From Gutenberg to Gates: Transforming the Unisa Library

Prof. John Willemse
Executive Director, Dept. of Library Services
University of South Africa
willej@alpha.unisa.ac.za
http://www.unisa.ac.za/library/index.html

Abstract

Unisa started in 1947 as one of the first universities in the world to offer distance education as its only task. Both the government and employers were sceptical and the university had to go to great lengths to establish the quality of its programmes. When this happened the university experienced thirty years of constant growth in student numbers, averaging about 9 percent per annum and including increasing numbers of post graduates. Its mode of teaching was mostly that of a print based correspondence course emulating tuition at fulltime institutions. The content of formal lectures is provided by way of printed study guides and supplemented by prescribed text books. Study letters provide informal information on the course, including assignments students have to complete and references to literature students need to consult.

Due to South Africa’s demographics, with many students living far away from any reasonable library service, the government in the early sixties agreed to subsidise the Unisa library on almost the same fulltime-equivalent student basis as residential universities. Due to the growth in student numbers this has resulted in the Unisa library developing into a major academic library. The focus has been on the provision of recommended books needed by its students for their assignments by way of a separate study collection with branches in the major urban areas and on the requirements for information and information resources by its lecturers and researchers. A major feature of the library is its team of subject librarians who assist the latter with their individual information needs, doing extensive literature surveys and obtaining any publications not available through interlending or document supply. Technology and interlibrary cooperation has been used wherever appropriate to improve the service. More recently training in library and information skills has received increased attention. The library developed an extensive performance measurement programme to determine the effectiveness of its services.

The developments in information and communication technology have been closely studied and integrated into the library’s service as far as possible. It is accepted that electronic online information services will soon be preferred by students and staff alike. Unfortunately at this time the economic climate deteriorated and financial support for universities decreased as in many other countries in the world, exacerbated by the decline in the South African currency, with the result that the acquisition of books and journals has been halved and that funding of expensive electronic services has become a real problem. At the same time the political changes in South Africa resulted in the need for affirmative action programmes and pressure for far reaching organisational change.
There has also been strong pressure from the government for drastic changes in the higher education system to accommodate large numbers of black students who did not have the opportunity for a tertiary education in the past.

The impact of the above on Unisa and its library has been quite severe. Where it used to have a monopoly in distance education, many local as well as overseas universities are at present offering programmes of various kinds, particularly in those fields of study which have been most profitable. This has resulted in first a stabilising and lately a decrease in student registrations - thus worsening the financial situation. A serious decrease in government subsidy to universities and other factors has in fact resulted in a major budget deficit in 1997 which has compelled the university into an extensive downsizing and rationalisation exercise which has had a major influence on the library's strategic planning approach.

Taking into account all the strategic issues impacting on the library, it was clear that a significant transformation of the library was required if it was to remain relevant and realise its vision that “through a client driven focus we are the preferred source of academic information services for the University where, in a dynamic environment, skilled and dedicated staff are a guarantee of quality service”.

After considering the available options it was decided to follow the process reengineering route. Although significant progress was made, a number of problems resulted in a change of consultants halfway through the project. Building on the results of the project at that stage a strategic enterprise model was followed. It was realised that the Library had two option, either seriously reduce cost, which would inevitably have a negative impact on its services, or generate alternative revenue streams. In the light of the negative longterm ramifications of downsizing the possibilities of generating its own income over and above the government funding were critically examined.

The objectives of the Library for this exercise had to be in line with its vision and mission. It therefore has to offer relevant services to both its current as well as its future clients and demonstrate to them and all other stakeholders that it adds value to its services that way. Obviously all available resources, whether they are financial, human or technological need to be used to their maximum advantage. One of the most important objectives is to be less dependant on the funding received from the University, which depends on the government subsidy and which is unlikely to increase to the same extent as the prices of books, journals and other costs.

The following design principles were agreed upon with the University management. The Library is allowed to make available and offer its services outside of the Unisa community on the proviso that the basic services to the Unisa community, which are funded by the subsidy, will not be adversely affected. Any additional investment in technological and other developments needs to be fully justified by either savings or enhanced services. And most importantly the Library should not do anything that is not in line with Unisa’s overall services and the changes taking place in the institution at large.
Five service groups were identified as those which are its core services and those most likely to make the Library realise its objectives. They obviously include the basic traditional services of making available books and journals as well as audio-visual information sources and information provision services, though these will be developed to include new ways of delivery. New service groups relate to web and full text information services and training services in information and other relevant skills, which the library has been offering on a limited scale but which have to be significantly expanded. The Library has been offering its expertise to other institutions from time to time and its is believed that a wider market exits for these services, which should be exploited.

When the viability of the above services were analyst, four factors were identified which were critical to the success of most or all of them. Firstly there is a lack of business culture, which includes the fact that there no systems are in place to receive payment for services, and that the library has virtually no marketing expertise. Secondly, many different technological development are in place, but they need to be integrated within the Library as well as with other developments within the University. Copyright has been and will be a major issue, particularly if we are to offer our services on a commercial basis. Fourthly there exist structural and organisational problems which will have to be addressed as it is almost impossible to move staff to other positions and a new organisational structure with teams in a process based environment is required. Staff themselves will have to developed so that they are empowered to make their own decision within clearly defined boundaries of responsibility and policies decided upon by themselves.

Project plans have been drawn up and project implementation teams are being constituted for each of the services as well as for the critical success factors to put the above mentioned developments into place within the next six to eight months.
From Gutenberg to Gates
Transforming the Unisa Library

John Willemse

Executive Director: Library Services
University of South Africa

Address: Unisa Library
P O Box 392
PRETORIA
0003
Republic of South Africa

E-mail: willej@alpha.unisa.ac.za

Web: http://www.unisa.ac.za/library/index.html

UNISA AS MOTHER UNIVERSITY

University of the Cape of Good Hope 1873
examining body/awarding degrees
constituent colleges
Unisa 1916
colleges become autonomous
independent students
UNISA AS DISTANCE TEACHING UNIVERSITY

Van der Walt report 1946
support independent learners
based on full time model

printed study guides
prescribed text books
study letters
assignments/recommended books

UNISA AS DISTANCE TEACHING UNIVERSITY

slow start /new concept

government, employers sceptical
concentrate on quality

strong growth after acceptance

six faculties
post graduate studies
increasing student numbers
TRADITIONAL LIBRARY SERVICES (1)

initial prescribed books service
other libraries to supply reading

local conditions require self-sufficient service
many students far from libraries

funding formula as for residential universities
fte-based
proper library service

TRADITIONAL LIBRARY SERVICES (2)

study collection and branches
multi copy recommended books
branches in major urban areas
postal service, students pays return postage

research collections
student numbers/subsidy formula
major collections in humanities/social sciences
APPROACH TO SERVICE

promote university programmes

study
research

primary services

information sources
information/subject reference
library and information literacy

need for cooperation

use of technology

TIMES OF CHANGE

technological
economical
organisational
socio-political/SA
higher education
IMPACT ON UNISA

competition

SA universities
world wide

deceasing funding

decreasing student numbers

changing tuition mode

affirmative action

NEW STRATEGIC PLANNING APPROACH

vision

mission

strategic goals

need for transformation
UNISA - Department of Library Services

Presentation to UNISA Management Committee
October, 1998

Content

- Background
- Library Objectives
- Design Principles
- Proposed Key Changes
- Key Services the Library will Offer
- Services & Markets
  - Current & Proposed
- The Online Library
- Critical Success Factors
- Implementation
Background

- In 1997, the Library undertook an internal process reengineering project focussing on:
  - Core vs non-core activities,
  - Organisational structures, and
  - Process redesign
- Project recommendations were not implemented.
  - Programme Optimum changed the project brief to include significant downsizing objectives.
  - Downsizing objectives were renegotiated to 10% per annum over two years (natural attrition).
- Library was faced with two broad scenarios:
  - Cost Reduction within the existing market framework
  - Alternative Revenue streams through redesigned services and additional markets
- Aware of the negative long term ramifications of downsizing, the Library needed to examine the second option in terms of:
  - Acceptability - Market acceptance of redesigned services,
  - Feasibility - Implementability with current competencies, technology and processes, and
  - Financial viability of services

Library Objectives

- Offer relevant services to current and potential clients
- Demonstrate value-add to our stakeholders
- Maximise use of our resources to improve our financial position
- Decrease our dependence on UNISA funding
- Add more value to become more competitive
Design Principles

- Library is allowed to offer its services outside of the UNISA community
- Basic Services to UNISA community will not be adversely affected
- Additional spending on, for instance, technology must be justifiable
- Services designed cannot be out-of-line with UNISA “Big picture”
- Changes required cannot be out-of-line with UNISA “Big picture”

Proposed Key Changes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing</th>
<th>Markets</th>
<th>New</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve service levels</td>
<td>Introduce chargeable services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Increase market scope
- Offer services beyond UNISA community (current market) to other markets ranging from certificate students to other libraries

Improve existing service levels
- Improve and package services for specific target markets
- Increase choices for access and delivery

Expand services
- Repackage existing services or service capabilities for specific markets

Introduce chargeable services
- Differentiated pricing structures according to target market and service

Redeployment of resources
- Focus on value added Library Services and increased capacity utilisation
Services the Library will Offer

Lending of research and study collection Books & Journals
- Access to information on subjects relevant both to study courses and a wide range of subjects available for loan in book or journal form; Delivery and collection of material, self-issuing method, flexible lending quotas & flexible loan periods

Lending of Non-Printed Material (CDs, Videos, Tapes, etc.)
- Access to recorded images, recorded sound and microfilmed information on a specific range of subjects; Provision of equipment; Delivery and collection, Self-issuing, flexible lending quotas & flexible loan periods

Web Services and Access to Full Text Information
- Immediate and convenient access to information independent of geography and time via a seamless non-human interface, using software for search and display. Original content will include subject based data warehouse, unique African content, commercial links & websites

Services the Library will Offer

Information Provision Services
- Mediated access to bibliographic references answering queries, and performance of secondary research.
- Provision of customized information

Training Services
- Offering library, information skills, research skills training courses across a variety of media from in class room to internet to video based courses

Consulting Services
- Offering Library Set-up and information management consulting services, ranging from once-off studies to insourcing of activities for libraries and commercial clients
### Proposed changes in Service Access & Delivery

#### Current Modes of Access & Delivery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Books &amp; Journals</th>
<th>Non-Published Material</th>
<th>Access to Full Text Info</th>
<th>Info. Provision Services</th>
<th>Training Services</th>
<th>Consulting Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Commercial Market&quot;</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Libraries &amp; Bids</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSA Certificate Students</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSA Learners</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSA M.D Students</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSA Staff</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Proposed Modes of Access & Delivery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Books &amp; Journals</th>
<th>Non-Published Material</th>
<th>Access to Full Text Info</th>
<th>Info. Provision Services</th>
<th>Training Services</th>
<th>Consulting Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Commercial Market&quot;</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Libraries &amp; Bids</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSA Certificate Students</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSA Learners</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSA M.D Students</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSA Staff</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Proposed changes in the Pricing of Services

#### Current Pricing Mechanisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Books &amp; Journals</th>
<th>Non-Published Material</th>
<th>Access to Full Text Info</th>
<th>Info. Provision Services</th>
<th>Training Services</th>
<th>Consulting Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Commercial Market&quot;</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Libraries &amp; Bids</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSA Certificate Students</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSA Learners</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSA M.D Students</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSA Staff</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Proposed Pricing Mechanisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Books &amp; Journals</th>
<th>Non-Published Material</th>
<th>Access to Full Text Info</th>
<th>Info. Provision Services</th>
<th>Training Services</th>
<th>Consulting Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Commercial Market&quot;</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Libraries &amp; Bids</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSA Certificate Students</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSA Learners</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSA M.D Students</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSA Staff</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Critical Success Factors - Across Services

- Business Approach
  - We are not geared to receive money from those willing to pay
  - We have little to no marketing competency

- Technology
  - We are not yet ready to offer fully integrated services

- Copyright
  - Cannot be ignored - must be negotiated

- Structural Flexibility
  - We cannot move staff to where we need or want them
  - Staff needs to be empowered to make customer service decisions
The UNISA Online Library

- Betsy Goodman - sitting in front of her PC in Johannesburg requires information on a specific topic and stumbles (not by accident, but through the correct marketing efforts) upon the UNISA LIBRARY SITE.
- Betsy browses through the UNISA CATALOGUE and finds a Full Text Article abstract and a book which meet her requirements.
- Betsy checks the material, description as well as real-time availability online.
- She now wants to place a request online.

- If Betsy is a registered student, staff member or belongs to some other category of client with which the library has existing arrangements, her entering a specific number will process this request immediately.
- If Betsy never before had anything to do with UNISA, she will be invited to join as a member and/or to give her credit card details.

- She now specifies delivery method and delivery charges are automatically added to the final amount.
- The credit card information is passed on to Betsy's and UNISA LIBRARY's respective banks for authorization.
- Just seconds later, Betsy's credit card is approved.

The UNISA Online Library

- Still online, she sees that her request has been accepted, and she is given an order number.
- She is now able to download the full text document, review and print it.

- Within seconds, a pick list prints at the LIBRARY's LENDING DEPT. along with bar code that contains a record of the transaction and a link to Betsy's master record.
- Once the bar code is scanned, a packing slip, a bar coded returns label and a shipping label are automatically printed.

- Simultaneous, in real-time:
  - Betsy is sent an e-mail notifying her that her book is being shipped and providing a shipment tracking number and an expected time of arrival.
  - The designated UNISA Carrier picks up the package on its scheduled daily run. He has been automatically informed of the package routing details.
  - She can now check the whereabouts of her package on the carrier's website.
The UNISA Online Library

- The following UNISA LIBRARY SYSTEMS get updated automatically
  - General ledger,
  - Accounts payable,
  - Accounts receivables
  - Book inventory system.

- Some days later Betsy receives her book, depending on the method of delivery she chose, the book could be delivered by mail, courier, etc.
- She is one happy customer
- The book arrived with a slip specifying the nearest point of drop off, the date for collections, or the phone number to dial for scheduled fetching.

- In case, Betsy might forget to return the book by the specified date:
  - The system follows up with an email one week before the specified return date.
  - The system automatically debits her credit card after a time period of 14 days.
  - The book gets delivered by her to a specified drop off point and picked up by the carrier from there on his scheduled route.

Implementation
Shifting mindsets, attitudes and behaviours

- Organisation-wide Culture change
  - Moving from “free service” to “fee service”
  - Multi-skilled, empowered employee providing self-directed services
  - Teams operating in a flexible, process-based organisational structure
  - Individuals assuming personal responsibility for learning and advancement

- Project Specific Service provision
  - Individual contribution to and responsibility for process operation
  - Customer-focussed attitudes and behaviours

- Change Management process
  - Advanced change management technology transferred to selected change agents
  - Detailed activities shown in all project plans
  - Activities address organisational climate and readiness
  - Process becomes a consistent way of managing change

- Transitional Structure
  - Definition of interim roles and responsibilities
  - Allocation of resources to interim structures
  - Adjust and negotiate interim workloads

---

Four Critical Projects

- Establishment of a Business Framework
  - Development of Policies, Systems, Processes and Training to allow the Library to provide commercial services.
  - Acquisition or development of appropriate marketing competencies

- Clarification of Copyright Issues
  - Investigation of key acts and licensing agreements for commercial information provision.
  - Negotiations with stakeholders and suppliers.
  - Determination of costs

- Technology Integration
  - Integration of disparate systems to provide streamlined and efficient service to existing and new customer base.
  - Determination of funding requirements.
  - Installation.

- People Management Framework
  - Development of Structuring Principles for Service projects.
  - Development of desired structural end-state
  - Redeployment Strategy
  - Interlinkages with Remuneration, Performance Management, Training & Development
Service Development Projects

6 - 8 Months

Market review
Process redesign
Staffing requirements
Structural requirements
Physical infrastructure
Competency audit
Communications planning
Intervention planning
Budgeting
Implementation timing
Stakeholder negotiations

Service Dependent
Integration &
Implementation
Restructuring &
Redeployment

5/10/13

Planning
Additional work - iterations - implications

Key UNISA Decision Points

Strategic Alignment
- Agreement on proposed initiatives and services

People Management
- Remuneration, performance management and development policies
- Redeployment of staff and organisational restructuring = policy
- Equity and transformation policies

Commercial Initiatives
- Financial policies
- Systems Integration
- Marketing policies

Technology Integration
- Integration of initiatives with existing technology plan
- Technical technology platform standardisation

Budget Allocation
- Integration of project budgets into overall Library budget and UNISA transformation budget
- Funding of technology platforms
- Revenue allocation

9/10/13

Page 20