

Crescer [Grow]: SIBi/USP Staff training and development Program

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Abstract:

It describes the institutionalization of continuous education process of library teams, with prominence for the creation of the Staff Training and Development Portal (Crescer) of University of Sao Paulo's Integrated Libraries System (SIBi/USP). SIBi/USP understands that continuous qualification aims at promoting organizational changes and developing competencies in order to improve the quality of products and services offered. To achieve these goals, training sessions, events, courses (remote and *in loco*) are developed and provided on a yearly basis, among other activities that promote professional development. Since the beginning of the process in 2002, 6,467 qualification opportunities for library professionals have been offered at different management levels (basic, technicians, and qualified librarians). The present study shows the evolution of these processes and some results that indicate the quality improvement in products and services offered to the academic community.

Keywords: Staff training and development; University Libraries; Portal.

1 Introduction

The University of São Paulo's Integrated Libraries System – SIBi/USP has its library teams spread in 40 specialized libraries located at USP's teaching and research units, Centers, Hospitals and Museums, as well as at its own Technical Department. The staff totals 789 employees, being 322 librarians, 282 library assistants (technical level) and 185 library assistants (basic level).

Since SIBi/USP creation, the concern about staff training and development has taken into account the activities developed in order to establish standardized systemic procedures for the processes elaborated in the collection development area, information treatment and access.

In 1996 the "SIBi/USP Staff Training and Development Project: development of a methodological model for environments undergoing remodeling process, based on quality management principles" [1] was implemented as part of the USP's Quality and Productivity Management Program. This project justified the inclusion of the SIBi/USP as a budget unit for the allocation of financial resources aiming at the expansion of training programs and Human Resources development, which has occurred since 1997.

The organization atmosphere arisen from the Project and the need of guidelines for the resources expenditure caused the

expectation of a policy for implementation of continuing staff training and development, in order to provide behavioral and organizational changes, especially for products and services quality.

In the SIBi/USP's Strategic Planning for 2002, the training and development area was established as one of the systemic strategies, resulting in the proposal of the CRESCER Project – Institutionalize procedures for the continuing staff training and development. A work team consisting of librarians from different units of the System was assigned for the Project operationalization, whose final report is available at: http://vega.sibi.usp.br/gestao/Proj15/crescer_rel_final.doc

2 Guidelines for staff training and development

The document on "Competencies for the 21st century information professionals' of the Special Librarians Association", identifies four major areas of competence in which information professional must demonstrate professional skill, namely: managing information organizations, managing information resources, managing information services and applying information tools and technologies" [9].

According to Nascimento [8] the information professional must develop technical skills within his performance area; social skills oriented to interaction, cooperation and ease of communication, cultural and emotional skills that encourage the involvement and development of self-esteem and creativity.

Hommerging and Vergueiro [7] add to these skills: wider exposure and participation in the organization's internal policies; initiative in problem solving; performance as a marketing element.

Giesecke et al. [5] propose a set of competencies to be developed by professionals working at university libraries where interpersonal, managerial and technical skills are included.

In a survey on labor market requirements for librarians in the United Kingdom, the following skills, among others, were pointed out: ability to work under pressure; flexibility; ability to deal with several users; writing skills; inquisitive spirit; reflection; dedication; leadership and innovation [6].

According to TACHIZAWA; FERREIRA; FORTUNA [11] the development of training and development programs must

aim at maximizing the learning potential and productive capacity of individuals, providing the acquisition of new skills, new knowledge, as well as behavioral and attitude changes. In order to guarantee the efficiency, the training program has to be linked to the goals and strategies of the organization, foreseeing the following phases for its elaboration: 1) training needs diagnosis; 2) schedule definition from the diagnosis made; 3) implementation and execution; 4) results assessment.

When discussing about the basic conditions for the effective development of corporate university projects, Eboli [2] notes that they must be based on the identification of the crucial competencies, presuming the involvement of all organization's segments; application of multiple learning modes; adoption of knowledge management concepts; continuous results assessment, aiming at the business goals.

Gerrard [4], on his turn, analyzes the elements required for the implementation of effective personnel training and development programs in libraries and information services, pointing out: 1) support from management and team; 2) review of potential training and development practices already in progress; 3) needs survey; 4) implementation; 5) assessment.

The development of the Project regarding the institutionalization of continuous training and development process for System teams was based on the assumption that staff training and development allows: the creation of a learning culture in the organization; the development of talents aligned with the System mission and goals; encouragement towards individual and organizational development, contributing for the System flexibility and agility to face challenges and anticipate future scenarios.

From the premises listed, the following strategy was adopted:

- Analysis of specialized literature and experiences in the area;
- Survey of ongoing initiatives by means of a questionnaire directed to SIBi/USP libraries;
- Survey of the individual training and development demand existing in the Technical Department, Libraries and other project teams, by means of a form forwarded to all of the System participants.

The Project resulted in the documents "Guidelines for SIBi/USP staff training and development" and "Process flow". Details on the documents content and project assumptions and strategies can be checked at: http://vega.sibi.usp.br/gestao/Proj15/crescer_rel_final.doc.

Guidelines describe the institutional commitment to team continuous training and development, for the creation of a learning culture that fosters both the individual and organizational development. Training and development actions oriented to the three functional levels (college, technical and basic) are foreseen in three areas: 1) initial training; 2) hands-on training; 3) enhancement. The following instruments are recommended for the implementation of the Training and development Policy: 1) Annual Training and development Plan; 2) Performance and

Assessment Reports of Actions and Annual Training and development Plan; 3) Management Information Systems on the SIBi/USP Training and development Actions. In addition, the creation of an administrative infrastructure together with the SIBi/USP Technical Department is proposed for the coordination and implementation of the Training and development Program in a continuous flow.

From the training and development needs identified in the above mentioned studies, a Capacity Plan - as a test for the process formalization - was proposed by the Project Team and Implemented by the SIBi/USP Technical Department.

3 SIBi/USP Training and Development Portal

According to Eboli [2], the commitment of contemporary organizations to the education and development of people has acquired an increasingly relevance in the international scenario, to the extent of introducing itself as a sustainable competitive edge, culminating with the arising of corporate universities as instruments for the "alignment and development of human talents towards corporate strategies." (p. 103). According to the author, corporate universities can be seen as a "system of individual development supported by the management of people by competencies." (p. 104).

For Terra and Gordon [2] corporate portals must be implemented with "a focus on Knowledge Management", thus being able to bring about changes in corporate operations. The authors emphasize that today the implementation of corporate portals is basically performed to meet the needs of employees, communities, and even the needs of the large network that goes beyond corporate boundaries. These portals, in many aspects, "represent one of the first big IT's [Information Technology] waves based on the need of a *wide* users database."

The use of web resources, and more specifically, the creation of portals aiming at the continuous professional development in the organizations, has become an increasing trend which has also been adopted in libraries and information services environments.

According to Smith [10], "increasingly information work involves virtual relationships with team members, clients, and suppliers. Professionals who pursue CPE through web-based learning will not just be learning specific skills, but will be experiencing the information management environment of the 21st century".

Therefore, the second phase of the Projeto Crescer [Grow Project] was developed in 2003 and comprised the planning and implementation of the Training and development Portal for the SIBi/USP teams, from the following phases:

- Content identification and definition;
- Establishment of the Portal structure;
- Development of the Portal graphic design;
- Elaboration of Portal contents;

- Definition and modeling of databases for Portal maintenance;
- Establishment of standards and procedures for the description of database information;
- Definition of platforms and tools for the implementation of the Portal;
- Development of the Portal prototype;
- Inclusion of the Training and development Portal in the SIBi/USP (SIBiNet) Service Network;
- Opening and release of the Portal;
- Elaboration of the Portal operational flows and maintenance routines.

The Portal was open in December 2003, during the SIBi/USP Internal Seminar, presenting the following structure:

- About SIBi/USP: History, Proposal;
- Training Opportunities: Courses / Manuals / Tutorials, Integration Program;
- Reading Room: Electronic Publications, System-Generated Knowledge, Texts of Interest, Sites of Interest and Curiosities;
- Events;
- Competencies: Curricula Pool and Successful Experiences;
- Careers & Employment: Library positions and Career plan;
- News;
- What's new on the site.

4 SIBi/USP training and development initiatives: 2002-2005

As mentioned above, the first formal training and development plan established in 2002 set the institutionalization of the System process, with developments in the following years.

The approved Guidelines included a recommendation regarding the need to create a new administrative infrastructure for the coordination of the SIBi/USP training and development area. Then, a team was built inside the Technical Department, accounting for the planning, implementation and monitoring of the System team training and development activities.

The range and diversity of the needs pointed out by the teams are being gradually accomplished in compliance with the systemic guidelines and strategies, at short and medium terms. Thus, several training and development actions were implemented and/ or subsidized, comprehending specific

areas of librarianship and information science, oriented to the three professional categories working with the System: librarians and library assistants (technical and basic levels).

Courses and/ or events provided covered the following areas: Management, Training and Development for Services (Operational) and Information Technology. The number and type of actions and sessions offered in the last four years can be verified in the tables below:

Area	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total
Management	04 courses	08 courses	10 courses	17 courses	39
	11 sessions	10 sessions	17 sessions	24 sessions	62
Training and development for Services (Operational)	03 courses	14 courses	14 courses	21 courses	52
	04 sessions	41 sessions	33 sessions	42 sessions	120
Information Technology	01 course	-	-	04 courses	05
	02 sessions	-	-	04 sessions	06
TOTAL	08 courses	22 courses	24 courses	42 courses	96
	17 sessions	51 sessions	50 sessions	70 sessions	188

Fig. 1: Overview of training and development actions: 2002-2005

Area	Content/ Themes
Management	Bibliometrics and Scientometrics Collections development policy Commitment Digital libraries Innovation Interpersonal relations Knowledge Management Leadership Librarian's social role Management System Marketing Performance Indicators Personnel Management Quality Scientific Publishing Teamwork University libraries
Training and development for Services (Operational)	AACR2 Access to online databases Catalogation Conservation / Preservation of documents Copyright E-books EAD [distance learning] Tools Indexing Metadata Oral presentation techniques
Information Technology	Front-Page Flash Design PHP basic PHP advanced Excel advanced
Events	National Conference of University Libraries SIBi/USP Internal Conference Cruesp/Libraries Conference Ala Annual Conference Brazilian Congress of Biblioteconomy and documentation IFLA Pre Meeting Marketing International Conference of digital Libraries

Fig 2: Content of courses/ Events: 2002-2005

From the demand identified in the training and development needs survey, a priority was given to the execution of actions oriented to the quality of services and products provided by the libraries, as a result of the SIBi/USP Quality Assessment Program initiated in 2002.

A course was planned in 2003 with the specific purpose of gathering three categories of System professionals and establishing a forum for the exchange of reflections and experiences about actions that bring about and foster institutional and innovation commitment. The outcomes of these forums subsidized the strategic planning of the following year.

In 2004 the first SIBi/USP experience was initiated by using EAD [distance learning] tools, and in partnership with the APBAD ([Portuguese Association of Librarians, Archivists and Documentalists) the course Quality in Information Services was provided, whose curriculum developed

originated the book "Qualidade em Serviços de Informação: uma experiência em EAD" (Quality in Information Services: an experience in EAD) [3].

In the same year, the SIBi/USP Internal Seminar, which had been held in the two previous years, reached a new dimension and was turned into the "I Seminar of CRUESP/Libraries Consortium' Experience Exchange – I Seminário de Compartilhamento das Experiências do Consórcio/Bibliotecas". SIBi/USP participates in this Consortium that gathers the library systems of the three state universities of São Paulo (USP, UNESP and UNICAMP). The opening for the participation of CRUESP librarians amplified the possibilities of experience exchanges, as well as integration among professionals. From this experience, a course in EAD was planned in 2005, in the indexing area, oriented to professionals of the institutions that participate in the consortium.

As the virtual environment has been extensively used to provide training in services, all required manuals and features used by the professionals for the maintenance and management of USP bibliographic databases – Dedalus are stored and available in a space created on the SIBi/USP site, called "Technical Area".

Quality and productivity are strategic university guidelines and they have been incorporated by the System since 1995. Upon this directive, an effort was made to increment initiatives towards the training and development of teams regarding quality management principles and tools. The experience of the Divisão de Biblioteca da Escola Superior de Agricultura Luiz de Queiroz/USP [Library Division of the Agriculture School Luiz de Queiroz/ USP] originated a Project called "Quality Management System" relying on the participation of 14 libraries plus the Technical Department. The assumption of the model adopted in this project is to motivate the commitment to quality improvement of services and products offered, fostering team potential and skills.

5 Impact on libraries' daily routine

Participants evaluated all events performed in the period. The professionals' impressions highlight the great level of receptiveness and acceptance of the training and development program, evidencing the adequacy of the actions developed.

The main program innovation is on the assumption of reaching the library team as a whole, regardless of positions or functions performed, which is opposed to the previous common trend of including only librarians. This guideline had a positive impact on the receptiveness and involvement of professionals in the proposed actions, contributing, on a favorable basis, to the organizational atmosphere.

There was also a gradual increase in the number of participants in training initiatives, totaling 6,646 professionals between 2002 and 2005, as explained in the table below:

Year	Total of trained employees			Grand Total *
	S	T	B	
2002	466	255	102	823
2003	1,336	289	170	1,795
2004	1,039	231	110	1,380
2005	2,012	360	96	2,468
TOTAL	4,853	1,135	478	6,466

* Comprises 1,212 participations of people external to SIBi/USP.

Fig. 3: Total of trained employees

It must be emphasized that the statistics presented in this study refer to systemic initiatives, that is, led by the Technical Department and directed to all Libraries. However, each Unit also keeps activities in services training or continuous education for its own teams.

SIBi/USP librarians have as tradition the presentation and publication of case studies in specialized events and magazines. However, in the last four years, an increase in the number of papers published by the System professionals, compared to previous years, has been evidenced, as it can be seen in the address: <http://www.usp.br/sibi> - Knowledge produced by SIBi/USP and shown in the following figure:

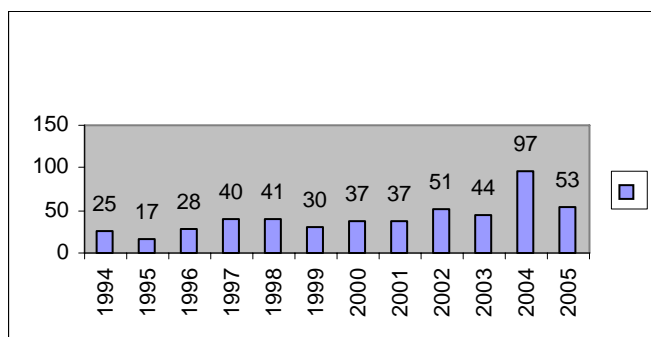


Fig.4: Evolution of Papers Published by the SIBi Staff (1994-2005)

Another positive indicator of the training and development program was realized during the Career Development Program implemented by the University Administration Council in 2005. One of the promotion criteria was the personal commitment to continuous improvement, translated into the participation in courses, events, training and publications. Although this program has not been completed in all units, the actions of the System library managers point out the good development of the teams compared to other academic and administrative sectors of the University.

6 Final considerations

The development and immediate results of the program exposed the relevance of the continuous training and development theme for the organizations in general, especially for libraries and information services.

Therefore, the guidelines and initiatives adopted in the SIBi/USP team training and development process are in line with the current trends of creating a permanent learning environment, revealing the commitment of the institution and its members with the continuous personal and organizational enhancement, focusing on the quality of products and services provided.

The assessment of the results obtained so far points towards some future trends and guidelines, such as the increase in the option of web resources and distance education, as well as the definition and implementation of indicators to measure the efficiency of training courses offered.

At the same time, there is the basic assumption in the sense of keeping ongoing initiatives to motivate the team commitment spirit towards continuous quality improvement of products and services provided by libraries to the user community.

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