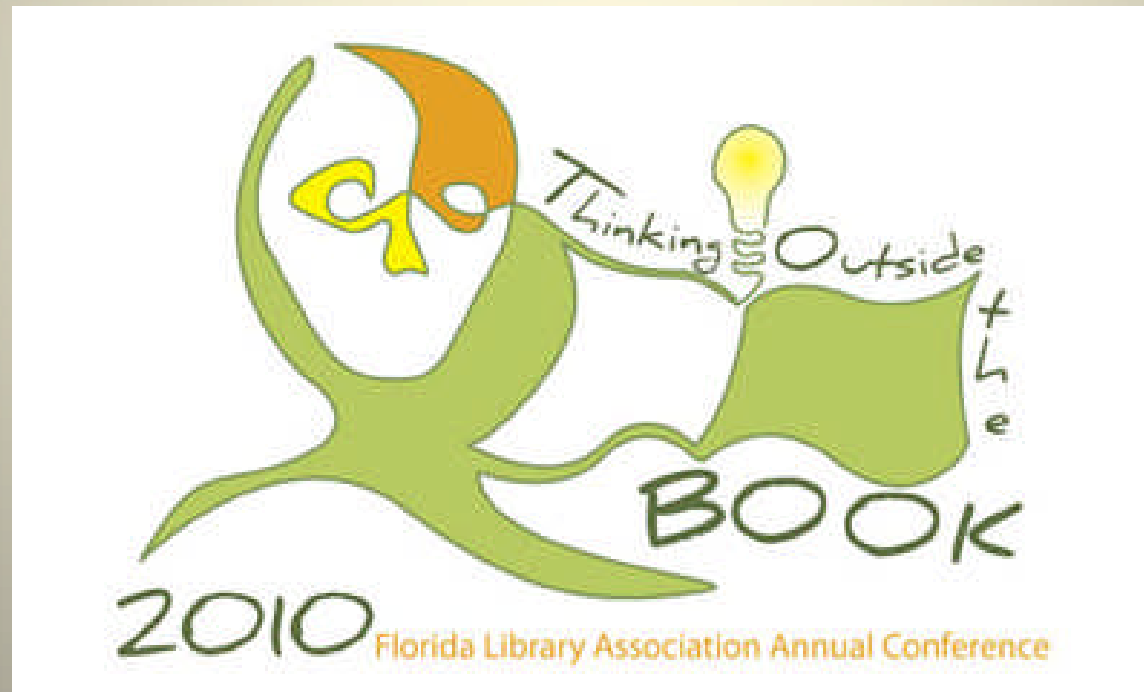


*Continuing Quality Library
Services in Times of Budget and
Staff Reductions*



What is continuous improvement in a public library?

An effort aimed at the implementation of quality concepts and practices throughout the organization, focused on aligning the library around a set of improvement goals.



Examples

South Plainfield Public Library

Jeffersonville Township Public Library

Bloomfield-Eastern Green County Public Library

East Brunswick Public Library

South Orange Public Library

South Plainfield Public Library



South Plainfield Public Library

Shortens the Wait for New Books

The South Plainfield Public Library wanted to reduce the backlog of new books waiting to be cataloged, saving time without increasing mistakes.

South Plainfield Public Library

The team began by creating a flowchart. They decided that the process began when the book is unpacked and ended when the book is ready for the final steps of putting on the plastic cover, security strip, etc. This is the period when the book is actually catalogued, assigned a call number and bar code, and its MARC record is downloaded into the library's catalog.

Flowchart



Something to Think About

- “We often will ‘see’ a problem and then will jump to a conclusion without actually investigating the situation, thereby missing where the real problem exists,” wrote Linda Hansen. “This program taught us to slow down, take the situation apart, and find where the real problem exists, thus finding a solution to the actual rather than the perceived problem....the important idea is that everyone is involved in the decision and that their concerns are addressed.”

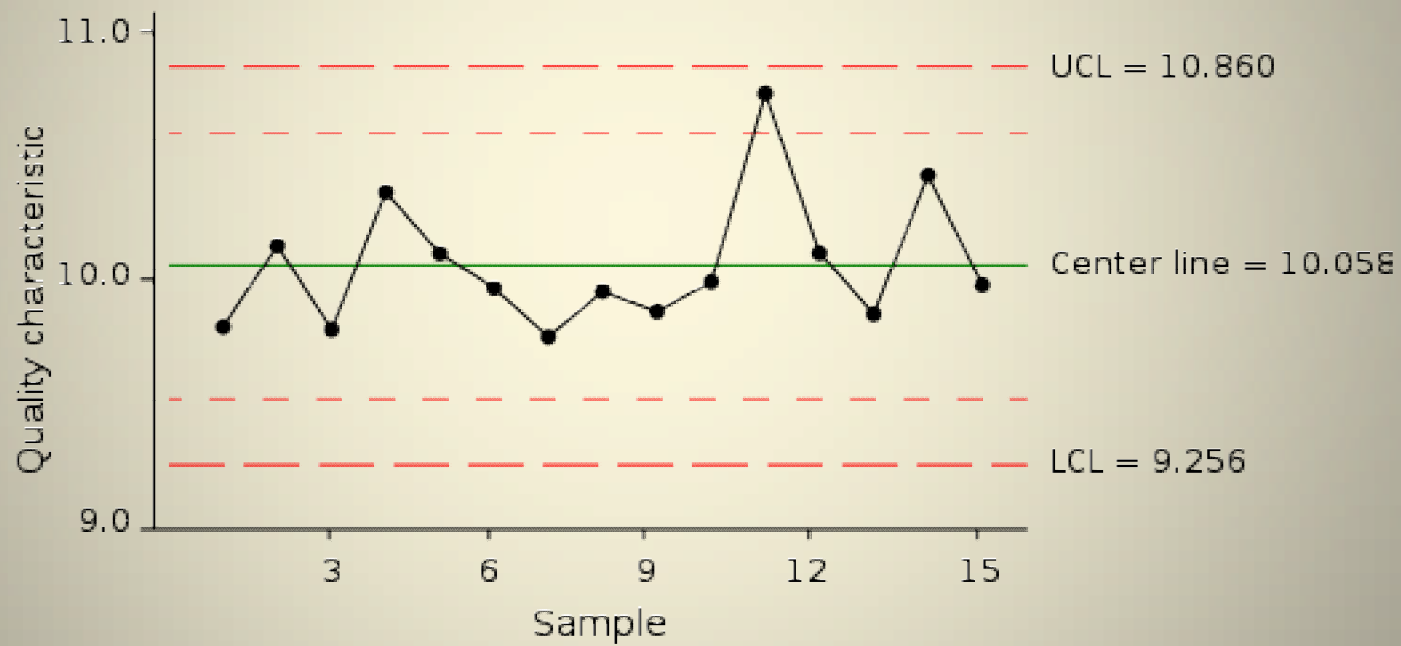
Acquiring Data

The team decided to track the number of days it took for a book to go from beginning to end of the process and to record how many and what kind of cataloging mistakes were reported. They gathered the data on the days the library was open for an initial month. The material processing staff member documented the number of days for each book. A cataloger put the information into the computer and made notes as difficulties came up. A team member created a spreadsheet to record the date when an item was received and when it reached processing. They used a second sheet to track materials returned due to errors in processing or corrections to cataloging.

Processing the Data

They translated the raw data into a Process Behavior Chart to establish a mean and then computed the upper and lower process limits to establish the expected range of variation which could be considered normal. For the first month, the average number of days to completion was 37.8.

Behavior Chart Example



What They Learned

For the first month, the average number of days to completion was 37.8. “All processes have inherent variability,” noted Linda, “and we needed data which allows us to see the variability and to assist us in improving the process (or even establishing if the process needs improvement).”

The team then tried some changes and kept track of the data to see if the changes improved the process. Among the changes, they: Cleaned and organized the TS office
Labeled all carts and areas for what they are used for (ex. “Mending Books”, “Original Cataloging needed”, etc.) to see the whole picture better
Created a second cataloging computer with the same tools as the first to maximize usage

Results

When they computed the average of the second month's data, it was 30.5. Clearly, the small changes the team made were starting to have an impact on the process.

Linda concluded: "...the frontline staffers in all likelihood have a better concept of what will work and not work based on their everyday experience. However, improvement does not support an uncontrolled change in procedure... you must plan for the change so that it can be quantified to see if it is an improvement."

More Questions to Ask

- Are we managing costs as aggressively as possible?
- Do we know what, specifically, we would do if we had to cut our budget by 10 percent, by 20 percent, by 30 percent?
- Have we identified the triggers that will set our contingency plans in motion?
- Do we know which of our programs and activities are mission-critical, and what each costs?
- Are our discretionary dollars allocated to these programs and activities?
- Should we be cutting programs?

More Questions to Ask

- Do we have low- or no-cost ways to strengthen our organization?
- Is this an opportunity to bring critically needed skills onto our leadership team?
- Are we involving our board members and using their talents and connections appropriately?
- Are we helping our folks stay focused on the people and causes we serve or getting bogged down in our own woes?

Why Pursue a Continuous-Improvement Management Strategy?

Adopting continuous-improvement strategies enables libraries to realize improvements in three primary domains: services for patrons, processes to make it easier for employees to do their jobs, and institutional outcomes.

Areas to Explore for Continuous Improvement/Doing More With Less

I. Technology

II. Outsourcing

III. Internal Process Refinement

IV. Cross Functional Service Delivery

V. Partnerships

VI. Self-Service

Modeling Effective Communication in Announcing Change to Employees and Users

10 keys to planning, announcing, implementing,
and communicating a change initiative

- I. Remember that there's no one perfect way to communicate change.** Change is uncomfortable, and adapting to change is messy. The perfect Gantt chart does not make a painless change experience. Why? Because tasks are easy to list, but behavior and long-held habits are not easy to change. Gather outside information, solicit perspectives, and adapt the approaches for your organization and group.

10 keys to planning, announcing, implementing, and communicating a change initiative

2. Start by asking yourself what exactly is changing and why. Too many programs are heavy on the jargon and light on the substance of what the buzz phrases mean in the day-to-day reality of the organization's people. You have to make that link. For example, what does it mean when you say the organization needs to be save money? Go to the root of what you're trying to achieve from an organizational behavior perspective, and give the jargon life.

10 keys to planning, announcing, implementing, and communicating a change initiative

3. Know what results you want, ideally, from both the change initiative and the communication program or tactic. What's the call to action for the communication program? What's the call to action for the specific communication tactic? What systemic or operations changes are under way that provide the framework for the desired results and behaviors?

10 keys to planning, announcing, implementing, and communicating a change initiative

4. Share information with employees as soon as possible. Once fear and insecurity are heightened, you waste a lot of time getting back to a place of order, understanding, and productivity, and many people head for their desks to update résumés and to call employment recruiters.

10 keys to planning, announcing, implementing, and communicating a change initiative

5. Remember to use a variety of communication pathways and vehicles.

Some organizations make an enormous mistake in using only one vehicle, such as e-mail or the company intranet site.

Redundancy and repetition are helpful in creating an effective communication program.

The 5 Motivators of People

Intrinsic Motivation – Fun

- Likes doing the job
- Spontaneous activities
- Being very good at a job
- Fun at work
- Find out which tasks an employee likes

The 5 Motivators of People

Instrumental (\$\$\$)

- “What’s in it for me?”
- Expectation of getting something in return
- Compensation/money/bonuses
- Caution: Non-monetary rewards

The 5 Motivators of People

Self-Concept External (Reputation)

- Positive feedback/praise and recognition
- Bragging and telling stories
- Being attentive to what others think and say
- Assign projects/prestigious reputation

The 5 Motivators of People

Self-Concept Internal (Achievement)

- Difficult tasks at work/Challenging work
- One's skills are needed
- Expanding range of skills
- Most important tasks
- Success of the operation
- Slap in the face: Menial and mundane tasks

The 5 Motivators of People

Goal Internalization (Principles)

- “Why are we doing this”
- Strategic focus/Believes in the cause
- Similar principles and values
- Focus on vision and mission/End-Goals
- How tasks being performed

Thanks for Attending!!!

