

5-15-2008

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

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Repository Citation

Baunach, K. S. (2008). Experiences of a Reluctant Supervisor: Discovering New Skills and Innovative Ways to Manage. .
<http://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/ovgtsl/3>

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Experiences of a Reluctant Supervisor



**DISCOVERING NEW SKILLS AND
INNOVATIVE WAYS TO MANAGE**

Story Time!



*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. Lightning 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
 - Lightning 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

Lencioni, Patrick. *Death by Meeting: A Leadership Fable about Solving the most Painful Problem in Business*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004.

Harnish, Verne. *Mastering the Rockefeller Habits: What you must do to Increase the Value of Your Fast-Growth Firm*. New York: Select Books, 2002. (Chapter 8 is specifically on meetings)

Soete, George J. *The Library Meeting Survival Manual*. San Diego: Tulane Street Publications, 2000.

Dewey, Barbara I. and Sheila D. Creth. *Team Power: Making Library Meetings Work*. Chicago: American Library Association, 1993.