



***1 Dec 2004....Online 2004
Cilip Event***

***No Going Back?...
Outsourcing Information services***

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No going back...Outsourcing

Talk will cover:

- The background to outsourcing and externalization
- Questions to ask before outsourcing
- Information Audit and the results
- Advantages and disadvantages
- Information ownership; using an information service provider
- Outsourcing agreements and keeping the agreements on target
- Keeping staff and users happy
- Communications!



Information abounds.....

- *Twenty years ago information doubled every 15 to 20 years.*

In contrast, within the next two decades, information is expected to double every 6 months

So Work Smarter not Harder.....

Keep assessing the services you provide, talk to the users, keep developing your staff and keep up with the latest trends and information!



Information abounds.....

- Increased access to large amount of validated and authoritative information sources
- Rapid developments
 - better browsers
 - technology more robust
 - variety of full text delivery, sgml, html, xml, pdf, word docs etc
- Wide choice
 - standalone PCs and CD-ROMs
 - networked e.g. Intranets in an organisation
 - services via the Internet
- Priced and free



Outsourcing.....

- The background to outsourcing and externalization
- Many examples over the decades:
 - Routine book servicing tasks.. labelling, bookbinding, fitting jackets etc
 - Pre-Book selection, journals subscriptions
 - Cataloguing
 - Support services – IT
 - Security, cleaning and maintenance



No Going Back.....

Questions to ask before any outsourcing takes place

- *What is the core business?*
- *How are we are doing?*
- *Why is this job done, need it be continued, can the need for it be avoided?*
- *How is it done, why this way? can a better way be found?*
- *When is it done, why then? can a better time be found?*
- *Where is it done, why there? can a better place be found?*
- *Who does this job? why is it done by them/him/her? is there someone else - inside the organization or outside, who can do this job?*



No Going Back.....

Questions to ask before any outsourcing takes place

- *Is there someone else - inside the organization or outside, who can do this job?*
- *Are the staff able to deliver the services/products - what training will be needed?*
- Where the question has been asked with the word "can?" ask it again with the word "should?"
- This will open up two further issues for decision, depending on the answer to the question containing the word "can?" If the answer was "no", is it worth investing to find out whether a way can be found to do things better, and if the answer was "yes", does it follow that the service should go to the alternative supplier or means of providing the service?



No Going Back.....

Questions to ask before any outsourcing takes place

- Quality of service and your customers - make them aware that they too have a role to play. Customers should:
 - *be aware of what the information service can do*
 - *identify their information problems/needs*
 - *agree to bring them to the information service as first port of call*
 - *communicate them to the information service staff and discuss them*
 - *give feedback to the information service*
 - *keep information service staff aware of their changing subject interests*
 - *involve the information service in projects that have information implications*



No Going Back.....

Questions to ask before any outsourcing takes place

- At the end of the day it is the customer who really decides the quality of the services, by:
 - *making demands for improvements on an existing service*
 - *asking for new services*
 - *showing a willingness to co-operate*



No Going back ...Outsourcing..... Information Audit

An information audit provides the organization with a wealth of important data such as:

- what information exists within the organization
- where it is located
- how many sections within the organization or the community being served have their own collections of information, or have an official branch of the information service
- what information the organization needs and when it is needed
- who uses it
- what gaps exist
- where potential customers for information are in the organization



No Going back ...Outsourcing..... Information Audit

- why people use a particular service or source of information in preference to others
- why some people use the service frequently or occasionally
- why some people never use the service
- how to produce the information in the format needed
- what training is needed for both staff and users
- Armed with this data, the LIS manager can begin to put together the range of services that will meet the needs of the greatest number of users in the most cost effective way.



No Going Back.... Outsourcing..... Advantages and Disadvantages

- Minimizing the risk....
- that there is a sufficiently large supplier base able to offer the service;
- that a large enough number of them are prepared to make a bid at a reasonable price;
- that you have the resources to manage the resulting agreement or contract
- Flexible specification ..If you draw up a specification so inflexible that it leads you into a one-to-one agreement with an inexperienced or poor supplier, you have effectively cut off the possibility of any worthwhile service development.
- Similarly if you choose to enter an area where there is only one supplier, you are at risk if that company's fortunes fail, and may find yourselves subject to unexpected price rises or shortfalls in service quality.



No Going Back.... Outsourcing..... Advantages and Disadvantages .. Other points

- Question of ownership... of service... stock and even staff
- Information technology and ISPs
- Technical services – e.g. cataloguing – standard services
- Collection development e.g. Liverpool experiment
- Document delivery
- Enquiry services
- Preservation



No Going Back.... Outsourcing..... Advantages and Disadvantages .. Other points

- Staff expectations – how does the information professional fit into all this
- Suppliers' expectation
- Users expectations
- Management expectations
- Feedback
- Effect on services



No Going Back.... Outsourcing..... Agreements

- Selecting the suppliers
- Making the agreements must involve your legal and financial departments
- Copyright, licences and other documents
- Contract period
- Other services to outsource



No Going Back.... Outsourcing..... Agreements

- **Scheduling the agreement – the PLAN with timing**
- **Do not underestimate the time it will take**
- **Selecting the suppliers – use the various sources e.g. CILIP Buyers' Guide, adverts, word of mouth!!!**
- **Making the agreements must involve your legal and financial departments**
- **Contract period**
- **Other services to outsource**
- **Among the types of supplier organisation that might wish to bid are these:**
 - **specialist library and information consultancies**
 - **specialist library materials suppliers**
 - **facilities management companies**
 - **other libraries, e.g. national libraries, other libraries in the sector, specialist libraries**



No Going Back.... Outsourcing.....Evaluation

- The bid evaluation is likely to be managed in line with your organisation's rules on tendering and contracting - But consider these also
- How closely does the bid match what you specified? Has it met all the essential requirements, and how does it deal with desirable requirements?
- What weighting do you give to the various elements listed in the specification? In other words, would you give more weight to (say) a supplier who offered to provide and maintain a library computer installation with a two hour maximum time to fix than to one who offered a four hour time to fix? And if so, how is that reflected in the weighting for the importance of cost?
- What has the supplier offered you that you weren't expecting? Has he for example thrown in an offer of free book servicing as well as a price discount



No Going Back.... Outsourcing.....Evaluation

- How much confidence do you have in the supplier's promises?
- Are there factors (like geographic location) that make you doubt that the service can be delivered as offered and does the supplier say how these will be overcome? (One of us has seen a bid that in effect said "we can't do what you want, but if you award us the business we'll set up a UK subsidiary to serve you" – a great promise but how long would it take to put into effect and to be running well enough to provide the service quality wanted?)
- You could set these and other selection criteria out in a table to help you
- Making the agreements must involve your legal and financial departments
- Contract period – decide what is right for you ...
- Other services to outsource



No Going Back.... Outsourcing..... Agreements

What to include in your outsourcing agreement ... basic objectives:

- it states what the customer needs by providing a service statement
- it shows the mechanics and processes of fulfilling those needs
- it describes the quantities of work to be handled
- the ways of measuring them

In doing this it:

- records what the purchaser wishes to buy and therefore what the supplier is expected to provide
- describes the agreed services in such a way that it is precise enough to act as an agreement but not so prescriptive that it prevents service development or precludes negotiated change to improve service



No Going Back.... Outsourcing..... Agreements

- “Commercial” see Pantry and Griffiths books published by Facet Publishing www.facetpublishing.co.uk also on www.sheilapantry.com.books
- *Managing Outsourcing in library and information services*
- *The Complete Guide to Preparing and Implementing Service Level Agreements*



No Going Back.... Outsourcing..... Agreements

- Keeping people in the picture
- What agreements do not do
- Negotiating and signing the agreement
- Strategies for reaching agreements
- Managing multiple agreements
- Monitoring agreements



No Going Back.... Outsourcing...

Outsourcing agreements and keeping the agreements on target

- Keeping staff happy - continuous dialogue
- and users happy – continuous dialogue – remember requirements change
- Keep the agreements on target including service monitoring
- Communicate, Communicate and Communicate again!



No Going Back.... Outsourcing...

- We hope that we have helped you to think about the Questions to ask before outsourcing
- Information Audit and the results
- Advantages and disadvantages
- Information ownership; using an information service provider
- Outsourcing agreements and keeping the agreements on target
- Keeping staff and users happy
- Communications!
- Need to continually examine the current situation and ensure that information collection and access is adequately funded



No Going Back - Outsourcing

Remember -

- Work smarter not harder
- Be flexible in your approach to change
- Use outsourcing to access the supplier's knowledge and experience
- There are benefits but they may take time to show
- Adopt technologies that help you deliver your information services and keep them at the leading edge
- Tell people what's happening - then tell them again!



No Going Back.... Outsourcing...

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