

EFFECTIVE USE OF INTRAPRENEURSHIP IN THE LIBRARIES: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract: The concept of intrapreneurship is becoming increasingly important in the business world. It refers to the process of promoting innovation, creativity, and risk-taking within an organization by empowering employees to act as entrepreneurs. Intrapreneurship is a valuable tool for libraries as they strive to remain relevant and adapt to changing technological, social, and economic environments. This article will explore the concept of intrapreneurship and its relevance to libraries and also discusses about the challenges and prospects of implementing intrapreneurship in libraries.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship; Intrapreneurship; Libraries; Intrapreneurial librarianship; Entrepreneurial skills

"Libraries store the energy that fuels the imagination. They open up windows to the world and inspire us to explore and achieve, and contribute to improving our quality of life."

- Sidney Sheldon (1917-2007. American writer and producer)

1.0 Introduction

Libraries are facing significant challenges in today's digital era with the more demand for digital services and resources and needs to transform their services to meet the changing needs of the users. There is one way emerged as an essential concept for libraries to embrace in the digital era of doing this through intrapreneurship. Intrapreneurship is the act of behaving like an entrepreneur within a larger organization. It involves developing new products or services within the existing organizational structure. Intrapreneurs are employees who are given the freedom and resources to pursue their ideas and bring them to fruition and to develop new products or services within the organization. They are often referred to as "entrepreneurial employees" and are critical to the success of an organization in today's fast-paced and constantly changing business environment. In the context of libraries, intrapreneurship can lead to the development of new services that meet the changing needs of users.

2.0 Intrapreneurship in Libraries

Intrapreneurship in libraries refers to the practice of applying entrepreneurial skills within a library environment enable libraries to innovate and create new services, programs, and processes that better serve the needs of library users. It involves cultivating an entrepreneurial mind set among librarians and library staff, encouraging them to think creatively, take calculated risks, and innovate to meet the evolving needs of library users. Intrapreneurial librarianship can take many forms, such as developing new services or programs, experimenting with new technologies, collaborating with community partners, and seeking out new funding sources.

3.0 Intrapreneurial Librarians

Intrapreneurial librarians are those who identify and pursue opportunities for growth and change within their organizations, using creative and proactive strategies to overcome challenges and achieve their goals.

Intrapreneurial librarians also focus on creating a culture of continuous improvement, where staff are encouraged to experiment, learn from failure, and continuously adapt to changing user needs.

Intrapreneurial librarians work closely with their colleagues, library users, and other stakeholders to identify unmet needs and develop new solutions to address them. They are willing to take calculated risks and are not afraid to try new things, even if they do not have a guaranteed outcome.

4.0 Challenges of Intrapreneurship in Libraries

Implementing intrapreneurship in libraries is not an easy task and there are some significant challenges, which include:

4.1 Resistance to Change

Libraries are often perceived as traditional institutions, and therefore, some employees may be resistant to change. They may be comfortable with the way things have always been done and may be hesitant to adopt new approaches or technologies.

4.1.1 Risk Aversion

Libraries may be risk-averse organizations that are hesitant to take on new projects that could potentially fail or result in negative consequences. Sometimes, fear of failure and inertia could lead them to reject intrapreneurship in libraries.

4.1.2 Lack of support:

Implementing intrapreneurship requires the support and buy-in of all stakeholders in the library. If some librarians feel that they are not being listened to or that their concerns are being ignored, they may resist change. The hierarchical nature of library organizations may hinder the adoption of intrapreneurial initiatives.

4.1.3 Limited Resources:

Libraries are often constrained by limited budgets and resources, which can make it difficult to invest in new initiatives or technologies. Intrapreneurship requires a willingness to take risks and experiment, which may not be possible when resources are limited.

4.1.4 Lack of Incentives:

Librarians may not be incentivized to take risks and innovate because there may not be any rewards or recognition for their efforts.

4.1.5 Limited Autonomy

Librarians may not have the autonomy to make decisions and take action without approval from higher-ups, which can slow down the innovation process.

4.1.6 Limited Access to Technology

Libraries may not have access to the latest technologies and tools needed to support intrapreneurial initiatives, such as prototyping software or data analytics tools.

4.1.7 Silos and Bureaucracy

Libraries are often organized into functional silos that can hinder cross-functional collaboration and communication. Bureaucratic processes and procedures may also impede the implementation of intrapreneurial initiatives.

5.0 Prospects of Intrapreneurship in Libraries

Despite the challenges, intrapreneurship has the potential to bring about significant benefits to libraries. Some of the significant prospects include:

5.1 Innovation and Creativity

Intrapreneurship fosters a culture of innovation and creativity, allowing libraries to stay relevant and adapt to changing user needs. It provides a platform for employees to generate new ideas, experiment, and develop new products and services.

5.2 Increased Engagement and Retention

Empowering employees to act as intrapreneurs can lead to increased engagement and job satisfaction. It can also help libraries to retain top talent, as employees are more likely to stay with organizations that support their ideas and provide opportunities for growth and development.

5.3 Increased Efficiency and Effectiveness

Intrapreneurial initiatives can lead to more efficient and effective operations. By encouraging employees to develop new approaches to their work, libraries can streamline processes, reduce waste, and improve services.

This approach to librarianship emphasizes the importance of collaboration, communication, and experimentation. By embracing an intrapreneurial librarianship, libraries can become more dynamic, responsive, and user-focused, enabling those to better serve their communities in a rapidly changing information landscape. With the result, libraries can stay ahead of the curve and continue to provide relevant and valuable services to their users.

6.0 Implementation Strategies

Implementing intrapreneurship in libraries requires a deliberate and strategic approach. Some of the critical strategies include:

6.1 Creating a Culture of Innovation

Libraries should strive to create a culture of innovation that encourages employees to generate new ideas and experiment with new approaches. This can be achieved by providing training and development opportunities, recognizing and rewarding innovative thinking, and promoting a mindset of continuous improvement.

6.2 Breaking down Silos

Libraries should aim to break down functional silos and promote cross-functional collaboration and communication. This can be achieved by creating interdisciplinary teams, providing opportunities for employees to work on projects outside of their usual roles, and promoting a shared sense of purpose.

Providing Resources: Libraries should provide the necessary resources to support intrapreneurial initiatives. This can include funding, time, and access to technologies and expertise. Libraries can also leverage partnerships and collaborations to access additional resources and expertise.

7.0 Entrepreneurial skills for the user services

Librarians can apply entrepreneurial skills and approaches in several areas within a library environment to better serve the needs of library users. Here are some examples:

7.1 Collection development

Librarians can apply entrepreneurial skills to assess the needs of their library users and develop collections that meet those needs. They can use market research techniques to identify popular genres and subjects, and develop partnerships with publishers and authors to bring in new titles and series.

7.2 Program development

Libraries can develop innovative programs that meet the needs of their communities. Librarians can use entrepreneurial approaches to identify opportunities for new programming, research the interests and needs of their users, and develop partnerships with other community organizations to create programs that are relevant, engaging, and impactful.

7.3 Marketing and outreach

Libraries can use entrepreneurial approaches to promote their services and programs. Librarians can use social media, email marketing, and other digital tools to reach out to users and attract new patrons. They can also develop partnerships with local media outlets to generate publicity for their library and its offerings.

7.4 Technology

Librarians can use entrepreneurial approaches to develop and implement new technologies that enhance the user experience. They can research new software and hardware solutions, develop partnerships with tech companies and startups, and work with their IT departments to implement new tools and platforms that meet the needs of library users.

7.5 Fundraising and grants

Libraries can use entrepreneurial approaches to secure funding for new programs, collections, and technologies. Librarians can research funding opportunities, develop grant proposals, and work with their development departments to cultivate relationships with donors and secure major gifts.

7.6 Library as Incubator

Can encourage library staff to use the library as an incubator to develop and implement innovative new services that meet the changing needs of users.

7.7 Creative Spaces program

Can provide access to specialized equipment, collaborative workspaces and resources for creators and makers to design, prototype, and manufacture their ideas and creative projects.

8.0 Conclusion

Intrapreneurship is a valuable tool for libraries looking to stay relevant and adapt to changing user needs. Implementing intrapreneurship requires a strategic and deliberate approach, including creating a culture of innovation, breaking down silos, and providing resources. While intrapreneurship is not without its challenges, libraries that embrace it can reap significant benefits, including increased innovation, engagement, and efficiency. By encouraging employees to think creatively and take risks, libraries can develop new services and products that meet the changing needs of their users. Libraries that embrace intrapreneurship will be well-positioned to thrive in the digital era and continue to provide valuable services to their users.

Overall, intrapreneurial librarianship is about creating a culture of innovation within libraries, empowering library staff to take ownership of their work, and encouraging them to think creatively and entrepreneurially to better serve their communities. Applying entrepreneurial skills and approaches can help libraries stay relevant and innovative in an ever-changing landscape, while better serving the needs of their users.

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