Cross-Training for a Flexible Staff

An Infopeople Webinar

Presenters: Gail Griffith
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Tuesday, May 17, 2011
12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m.

Agenda

• Why cross-train your staff?
• Selecting employees for cross-training
• Practical considerations
• Cross-training for job enrichment and career advancement
• Cross-training caveats

POLL: Are you...

• Library Director
• Other manager or supervisor
• Front-line staff

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What’s in it for the Library?

• Use the chat to brainstorm ideas from a manager’s point of view

Benefits for the Library

• Knowledge management
• Succession planning
  – Plan for retirements
  – Respond to younger workers’ desire to build résumés and prepare to move up
• Meet customer needs
  – Manage family and medical leaves of staff
  – Manage tight staffing/hiring freezes

What’s in it for Staff?

• Use the chat to brainstorm ideas from the point of view of staff
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Benefits for Staff

• Challenge
• Learning
• Résumé builder for internal and external jobs
• Improved teamwork

Where to Start?

• Current or upcoming job vacancy
• Need to correct errors or be more efficient
  – Staff need or want to know more about how other departments work
  – Staff want others to know what they do
• Staff unable to pitch in and serve customers from other departments

People First, or Jobs First?

Your last name begins with A-L
• Use the chat window to brainstorm the benefits of using selected PEOPLE to begin your cross-training effort

Your last name begins with M-Z
• Watch the brainstorm and think about their reasons. You’ll have an opportunity to respond in a minute.
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Now Let’s Switch

Your last name begins with M-Z
• Use the chat window to
  brainstorm the benefits of
  using selected JOBS to
  begin your cross-training
  effort

Your last name begins with A-L
• Watch them brainstorm and
  think about their reasons.

Selecting Employees for Cross-Training

• Where will cross-training get the job done
  more effectively or efficiently?

• Who is likely to be successful?
  • Same or similar job classification
  • Pilot with champions

Examples

• Children’s and Adult Services librarians
  — Goal vs. mandate (Carroll County, MD)

• Structured and scheduled job enrichment
  opportunities
  — Voluntary, open to all levels (Yale University Library)

• Core and Elective Continuing Education (Tulsa,
  OK)
  — Handout #1: Cross Training as Continuing Education

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Poll: Which Job Pair?
Choose a job pair you’re familiar with. We’ll use it in some examples.
1. Adult and Children’s Services librarians
2. Circulation and Technical Services clericals
3. ILL and Digitization paraprofessionals

Practical Considerations
• Handout #2: Notes for Developing a Cross-Training Plan
• Be clear about why
  – Promoting understanding, or making lasting changes?
• Tell staff what to expect: who, why, how, and when!

What Will Staff Learn?
• Determine core functions of the jobs in which staff will be cross-trained
• What is the depth of training needed?
• What will success look like?
• Staff involvement is key to getting it right
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What Needs to Happen?

• Determine what training resources already exist
  – Handout #3 is an example of a checklist to help
    Adult librarians being cross trained in Children’s
• Decide who is responsible and accountable for training
• Provide opportunities to practice new skills
• Update job descriptions and performance management tools

Opportunities for Staff

• If you want to provide career development opportunities for staff, what else might be important?
  • Use chat to tell us what you think

Cross-Training for Job Enrichment and Career Advancement

• What might be important?
  – Develop a structure so it actually happens
  – Can promise the opportunity to learn, have their work seen by others, and become a strong competitor for promotion (vs. promising a promotion)
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Barriers to Cross-Training

Last name begins with M-Z
• Use the chat window to brainstorm as many barriers to cross-training as you can think of

Last name begins with A-L
• Think about those barriers, because you’ll have a chance to respond in a minute.

Remove Those Barriers!

Last name begins with A-L
• Use the chat window to brainstorm as many ways around those barriers as you can.

Last name begins with M-Z
• Watch to see how many of the barrier-busting strategies you agree with!

Cross-Training Caveats

• Stay within the jobs’ scope and level of responsibility
• Work within union agreements
• Avoid the appearance of favoritism
• Keep communicating and listening
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Q&A

Web Links

• Two examples of academic library programs
  – Yale University Library Cross Training Initiative for Library Staff:
    www.library.yale.edu/training/stod/xtrain/crosstraining.html
  – Cross Training for Professional Development—Dartmouth College:
    www.dartmouth.edu/~library/home/committees/.../crosstraining%20final.doc

Thank You!

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