

Leadership: Acknowledging Change

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Abstract

This paper focuses on three elements that ultimately affect the outcome of every leader's term. The first one is their knowledge base, the second one is space or land, and the third one is time. These are finite, limited resources that can be used to address the one constant in the universe: change. In this paper I explain how each of these resources might be able to minimize or maximize the effect of change. The best leaders have to deal with change on a constant basis and in order to manage it successfully, they have to be aware of each of these resources and the best way to leverage them. I will present three examples of change, and how the three resources were utilized to address them.

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Change is a constant in the universe. The ability to manage change is a skill that leaders need to attain in order to motivate their group to keep moving forward. Three critical resources needed to accomplish this are: knowledge, land, and time. The reason these three are valuable is because every single one of them is limited and finite. In this paper I will explain how each of these three elements are necessary and are in fact key concepts that each leader, not just archivists, should analyze before setting up a business in this very competitive world we live in. Change is infinite, but knowledge, land and time are finite.

In order to begin and maintain a successful enterprise, you are going to need an extensive amount of knowledge and expertise. In the case of recordkeeping there are many different elements that you must consider. You need to know what type of recordkeeping your business or organization is classified as, so you can help your sponsors or stockholders understand what they are investing in. Examples of these can be institutional archives, hybrid archives, collecting archives, community archives, museum archives, integrated institutions, indigenous archives, activist archives, online repositories, and trusted digital repositories (Millar, 2017, p. 80-92). We constantly hear that a leader should hire intelligent people because it is in the best interest of their company to do so (Sheninger, 2018). There is significant truth in this because everyone in your organization has a purpose that helps it meet its business objectives and goals. As Dearstyne stated in the book “The success of any unit-including archives-in any organization will hinge on the ability of its managers to correctly identify and serve the needs and objective of the parent entity” (Dearstyne, 2008, p. 117). The most important challenge of the crew is contending with the change that rapidly occurs within the business. Not all policies enter the workplace at a steady pace. Not all new sources of knowledge are going to be discovered or acquired at your

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convenience. Most of the time, changes are thrown at the individual within the first two minutes of their workday. This has happened to me many times at the jobs I have worked at over the years. This also is something that many archivists must endure when in their profession. We went over this during the class this semester when analyzing the challenge of adaptation.

“Archivists have been characterized (when they have been characterized at all) as among the more reluctant human animals to accept - much less to court - change and the choices it brings” (Dearstyne, 2008, p. 116). This is a crippling stigma if not a lethal one for recordkeepers because this very institution is responsible for preserving new knowledge and insuring that the knowledge itself is placed in a proper context. If we do not improve the image of the profession, we can suffer severe penalties in the future because stockholders and investors may not be enticed to continue their investments into something that cannot move forward with the times.

The second most valuable resource in the universe as we know it, is land. In the recordkeeping reference, we will call it space. Probably one of the reasons that archivists are viewed as subjects not willing to budge or change is because of the rapid evolution of technology and data size requirements which can be overwhelming. There is an article released by the National Archives of the United Kingdoms that releases a guide for Cloud Storage that gives a general idea about the usage of the upcoming technology and how to apply it to the recordkeeping profession. What I appreciated about the guide was the list of positives and negatives which helped me to understand why the industry might have a hesitancy to change. In the negatives they state: “The Cloud is designed for flexibility and rapid change. Archives however are long-term. Cloud storage and service contracts need careful management through time to meet archive needs. Data held in archives must be expected to be both preserved and accessible beyond the commercial lifespan of any current technology or service provider”

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(Beagrie, Charlesworth, & Miller, 2014). This technology may be able to hold way more information, but only for a limited amount of time; you can see why recordkeepers are hesitant to use a program that could be replaced within a couple years. Scanning a bunch of physical files into a digital format and compressing them to make space for more storage seems like an inefficient use of time. One of the recordkeeping centers that I visited during this course was the LAMDA Archives. My host had many issues with the newer technologies because of limited staff and insufficient funding to pay for training volunteers in the use of newer technologies (Ken, Selnick, personal interview). Corporations have the financial power to improve their standards of technology for their recordkeeping offices, they may just not choose to do so. Record offices like LAMBDA Archives have the means to use the technology such as the Cloud, but do not have the potential to wield its full potential because of the limited funding and staff. As stated in the guide: “Cloud can be cheaper, but it often requires organizations to think differently about the way their budgets are managed. There are also different skills to IT service vendor and contract management that may involve re-training or recruitment costs” (Beagrie, Charlesworth, & Miller, 2014). There are also some significant perks that also come with the adoption of new technology. The guide states “Archives can add access to dedicated tools, procedures, workflow and service agreements, tailored for digital preservation requirements via specialist vendors” (Beagrie, Charlesworth, & Miller, 2014) which is useful for access. The more important element to both the recordkeeper and the customers/users is access in a business or organization. The goals and objectives of a corporation are more likely to be accomplished when the materials are available for use. Amazon is an example of a company that is meeting accessibility needs and desires for its business to thrive. Amazon is so successful it has even

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made time to make many national archive films available to the public through purchase with the assistance of a company known as CustomFlix Labs (National Archives, 2007).

Speaking of time, this brings us to that most significant resource. Time management is probably the most critical skill an individual can possess. You can pursue additional knowledge and you can purchase more space, but you cannot create or trade time. Time cannot be discounted or altered. You only get one chance to use each minute. You cannot return to rectify a mistake you made in the past, or change your mind and re-spend your time differently. I just lost time writing this paper and this specific sentence, but it had to be done. Someone else might have spent that time differently. Success in the recordkeeping profession relies on using time wisely by prioritizing which tasks of data management should be completed first. Some of these tasks include appraisal, preservation, and in some cases, repair. For appraisal we ask if the record in the collection helps add to the context of it. Does it bring anything unique? Is there an updated format of this record? These are questions that often must be answered quickly so we can move on to the next record. Time is also a factor in preservation because time itself is slowly destroying the documents we have stored. When that happens, and a document does sustain damage, whether by the passing of time, exposure to weather, or damage from insects, etc., we have scheduled maintenance for a document or a historical piece in need of it. Repairing necessitates labor from a member of your team or from an individual you pay outside of your organization. Leaders may experience sudden occurrences that end up consuming their original plan of action, so it is wise to have potential solutions at the ready. An example of this could occur in a museum that focused on textiles. If there was a hatch of moths and they began consuming the art and exhibits, you would have to change your initial plan of the day (Ex: you were going to present the exhibit to donors) and have to come up with a new plan on the spot and

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improvise. A leader who can plan for the future by being prepared for a variety of outcomes, is a leader who has mastered time management.

One additional good trait desired in a leader is understanding the concept of compromise. When stepping into the role of leadership, they are basically stepping into parenthood. Their needs are no longer the only ones that matter. Other individuals in the workforce need to be acknowledged and assisted. It is the job of leaders to ensure that their workforce is not only following goals and objectives that are set by the corporation; in addition, leaders need to make sure that the workforce is positively motivated and excited to join the mission has been set out for them. Make time to acknowledge their hard work, give them space to breathe if the environment is crushing down on them, and give them the knowledge that can help the organization expand and influence the goals and objectives that are essential to the organization.

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