fee on cataloging Internet resources. Since that time, a number of resources for technical services librarians have been made available, such as those found on the OCLC Web-Junction Technical Services resources site (<http://www.webjunction.org/technical-services/>).

The Internet is a great tool, but it can also present a problem in that the staff can spend a little too much time surfing it. Some control and self-monitoring is necessary to maintain unit productivity. However, allowing some level of surfing may help reduce some of the workplace stress that is so common in the changing technical services environment. Also, staff members need to become comfortable with the electronic databases the library purchases to provide proper service.

RESTRUCTURING TO PROVIDE "FASTER AND BETTER"

Pressure for more, better, faster, cheaper, combined with budget woes and, all too frequently, staff reductions have led to restructuring of technical services units. A buzzword for this is "reengineering." Close inspection of what the gurus of reengineering suggest reveals that the concept has much in common with what was once labeled "operations analysis" and "scientific management." Good management practice calls for ongoing assessment and evaluation of policies, procedures, workflow, and so forth. Unfortunately, in most situations daily demands seem to keep people from doing this on a regular basis.

You don't need to hire an outsider to handle many of the basic techniques of work analysis. If you seriously think about each of the following questions, you will be well on your way to creating an effective and efficient unit:

- What is done?
- Why is it done?
- Where is it done?
- When is it done?

- Who does it?
- How is it done?

An excellent text to help with rethinking operations is Richard Dougherty's *Streamlining Library Services*.⁸ The book is a greatly revised and updated version of the classic Dougherty wrote many years ago.

An example of planning and rethinking activities is the implementation of PromptCat, which calls for a planning team of catalogers and acquisition staff. The process is not as complicated as a merge, but it can be more contentious because it often demonstrates that neither unit really understands what the other does.

One challenge that arises when it comes to merging or starting a program such as PromptCat is the question of quality control and what that means in a particular library. In the case of outsourcing copy cataloging (PromptCat), many units have some interest as the data from the outside agency become a part of the library's online public access catalog (OPAC). Often there are staff members who believe no effort should be spared to create an error-free OPAC, while others believe perfection is impossibly expensive and does not serve the end-user in the long run.

STANDARDS

OPACs are the end-user's key to unlocking the library's resources and, in some cases, the resources of other libraries. They play a more prominent role for users than did the card catalogs of years gone by, if for no other reason than that they generally offer more modes of access and are considered quicker and easier to use than their fore-runners. Given their importance to quality customer service, it is a good practice to have just one unit responsible for OPAC maintenance.

One long-standing management technique for assigning task responsibility is to give it to the unit or person who most frequently performs the task. The catalog department creates the initial bibliographic record for each new title and item records for additional copies or volumes in a set that ultimately constitutes the core of the database. Thus, it is rather common that the cataloging unit is responsible for maintaining the database content and its quality.

If it is just a matter of initial inputting of data, the task would be of less concern; however, it goes far beyond that. There are ongoing adjustments that must be, should be, or are desirable to make in the existing records. On the "must" side is indicating changes in the location information, say from open stacks to storage. Another must is deleting records for withdrawn or lost items. A "should be" issue is cross-linking different records for works by a single author who has several name variations. One of the most desired adjustments, but one that is not implemented as often as staff would like, is updating subject headings, which seem to change on a regular basis. Handling the changes manually eats up limited staff time. If the ILS does not provide updating capability, some libraries have found it cost-effective to outsource the work. In many ways, the process of deciding what is not an error is difficult. It may require months of discussion before there is agreement on items that can be less than perfect and still go into the OPAC.

TABLE 2.2 RESPONSIBILITY MATRIX

	Head Cataloger	Head of Acquisitions	Cataloging Assistant	Receiving Assistant	Invoice Assistant	Physical Processing
Establish PromptCat profiles and processing requirements with OCLC and vendors.	P	S				
Define cataloging review process, including definition and handling of errors and exceptions.	P		S			
Load PromptCat files into local system.	S	S		P		
Compare books to PromptCat records and approve payment.	S		S	P		
Route errors and exceptions to appropriate staff.	S		S	P		
Pay invoices.		S			P	
Correct errors and exceptions.	S		P			
Relabel books as necessary.			S			P
Provide feedback to OCLC and vendors.	P	P				

P = primary responsibility; S = supporting responsibility.

Standards are a good starting point for anyone thinking about outsourcing. An example of a standard created by a technical services unit is illustrated in Table 2.2. The LMU library uses the chart for handling incoming PromptCat items. The basic concept underlying the chart is that the standards should be clear enough so persons who have no cataloging background can quickly review incoming materials and decide if they are acceptable or require the attention of the cataloging staff. (See chapter 14 for a discussion of MARC tags.)

SUMMARY

The management issues in today's technical services environment are essentially the same as for other areas of the library: too much to do, too few people to do what must be done, and constant pressure to do more with less. Basic management practices are key elements in making the "more, faster, better, cheaper" pressures somewhat more manageable. A host of management resources are available for technical services staffs

to consult. This chapter covers only a few of the topics; management of organizations in times of change and stress is the subject of a great many full-length books.

It does not appear likely that the library work environment is going to change much from the present circumstances in the very near future. Concepts of time and stress management are helpful for all staff. Developing ways of sorting out what is essential, desirable, and nice to have with all staff members is also worthwhile. Creating even an informal sense of team membership prevents members from feeling as if they are alone. Working on communication and negotiating skills promotes a work environment that is effective and somewhat, if not completely, comfortable for everyone.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are some steps to take to better manage your work time?
2. Describe the elements involved in running effective meetings.
3. Discuss the issues that contribute to the pressure on technical services units to do more.
4. Discuss the issues that contribute to pressures to do things faster, better, and cheaper.
5. What steps have technical services taken to address the need to do things faster, better, and cheaper?
6. Teamwork or team projects call for some changes in the way individuals do their work. What are some of those changes?

NOTES

The epigraphs for this chapter are from Peter Hernon and Ellen Altman, *Assessing Service Quality: Satisfying the Expectations of Library Customers* (Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 1998) and Shelia Intner and Peggy Johnson, *Fundamentals of Technical Services Management* (Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 2008).

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