Experiences of a Reluctant Supervisor: Discovering New Skills and Innovative Ways to Manage

Kerri Scannell Baunach
Experiences of a Reluctant Supervisor

DISCOVERING NEW SKILLS AND INNOVATIVE WAYS TO MANAGE
The following story is fictional. Any similarities to real life are entirely coincidental.
Question for the Audience

- How many people are current supervisors?
  - Non-student employees
- Supervisors: did you want to be a supervisor?
- Who fell into the position?
- Do you have a supervisor?
Background/Challenges

- Reorganization in 2004
- Special Formats Unit started in 2005
  - 5 people, currently:
    - 2 librarians: music cataloger, special collections cataloger
    - 3 staff: 2 in music/fine arts, 1 maps cataloger
  - Staff is in 3 buildings
- New unit meant new working relationships
- In some cases, also new job responsibilities
Today’s focus

Meetings
Why meetings?

- We try to do too many things in one sitting
  - As well as one setting!
- Meetings aren’t discussed enough
- We are in a rut, need something new to think about
- We are never really taught how to run an effective meeting
  - Nor do we see effective meetings in action
- We all hate meetings!
The Positives of Meetings

- Information is shared
- Planning for new products/services
- Addressing problems
- Exchange of ideas
- Seek advice
- Creating shared responsibility for direction/priorities
- Encourage collaboration
The Library Literature

- Didn’t do a lot: this presentation is mostly personal experience
- First: books from the business world
- Checked in my library:
  - 2 books!
  - Nothing in Library management books
- Searches of Library Literature:
  - Not very successful – Still have work to do here
Activity

- Groups of about 5 people
  - Try to get with people you don’t know
- Pretend you all work together and you are having a meeting
  - It’s next Monday morning, the beginning of a new week
- You can just be you or pretend that you’re someone else
  - Whatever job you’ve always wanted
- Everyone speaks, each gets 60 seconds: tell the group your top 2-3 priorities for the week
  - You have 5 minutes total – GO!
Activity

• Debrief
  ○ Was it hard? Easy?
  ○ Was anyone able to ask a follow-up question?
  ○ Did you want to ask more questions?
  ○ Did someone try to take charge as the leader?
  ○ Did you stay on track?
  ○ Did you learn something?
  ○ Did your group need less than 5 minutes to finish? Why or why not?
  ○ What else?
The Four Meeting Types

- Daily Check-in
- Weekly Tactical
- Monthly/Ad-hoc Strategic
- Off-site Quarterly
My Adaptation

- Weekly Check-in
- Monthly Tactical
- Ad-hoc Strategic
Recent Unit Review:

- Need to focus more on our key metrics
- Refrain from allowing people to go into too much detail
- Get away from agendas at the Tactical meetings
- Overall doing well
- Need to review this on a more regular basis
- Strategic meetings should involve whole unit
Outcomes

- **Weekly Check-in**
  - Has created a sense of community in the unit

- **Monthly Tactical**
  - Good communication
  - Always feel that we know what’s happening
  - Still have some work to do/move away from pre-set agendas

- **Ad-hoc Strategic**
  - Good focus
  - Should involving everyone in meeting
  - Need more of these so there is more focus in Monthly Tactical
Next Steps

- There will always be a tendency to slip
  - Set up regular review of progress
- More research
- Survey Librarians to see just how much “wasted time” is spent in meetings
  - Find and follow model of business world
- Encourage others in organization to find a way to adopt a similar model
Questions

Thank you!!

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The Four Meeting Types (from Death by Meeting, see bibliography, page 2)

1. Daily Check-in
   a. What are your priorities today?
   b. Each person gets 30-60 seconds
   c. Total meeting time: 5 minutes (depending on number of people)

2. Weekly Tactical
   a. Lightening Round (60 seconds each)
   b. Key Metrics Review
   c. Tactical Agenda Items Decided
   d. Potential Strategic Topics set aside
   e. Decisions/Actions made
   f. Total meeting time: 45-60 minutes

3. Monthly Strategic/Ad-hoc Strategic
   a. Set agenda ahead, no more than 2-3 topics
   b. Everyone does research/planning ahead of time
   c. Total meeting time: depends, could be 2-4 hours

4. Off-Site Quarterly
   a. Away from office, time to review direction, etc.
   b. Total meeting time: 1-2 days

Kerri’s Adaptation for Special Formats Unit

- Weekly Check-in
  - Meeting time: 5 minutes

- Monthly Tactical
  - Lightening Round
  - Progress Review/Key Metrics Review
  - Real-Time Agenda
  - Strategic Issues for later
  - Decisions/Next steps
  - Meeting time: 30-45 minutes

- Ad-hoc Strategic
  - Time to discuss the “big issues” set aside during Tactical meeting
  - Meeting time: 1-2 hours

Key Metrics of the Organization (from the UK Libraries’ Strategic Plan)

- Basics
  - Continue to build and maintain collections
  - Provide access to materials and information
  - Continue to provide bibliographic services

- Goal 2: Advance the role of librarians as valued partners in teaching and learning
  - Expand and enhance use of unique materials in the learning experience

- Goal 3: Expand the availability of and access to quality information resources
  - Expand access to uncataloged or electronically inaccessible collections
    - Update and prioritize collections to be cataloged, including the unit and person responsible and a projected timeframe for completion

- Goal 5: Expand the Libraries’ virtual presence
  - Increase digitization of primary source materials
  - Expand metadata to allow broad topical access to unique digital assets
Working Bibliography

In the order which I found most useful to me and my situation


