A Training Programme

Strategic Planning for Records and Archives Services

INTERNATIONAL
COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES

INTERNATIONAL RECORDS
MANAGEMENT TRUST

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR RECORDS AND ARCHIVES SERVICES

MANAGING PUBLIC SECTOR RECORDS

A STUDY PROGRAMME

General Editor, Michael Roper; Managing Editor, Laura Millar

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR RECORDS AND ARCHIVES SERVICES

Strategic Planning for Records and Archives Services

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Strategic Planning for Records and Archives Services

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FIGURES

INTRODUCTION TO *STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR RECORDS AND ARCHIVES SERVICES*

Strategic Planning for Records and Archives Services is one of a series of three modules that provides an introduction for managers in the records and archives field to the executive management issues affecting records and archives systems and services. The others are *Developing Infrastructures for Records and Archives Services* and *Managing Resources for Records and Archives Services.* It is recommended that this module should be studied after *Developing Infrastructures for Records and Archives Services* and before *Managing Resources for Records and Archives Services.*

> *Some of the issues raised in this module are also discussed in* Analysing Business Systems.

These modules are rather more practical than theoretical. The theory and philosophy behind the various techniques and approaches advocated are covered more fully in the extensive range of management literature generally available. The focus in this module is on providing a practical framework for the delivery of an end product, in this particular context the efficient and economical management of the resources necessary to deliver effective records and archives services.

Although this series of modules is primarily concerned with the management of records and archives services within the public sector, much of its language has been taken from the private sector, where the study of management issues originated. Hence, it is important to begin with definitions of key terms used in the series.

> *Mission:* The purpose for which an organisation exists.
>
> *Business:* The core functions of an organisation that contribute to the achievement of its mission.
>
> *Process:* The means whereby an organisation carries out any part its business.
>
> *Input:* Any resource required for the functioning of a process, in the course of which it will be transformed into one or more outputs.
>
> *Output:* The product of the transformation of inputs by a process.

> *Customer:* Anyone who needs, uses or benefits from the output of a process.

Thus, the **mission** of the National Records and Archives Institution is the effective life-cycle management of public sector records and archives; the **business** of the institution is to carry out the various functions that contribute to the achievement of that mission. One of the **processes** that supports that business is the enactment of appropriate records and archives legislation; the **inputs** into that process include existing relevant legislation, information about legislation in sister countries, archival and legal staff expertise and parliamentary time. The **outputs** include a National Records and Archives Act and the regulations necessary to implement it. The **customers** benefiting from those outputs will include government agencies, the National Records and Archives Institution and the public.

Other key terms used throughout this series of modules are efficiency, economy, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness.

> *Effectiveness:* A measure of the ability of a process to produce specified outputs.
>
> *Efficiency:* A measure of the ability of a process to produce more outputs from the same inputs.
>
> *Economy:* A measure of the ability of a process to produce the same outputs from reduced inputs.
>
> *Cost-effectiveness:* The optimum balance between efficiency, economy and effectiveness. Also known as value for money.

The core modules in the Management of Public Sector Records Study Programme have provided guidance in the professional aspects of managing records and archives throughout their life cycle. This module concentrates on equipping managers with the additional knowledge and skills needed to establish and maintain the regulatory framework necessary to provide essential records and archives services. While people other than managers may certainly study this module, they will find the examples and activities designed to address the needs of management. If students are not in a management position themselves, they may wish to communicate with colleagues in management or to develop hypothetical situations in order to examine some of the concepts introduced here.

In these three modules, the term 'manager' is used to refer to the person responsible for a variety of management decisions. It is understood that many people studying these modules will not be actual 'managers'; however, the information provided will be of value regardless of where a person is within the organisational structure. Therefore, you are encouraged to consider yourself a 'manager' while studying these three management modules and to consider the management issues fully and completely, regardless of your actual position within the agency.

These modules make specific reference to public-sector issues and refer largely to national government activities. Those people based in other jurisdictions should read

these and consider the information provided in relation to their own organisations and systems.

Strategic Planning for Records and Archives Services consists of five lessons:

Lesson 1:   Management and Change

Lesson 2:   Strategic Planning

Lesson 3:   Project Management

Lesson 4:   Promoting Records and Archives Services

Lesson 5:   What to Do Next?

AIMS AND OUTCOMES

Aims

This module has five primary aims. These are

1. to introduce records and archives professionals to the key issues of change management

2. to outline the principles and practices of strategic planning

3. to outline the principles and practices of project management

4. to outline the principles and practices of promoting records and archives services

5. to introduce sources of more information on management issues.

Outcomes

When you have completed this module, you will be able to

1. identify the key management issues facing the records and archives system within which you are employed

2. prepare a strategic plan that will enable you to change your records and archives organisation

3. undertake the management of a project within your records and archives system

4. know how to persuade senior management of the benefits of an effective records and archives system

5. know where to go for more information on management issues.

METHOD OF STUDY AND ASSESSMENT

This module of five lessons should occupy about 50 hours of your time. You should plan to spend about:

> 10 hours on Lesson 1
>
> 10 hours on Lesson 2
>
> 10 hours on Lesson 3
>
> 15 hours on Lesson 4
>
> 5 hours on Lesson 5.

This includes time spent doing the reading and completing the activities and study questions.

At the end of each lesson there is a summary of the major points. Sources for additional information are provided in Lesson 5.

Throughout each lesson, activities have been included to help you think about the information provided. Each activity is a 'self-assessed' project; there is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer. Rather, the activity is designed to encourage you to explore the ideas presented and relate them to the environment in which you are studying or working. If you are studying these modules independently and are not part of a records or archives management organisation, you should try to complete the activities with a hypothetical situation if possible. If the activity suggests writing something, you should keep this brief and to the point; this is not a marked or graded exercise and you should only spend as much time on the activity as you feel necessary to understand the information being taught. At the end of each lesson are comments on the activities that will help you assess your work.

Following the summary at the end of each lesson are a number of self-study questions. Note that these self-study questions are designed to help you review the material in this module. They are not intended to be graded or marked exercises. You should complete as many of the questions as you feel will help you to understand the concepts presented. External assessments, such as assignments or exams, will be included separately when this module becomes part of a graded educational programme.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

This module assumes that you have access to a records office, records centre or archival institution or that you have some involvement with the management of records . The various activities may ask you to draw on your own experiences and compare those with the information provided in the lessons. If you do not have access to records or archives facilities within your organisation, you may need to develop a fictitious scenario for your activities. You do not have to be in a senior management position to work through the activities in this module, although you wish to discuss this module with friends or colleagues who are involved with organisational planning so that you can discuss principles and concepts with them and compare your understanding with theirs.

Case Studies

The following case studies may provide valuable additional information.

Case Study:

10:    Chris Seifried, Canada, 'Management Decision Making and Teamwork Case Study'

28:    Ann Pederson, Australia, 'Management Case Study: Revising the Record-keeping Programme for the Widget Manufacturing Company'

29:    Ann Pederson, Australia. 'Advocacy/Marketing for Record Keeping: A Case Study'

MANAGEMENT AND CHANGE

The purpose of Lesson 1 is to provide managers with the foundations for developing and implementing the life-cycle approach to records and archives management, ensuring records are managed through a continuum of care. This approach, advocated in the core modules of this study programme, cuts the traditional boundary between records management and archival administration. More specifically, this lesson is intended to raise questions in the minds of records and archives staff with management responsibilities (hereafter referred to as 'managers') about current management practices and procedures within records and archives systems and services, with a view to creating and managing changes within those systems and services.

The lesson will deal with a number of general management issues that will assist managers, in a broad way, to cope with the changes required and prepare them for the discussion of specific management practices and techniques in subsequent lessons. The precise way in which these management issues arise and they way in which they should be addressed will depend upon the local situation in terms of the stage of records and archives development, the management environment and the availability of resources. Hence, this lesson and those that follow should be regarded as a series of 'tasters', providing ideas and a stimulus to managers in considering how to introduce and maintain effective, efficient and economical records and archives systems and services.

This lesson considers the following questions:

- Why is there a need to change something?

- Why is that change being considering at this particular time?

- How is change to be effected?

WHY IS THERE A NEED FOR CHANGE?

> Here is Edward Bear, coming downstairs now, bump, bump, bump, on the back of his head, behind Christopher Robin. It is, as far as he knows, the only way of coming downstairs, but sometimes he feels that there really is another way, if only he could stop bumping for a moment and think of it.
>
> AA Milne, *Winnie the Pooh*.

The above quotation illustrates, in a rather novel way, the underlying purpose of this module. How often have managers and staff thought, 'There must be a better way of doing this, but I have not got any time to think about it'. For most of us, doing the job and undertaking the task, are the priority and have to come first. Lesson 1 and the other lessons in this module are aimed at helping managers to improve existing practices and approaches by a planned process of change. In other words, to stop 'bumping' and get 'thinking'!

The effective and efficient introduction of new or enhanced records and archives systems and services must form part of a planned process of change that has been set against a clear picture of the potential shape, type or feel of those systems and services in the future. The starting point, however, must be clarity as to why change is being considered.

Planned change can dramatically improve the operations of records and archives systems.

WHY IS CHANGE BEING CONSIDERED?

The manager can get a clearer picture of why change is being considered in his or her organisation by considering the following questions.

- What are the problem areas?

- What are the constraints and opportunities?

- What factors may affect the process of change?

Problem Areas

The major problem areas within an organisation are likely to be

- A lack of a clear idea by managers and staff of what they are trying to achieve (that is, an absence of clear and agreed aims and objectives)

- inefficient and ineffective work practices

- inappropriate organisational structures

- inadequate or badly managed human, financial and physical resources.

For example, existing an registry may be disorganised and poorly equipped with insufficient manpower. The result could be that the record system is failing, with the result that files cannot be retrieved easily, or at all; information is unavailable; and because of this, government as a whole is liable to duplication of effort and poor decision making. All the major problem areas identified above are in evidence here, and each would need to be examined and the main points tackled before the old registry could be transformed into a new records office.

Activity 1

Can you think of two problems found in your institution that you think should be changed? Write a brief description of each problem and indicate why you think changes should be made.

Constraints and Opportunities

The constraints that apply to the process of change are likely to be

- availability of resources

- attitudes to change

- timing.

The opportunities arising from the process of change include

- promotion of greater efficiency and effectiveness

- improvement to morale

- provision of greater job satisfaction

- reduction in costs.

It is vital that constraints do not take precedence over opportunities and thereby inhibit the positive process of changing the status quo for something better.

For example, the passage of a new records and archives law through the bureaucratic, legal and political processes can be fraught with problems and it would be all too easy to accept second best, such as making a few amendments to existing legislation rather than enacting a new law, or to give up.

Constraints must not take precedence over opportunities.

Factors that Affect Change

It is also essential to consider the factors that may affect the area of activity to be changed. Consider these factors by asking

- Why consider the change now?

- What is the political climate like? Are there any political pressures to change?

- What is the organisational climate like? Are there pressures from senior management to change?

- What is the level of readiness for change of the staff?

- What is the current financial climate like?

- Do any wider issues affect the area?

THE VISION

The manager should now be able to build up a 'vision' of what change is necessary and feasible, what the end result of the change would look like and what the major obstacles to be overcome and benefits to be obtained would be. The vision may be the total restructuring of the national records and archives system or a major component of it (such as establishing a new records class) or the improvement of local practices (such as the decongestion of a registry). The obstacles could include financial constraints and the initial indifference of top management. The benefits for top management would include more effective records retrieval and a better motivated work force.

HOW IS CHANGE TO BE EFFECTED?

When managers are clear why a change is being considered and have given thought to what the result of that change should look like (the vision), the next stage is to plan how to get from the old reality to the new vision (the process of change). This is sometimes called the 'gap theory'. The questions to consider are

- where are you now?

- where do you want to be?

- how do you close the gap?

It is, therefore, necessary to devise an action plan to close the gap, to effect the necessary changes.

However, the changes cannot take place in a vacuum. The key issue in the management of change is how to make the changes fit into and reinforce wider strategic plans and programmes and the changes they entail.

The model at Figure 1 sets out the various factors that need to be considered when planning change. It includes the analysis discussed earlier and the actual stages of change, from establishing what the reasons for change are through to action and review. Each of these areas is considered in more detail following the figure.

The process of change follows a logical sequence of stages.

What are the reasons for change?

- Why are you doing it?

- Problem areas

- Opportunities

- Factors
    discuss what the end result could look like (the 'vision') and generate
    initial ideas for action to be taken; then define what has to be done.

The area to be tackled

- Clarify the specific areas

Aims

- Where are you starting from?

- Who will benefit?

- What do you hope to achieve?

- What can you achieve?

- What will the end result look like (the 'vision')?

- How will you judge progress? (establish milestones and monitor)

Objectives

- List those things that need to be done

- Identify targets for action

Action

- Plan who does what, when and how

- Be flexible but be sure to 'focus' on the task

- Prepare an action plan

- Carry out actions

Review

- Review regularly against action plan

Figure 1: An Approach to Change

The Area to Be Tackled

The area, function or factor that has been identified for change must be clearly identified. There should be no 'fuzzy' edges, since these might lead to a lack of clarity about the precise nature, extent and context of what is to be tackled. For example, there would be no point in developing and implementing a scheme of service for a records class, if the need for new legislation or regulations to permit that development to happen had not been identified.

Aims

An aim, in general terms, should state the purpose and direction of the change that is being considered.

The various questions listed under 'aims' in the model in Figure 1 are designed to help identify the relevant key aims through a logical process of stages leading to a clear picture of what the end result should be.

Aims are dealt with in more detail in Lesson 2.

Where Are We Starting From?

First there is a need to establish a baseline (the present situation) so that the extent of the changes and the levels of benefit can be projected.

Who Would Benefit?

The areas of work and people who would benefit from the change should be set down. This would enable an evaluation of costs and benefits and make it possible to identify key people (such as stakeholders), who could influence and act as supporters to any change.

For example, the introduction of new organisational arrangements in a records centre that enable procedures to be more effective and efficient would benefit managers and staff (better job satisfaction/clearer objectives), action officers (availability of files and information) and senior management/ministers (reduced costs and better value for money).

What Do We Hope to Achieve?

This step reflects the identification of opportunities and constraints in achieving the change required. Although the intention would be 'inspirational' and forward looking, the various practicalities and elements of introducing change must be considered and set against what it was hoped might be achieved to arrive realistically at what can be achieved.

For example, there would be no point in hoping that a new law would pass within a six-month period if the parliamentary process would not allow this to happen. In a similar way, giving National Records and Archives Institution staff the power to inspect records offices within agencies, with a view to making changes where

appropriate, would depend upon relevant provisions in the records and archives law.

What Would the End Result Look Like?

What the end result will look like (the vision) needs to be developed into a final form, following the earlier, initial discussions (see 'What are the reasons for change' stage of the model at Figure 1). In this process it is necessary to

- be imaginative ('inspirational')

- ensure realism (ie what can be achieved within stated resources)

- provide a wide view of what the result would look like (do not get bogged down in detail)

- establish the major people, processes, systems and changes needed

- determine how the vision can be monitored and performance/output measured.

For example, there might be a need to set up a team in the current records division of the National Records and Archives Institution to restructure records offices in a agency cluster. The end result would involve identifying teams of (say) four, containing a team leader from the division and staff with relevant skills; using existing manuals to provide information and a training base; defining clear aims and objectives; and planning on project management principles, with the agreement of relevant senior local managers. It would not involve at this stage identifying individual team members or the agencies to be involved, or preparing a project plan and establishing a time frame to work within.

Objectives

Objectives bridge the gap between aims (giving purpose and direction) and targets (quantifying what has to be achieved) by providing specific planned achievements for furthering each aim.

When listing those things to be done (see Figure 1), it is essential that only major areas are identified and listed. It is not necessary to produce a 'task list', that is, list of specific tasks or responsibilities to be undertaken.

> *Objectives and performance measurement are considered in more detail in Lesson 2.*

The example at Figure 2 illustrates the key elements of vision, aims and objectives and the relationship between them. Note that only one of several possible aims and a selection of its supporting objectives are presented.

Vision:	To establish systems and services throughout the public sector for the effective and accountable management of records and archives.
Aim:	To convert existing registries in all agencies of government into efficient records management units.
Objectives:	To ensure the appointment of records managers in all agencies within the next six months.
	To restructure and decongest the registries of ten agencies a year over the next three years.
	To issue general retention and disposal schedules relating to financial and personnel records by the end of next year.

Figure 2: The Vision, Aims and Objectives of a National Records and Archives Institution

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Activity 5

For each of the two problems you have identified, write a vision statement and then describe at least one aim. Then for each aim, outline two or three objectives. Use Figure 2 as an example of how you would lay out this information.

Action

When a vision of the end result of the change has been determined, a baseline has been established and the aims and objectives have been identified, the means of achieving the vision need to be established. This is the process of planning who does what, when and how. Remember the following points.

- It is critical to secure top management commitment to the change.

- There must be flexibility in the planning process, to allow for changes in direction or to address new factors.

- It is wise to concentrate on the specific tasks to be done and allocate action with the specified time frame.

- It is important to identify the major people involved with the process of implementation and able to create the change.

- It is important to set clear objectives for each task against time targets.

> *Top management must be committed to change for it to succeed.*

Action plan

The framework within which action should take place is the action plan. Figure 3 is one example of a simple action plan, which brings together all the various elements discussed here.

A project plan may be needed for each objective, depending upon the nature of the objective and the number of tasks involved. The project plan provides a graphical (or bar chart) type display of progress with the different elements of the objectives and important dates ('milestones') identified. The action plan as a whole, may also need a project plan covering all the major action.

Figure 4 provides an example of a project plan. It relates to the extension of records office space. Both the action plan and project plan must be flexible and regularly reviewed. Changes, including slippages in time targets or new work, should be reflected.

> *The preparation of strategic and project plans are dealt with in more detail in Lessons 2 and 3.*

Review

The review process must take place regularly, with changes made accordingly. In addition, a less formal daily review of developments and progress should automatically take place.

Activity 6

Using Figure 3: Action Plan as an example, write an action plan for changing each of the two problems you have identified in earlier activities. Imagine you are the manager in charge of making those changes and indicate what you would do, who would be responsible, and what time frame you would allocate . Provide as many details as possible, even though the situation is only hypothetical.

Action Plan

Project:_____

What are the objectives? (numbered in priority order)	Are there cost implications? (Y/N)	What are the identified benefits?	What is the time target?	When will objective be monitored?	Who is the action officer?	Who else will need to be involved?	Project Plan (Y/N)

Figure 3: Action Plan

Records Office Extension Project

No.	Action	Months													
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
		1998												1999		
		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
1	Submitting estimates	xxxxx														
2	Estimates process		xxxxx													
3	Detailed design			xxxxx	xxxxx											
4	Prepare tender documents				xxxxx	xxxxx										
5	Seek tenders						xxxxx									
6	Report, instruct and lead in							xxxxx								
7	Construction								xxxxx	xxxxx	xxxxx	xxxxx				
8	Fit out shelving												xxxxx	xxxxx		
9	Inspect construction														xxxxx	
10	Sign off and official opening															xxxxx

Figure 4: Project Plan for a Records Office Extension

WHAT MANAGEMENT SKILLS ARE NEEDED?

The earlier part of this lesson considered the processes needed to create change: establishing a 'vision' of what is wanted and the different ways of achieving it. Although the change has been focused towards the development, implementation and maintenance of a new system of managing records and archives based on the life cycle and continuum concepts, the approach has a universal application to the change of any area, function or factor. The effective delivery of this requires managers with a range of management skills.

Figure 5 provides a model of the main management skills. The key areas are discussed briefly below, with a more detailed consideration in subsequent lessons in this module.

Planning

Planning involves the need to think ahead in strategic terms (the 'vision') and plan elements, such as action to be taken and tasks to be completed. The key points are to ensure that

- the scope of what management wants to get done is understood - that is, the baseline has been set, the desired outcomes established and the benefits identified

- aims are always clearly set

- objectives and tasks are scheduled against time targets.

An example would be the building of a new records centre, where the needs of users and staff would have to be balanced against construction timetables and the introduction of new organisational arrangements.
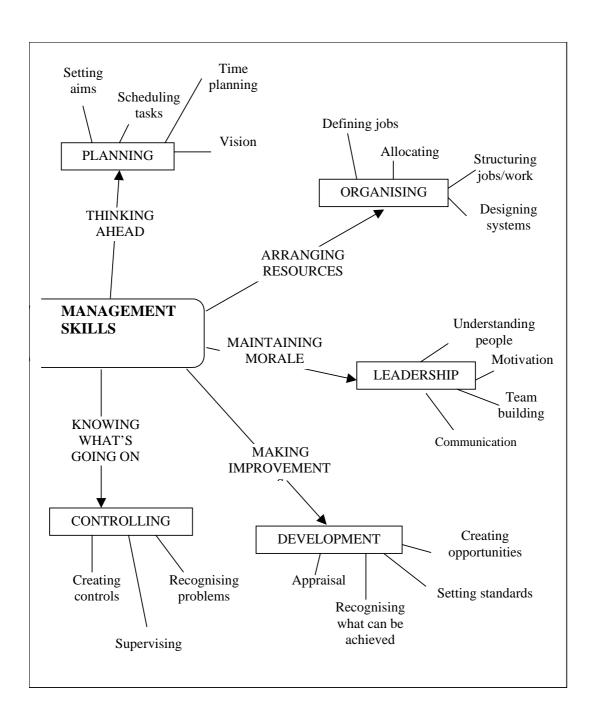
> *Planning requires thinking ahead.*

Figure 5: Management Skills

Organisation

The ability to manage resources effectively (such as budget, staff, time, equipment or accommodation) is a major area of importance for any manager . It is important to ensure that

- jobs are clearly defined and structured (within an overall plan)

- work is allocated to appropriate staff with the right competencies

- staff/work is managed against objectives, performance, output and time targets

- systems are designed to deliver results.

The restructuring of an agency records office is a good example. Here roles and tasks have been redefined, alongside the introduction of new systems. Objectives and standards/quality of performance and output should be clear.

> *Organisation is the ability to manage resources effectively.*

Leadership

The maintenance of morale, firm decision-making and clarity of direction (the 'vision') by the head of an organisation are always of fundamental importance to the achievement of the organisation's aims of that organisation and the effectiveness of its business. Similarly, in the creation and implementation of change, firm, clear leadership is fundamental to the change process. Key actions include

- understanding people (their strengths and weaknesses, particular skills and experience)

- motivating staff to ensure job satisfaction and pride in the effective delivery of tasks

- building teams to ensure a unified vision, best use of resources and quality results

- communicating.

The creation of a National Records and Archives Institution would require clear vision, communication and leadership by the director in order to ensure that staff understand the reasons for the change and have their anxieties addressed.

> *Leadership involves maintaining morale while making firm decisions and having a clear vision.*

Development

Making improvements in systems, procedures and working or management practices should be part of a continuous process of change. It is important to

- regularly review and appraise the current position against the original baseline

- recognise the opportunities to develop and improve (realising what can be achieved)

- create the opportunities for further change

- set standards of quality, performance and output for staff.

The introduction of the new approach to records management is an example of where record staff and managers can seize the opportunity to improve an existing system. The key is to know where you are now and to create the opportunity for change by having a clear 'vision' of what is achievable and gaining the commitment of top management to what is proposed.

> *Development is the process of making continuous improvements, in order to achieve a vision.*

Control

Effective control means knowing what is going on. Ineffective control is marked by lack of knowledge, insufficient information and poor leadership. In order to ensure good control, it is necessary to

- create, apply and review control mechanisms for systems, procedures and resource management

- recognise and correct problems as soon as possible (problems can indicate that control mechanisms have failed, are inadequate or are missing)

- supervise key tasks and action to ensure that they are delivered effectively.

These management skills are dealt with in more detail in the lessons that follow in this module and in Managing Resources for Records and Archives Services.

> *Control involves applying control mechanisms, correcting problems and supervising key tasks.*

Activity 7

For each of the two problems you have identified, write a brief description of the main points you would need to remember or the main actions you would need to take to ensure good

>   organisation
>   leadership
>   development
>   control.

Be sure to be specific about your own problems and not just offer general statements.

SUMMARY

Lesson 1 has stressed key requirements for the creation of change:

- senior management commitment

- knowing where you are starting from (the baseline)

- clear aims and achievable objectives

- effective action planning and project plans

- identification of opportunities and constraints.

This lesson has also identified the management skills necessary to create change:

- consider what can be achieved

- plan ahead

- organise resources effectively

- control action through positive leadership and good communications

- ensure that a process of continuous improvement is in place.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why is change sometimes needed?

2. Why should the process of change be planned?

3. Identify four major problem areas that often occur within an organisation.

4. Explain the idea of 'constraints' and 'opportunities'.

5. Identify three constraints and three opportunities that can affect the process of change.

6. Identify four factors that can affect the process of change.

7. What different types of benefits are there to change? Why is it important to identify benefits at the outset of the change process?

8. What is a 'vision'? Explain the idea of obstacles to and benefits of a vision.

9. What are 'aims' and 'objectives'?

10. Explain the concept of an 'end result'.

11. Name three factors central to the success of any action to make changes.

12. Why is knowing where your baseline is so important?

13. What is an action plan?

14. Why is a review process critical to change management?

15. Define the following management skills and identify two key points to remember for each:

    - planning
    - organisation
    - leadership
    - development
    - control.

ACTIVITIES: COMMENTS

Activities 1-7

Each of these activities is intended to help you consider the general information provided in this lesson and apply it to a specific situation within your institution, whether real or hypothetical. The activities allow you to be 'manager': identifying problems and seeking solutions. It is important when working through and reviewing these activities to make sure you have considered all possible scenarios and have applied the information in the lesson to your particular situation. Be careful not to provide only general answers, as they do not help you relate this management information to the reality of your organisation.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Lesson 2 introduces managers in the records and archives field to the concepts of strategic management and planning.

In military terms, 'strategy' is the art of moving troops to impose upon the enemy the place, time and conditions of fighting preferred by oneself. By analogy the term is used more generally in management studies to mean the acquisition and deployment of resources in the furtherance of the mission, aims and objectives of an organisation.

Strategic planning may be best understood in the context of game playing.

- **Strategy** has to do with the art of choosing the right game to play in the first place.

- **Tactics** has to do with the science of choosing the best approaches for winning that game.

- **Policy** is what governs how we conduct ourselves in playing the game.

- **Planning** is what we do to convert our tactics into a set of moves.

This lesson will concentrate on strategy and planning. It will

- distinguish strategic management from operational management

- outline the process of developing a strategic plan.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

'Strategic management' is concerned with making fundamental decisions affecting the organisation's mandate, mission, aims and objectives and the policies adopted for their attainment. However, it may be easier to understand strategic management by distinguishing it from operational management. At its simplest, the distinction is as follows.

- Management carried out at top of an organisational structure is strategic management.

- All else is operational management.

However, strategic management is not the sole preserve of senior officers within the organisation. In practice, most managers will be involved in a mix of strategic and

operational management, with strategic planning predominating at higher management levels. For example, an agency records manager and his or her line manager would both be involved in the strategic management of the records management unit; but the line manager would have a heavier strategic management load because he or she would be involved also in the strategic management of other work areas; while the records manager would have a heavier operational management load in respect of the operational management responsibilities within the unit.

> *Strategic management involves making fundamental decisions about the mandate, mission, aims and objectives on an organisation, in order to strengthen or improve systems and services.*

Strategic management is important because

• it provides direction to the organisation

• it matches its key aims and objectives with future plans

• it ensures efficient and effective use of resources in the short, medium and longer terms.

Strategic management establishes the strategy, tactics, policy and planning context that provides operational management with

• guidance

• direction

• boundaries.

> *Strategic management provides direction.*

STRATEGIC PLANNING

> *Strategic planning*: The process of identifying an organization's mission, aims and objectives, determining its needs, capabilities and resources, and then developing strategies to achieve those goals.

Strategic planning is at the heart of strategic management. Its essential elements are

• thinking through the key aims and objectives of the organisation

- making plans for future developments

- working out how to get from where the organisation is now to where it wants to be.

Strategic planning is basically a formalised systematic process that

- identifies the basic business of an organisation (its mandate and mission)

- establishes its core functions (aims)

- determines its short-, medium- and long-term priorities (objectives)

- allocates the resources necessary for the effective and economical achievement of the mission, aims and objectives

- produces a formal statement of the outcome of that process in the form of a strategic or corporate plan.

There is no universal model for a strategic plan. Each organisation must design its own plan to fit in with its own business needs. However, four elements are important in any strategic plan.

1. The plan must link the present to the future: projecting strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats into the future; considering alternative options and courses of action.

2. The plan must be part of a continuing planning process: considering the 'who', 'what', 'when', 'why' and 'how'.

3. The plan must be approached with the right attitude: managers at all levels need to understand (and believe) in the process; strategic planning is more 'thinking' than 'doing'; it requires managers to undertake the process as an integral part of management.

4. The plan must provide a framework for linking upwards into other strategic plans and downwards into programmes, projects and operating plans.

Activity 8

Have you had any experience with the process of strategic planning? If so, write a brief description of what happened and indicate whether, in your opinion, the process worked or did not work. Why was it successful or not?

If you have not had any experience with strategic planning, write down your opinion, based on your reading so far, of what strategic planning is and why it may be a positive or negative influence in your institution. Write down three benefits and three disadvantages you can think of to strategic planning.

PREPARING A STRATEGIC PLAN

Preparing a strategic plan requires that all the managers involved participate in a sequence of actions, including

- identifying the organisation's mandate and defining its mission and its aims

- assessing its strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunities and threats that it faces

- identifying the strategic issues facing the organisation

- developing a strategic programme

- establishing a vision for the future.

Mandate, Mission and Aims

Mandate

> ***Mandate:*** The source of authority for an organisation's activities.

An organisation's mandate is the formal statement of its core business. This statement may be contained in a single document, such as the legislation that established the organisation, but it is more likely to be a drawn from a number of sources, including specific and general legislation, regulations, policy statements and undertakings. In the private sector, the mandate may be found in a board minute or an executive decision.

Mandates are likely to be disparate, often contradictory or ambiguous, and they may be expressed in legalistic terminology. In practice, therefore, it is necessary to produce a concise and clear statement of the purpose of the organisation.

> *The mandate is the formal statement of an organisation's core business.*

Defining the core business involves

- reviewing the mandatory documents to establish what is mandatory and what is permissive

- analysing the organisation's stakeholders, determining which are the key stakeholders and ascertaining their expectations.

> *Stakeholder:* Any person, group or other organisation that has a claim on an organisation's attention, resources or output or is affected by that output.

In terms of a National Records and Archives Institution the stakeholders will include the government, parliament, the minister responsible for records and archives, heads of agencies and those responsible to them for the management of their records, the public and posterity.

Analysing stakeholders in the form of customers, suppliers and competitors is dealt with in more detail in Lesson 4.

The Mission Statement

The outcome of this process of developing the mandate is a 'mission statement'.

> *Mission statement:* A written articulation of an organisation's purpose or mission.

Mission statements articulate the organisation's purpose or function and provide the philosophical framework within which the organisation's plans and strategies are formulated. A mission statement consists of four main elements:

- a statement of the organisation's overarching purpose or mission

- a vision of what the organisation would like to become

- a statement of the organisation's core values and beliefs

- a statement of the organisation's goals or how it will reach its vision (these should be quantifiable).

> *The mission of an organisation is the purpose for which it exists.*

For example, the mission statement of a National Records and Archives Institution might be

> To promote good governance and accountability by the establishment and maintenance of effective life-cycle records and archives management systems throughout the public sector.

Mission statements can be used to

- evaluate whether an organisation's mission or purpose is in alignment with its environment

- motivate staff

- measure progress toward goals.

It is important to involve staff in this process, to help build their commitment to the organisation's mission at every level. However, developing an organisational mission statement that reflects the shared vision and values of everyone within the organisation will take time and effort.

One technique for developing an organisational mission statement, drawn from the process of 'total quality management', entails identifying customers' requirements.

> *Total quality management:* A management philosophy that focuses on customer satisfaction, commitment to quality, continuous process improvement, employee involvement and statistical process control to solve organisational problems.

According to the total quality management philosophy, if the customers' requirements are met or exceeded, the organisation will thrive. Thus the customers' requirements will determine what it is the organisation should be doing.

Meeting customers' requirements is dealt with in more detail in Lesson 4

Another technique used to develop organisational mission statements is brainstorming. Brainstorming is used to help a group generate as many ideas as possible in as short a time as possible.

In brainstorming, staff members are asked to envision the organisation at a certain point in the future, such as five years from now. To focus the brainstorming effort, session participants might consider the following questions.

- Who are the stakeholders in the organisation? How do we work with them? How do we produce value for them?

- What are the most influential trends affecting the organisation?

- What is the impact of our work?

- What does the organisation look like?

- How do the important elements of the organisational system interrelate?

- What are our values? How do we treat our co-workers? How are people recognised?

- What is our organisation's role in our community?

After producing answers to these questions, participants might then consider answering the questions based on the organisation's current situation. Comparing the two scenarios can help to clarify the goals and strategies needed to realise the organisation's mission.

Brainstorming in the context of team building is discussed in more detail in Managing Resources for Records and Archives Services.

Activity 9

Without consulting your organisation's existing mission statement, write a mission statement for a particular functional unit in your organisation, such as the records management unit, a records centre or the reference department of the archival institution. Compare your statement with any already in place in the organisation.

Aims

> *Aims:* Statements of the ongoing purposes of an organisation arising from its mandate.

In furtherance of its mission, the organisation should also develop more specific aims. These are statements of ongoing commitments to the core business of the organisation. Good aims should be

- inspirational
- broad in scope
- easily understood
- all embracing
- longer term
- without time constraints
- not quantified
- concise.

For example, the aims of a National Records and Archives Institution might be to

- ensure the effective, economical and efficient management of public sector records throughout their life.
- identify records of enduring value and transfer them to the National Archives.
- preserve the archives in the custody of the National Archives.
- provide access to the archives for those who need to consult them.

> *Aims are statements of ongoing commitment.*

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

The next step is to identify the internal strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and the external opportunities and threats it faces. This process is known as a SWOT analysis, from the initial letters of the four elements.

> ***SWOT analysis:*** The systematic assessment of an organisation's internal strengths (S) and weaknesses (W) and external opportunities (O) and threats (T).

> *The purpose of a SWOT analysis is to reinforce strengths, remedy weaknesses, take advantage of opportunities and deflect threats.*

SWOT analysis asks the following questions.

Strengths

These should be considered from both the point of view of the organisation and that of its customers.

- What are the organisation's advantages?
- What does it do well?

Weaknesses

Again these should be seen from both the point of view of the organisation and that of its customers.

- What could be improved?
- What is done badly?
- What should be avoided?
- What do competitors do better?

Opportunities

Useful opportunities can come from changes in the organisation's environment.

- What are the relevant trends?
- What forthcoming events provide the chance to promote the organisation and its services?
- How can the organisation take advantage of these trends and events?

Threats

Again, problems can arise from changes in the organisation's environment.

- What obstacles have to be faced?

- What are competitors doing?

- Are the requirements for the organisation's services changing?

- Is changing technology a threat as well as an opportunity?

Carrying out this analysis will often reveal changes that can usefully be made and put problems into perspective.

The Business Environment

Analysing the organisation's business environment to identify opportunities and threats involves the following steps.

1. Describe the current business environment. To facilitate analysis, you may want to divide the broader business environment into the following sub-categories:

- economic environment, including relevant macroeconomic factors, such as the growth rate of the economy, interest rates, currency exchange rates and inflation rates, and microeconomic factors, such as the availability of funding from estimates and other sources

- technological environment, including new industrial processes or information technologies that may impact the organisation

- social environment, including any factors that may lead to changing values

- demographic environment, for example an aging population which may lead to changing priorities or needs

- political and legal environment, for example a policy shift away from public ownership to private ownership or the implementation of new legislation.

2. Answer the question 'what has changed or will change about the current business environment?' You may want to categorise changes into those that are short term and those that are longer term.

3. Assess whether the changes that have been identified qualify as opportunities for or threats to the organisation. An example of an opportunity for a National Archives might be new records and archives legislation. This might be considered an opportunity because it recognises and enhances the role of the organisation. Conversely, the need to compete with other agencies in providing in records management expertise might be categorised as a threat.

Identifying Strategic Issues

Identifying strategic issues is the heart of the strategic planning process It is at this stage that the organisation identifies and addresses the fundamental policy choices it has identified through the process of developing a mandate and mission and conducting a SWOT analysis.

This process involves

• identifying each issue

• determining whether it is a strategic issue

• assessing the consequences of failure to address that issue

• arranging the strategic issues in priority, logical or time order.

For example, a National Records and Archives Institution might be facing the implementation of access to information legislation in the government. Ensuring that all records are easily accessible, in order to comply with this legislation, may be a strategic issue. The priority given to this strategic issue over others will depend in part on the time frame for implementation of the new legislation, on the current state of records and on the available resources to improve systems.

The institution may also identify inadequate sorting areas as a strategic issue, but this issue may be of lower priority than preparing for access to information legislation. However, the two issues may be connected: the institution may be better able to comply with access requirements if it can sort records more efficiently, which requires improved sorting areas.

> *Strategic issues are those that affect the fundamental policy choices of the organisation.*

Establishing a Strategic Programme

Objectives

> ***Objective:*** The statement of a specific goal in support of an organisation's aims, which it is intended to achieve within a specified period of time.

At this stage all the work that has already been done is brought together to establish a strategic programme. This programme is usually expressed as a series of objectives and sub-objectives stemming from the strategic issues that have been identified as strategic priorities. Good, effective objectives are

- specific

- objective

- limited in number

- prioritised

- ends not means

- challenging but achievable

- measurable in terms of performance, output and value for money.

These are sometimes summed up as SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed.

> *Effective objectives expand on aims in specific ways.*

The human, financial and physical resource implications of each objective should be considered. It is better to propose a small number of major objectives and key performance measures, attainable within resource constraints, than to produce a long wish list of unachievable objectives.

Performance Measurement

> ***Performance measure:*** An indicator of effectiveness based on a standard definition of a process and the units for its measurement. Also known as a performance indicator or target.

Measuring performance may present problems in the context of records and archives work, but it is not insuperable. Some objectives may be susceptible to measurement in terms of reduction of unit costs and others in terms of service targets; if no other measurement is appropriate, measurement may be in terms of target dates.

The Vision of Success

The 'vision of success' sums up the strategies that have been adopted in the strategic plan. It is a summary of what the organisation should look like when it has successfully implemented its strategies and developed its full potential.

For example, for an agency records management unit, the vision of success might be as follows.

> Over the next three years, the unit will decongest the existing registries, restructure all the records offices and dispose of all records due for transfer to the records centre or for destruction, while developing and maintaining an efficient service to users of the agency's records.

The Strategic Plan

Strategic plan: A formal statement of an organisation's intended outputs over a specified period of time and of the inputs required to produce those outputs. Also known as a corporate plan or development plan.

The outcome of all the above activities should be a strategic or long-term plan. A strategic plan sets out the organisation's mandate, mission statement, aims and objectives. It also identifies the resources needed to fulfil the plan and the performance measures that will indicate its successful accomplishment. It is essential that the plan should be realistic in terms of what is achievable with available resources and within agreed times. The plan should cover the longer term, such as the next five years.

The strategic plan should also take account of and conform to the strategic plans of any related organisations. For example, the strategic plan of a records management unit should fit in with both the wider strategic plan of the parent agency and the strategic plan of the National Records and Archives Institution.

Strategic planning is a continuous process and the strategic plan is a rolling plan. As the first year of the plan come to a close, the planning process should be repeated, taking account of progress achieved during the year, and a new strategic plan should be developed, covering the new longer-term period, such as the next five years.

Each strategic plan should be formally accepted by the organisation's managers and the key stakeholder, to whom staff should present regular progress reports on actual performance in relation to agreed performance measures. For example, in a National Records and Archives Institution, the key stakeholder might be the minister responsible for public sector records and archives.

Once agreed, the strategic plan will become the framework for a number of subsidiary plans, including

- financial plans, such as the long-term public expenditure plan and the annual estimates

- the annual business plan.

> *Financial planning is dealt with in more detail in* Managing Resources for Records and Archives Services.

Activity 11

Imagine you are the manager of your records management unit. You have identified as a strategic issue the need to change your system for transferring records out of your unit to the archival facility. The process of change involves revising your forms and procedures, updating your training manuals and training staff in the new procedures. Your senior management has approved additional expenditure to accomplish this work over the next six months.

Using the information provided so far in this module, develop a strategic plan to achieve this change in your systems.

This plan can be brief but you should try to incorporate as many elements as possible from those identified in this lesson. The purpose of this exercise is to help you think through the strategic planning process for one specific situation; your answer need not be comprehensive but you should do as much work as possible to help you feel comfortable with the ideas presented so far in this module.

Republic of Erewhon

Records and Archives Institution Strategic Plan, 1998–2002

Mission Statement

The Records and Archives Institution of the Republic of Erewhon endeavours to ensure the efficient and economical management of the records of the government of Erewhon throughout their life cycle and the preservation of those public records of archival value for current and future use by the government and citizens of Erewhon and others.

Environmental Analysis

The National Archives of Erewhon was established in 1959, and it has served as the nation's repository for archival records of the government since that time. In 1961 the University of Erewhon established a Special Collections Division, which has actively acquired private records relating to the history of the Republic of Erewhon both before and after independence.

In 1978 the government established the National Library of Erewhon, and the National Archives transferred its collection of publications to the National Library at that time. Since then the National Archives has been responsible for public records, with a small archival reference library for staff use.

In 1996 the government revised records legislation establishing a National Records and Archives Institution, encompassing comprehensive records management services and management of the National Archives of Erewhon.

The primary users of the National and Archives Institution and the National Archives of Erewhon are government officials, academic researchers, citizens conducting local, family or community research, and university students and school children for projects.

Civil Service Reform

As part of the implementation of civil service reforms, the National Records and Archives Institution has undertaken to restructure existing records services within government. This is a requirement of donor aid and time limits have been established.

Assessment of Resources

At present, the National Records and Archives Institution has the following resources.

Staff

- 20 full-time professional staff (6 with diplomas in records management, 4 with masters in archival studies
- 25 full-time support staff.

Buildings

- one central records repository and reference area, in a separate building near Government House
- three offsite storage areas for semi-current and archival records, none with environmental controls or monitors.

Equipment and supplies

- recently acquired microfilming equipment, to international standards
- three trucks and two cars
- no computer resources.

Financial resources

- sufficient budget to maintain existing operations but not to provide additional services, training or expansion.

Figure 6: Sample Strategic Plan for the 'Republic of Erewhon'

Existing Holdings

The National Records and Archives Institution has custody of both semi-current and archival records and administrative responsibility for current records. Current holdings include:

- 5000 linear metres of semi-current records, 1000 of which are identified and accessible
- 500 linear metres of archival records, 300 of which are arranged, described and accessible.

The National Records and Archives Institution also has a small reference library, consisting of approximately 100 publications. These are generally for staff use only.

Goals and Objectives

Given the requirements of the National Records and Archives Institution to restructure government records systems, and given the high and increasing use of archival records by government personnel, the National Records and Archives Institution's goals and objectives for the years 1998–2002 are as follows.

Goals

Following are the overall goals to be achieved in the four years.

1 Retrain key staff in current records management practices, to ensure their ability to execute restructuring and processing appropriately.

2 Restructure records systems in key government departments.

3 Complete the processing of the 4000 unprocessed semi-current records, to ensure accessibility by government and ease of transfer to archives.

Objectives

Specifically, the following steps will be taken to achieve these goals.

1 Train two professional staff members per year for four years in records and archives management.

2 Develop a plan to expand the professional resources and library of archival and records management literature to support training.

3 Restructure the records systems in two government departments per year, beginning with the key policy-making departments.

4 Review and report on the restructuring process monthly to ensure compliance with the restructuring programme.

5 Hold monthly meeting between newly trained staff, restructuring staff and processing staff to ensure conformity of policies and procedures.

6 Assign three professional and five support staff exclusively to clearing the backlog of unprocessed semi-current records.

7 Acquire space within an appropriate government building to undertake the processing work.

8 Replace the shelving systems used for semi-current records storage with stable metal shelving to allow for the return of records once processed.

9 Review all administrative and descriptive systems and improve as required prior to completing the description of processed semi-current records.

10 Prepare a report on the acquisition of computer systems for managing information about holdings.

Resources required: 100,000 Erewhon currency   *Review date:*   Dec. 1999.

Figure 6: Sample Strategic Plan for the 'Republic of Erewhon' (cont.)

The Annual Business Plan

The annual business plan takes those elements of the strategic plan that are to be tackled during the forthcoming year and sets out in more detail than the strategic plan how they are to be accomplished and how success is to be measured.

> *The business plan outlines the work to be done during the year.*

Like the strategic plan, the annual business plan should set out the organisation's mandate, mission statement and aims. However, its objectives will be more specific, will be related to the year in question and will have their own performance measures. They may be either finite short-term objectives to be achieved within the year or stages to be completed within the year towards the achievement of longer-term objectives.

Again like the strategic plan, the business plan should identify in more detail the resources allocated to fulfil each objective. In this respect it will be inextricably bound up in the annual estimates process. It is essential that the business plan should be realistic in terms of what is achievable with available resources and within agreed timescales.

The annual business plan in turn should both fit in with the business plans of related organisations and become the framework for a number of subsidiary plans, including

- operational plans for the organisation's several units
- annual job plans for its staff.

> *Job plans are dealt with in more detail in* Managing Resources for Records and Archives Services.

SAMPLE EXCERPT FROM BUSINESS PLAN

WORK PROGRAMME 2

Objective	**Preservation**
Work programme	**Preserving the public records**
Continuing work	We provide for or oversee the security and physical care of the records in a variety of media from their creation in originating bodies to their permanent preservation and use in the PRO or in places of deposit[1]. We apply a range of techniques to conserve those that are damaged. We develop standards for the careful handling of records and train and monitor staff and users in meeting them. We agree and monitor preservation standards and access facilities for public records in places of deposit. We promote the copying of records in order to minimise wear and tear on the originals. Our work on remote access to the records will also facilitate the preservation of the originals: see work programme 3.
1999-2000 key performance indicator targets	KPI 1a: unit cost of selecting and preserving records per metre: see work programme 1
Related four-year objective	KPI 3: to increase the proportion of records stored to the preservation and environmental standards of *BS 5454* from 88.29% to 88.45%

Figure 7: Excerpt from a Sample Business Plan

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[1] Places appointed by the Keeper of Public Records as suitable to hold three categories of public records: i) those created locally and with a specific local interest; ii) those of a nature or format which require specialised skills for their preservation and/or use, not available at the PRO; and iii) those of certain public record bodies which have an administrative need to keep their archives. About one fifth of permanently preserved public records are held in about 250 places of deposit.

Developments in the work programme to 2002-03	**To improve the preservation of the public records**
	We shall promote improvements in the preservation of public records in places of deposit
	We shall establish new standards and targets for preserving electronic records
	We shall increase the number of documents conserved by an average of 10% a year until 2000-01
	We shall carry out a five year programme from 1999-2000 to make accessible all documents currently designated as being unfit due to their physical condition and in high demand for consultation (Public Service Agreement)
	We shall pilot induction courses for new on site users at Kew designed to give them preservation awareness and skills
1999-2000 work programme targets	To monitor storage and access facilities for deposited public records by inspecting 50 places of deposit
	To increase the number of records for consultation on microfilm by 10%[2]
	To upgrade our storage for working master microfilms so that it meets the recommendations of *BS 1153: Recommendations for the processing and storage of silver-gelatin-type microfilm* (BSI, 1992)

Figure 7: Excerpt from a Sample Business Plan (cont.)

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[2] Is the microfilming programme will be accelerated and the target increased in-year: see p3, n4.

1999-2000 staff training and development priorities	Training in IT applications and project management skills to support preservation activities		
	Spreading knowledge and skills gained through external contacts in the preservation sector		
Key functions (see annex 1)	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 4.3		
Departments	Archive Inspection Services, Conservation, Document Services, Estates and Central Services, Records Management, Preservation Services (lead), Reader Information Services		

BUDGET

	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Staff numbers	63.89	63.89	63.89	63.89
Staff cost £000	1,421	1,421	1,421	1,421
Other cost £000	11,712	11,712	11,712	11,712
Income £000	-274	-274	-274	-274
Total cost £000	**12,859**	**12,859**	**12,859**	**12,859**

Figure 7: Excerpt from a Sample Business Plan (cont.)

Reproduced with permission from UK Public Record Office, *Corporate Plan 1999-2000 to 2002-2003 and Business Plan 1999-2000,* pp. 16-17.

SUMMARY

Lesson 2 has defined strategic management and distinguished it from operational management

It has also outlined the process of developing a strategic plan through the following steps:

- identifying the organisation's mandate and defining its mission and its aims

- assessing its strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunities and threats that it faces

- identifying the strategic issues facing the organisation

- developing a strategic programme of measurable objectives

- establishing a vision for the future.

It has also related the strategic plan arising from this process to various shorter-term plans that are dependent upon it.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Define strategic management and operational management.

2. Why is strategic management important?

3. Define a strategic plan.

4. Describe the four elements that are important to a strategic plan.

5. Describe the processes involved with strategic planning.

6. Define a mandate and a mission statement.

7. Who is a stakeholder?

8. What is team building?

9. What is brainstorming?

10. Define aims.

11. Explain four qualities that should be found in aims for them to be workable and effective.

12. What is a SWOT analysis?

13. What is the purpose of a SWOT analysis?

14. What are strategic issues?

15. What are objectives?

16. Explain four qualities that should be found in objectives to make them effective.

17. Define performance measurement.

18. What is a 'vision of success'?

19. What is an annual business plan?

ACTIVITIES: COMMENTS

Activity 8

Many people have had difficult experiences with strategic planning; this is usually because the process is not followed through to its logical conclusion, or unrealistic estimates are made of the availability of resources or the feasibility of the timescales. Strategic planning is not useful if it is not done well and thoroughly. That said, it is possible to develop a strategic plan for specific and limited actions, building on each plan so that overall change occurs over time. It is important not to dismiss strategic planning just because you have had one bad experience with the process.

Activity 9

For example, the mission of an archival facility within a national government might be stated as follows.

> The mission of the National Archives is to appraise, select, acquire, arrange and describe, preserve and make accessible in accordance with the highest standards of the archival profession the public records of the national government and associated non-governmental records, in order to ensure that its activities, plans, programmes and functions are documented fully and the history of the government and the nation is available to support continuing government operation and public research.

Activity 10

The disposal scheduling process might be used as an example. The main output of this process is completed disposal schedules. The users of this output are the creators and holders of the particular records series covered by the disposal schedule. There are a number of information inputs in the preparation of disposal schedules. These include information about the records, information about rates, types and length of use, and information about legislative or regulatory, financial and archival retention requirements. Those who supply this information can be considered the suppliers. For example, records managers supply information about the records, records creators supply information about records use and archivists supply information about archival retention requirements. Records creators and holders might be considered competitors in the sense that they can make their own decisions about records retention and disposal without preparing a disposal schedule and seeking inputs from all the various suppliers of information normally consulted in the scheduling process. However, this competition results in an inferior output as retention decisions are made on the basis of only partial information.

Activity 11

This activity should help you see the various elements of the strategic planning process and learn how the work can proceed. For an example of a strategic plan, see the sample included with this lesson.

PROJECT PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Lesson 3 introduces managers in the records and archives field to the concepts and processes of planning and managing projects.

> ***Project:*** A formally established, single-time work effort with a well-defined beginning, scope and objectives, end product, completion and success criteria and end point.

A project is the opposite of a routine, repetitive process. It may be the construction of a building, the procurement of equipment, the introduction of a new system or a mix of any or all of these.

Any project needs to be properly planned and managed if it is to be completed on time and within budget and is to produce a satisfactory output. There are a number of project planning and management systems on the market, many of them including project management software that can be run on personal computers.

This lesson provides a summary of the basic components of the process and systems involved with project planning and management. It will stress the importance of

- emphasising a business rather than a technical approach

- involving users

- understanding and managing organisational structures and control systems

- dividing project work into discrete steps or stages.

THE BUSINESS APPROACH TO PROJECTS

Before any project is begun, it is essential to consider carefully

- the benefits anticipated from the project

- the outputs that will produce those benefits.

If you do not know what you want, how do you know when you have got it? If you do not know where you are going, how do you know when you have got there?

Business needs and priorities should determine whether a project is initiated and what form it should take. Technical considerations are important but they should not drive the project. They are secondary to other considerations. Following are some key questions to ask.

- Should we do it?

- Should we do it now?

- Can we afford to do it?

- How can we do it?

- Will it work?

These questions are developed further below, in the section on the initiation of a project.

Activity 12

Can you think of a project with which you have been involved recently? Write down a brief description of the project and indicate at least two areas where the project was a success and two areas where the project was less successful. Can you provide reasons for the successes and the failures?

USER INVOLVEMENT

Because a business approach is being taken towards project planning and management, the key participants will be the end-product users, not the technical experts. In this context such users are taken to be the relevant operational staff of the organisation rather than its customers, though the staff should always remember what their customers need.

Users should know what their aims and objectives are (that is, where they want to go) and what needs to be done to achieve them (that is, how to get there). That is not to say that user requests should be acceded to without question or that bigger, newer or more sophisticated ways of doing the present job will necessarily be the answer. For example, if a system for processing data is not working, introducing computers will not necessarily solve the problems. Users must be able to stand back from the job, look at the required product and map the best way of getting there, even if that means changing the job.

Hence, users should be involved in all stages of the project from the inception to the implementation. This involvement may be formalised in the establishment of a users committee with representation on the project steering committee.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES AND CONTROL SYSTEMS

If projects are to be managed effectively and economically, they need to operate within appropriate organisational structures and control systems.

Organisational Structure

The organisational structure should be a simple as possible. Responsibilities for each of its elements should be carefully defined and delineated. The key players within the organisation will include

- the steering committee or project board
- the project manager
- assurance or quality co-ordinators
- project teams
- project support staff.

Steering Committee

> ***Steering Committee:*** A senior management group that approves the commitment of resources to, oversees the general direction of and monitors the progress of a project.

The steering committee should be responsible for the strategic management of the project. It should be small but influential, ideally with only three members: a senior manager (as chair), a senior user and a senior technical specialist. These people should be sufficiently senior within the organisation to take decisions and commit resources (within budgets) without having to refer upwards, except in cases of major variances from the project plans (such as serious cost or time over-runs).

In some systems the title 'project board' or 'management board' is preferred, with the implication that a board has more powers of decision than a committee. The more widely found 'steering committee' is used here.

The steering committee should be accountable for the project, with responsibility for

- giving strategic direction to the project

- approving project terms of reference and project plans

- managing risk

- agreeing tolerances, approving exceptions and, if necessary, terminating the project

- managing progress and agreeing action

- signing off the project.

Project Manager

The project manager should be accountable to the steering committee for the conduct of the project and delivery of its outputs. He or she should be selected for management skills and abilities rather than for any specific subject expertise.

The project manager should be responsible for

- preparing terms of reference and project plans

- establishing teams, setting their objectives and approving their work plans

- setting checkpoints and preparing periodical progress reports and exception plans

- preparing end-of-project reports.

Assurance or Quality Co-ordinators

The assurance co-ordinators should be responsible for

- assisting the project manager

- establishing business, user and technical quality standards and acceptance criteria

- monitoring performance against plans.

Project Teams

Project teams will need to be established to carry out the project. Their size and composition will vary with the scale and scope of the project. For smaller projects a single team headed by the project manager may suffice. For more complex projects a number of separate teams to tackle discrete parts of the project, each headed by a team leader, may be necessary.

Team leaders should be responsible for

- contributing to the planning process

- managing their teams in the execution of the project.

If there are not enough technically qualified personnel within the organisation to fill all the technical posts required for planning and managing the project, then people may have to be borrowed from other agencies within the public sector or hired as

temporary consultants from the private sector.

At some stages of the project, it is likely that the teams will be working with technicians from the companies supplying equipment or services. It is important that any technical consultants hired by the organisation should be independent of those suppliers. Otherwise, there is a potential for conflict of interest with the companies supplying goods or services to the organisation.

Project Support Staff

The project will need to have an appropriate complement of administrative and clerical staff to manage the paperwork produced and provide the necessary logistical support.

Activity 13

Imagine you are responsible for a project to install two new computers and appropriate software to prepare descriptions of archival records. The computers and software are being supplied by a private company in your country; all of the work to install the equipment and software is to be done by staff within your organisation.

Outline who in your organisation you would assign as

> steering committee
>
> project manager
>
> project team.

Would you need to break the project down into discrete parts with separate project teams for each? Why or why not?

For this exercise, do not identify specific individuals within your organisation but rather the appropriate positions, such as senior archivist or computer technician, according to the jobs in place in your institution. If a particular position does not exist, you may wish to create one and explain why you felt this action was necessary.

Control Systems

Control should be exercised at all levels throughout the project. It is important to install a formal mechanism for monitoring progress. At the heart of this mechanism should be a sequence of plans, quality reviews, risk assessments and reports for consideration and action at the appropriate level within the organisational structure. These documents should be produced at predetermined points within the planning process and should be considered at formal meetings of the respective bodies. Since these reports will be the basis on which decisions are taken, it is essential that they should be accurate and complete.

Plans

The plans should establish the parameters for the project and its several components. The plans should set out

- specifications of outputs and quality standards

- availability of resources

- technical constraints

- risks

- financial and time tolerances.

Quality Review

Quality review may be formal or informal. Its purpose is to ensure compliance with quality standards and to discover and document errors.

Reports

Reports should be expected at various predetermined checkpoints during the project and at the end of the project. If at the checkpoints serious problems are observed, such as breaches or potential breaches of tolerances, shortages of staff or technological difficulties, the project manager should trigger exception reports. The steering committee will then have to decide whether to modify the original plans by means of an exception plan or to discontinue the project.

Meetings

Formal meetings should be scheduled for each of the bodies within the organisational structure at the points within the project when the various key documents are ready for consideration and acceptance. These meetings must be minuted.

> *The progress of any project should be controlled through the use of plans, reviews, reports and meetings.*

PROJECT STAGES

For convenience of planning and control, it is usual to divide projects into a number of discrete steps or stages. These are approached in a set sequence but it is possible to repeat steps or terminate actions at any stage. It may be particularly important to return to and repeat a previous stage if major difficulties arise.

For the purpose of this lesson, a seven-stage process is recommended. Remember, these stages may be changed, repeated, or removed depending on the specific project in question. The seven stages outlined here include

- initiation

- analysis

- design

- development

- implementation

- operation

- evaluation.

Initiation

A project may be initiated as an outcome of the strategic planning process or as a response to changing regulatory requirements or customer needs.

At this stage, basic business questions are asked.

- Should we do it? What are the benefits? Do the benefits justify the expenditure of time, effort and resources? Remember the maxim: 'If it isn't broken, don't try to fix it'.

- Should we do it now? Where does it fit in our strategic priorities? What would be the penalties of not doing it?

- Can we afford to do it? Do we have the human, financial and physical resources to manage the project?

- How can we do it? What are the technological and other options available? What are the legal or other constraints?

- Will it work? What outputs can we expect and how will we measure success? Do we have the human, financial and physical resources to derive full operational benefit from it?

If the answer to the last question is: 'We do not know', it may be advisable to set up a feasibility study, which can be a mini-project in its own right. Such a study helps the organisation determine if the project is valuable and if the organisation will benefit fully from the products created.

> *A project should begin by asking critical questions about*
> *whether or not the work should even be considered.*

Once all the questions have been answered and a decision to initiate the project has been made, a number of preliminary actions need to be taken. These include the following.

- Issue a formal project initiation document setting out the project's purpose, parameters and anticipated products.

- Appoint the steering committee.

- Assign appropriate resources.

- Establish control mechanisms.

- Select the project manger and project team(s).

- Prepare a project plan covering all the stages described here.

Analysis

This stage is concerned with 'What?' not 'How'. What outputs are expected from the project? What is its purpose? Where do we want to get to?

The following information is gathered at this stage.

- User needs are identified and quantified.

- These needs are placed in order of priority, with the essential taking precedent over the merely desirable.

- A realistic assessment of the availability of resources is made.

- Risks are assessed.

- Benefits are identified and quantified.

- The effect of changes to existing procedures and structures are identified.

The analysis determines what is going to be done.

From this analysis, a user specification is developed (in some systems this stage is known as the 'specification stage'). For complex projects this may require full-scale functional analysis.

For a more detailed discussion of functional analysis see Analysing Business Systems.

Activity 14

Undertake a risk assessment for a small potential project, such as reorganising a filing system or moving records from one office to another. What risks are involved? Why is the project worth doing? Who should be responsible for (a) identifying and (b) managing the risks?

Design

This is the stage that is concerned with the 'How?' How might we deliver the specified outputs? How do we get to where we want to go from where we are now?

> *The design stage determines how a project will be executed.*

At this stage, the practical means of meeting the user specification are identified:

- possible technical solutions are explored

- alternative logical and physical systems are mapped

- operational resource requirements are estimated

- the implications of changing from the present situation are examined

- technical and quality standards are determined.

In larger projects the early phases of this stage are likely to be iterative. That is, the work will be undertaken, reviewed and repeated as necessary so that user requirements and design constraints are matched to produce a revised user specification. It may also be that in the early phases a number of design options present themselves to the stage team. If so, a cost-benefit analysis of the options should be undertaken. The option that best balances benefits and costs will normally be the one selected for full development.

From this process should emerge a detailed design specification. This may range from a design for a totally new product to one that improves on an existing one (such as building a new archival repository or improving and extending an existing one). The detailed design specification will provide the basis for any contracts for the supply of the product at the next stage.

Linked to this specification should be a timetable of implementation stages, showing their critical relationship to each other. Consider the following for example.

- It is not possible to start constructing an archival repository until the land has been acquired.

- It is not possible to start installing racking and shelving before construction has been completed.

- It is not possible to start moving in archives before the racking and shelving has been installed.

Such a timetable might be expressed as a simple Gantt chart (see Figure 8).

The process of developing Gantt charts and analysing the critical flow of work is discussed in more detail in Analysing Business Systems.

Development

This is the stage when the project's design starts to become a reality. Development will normally involve a partnership between the organisation and contractors supplying the product. It will often be the longest single stage of the project and, therefore, the one with the greatest number of checkpoints.

The product may be the construction of a new archival repository, the assembly of hardware, software and data for a new information technology system, the procurement of new conservation or reprographic equipment or the restructuring of a registry system.

However, this stage should not been seen as one of purely technical input. Introducing a new product will have significant implications for the way in which staff work. Therefore, it is important that preparation for the necessary changes to working relationships and practices should go hand in hand with technical development.

Whatever the product is, the stage should not be concluded until the product has been tested in the changed working environment and both have been found to conform to pre-determined technical and quality standards and to meet user specifications.

> *Development involves actually executing the design and testing the product to make sure it is satisfactory.*

Implementation

This is the stage at which the user takes over the product and prepares to operate it, to manage the changes to working relationships and practices which it involves and to achieve the anticipated benefits. It will include drafting user manuals and training staff to carry out new procedures and operate new equipment.

> *Implementation includes the development of training and maintenance procedures.*

Operation

This is the final stage of the project, when the product becomes fully operational. Unforeseen problems may now occur, but if the project has been well planned and controlled, these should be of a minor nature needing only fine tuning to correct them.

No.	Action	Months														
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
		1998												1999		
		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
1	**Seek funding**	xxxxx														
2	**Funding confirmed**		xxxxx													
3	**Detailed design**			xxxxx	xxxxx											
4	**Prepare tender documents**				xxxxx	xxxxx										
5	**Seek tenders**						xxxxx									
6	**Construction**							xxxxx	xxxxx	xxxxx	xxxxx					
7	**Fit out shelving**											xxxxx	xxxxx			
8	**Inspect construction**													xxxxx		
9	**Move archives**														xxxxx	
10	**Sign off and official opening**															xxxxx

Figure 8: Gantt Chart for Constructing and Occupying an Archival Repository

Evaluation

The purpose of an evaluation is to

- review, verify, evaluate and report on the adequacy of the internal control framework established to manage a function

- examine and evaluate the performance of the function in relation to that framework

- advise management on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of operations.

Basically, evaluations (also known as audits, reviews or monitoring reports) assess performance, identify opportunities for improvement and develop recommendations for improvement or subsequent action. Evaluations of management systems should be undertaken on a regularly scheduled basis, not only to determine the deficiencies of the systems but also to identify proficiencies. Evaluations can also assist in determining compliance with legislative and policy requirements.

There are many options available when deciding how to conduct an evaluation of the management system of an organisation. Broadly the choice is between

- a formal, regimented evaluation conducted by an outsider

- an informal evaluation conducted by someone within the agency.

Informal evaluations may be done as an ongoing part of the management programme as a self-checking tool for any aspect of the management system.

It is important to stress that the purpose of the evaluation of the management system is not to lay blame for any perceived inefficiencies, ineffectiveness or non-compliance with existing legislative and policy frameworks. Its purpose is to identify any existing problems and to find reasonable and achievable solutions. The overall aim is to achieve the sound and effective management of government resources.

Just as projects involve various stages, evaluations also involve a number of stages. These include

- planning

- preparation

- evaluation

- verification

- reporting

- implementation.

Planning

The planning phase involves selecting an auditor (and the evaluation team if necessary), determining the purpose or scope of the evaluation and gathering information pertaining to the management system and its objectives. The options for an auditor are usually

- an internal auditor or internal staff member

- an external auditor or consultant.

In some cases, it may be decided to utilise a team approach, rather than having the work done by a single individual. In such circumstances, an evaluation team will have to be established. The auditor should assume the project manager's role.

Before the evaluation can be initiated, it is absolutely essential to identify the scope and the objectives of the evaluation. The evaluation can be undertaken on either a portion of the management system, or on the system in its totality. This scope must be clearly and distinctly enunciated.

Once the scope of the evaluation has been determined, a preliminary evaluation plan should be developed. The plan should include

- meeting with senior management to discuss terms of reference

- arranging for interviews with staff, customers and others

- gathering background information

- determining methods and techniques to test, document and evaluate the management system and so on.

The evaluation plan should lead to a more formal project plan, setting out a broad outline of the proposed project. It should

- specify the need (what is being evaluated, the purpose of the evaluation)

- identify the customer (the unit manager, the branch, the ministry)

- identify the auditor or project manager (the person leading the evaluation)

- name the proposed members of the project team (including a summary of their skill sets)

- list the major project phases and major milestones in each phase

- time frames and cost estimates, where possible and appropriate.

Preparation

This is the phase in which the auditor or evaluation team will become more familiar with the policies, functions, activities and procedures of the agency or other unit to be evaluated. This phase is devoted to gathering additional information and testing the process to identify problems and other areas that warrant detailed examination.

Data must be collected to prepare for the review process. There are many ways to collect data, including review of documentation, personal interviews, questionnaires, random discussions with staff and analysis of the organisation's procedures or activities.

The product of this phase is an interim report that presents the findings of the review: an account of the system that is in place within the organisation. The interim report presents the findings of the data-gathering process and allows senior management to see the progress of work to date. Once the interim report has been written, discussed, revised and edited, it can be submitted to senior management. Since the findings may be complex, it may be necessary to make a short oral presentation along with the report. The purpose of the report and presentation is to discuss the findings so far and to seek approval for the final evaluation and verification of the systems being audited.

Evaluation

The actual evaluation of the systems being audited takes place once the data about those systems have been gathered and senior management has approved the continuation of the work. Within the evaluation process, both positive aspects and deficiencies should be identified with supporting rationales. There may be good reasons for some of the deficiencies, such as inadequate resources, insufficient space, untrained staff and so on. The evaluation report should also make special note of areas where there is the greatest potential for error, loss or non-compliance that may put the agency or its head at risk.

The evaluation of the management system should not be a one-time affair. All management systems should be evaluated at regular intervals. Initially, the system should be evaluated for its conformance to project parameters: the performance standards that have been established for the management area. Then, at pre-specified periods, the system should be rechecked to verify its ability to meet continually changing needs, with recommendations to make changes and updates as required.

> *The products of any project should be reviewed regularly to determine their continuing success and validity.*

Verification

In this phase, the auditor concentrates on an in-depth verification of essential operational controls, significant deficiencies and major inefficiencies. This verification phase is required to determine if those controls are operating as designed and are effective; and to substantiate significant deficiencies and major inefficiencies, as well as determining the causes and effects of everything noted.

The techniques used in the verification phase include

- testing each of the management processes

- personal observation of as many facets of the management system as possible

- inquiries, reports and analysis of information gathered

- independent or third party interviews.

Reporting

Reports have several purposes. These include passing along information, reporting on progress, and obtaining approval. Naturally, the number of reports will depend on the size of each project. Some of the reports may be presented verbally and be documented through minutes of meetings. Others may be written and then presented orally as well. Still other reports may just be simple notes to the file. The final evaluation report should be distributed to all relevant persons.

Implementation

If the evaluation report is accepted by management, the next step would be the implementation of the recommendations. Fundamentally, the recommendations should improve the quality of the management system.

Activity 15

How are evaluations conducted in your organisation? If they are not conducted, what steps are taken to ensure projects are successful or to improve activities in the future? Write a brief description of your findings.

Activity 16

Using the hypothetical project you worked on in the activity earlier in this lesson, consider the work involved in each of the seven stages of the project:

> initiation
>
> analysis
>
> design
>
> development
>
> operation
>
> evaluation.

For each stage, write a brief description of the activities or tasks that might be involved, the questions or concerns that would need to be addressed and the steps you would take to make sure the project was a success.

SUMMARY

Lesson 3 has provided a summary of the basic components of a project planning and management system. It has stressed the importance of a business rather than a technical approach and of user involvement. It has introduced organisational structures based upon the allocation of specific but interlocking responsibilities to

- a steering committee

- a project manager

- assurance coordinators

- project teams

- project support staff

The lesson has also proposed control systems based upon formal project plans, quality reviews, risk assessments, reports and minuted meetings.

Finally, the lesson has described a planning process divided into the following discrete steps or stages:

- initiation

- analysis

- design

- development

- implementation

- operation

- evaluation.

In discussion the evaluation process, this lesson has examined the various stages involved, including

- planning

- preparation

- evaluation

- verification

- reporting

- implementation.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Define a project.

2. What are the qualities of a project that makes it different from a routine, repetitive process?

3. What is the concept of a business approach to project planning?

4. What five key questions should be asked when considering a new project?

5. Who could be considered the users of projects?

6. What is the role of the steering committee?

7. What is the role of the project manager?

8. What is the role of the project team(s)?

9. What control mechanisms should be in place at all levels throughout a project?

10. Describe each of the seven stages of a typical project.

11. What questions might be asked when initiating a project?

12. When are technical and quality standards determined?

13. When are risks assessed?

14. At what stage are training and maintenance procedures developed?

15. When does the product of a project become operational?

16. What is the purpose of an evaluation of a project?

17. Define and explain each of the six phases of an evaluation project.

18. Why is it necessary to obtain approval for further action?

19. Why are reports important when preparing evaluations?

ACTIVITIES: COMMENTS

Activity 12

People are involved with projects every day, from organising a body of records to preparing their daily meal. It has been argued that every piece of work we undertake can be defined in project terms. Many projects seem successful but perhaps could have been done more efficiently; one of the important factors is ensuring there is a strong vision of the final product and communicating expectations clearly to all people involved with the project. The rest of the information in this lesson should help you identify ways that you could have improved work on the project you identified for this activity as well as helping you plan future projects to be effective and efficient.

Activity 13

The positions identified to undertake the work of the steering committee, the project manager and the project team(s) will differ depending on the nature of your own institution. A large and complex institution may have dedicated technical staff responsible for the installation of computer equipment and software. A smaller institution may have no such staff.

It is essential to ensure senior management support by including a senior manager on the steering committee, and ensuring other individuals involved are committed to the project and knowledgeable about the project and its purpose.

Activity 14

Compare your findings with the information provided in this lesson to see if the processes in your organisation differ from those suggested here.

Activity 15

Compare your findings with the information provided in this lesson.

Activity 16

Each of the seven stages should be considered. Compare your answer to this activity with the information provided in this lesson and ensure that you understand clearly the issues raised for each of the seven stages identified.

PROMOTING RECORDS AND ARCHIVES SERVICES

Lesson 4 provides guidance for senior records and archives professionals in raising and resolving key issues with policy makers and senior management. It is based on the proposition that information is a strategic asset to any government or enterprise. It is also based on the belief that sound information and records management is an essential ingredient in any democratic society. Access to reliable and accurate information sources is critical at all levels of government, from the highest level, with its concerns over the rule of law, the delivery of services to citizens and the transparency of government to its people, to operational levels in the public and private sectors, with their concerns for administrative reform and efficiency, improved and competitive customer-based services and internal and public accountability.

While most modern legislators, jurists and public and private sector executives accept in theory the importance of information, few governments or private sector organisations demonstrate the acceptance in practice. Too often information and records are used as tools of power rather than of empowerment. Too often information is equated with computers. Senior management tends to focus its attention on technology rather than information. Seldom are the necessary policies actually in place to facilitate the use of information as a strategic asset.

This lessons aims to assist records and archives professionals to understand the policy process and to develop appropriate communication skills. These skills are needed to raise awareness among senior managers and other stakeholders of

- the importance of information as an asset for national development

- the links between information management, information technology and records and archives management.

THE POLICY PROCESS

Policy making is the process of choosing from the range of options those that will be most effective and beneficial. Making such choices in the absence of information, and certainly in the absence of perfect or complete information, is often necessary. However, making choices in the absence of available information because the

decision makers do not know of the existence of the information, do not have easy access to it, or do not know how to access it, is simply poor management. A central purpose of this lesson is to provide records managers with the means of assuring decision makers that they do not have to be satisfied with poor management. The principal road to making the necessary changes is the establishment of strong mechanisms for effective information policy making, information planning and information management.

Choices can be made at different levels. These levels are distinguished as strategy, tactics, policy and planning. These ideas were introduced in Lesson 2 in terms of the concept of playing games.

- **Strategy** has to do with the art of choosing the right game to play in the first place.

- **Tactics** has to do with the science of choosing the best approaches for winning that game.

- **Policy** is what governs how we conduct ourselves in playing the game.

- **Planning** is what we do to convert our tactics into a set of moves.

Strategy

Strategy poses the following questions.

- What do we want to be in the long run, given whatever legal or organisational constraints might be imposed from above?

- What do we choose to make or do?

- What is our vision of the future and how we fit into it?

- What are we good at and what would we have to change to align what we want to be with what we are?

Some organisations discover, perhaps accidentally, that they are in a different business from the one they were in originally. They are forced to face the question: Have we made the necessary strategic changes to become successful at what we have now become?

For example, a National Archives might have originally been established to preserve the historical records of the nation, concentrating on those records over thirty years old. But over time the archival institution may have become responsible for overall records management within the government. The business of the institution has changed and it must now re-examine its purpose and make strategic changes in order to fulfil its new duties. This may involve establishing a new organisational structure, creating new positions and developing a new understanding of responsibilities and functions.

To develop strategies, organisations need information about the business they are in and the customers they serve as well as about the legal or regulatory constraints within which they operate. Strategy making also requires considerable and accurate

information about the organisation itself: its financial, human and physical resources and its information and technology assets, strengths and weaknesses. Whatever strategy is chosen, information is crucial to its pursuit, in terms both of what information must be obtained externally and internally in order to carry out that strategy and of what information must be produced by the organisation to support it.

> *Strategy involves ensuring the organisation knows where it wants to go and what it wants to be.*

Tactics

To determine tactics, it is necessary to ask the following question. Knowing where we want to go, what is the best way to get there? Tactics are broad game plans as opposed to detailed plans; they provide shapes and forms within which clear and detailed plans may be developed. Feasibility studies may be regarded as tactical planning exercises: using information and assessing different approaches to develop a range of options.

Sometimes, this tactical stage is skipped and managers move directly from strategy to planning (or what some people might call from strategic planning to operational planning).

> *Tactics involve determining how to get where the organisation wants to be.*

Policy

Policy can mean

- prudence or wisdom in the management of affairs

- a definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives

- a high-level overall plan embracing general goals and acceptable procedures.

In the information and records management context, policy is what gives the lowest level file clerk the authority to deny a senior colleague access to certain categories of classified information or records. Similarly, if we are to take advantage of the efficiencies afforded by modern electronic systems, policies are needed to establish various ground rules about access to, and use of, information stores including organisational records.

Effective policy making answers the following questions.

- What guiding principles or values will we employ in establishing tactics to

implement our strategy?

- What do we mean by such terms as 'best way'?

For example, what is 'best' in a strategic vision that calls for providing the 'best service'? Is it the most effective service? The least expensive? The highest quality? The most error free? The service with fastest turnaround? Or some combination of these several qualities? As 'best service' cannot realistically be all of those things at once, what will the priorities be?

Just as the effective use of financial and human resources requires the establishment of financial and human resources policies, so the use of information resources requires a broad set of information policies.

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Policies establish overarching principles.
</div>

The terms policy and planning are sometimes used interchangeably, but this masks some of the harder questions that may have to be addressed in policy making.

Planning

Planning involves creating actions that combine the requirements of the tactics, strategy and policies. These actions will take place over specific times with specific resource levels and within specific centres of responsibility. Whatever the strategy, having the right kind of information at the right time is essential to meaningful planning. This is why programme managers are so important to policy making and planning in the information management and technology areas. The central operations of any organisation should dictate how information (including organisational records) and technology will be used effectively by that organisation.

Records management goes beyond the strategic use of information, but it must begin there. Business processes are derived from strategic aims and the strategic use of information in achieving those aims, and business actions and transactions are the residue of business processes that produce records.

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Planning translates strategies into actions, using tactics and policies as guides.
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Achieving Senior Management Commitment

There is no single definition of 'senior management'. In practice, the term can be taken to include managers who, within a broad area of work,

- are fully accountable for that work

- control the human, financial and physical resources to accomplish that work

- are involved in the formulation and implementation of strategy.

Senior managers are the people at the apex of the pyramid in an organisational structure, who can make things happen and who can provide other managers with the resources they need.

The functions of a senior manager are to

- establish key aims and objectives for the organisation

- influence and manage the culture of the organisation

- define the policy framework

- participate in formulation of strategy

- ensure that strategy is consistent with corporate aims

- agree the final strategy

- be accountable for the implementation of the strategy through the delivery of services to agreed performance levels.

Senior management commitment to any policy is needed because senior managers

- have the power to make things happen

- have budgetary control

- have access to ministers, other senior managers and stakeholders

- have a broader view of the priorities within the strategic plan.

Hence, to ensure a project or operation is successful, it is vital to get senior managers 'on side'. This is done by making senior managers aware of the benefits the project or operation can bring.

Consider for example the introduction of good information management across government. Senior managers would need to be shown the following benefits:

- increased efficiency and effectiveness

- lower cost

- closer accountability

- good governance

- improved rule of law.

It is also vital to determine how the project or operation fits into the organisation's wider strategic management and planning process. This can be done by stating clearly the aims and objectives of the project or operation and the results to be achieved.

Again taking information management as the example, it is important to demonstrate how, within a civil service improvement programme or strategic adjustment plan, an information policy can provide

- a strategic view for information management in the organisation, set out in clear plans that integrate information management into the wider strategic objectives of the organisation as a whole

- effective project management in the key areas of time, budget and quality standards

- regular monitoring and review of progress.

'Signing-up' senior management to this strategic view may be achieved through a clear written policy statement covering key areas. This written policy could be backed up by effective presentations explaining the details of the issue.

Thereafter, senior management commitment must be maintained. This ongoing commitment can be obtained through involving managers in projects through membership of steering committees and a regular process of reporting, informing them of

- key developments

- progress monitored against performance targets

- progress towards achieving long-term objectives

- progress towards achieving greater efficiency and effectiveness through improved services or lower costs.

> *Senior management support is critical to the success of any change in strategy or policy within an organisation.*

Activity 18

Using the information you prepared for Activity 17, write a brief plan describing how you would secure senior management support for your organisational changes, in order to make the National Archives into a fully functioning, integrated National Records and Archives Institution. Which senior managers would you contact for support? What information would you provide them about the changes? How would you maintain their commitment?

Be as specific as possible, remembering that the situation is hypothetical. Use senior management positions, not individuals, when identifying who would be involved.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Influencing people, whether they are senior managers, other opinion formers or customers, is dependent upon good communications. Proposals for change will go unheeded if they are not presented in an appropriate manner. It is essential that any person with management responsibilities develop a range of communications skills. Some of those skills are dealt with below.

> *Good communication is essential to good management and effective organisational change.*

Understanding Organisational Culture

It is worth highlighting the importance of understanding the 'culture' of the organisation in which the manager is working. In this context, culture simply means the way things are done in that particular organisation. The manager needs to be sensitive to that culture and take it into account in planning his or her strategy for managing

change.

This culture or an organisation is evident in

- how people communicate

- their roles in the organisation

- how they behave and dress

- who can and cannot do certain things

- what can and cannot be said or written

- how proposals and thoughts are expressed.

The most successful people are those who understand the culture and achieve their aims by exploiting that culture to the full in their dealings with their superiors, their equals and their own staff.

For example, when putting forward proposals it is necessary to know the following:

- What are the proper channels for putting forward those proposals?

- Are proposals usually formal or informal?

- Are proposals normally put forward in writing?

- Do people expect to receive initial thoughts on new plans or carefully prepared proposals?

Understanding the culture of the organisation is critical to successful change management.

Using the right language is critical. So too is an awareness of the informal networks that exist within and around organisations. It is not enough simply to look at the organisational chart to understand the organisation's culture.

Success or failure can ultimately depend on getting these seemingly small details right. For example, consider the process of making a presentation to a superior officer whom the manager has not met before. In most cultures calling the superior officer by his or her first name might well be wrong, but in many cultures addressing him or her as 'sir' or 'madam' might be thought equally inappropriate. No matter how convincing the manager's actual arguments are, mistakes over such details will detract from any success.

This is not to say that the accepted way of doing things must always be followed. Sometimes a new approach can be the most effective of all. However, what is vitally important is that any departure from the norm should be a conscious and deliberate decision, taken after consulting with key stakeholders and staff and considering the effect the new approach may have.

Report Writing

Report writing is a key communication skill. It is useful when communicating with staff at all levels but can be particularly important when dealing with senior management. Writing a report assumes a basic grasp of language, but it is a skill that can be learned in a number of ways and is capable of being refined continually. If learned at an early stage of personal development, report writing is a skill that will not be forgotten and will be continually used.

Reports should be comprehensive yet concise and accurate. They should be delivered on time so that the information that they contain can be taken into account in the policy-making process. The style of individual reports will vary depending on the requirements of the subject and local practice. Whatever the style, the report must be clear and unambiguous.

In the simplest terms, all reports should contain the following basic elements:

- a statement of purpose

- an explanation of the methodology used

- a summary of the findings

- an analysis of those findings leading to a number of conclusions

- the gathering together of a number of inter-related recommendations that should deal with any problems from the past and point to a clear strategy for the future.

If the report is a long one, it is often very helpful to compile a short executive summary that will enable the busy reader to get a general understanding of the content of the report and an indication of where the more important detail can be found.

Reports should be comprehensive yet concise.

Presentations

Giving presentations is another vital communication skill. What follows in this lesson is just an outline of the main points to remember when making presentations. Ideally, a person responsible for such communications work will take a practical training course.

An interesting speaker is one

- who has something to say, in an interesting way

- who can be heard in every corner of the room

- whose voice changes in pitch, tone and volume

- who uses silence to punctuate paragraphs, sentences and phrases

- who involves the audience by posing or responding to questions.

In short, a good presenter is someone who makes the audience think about a topic in a completely new way. The actual delivery of a presentation is only the tip of an iceberg. The bulk of the work has to be done in the preparation beforehand. A logical sequences of preparing for a presentation follows.

How to Manage Nerves

The first thing to realise is that all speakers feel nervous. But that does not mean that the speaker should show it.

> *All speakers feel nervous, but good speakers train the butterflies to fly in formation.*

It is important to examine your fears about speaking publicly:

- What it is you are nervous about?

- What is the root cause?

- What is the worst thing that could happen?

- What will you do if the worst should happen?

- How likely it is to occur?

- What can you do to prevent it from happening?

- What can you do to minimise the effect?

Preparing Reports and Presentations

Knowing the Audience

Consider the needs of the audience (both literally for a presentation and metaphorically for a report), not the needs of the topic. To do this, it is important to research the audience thoroughly in advance. Establish what the audience already knows, needs to know and wants to know and how the audience will use the information once your report has been read or your presentation is over.

Use language appropriate to the audience and the situation. Tailor the report or presentation to what its members need. Use examples, illustrations and anecdotes relevant to the audience. Try never to fall into the trap of patronising the audience.

> *Knowing your audience is critical to a successful report or presentation.*

Objectives of the Report or Presentation

When preparing a report or presentation on a topic, it is important to be clear 'Why?' (the purpose and objectives) and 'To Whom?' (the audience). If the objective is not clear, refer back to the initiator of the report or organiser of the presentation to be sure.

When clear on the purpose and objectives, next think about what has to be achieved by the report or presentation. For example, will the audience be interested, informed, stimulated or persuaded?

Do not try to do too much. Try to narrow the report or presentation down to one specific idea. For example, the key objective of a report or presentation on information management issues might be that by its end the audience will understand the difference between information management and information technology.

Without this clear objective, it will be impossible to measure how well the information presented was received. The objective provides direction. Remember, if you don't know where you are going, how do you know when you get there?

> *Be clear on the purpose of the report or presentation.*

Preparing the Material

Preparing the material for a report or presentation can be considered in two phases: preparation of the message, and planning its delivery.

When preparing the message, you should first collect facts, items of interest, anecdotes, illustrations and explanations; jot down ideas; brainstorm with the help of friends and colleagues; let the ideas incubate, then re-evaluate and, if need be, add more ideas. Then you should select the most relevant material, relating back to the main themes, the objective and the needs of the audience.

Next, organise material into three categories:

- information that <u>must</u> be included (without it the report or talk is pointless)

- information that <u>should</u> be included (to enhance the understanding of the material)

- information that <u>could</u> be included (if space or time allows).

The structure of the report or presentation should simply be

- introduction: capture the attention early; highlight key points; do not apologise, avoid 'I'm not an expert…'

- main body of text or talk: logical flow, sustaining interest

- conclusion: be brief, be clear, repeat or summarise key points ('tell them what you have told them').

When planning how to deliver the message orally, the options are as follows.

- Impromptu: An 'off the cuff' presentation without advance planning can be spontaneous and informal, but this approach may mean you miss out some important information.

- Memorising: This kind of presentation requires a good memory and is best delivered in an environment without distractions, but it can sound scripted.

- Written out: This method is good for conference papers and similar presentations but it can be difficult when reading from a text to maintain good eye contact, and the speaker can sound uninteresting.

- Written to speak: In this method, key phrases can be written on prompt cards and the speaker refers to the cards periodically to keep the presentation on track. With this approach it is necessary to know the subject material well, and practice is needed.

Whichever approach is chosen, be sure to place the material in an order that will be logical to the audience note down timings to keep from talking too long. Consider the use of humour, but if in doubt, do not use it. Decide on the degree of audience participation and what visual aids to use.

> *Choose a method of presentation that suits the information,*
> *the audience and your personal speaking style.*

Delivering the Message

When making presentations, remember to

- make a good first impression

- project your voice (speak to the back of the room, but do not shout)

- use inflection, pauses and appropriate language

- ask questions to keep the audience involved, and be prepared to answer questions

- use facial expressions as appropriate and make and keep eye contact

- use body language consciously; control unnecessary mannerisms.

Using Visual Aids

Good visual aids confer many benefits on reports and presentations, such as variety, retention, impact, sign-posting, clarity, conciseness and quality. However, be sure that they do not distract totally from the objective of the presentation. For example, a long video can take control away from a speaker. Similarly, using too many charts or graphs in a report can be counterproductive by focusing excessive attention on them at the expense of the material they are intended to illustrate.

A variety of visual aids may be available and appropriate, depending on why they are used and on the technologies available at the time: whiteboard, blackboard or flipchart, overhead projector slides (OHPs), video or film, 35 mm slides, photographs, maps, graphs and charts, models. When deciding whether or not to use a visual aid, remember, it should arise naturally from the material. It must not be used because it is a good graphic if there is no clear relationship between it and the topic.

Activity 20

Imagine that you have been asked to make a short presentation to senior management on your work to redefine the archival institution from a historical records facility into an integrated information agency. Through this presentation, you hope to 'sell' the idea of an integrated records and archives management facility, so that you can secure continued management support for your work. Do the following.

1. First, define the audience for your presentation.

2. Second, outline the purpose of your presentation.

3. Third, write a brief outline of the key points you would make in such a presentation, including

> information that <u>must</u> be included

> information that <u>should</u> be included

> information that <u>could</u> be included.

4. Next, write a brief description of the type of presentation you would make, explaining why you chose that approach. In your description, indicate whether you would use visual aids and explain what types and why.

Marketing

At one time, marketing was a concept entirely alien to the public sector, perhaps in part because the word was closely associated with ideas of selling, even of 'hard' selling. Recent changes in the public sector have placed a great deal of emphasis on arms-length relationships and on trading or quasi-trading relationships. The changes have also allowed managers more freedom to decide where they should obtain the services they require or if they should themselves be service providers. Thus marketing has become a more important issue within government. It has become necessary for managers in the public sector to develop marketing skills in order to 'sell' services and ideas to their stakeholders, customers, senior managers and staff.

> *Marketing involves identifying the needs of customers and ensuring those needs are met effectively.*

Managers have had to think seriously about how best to inform potential 'customers' about the services that they can provide and how to ensure these services meet customer needs. In the public sector this has meant an increased emphasis on service to the public, on determining the public's needs and on ensuring that those needs are met. These are all issues close to the hearts of marketing professionals.

More and more managers outside the private sector are finding themselves involved in aspects of marketing. For some, this will be a new experience, one that can be pleasurable or daunting, depending on the individual's personality and previous experience. This section of this lesson introduces the key elements of marketing.

Marketing Strategy

The starting point in developing any strategy has to be analysing both the external forces that affect the organisation and the internal situation of the organisation. This analysis is usually done by carrying out the well known SWOT analysis, environment scanning and market identification.

> *A SWOT analysis assesses internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats.*

SWOT analyses were discussed in Lesson 2.

Having looked at the inside and outside of the organisation, it is then possible see more clearly just what steps must be taken. These steps can be anything from improving effectiveness and economy to abandoning little-used products and introducing new ones.

A suggested approach to marketing strategy is as follows:

- know where you are (by examining strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats)

- know your customers (the public, other agencies, other units within your own agency)

- know your competitors (within the public and private sectors)

- know where you want to get to (budgets, markets, products)

- have a plan for getting there

- plan the introduction of new products and the improvement or discontinuance of existing ones

- obtain feedback on how well you and the competition are doing

- strive to win: winning is much more fun than losing, especially in marketing.

In the public sector, products to be sold are more likely to be services than goods.

> *Service:* Any act offered or performed that is essentially intangible in nature and does not of itself result in the transfer of the ownership of an object. Its production may or may not be linked to a physical object or product.

Most marketing has some elements of service about it. Since service is provided by people, their paramount importance can hardly be exaggerated. Staff need to be knowledgeable, helpful, pleasant and inspire confidence, qualities that are perceived by customers as being of a higher standard than that of the competition.

Activity 21

Outline three ways you would 'market' your archival facility as an integrated information agency. Who would you consider your 'customer' for these marketing approaches? Why would you try the marketing schemes you have identified?

Customers, Suppliers and Competitors

A method of analysis arising from the total quality management approach involves defining an organisation's customers, suppliers and competitors. To carry out this analysis, the following steps should be taken.

- Define the organisation's customers. Keep in mind that the word 'customers' does not only apply to people who purchase a product or service. In the context of a public sector organisation, we may use the word more broadly to encompass anyone who needs or uses the output of a business process. Also, customers – whether in a private or public sector context – may be external to the organisation, such as taxpayers, or internal to it, such as file users. Those business processes that directly achieve the organisation's mission, known as core business processes, tend to have external customers. Those processes that support the core business processes, such as budgeting, paying employees and managing records and

information, tend to have internal customers.

Customer: Anyone who needs, uses or benefits from the output of a process.

- Define the organisation's suppliers. Again, the word 'suppliers' is used more broadly here than in its traditional business sense. Every business system requires inputs that it can transform to produce its outputs. Who supplies the inputs to the organisation? Like customers, suppliers may be external or internal to the organisation. An example of an external supplier might be a computer vendor, while a stores department might be identified as an internal supplier.

Supplier: Anyone who supplies inputs required for the functioning of a business process.

- Define the organisation's competitors. The concept of competitors can be tricky for those working in a public sector organisation. Most people assume that government does not have any competitors. After all, there should only be one national government per country. However, when the notion of competitors is expanded it can apply to both the public and private sectors.

Competitor: Anyone outside an organisation, project or business process that competes for the same resources (inputs) or provides the same or similar products or services (outputs). Competitors may be external or internal.

It is important to raise a note of caution about defining competitors, especially in the context of the public sector. In business, normally the aim is to outperform the competition. However, in the public sector this is not necessarily the case. For example, if an organisation, such as a church, offers certain social services similar to services being offered by a government social services department, the goal in identifying the church as a competitor is not to outperform the service being offered by the church. Rather, the goal is to recognise areas where there may be duplication in order to rationalise the provision of services and the distribution of resources to meet broader social objectives.

Similarly, if competitors are seen as something or someone to be eliminated, identification of a programme or agency as a competitor may lead to suboptimal operation of the organisation. Care must be taken at all times to consider what is in the best interest of the organisation, that is, what will allow the entire system to function optimally.

Customer Care

> *A customer is anyone who needs, uses or benefits from an organisation's products or services.*

Customer care is any contact between a customer and an employee that is positive and productive for all involved. Some organisations may employ specialised 'customer service representatives', regularly taking orders by telephone, answering enquiries or handling complaints. However, the fact is that anyone who is in contact with the customer, even for a minute, is part of customer care.

In the context of this lesson, the customer may be a member of the public, a member of staff of another agency or a colleague within the same agency. Caring for a customer is important because that is what business is all about, whether in the public sector or the private sector. A customer is

- the reason for the organisations' activities, not an interruption

- someone needed by the organisation, not someone who needs the organisation.

Satisfied customers mean repeat business, when satisfied customers return again and again, and new business, when customers recommend the organisation to others. Good business can mean

- more job security

- greater opportunities for promotion

- good pay and benefits.

It is possible to provide better customer care through better communication skills. Good communication with customers is based upon information and attitude.

The importance of knowing your customers has been stressed already in Lesson 2 in the context of developing a mission statement for the organisation. According to the total quality management philosophy, if the customers' requirements are met or exceeded, the organisation will thrive. Thus the customers' requirements will determine what it is the organisation should be doing. Identifying those requirements involves consultation with customers to determine what products and services they desire and how they would like them to be delivered.

There are a number of methods for gathering information about customer requirements, such as customer surveys, customer focus groups, inviting customers to participate in a brainstorming session and working with customers or performing their work for a period of time. The choice of method should be tailored to the particular societal and organisational cultural context in which the information gathering is taking place. For example, in societies that have a strong oral tradition or that value personal contact, a mail-out customer survey may meet with little success.

It is equally important that staff should have the right attitude in relation to customers. Staff should be

- positive in outlook
- neat and well groomed
- welcoming to customers
- proud of their jobs
- ready to take the initiative
- sincere.

Well-informed staff are up to date, and knowledgeable about

- the availability of goods and services
- policies on returns, payments, and so on
- changes in prices (where relevant)
- changes in procedures.

Handling Complaints

It is important to handle complaints smoothly. First, some 'dos'.

- Show interest. For example, call customers by name and let them know that you are listening; give them your name too. Always treat customers with respect.
- Show empathy with customers. Imagine how you would feel in their position.
- Restate the complaint to make sure there are no misunderstandings.
- Admit the problem, if there is one. Be sure to say that 'we' made the mistake, rather than 'I' or 'they', and apologise for any inconvenience caused.
- Ask the customer what he or she would like done: a replacement? a refund?

Some equally important 'don'ts'.

- Don't be defensive. The complaint is not about you personally. Remember, upset customers may be reacting to other things that have happened that day.
- Don't give a flat 'no' for an answer. Always offer an explanation.
- Don't assign blame (to the computer, the mail room, and so on). Customers do not care whose fault it was; they just want a solution.

- Don't give commands to customers. Instead of 'sign this' say 'if you would please sign this ...'.

- Don't make promises that are unrealistic. The customer will just be more disappointed later on.

- Don't leave the customer dangling. Keep writing or calling with progress reports until the matter is resolved.

- Don't lose your sense of humour. Seeing the light side of things will make both you and the customer feel better. At the same time, don't give the impression that you think the complaint is trivial.

- Monitor complaints and have targets for dealing with them.

> *Customer service depends on the individual. Staff should be courteous, positive, well informed and clear.*

COMMUNICATING THE VALUE OF RECORDS AND ARCHIVES MANAGEMENT

The business activities of an organisation do not automatically result in the generation of accurate and usable records. Well-developed strategies are needed to ensure that records are controlled and managed effectively. Well-defined procedures and standards are required to ensure that reliable records are created and maintained, are available to users when needed and are disposed of appropriately when no longer required.

It takes time and effort to restructure records management systems to meet an organisation's changing requirements. Records managers need the strong support of senior management so that adequate time and resources can be invested in designing and introducing new records systems. This investment will bring benefits: better planning and decision making, cost-savings, increased efficiency and productivity, improved working environments and greater accountability are all outcomes of improvements to record-keeping systems.

Institutions need to promote an environment in which effective records management is encouraged. Senior management should support an agenda that includes the following:

- developing an efficient records service that meets the needs of the organisation

- promoting a culture of reliable and accessible records

- strengthening the role of records management and records managers within the organisation

- developing and strengthening records legislation, regulations and policy as appropriate

- defining and implementing records related standards

- providing incentives for better records management and disciplinary action for poor recordkeeping.

In order to obtain this senior management support, records and archives managers need to convince their superiors of the importance of good records care. The first part of this lesson has been concerned with how to communicate with senior managers, stakeholders and customers. The rest of this lesson outlines the strategic issues that must be communicated to government officials, namely

- the importance of information as an asset for national development

- the links between information management, information technology and records and archives management.

The purpose of providing this information here is to help managers understand <u>what</u> points they could communicate to explain the importance of records care and <u>why</u> they need to secure senior management support.

Information as a Strategic Asset

Governments have begun to accept what has been well understood in much of the private sector for years: information is an asset. Just as human, financial and physical resources are essential to good administration, information is critical to an organisation's health and development. Hence, information must be managed well; good information resources can help organisations or even whole countries grow and prosper and can even give them competitive advantages over others who do not wisely develop and manage their information resources. Countries that recognise information and information technology as critical national strategic assets are in a position to develop appropriate policies, plans and programmes.

For information to be managed well there must be a coherent information strategy at both national and agency levels, covering all aspects of information, not just information technology. It is vital that such a strategy should not exist in a vacuum but should fit in with and reinforce wider strategic objectives. The purpose of information and information technology is to promote the business of the organisation (good governance in the case of government agencies). Information management is not an end in itself.

Countries throughout the world are experiencing a rapid infusion of information technology in both the public and private sectors, at a pace even policy makers have difficulty comprehending. Virtually every bilateral and multilateral aid project now includes the installation of the latest generation of personal computers. Local and wide area networks are beginning to emerge for such purposes as facilitating intra-country trade, decentralising government and participating in world-wide networks oriented toward trade, customs and law enforcement.

Very often senior managers address information issues in terms of computers, digital data or information technology. Seldom is the management of information viewed in its broadest sense, to embrace information in whatever form it may exist. Links between information management and records management, between paper and electronic documents and records, and between any of those and information technology are poorly understood. Few governments have a clear understanding of the scope and nature of their information resources, including records and archives.

Similarly, there is often little knowledge about how information management and technology tools are actually being employed. Indeed, many governments and organisations do not even know how many or what type of information technology tools, such as personal computers or printers, they own. If there is not a clear policy and plan for the use of information as a strategic asset, how can there be effective use of information technology, the sole purpose of which is to make effective use of information?

Even the cost of investing in technology is poorly understood at organisational, ministerial and national levels. In many countries much technology is obtained not through normal procurement processes but as part of development assistance projects. In such cases, technology can be seen as a free good. Little consideration is given by top management to the implication for maintenance and future enhancements or how the dramatic increase in the use of technology changes work patterns and the manner in which documents and records are created and used. Consequently, there are serious policy gaps at the national and ministerial levels of almost all governments and little by way of meaningful planning of these important public assets.

Information Management and Information Technology

There is a widespread belief that computers will solve information problems and enable organisations to 'leapfrog' to a higher level of development. However, technology itself does not provide the solution to poorly managed records systems. Successful computerisation projects are dependent upon the availability of accurate records. Attempts to build computerised systems on top of collapsed or inadequate paper-based systems will inevitably lead to unreliable records and wasted resources. In particular, electronic records need to be effectively managed if they are to be reliable and authentic and provide verifiable evidence over time.

Although the fundamental principles for keeping records in an electronic environment

are the same as in a paper environment, the skills required to manage electronic records may be different. Records professionals and information technology specialists need to co-operate closely.

While acknowledging the importance of budgeting for and procuring information technology, it is essential to focus senior-level attention on more comprehensive policy and planning issues for information management and information technology. It is critical to separate the information from the technology.

The term information management (IM) is often used synonymously with the term information technology (IT). Yet it is very important to distinguish between these terms. Most organisations are deficient in the former (IM) and much too focused on the latter (IT). As a consequence, short-term technology interests rather than management and operational information needs dominate management attention, resource allocation and related decision making.

Information Management

> ***Information management:*** The planning, control and exploitation of the information resources of an organisation in support of it business. Also known as information resources management.

Information management fosters the effective use of information for specific business purposes and the maintenance of that information for sharing and recycling inside and outside of the organisation. The practice of information management in a public or private sector organisation involves understanding and analysing the mission, aims and objectives of the organisation and then developing information systems to support them.

> *Information systems should support the mission, aims and objectives of the organisation.*

This process involves the use of business systems analysis to develop the organisation's information architecture in a top-down approach. Business systems analysis examines

- an organisation's ultimate purpose or mission

- its aims and objectives

- major business areas (operations, human resources, finance) and supporting business processes (hiring staff) and sub-processes (checking references)

- the information needed and produced by the process

- the categories into which the information can be organised (correspondence, reports, data bases).

Information management is important because it facilitates intellectual or logical

control over information assets, which is critical for effective management of information towards strategic ends. In this respect, information management differs from the practice of records and archives management, which has tended to take a bottom-up approach and to focus on the physical control of the information medium with inadequate attention to the intellectual control of the information itself.

The bottom-up approach developed partly because until very recently most recorded information has been in the form of paper documents. Now, digital information systems afford the opportunity to manage information in much more powerful, efficient and effective ways in digital form rather than on paper (even though ultimately information may be printed on paper for reading). This new approach presents both a challenge and an opportunity for managers of records and archives systems to ensure that organisational records are dealt with as intrinsic parts of the business process in pursuit of organisational aims. As will be seen below, a well-balanced programme of information and records management is needed if an organisation is to operate effectively.

For more information on business systems analysis, see Analysing Business Systems.

Information Technology

A high-level definition of information technology is as follows:

> ***Information technology*:** The infrastructure needed to move large quantities of information from one place to another efficiently and securely.

For practical purposes, it may be easier to understand information technology as the application of computer and telecommunications technologies to the capture, processing, dissemination and storage of information.

Information technology makes it possible to do a much better job of information management today than was possible even a few years ago, but it is not to be confused with information management. This is not to trivialise technology. On the contrary, just as an organisation must understand how it can most effectively organise and use its information resources, so also it must develop the mix of information technology components that will best handle and maintain those information resources.

Put in simple terms, information is the 'what', information management is the 'why' and information technology is the 'how'.

Linking Information Management with Records and Archives Management

Finally, it is essential to establish in the minds of senior management the relationships between information management and records and archives management.

> ***Records*:** Documents regardless of form or medium created, received, maintained and used by an organisation (public or private) or an individual in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business, of which they themselves for a part or provide evidence.
>
> ***Archives*:** Records, usually but not necessarily non-current records, of enduring value selected for permanent preservation. Archives will normally be preserved in an archival repository.

Senior managers suffer from misconceptions about the relationship between information management and records management. This misunderstanding is largely a result of historical accident: hard organisational lines have been drawn between computer-based information technology operations and paper-based records management operations. Information professionals traditionally have been more interested in the technology. Records managers and archivists have typically been more interested in the medium.

Both groups have used specialised vocabularies that are not well understood outside of their own professions and thus their responsibilities and concerns may be unclear to their managers. For example, each profession may use different terms to describe the same subjects, or the same terms to describe different subjects. Yet, with different tools, both groups are performing information management functions. They need to join together within the information management umbrella so that their concerns for the technology and the medium can be integrated with a concern for the message (the information).

For relevant policies to be established, policy makers must understand the highly interconnected nature of information, records and archives. For some reason, managers are usually intrigued with the term 'information' but perhaps less aware of 'records' and 'archives'. Senior managers tend to think of records as papers that are maintained by their secretaries or in some central registry and then sent off to some distant place to gather dust as archives. Records and archives management typically enjoys a low organisational profile, budget priority and ranking in terms of the investment in human resources.

Yet increasingly records are being created in electronic form and, if managed in that way, have the potential to become part of the solution to administrative reform rather than remaining as part of the problem. The first important point to be made is that the storage or presentation medium is not what decides whether something is a record or not. The product and evidence of a business process is recorded information – a record – irrespective of whether it is created or stored or later presented in paper,

microform or electronic form.

While all records are sources of information, the reverse is not true. Some information sources do not qualify as records because they are purely reference documents. For example, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the Dow-Jones Index are information sources. They may be consulted in an organisation through a computer-based information system or through printed versions on paper. They are not records. However, if information from them is imported into another document created as part of the business process, that subsequent composite document is itself a record.

As senior managers come to understand the distinction between information technology and information management and the primacy of the latter, they should more easily understand the key role that records and archives management can and should play within their information management systems. It is the responsibility of managers in the records and archives field to deploy the arguments and skills introduced in this lesson in order to persuade senior managers of the importance of records and archives management.

> *Records and archives managers must convince senior administrators of the importance of records and archives management as part of a wider information management function.*

Activity 23

Review your work for Activity 20 above. In that activity you identified the audience for a presentation on redefining the archival institution from a historical records facility into an integrated information agency. Then you outlined the purpose of your presentation and prepared an outline of the key points you would make.

For this activity, draw on the work done in the earlier activity and write the text of a short written document, which may be used as a report or as a presentation, explaining the importance of records and archives management as part of a wider information management function in your organisation.

Be sure to refer directly to your organisation; make specific mention of issues that your government or agency needs to consider in order to manage its information resources more efficiently and effectively. Draw on the material provided in the last part of this lesson for general information and elaborate with appropriate examples or illustrations.

The Vital Importance of Records

Records and the information they contain are a vital resource for the conduct of an organisation's business. Without records, no organisation can function effectively. Records are required to

- develop and implement policy

- plan and make decisions

- keep track of actions

- achieve consistency in the conduct of business

- provide effective services to citizens

- achieve greater efficiency and productivity

- meet legal and regulatory requirements

- protect the interests of the organisation, its staff and clients

- reduce risks associated with missing evidence

- document the organisation's activities and achievements.

In a broader sense, public sector records underpin the protection of human rights, the rule of law and fair and equal treatment of citizens. The ability of governments to deliver services to citizens is based on the quality and availability of its records.

Records provide reliable and accurate documentary evidence, without which no government can be held accountable for its decisions and actions. Well-managed records can also provide a cost-effective restraint on the misuse of government resources. For example, the maintenance of accurate and auditable records can help prevent fraud; prevention is cheaper than the financial and social costs of corruption or prosecution.

Records provide the verifiable evidence that officials, auditors, concerned citizens and elected representatives need when enquiring into the performance of government organisations. Records document compliance or non-compliance with laws, rules and procedures. Records and the evidence they contain are the means by which governments can engender a climate of trust and demonstrate a commitment to serving the needs of citizens.

Nations are recognising the value of records and archives in defining and nurturing a national identity and building knowledge-based societies. The effort by some societies to destroy certain records (as has happened in the late 1990s, for example, in Sierra Leone, Cambodia and Kosovo) is a testament to the power records have as the basis for society's knowledge.

When Records Systems Do Not Work

When public sector records systems break down or are not functioning effectively, there are serious consequences for government and citizens.

- Information on which government decisions and actions must be based is lost.

- Officials are forced to take decisions on an ad hoc basis without the benefit of precedence or institutional memory.

- Resources are wasted as unwanted records continue to be stored.

- Staff waste time in fruitless searches for records than cannot be found.

- Fraud cannot be proven, and meaningful reporting and audits cannot be carried out.

- Government actions are not transparent.

- Computerisation projects fail because they contain unreliable data.

- Citizens cannot claim or protect their rights, nor can they be required to fulfil their duties and obligations.

- Citizens cannot make an informed contribution to the governance process.

- The nation's collective memory is impaired.

One of the challenges today is to ensure that reliable evidence of business transactions is captured from the mass of data and information created in paper and electronic form. This reliable information must be accessible and must be disposed of effectively when no longer required. The effects of poor record keeping can be illustrated in relation to virtually any area of government activity. The following are some of the consequences, for example, of a poorly structured filing system.

- Related papers are separated and the information on files is incomplete.

- Time is wasted by action officers and records staff in finding and retrieving documents.

- Important documents are mixed with irrelevant material, so that a file is difficult to use.

- Information about unrelated subjects is mixed on the same file, so that the sequence of business is difficult to follow.

- Different action officers may demand access to the same files at the same time, because the files contain information on unrelated subjects.

- Ambiguous file titles may lead to misfiling.

- Key papers may be lost because of misfiling.

- Stationery costs will rise when files are opened unnecessarily.

- There will be difficulties in making decisions about the disposal of files.

Poor management of particular types of records causes a different range of problems.

For example, without reliable and complete personnel records, pension entitlements cannot be verified, human resource planning is seriously impaired and corruption and fraud are difficult to detect. If financial records are poorly managed, financial audits are difficult if not impossible, corruption is again hard to detect and the organisation's financial future could be put at risk.

Activity 24

Based on the information provided in this lesson, as well as your work on the module *The Management of Public Sector Records: Principles and Context* (if you have completed it), review the various senior management issues introduced in this lesson. Then, imagine you have been asked to present a position paper to the senior administration on restructuring the records system to operate more effectively.

Write an outline of the points you would make in this position paper, and if you have time, write a short draft of the paper. Write at least as much as necessary to be able to identify key points you would raise. Be sure to link the general issues outlined here with the specific concerns of your own organisation and try to identify particular situations that could be discussed as examples of why and how records systems might be improved or restructured.

SUMMARY

Lesson 4 has introduced

- the policy and planning issues involved in managing information

- the communication skills necessary to influence senior managers, other opinion-formers and customers

- the importance of information as an asset for national development

- the need to convince senior managers of the need to integrate information management, information technology and records and archives management within their information management systems.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Explain the meaning of the terms 'strategy', 'tactics', 'policy' and 'planning' and give an example of the application of each term.

2. What are the responsibilities and functions of a senior manager?

3. Explain why senior management commitment is needed in order to make a policy work.

4. Explain two ways senior management commitment can be obtained.

5. What is the concept of an organisational culture?

6. What qualities in an organisation might define its culture?

7. Identify the key elements that should be contained in all reports.

8. What qualities make a speaker interesting?

9. Why is it important to know the audience for a presentation?

10. Identify three categories of material that might be found in a presentation.

11. Explain four different styles of presentation.

12. Explain the structure of a presentation.

13. What types of visual aids might be used to enhance a presentation.

14. When should visual aids be used?

15. Define the term 'marketing'.

16. What is the purpose of a marketing strategy?

17. Define a 'service'.

18. Define the concept of 'customer care'.

19. Define information management.

20. Define information technology.

21. Why is information a strategic asset?

22. Explain why senior managers often do not consider information management an important part of government operations.

23. Explain the concept of business systems analysis.

24. Explain the relationship between records and archives management and information management.

ACTIVITIES: COMMENTS

Activities 17-23

These activities are intended to help you examine the information provided in this lesson and apply the ideas to your own situation. This lesson tries to show you ways to clarify your organisation's purpose, scope and responsibilities and then develop the means to make necessary changes. The lesson also introduces you to techniques for communicating your ideas more effectively, and it discusses the importance of communicating the message that records and archives management are an integral part of the information management sphere.

Whenever possible, you should try to complete these activities as fully as possible, as they allow you an opportunity to practice important management techniques, such as developing strategies and tactics and establishing plans of action. They also help you understand the culture of your organisation and consider how you would present important organisational issues to senior management.

You should consider preparing 'finished' presentations or reports and then presenting these to some friends or colleagues. Ask their opinion on whether you communicated your ideas well and how you might improve your presentations or reports in future. Practice is valuable and constructive criticism should always be welcome!

Activity 24

You should use this activity as a basis for pulling together all your ideas so far about the importance of good records care. You should consolidate these thoughts in one overview document. Spend as much time on this activity as you can justify to prepare a solid outline of the issues you think should be addressed and, if possible, some of the approaches that might be taken to reorganise records systems.

Keep this information available as you continue to study the rest of the modules in this study programme, as this activity may provide valuable background information as you proceed to examine more specific record-keeping issues.

WHAT TO DO NEXT?

Strategic Planning for Records and Archives Services has concentrated on equipping managers with the additional knowledge and skills needed to plan and maintain essential records and archives services.

In particular it has dealt with

• the key issues of management of change

• the principles and practices of strategic planning

• the principles and practices of project management

• the principles and practices of promoting records and archives services.

ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

This module has introduced the principles and practices of planning, maintaining and evaluating public sector records and archives systems and services. But which tasks should you undertake first? Which are high priority and which are low? Each institution will make different decisions based on its present state of development and its needs and short- and long-term plans. However, it is possible to offer some recommendations for action, to help the institution develop the planning systems appropriate to its own situation. Complete the activity below then consider the suggestions offered.

Activity 25

Before proceeding with this lesson, consider the situation in your institution and the information provided in this module and then identify three priorities you would establish to implement a strategic management programme in your institution.

Priority 1: Identify Key Management Issues

This is largely a process of finding out what the situation is within your institution.

- What are your institution's mandate, mission and its aims?

- What are its strengths and weaknesses? What opportunities and threats does it face?

- What are the strategic issues facing the institution?

Priority 2: Prepare a Strategic Plan

Be clear about where you are starting from (your baseline). Then, develop a series of objectives and sub-objectives stemming from the strategic issues that you have identified as strategic priorities and identify the measures on which performance would serve to judge whether they have been attained or not.

Priority 3: Plan a Project

Next, plan a project that would enable your institution to attain one of its key objectives. The plan should establish the parameters for the project and its several stages, setting out

- specifications of outputs and quality standards

- availability of resources

- technical constraints

- risks

- financial and time tolerances.

Priority 4: Seek Senior Management Support

The next step would be to persuade senior management of the benefits of an effective records and archives system. Establish a programme to raise awareness among senior managers, stakeholders and customers of

- the importance of information as an asset for national development

- the links between information management, information technology and records and archives management.

Priority 5: Evaluate the Management System

Evaluating your institution's management system will involve

* reviewing the adequacy of the internal control framework established to manage the records and archives function for which your institution is responsible

* evaluating the performance of that function in relation to the control framework

* advising senior management on ways of improving the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of operations.

GETTING HELP

Many institutions, particularly in countries with limited resources, do not have ready access to information about strategic management. However, there are places you can go to get more information or to obtain assistance.

> *See the* Additional Resources *document for information on other organisations and associations involved with records and archives management generally.*

National Organisations

In each country there are likely to be the following national organisations that can give advice on various aspects of strategic management.

Ministries responsible for the civil service and for finance

For local practices in respect of strategic and project planning.

National Institute of Public Administration

For training, advice and literature on planning issues.

International Organisations

Following are names and addresses of agencies that could be contacted for assistance.

ARMA International Inc.

4200 Somerset Dr., Suite 215
Prairie Village, KS 66208-0540
USA
Tel: +800 422-2762 / (913) 341-3808
Fax: +913 341-3742
Email: hq@arma.org
Website: http://www.arma.org/

The Association of Record Managers and Administrators (ARMA International) is a not-for-profit association of over 10,000 information professionals in the United states, Canada and over 30 other nations. Among other positions, ARMA International members are employed as records and information managers, information systems and automated data processing professionals, imaging specialists, archivists, hospital administrators, legal administrators, librarians and educators. ARMA often publishes and distributes information on management issues in the records and archives field, including information about strategic management.

Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM)

Suite 402-1075 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario
Canada, M5S 2B1
Tel: +1 416 920 3337
Fax: +1 416 920 6574
Email: capam@compuserve.com
Website: http://www.comnet.mt/capam/

The aim of CAPAM is to enhance Commonwealth co-operation in improving managerial competence and achieving organisational excellence in government. CAPAM exchanges experiences on new developments and innovations in management in governments by building networks among elected and senior officials, academics and non-governmental organisations. CAPAM provides rapid access to information on best practices in government administration.

International Organization for Standardization (ISO)

Case postale 56
CH-1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 749 01 11
Fax: +44 22 733 34

Website: http://www.iso.ch

The International Standards Organisation (ISO) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies from some 130 countries, one from each country. The ISO promotes the development of standardisation in order to help facilitate the international

exchange of goods and services as well as to help develop cooperation in intellectual, scientific, economic and technical activities.

ISO/TC176 is particularly concerned with quality management and quality assurance and has prepared international standards on that subject in the ISO 9000 series. Copies of ISO standards are available through national standards organisations.

Activity 26

Find out if your institution has any information about any of the agencies listed above. Does your organisation receive publications, participate in conferences or meetings or otherwise work with any of these groups?

In your opinion, which groups should your institution consider communicating with first, if any, and what would you expect to achieve by doing so? How would you go about building a productive relationship?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

There are many publications available about management in general or about particular areas of management theory and practice. Some are more easily obtained than others, and some more up-to-date than others, but older publications also contain valuable information and may be more easily found in libraries in your particular country or region than very new publications that have not yet circulated around the world. The following publications on the subjects covered by this module should be noted. Core publications are identified with an asterisk (*).

> *Core publications are also identified in the* Additional Resources *document; refer to that document for information on more general publications on records and archives management.*

Management

* Bradsher, JG, ed. *Managing Archives and Archival Institutions.* Chicago, IL: Society of American Archivists, 1991

Evans, Frank B and Eric Ketelaar. *A Guide for Surveying Archival and Records Management Systems and Services: A RAMP Study.* (RAMP Study PGI-83/WS/6). Paris, FR: UNESCO, 1983.

Lock, Dennis, ed. *The Gower Handbook of Management.* 4th ed. Aldershot, UK: Gower, 1998.

Mazikana, Peter C. *Archives and Records Management for Decision Makers: A RAMP Study.* (RAMP Study PGI-90/WS/8). Paris, FR: UNESCO, 1990. Available electronically through the UNESCO website.

Osborne, David and Ted Gaebler. *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector.* New York, NY: NAL Dutton, 1993.

* Vaughan, Anthony. *International Reader in the Management of Library, Information and Archives Services.* (RAMP Study PGI-87/WS/22). Paris, FR: UNESCO, 1987. Available electronically through the UNESCO website.

Strategic Planning

* Bryson, John M. *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1988.

Performance Measurement

Methven, Patricia, et al. *Measuring Performance.* Best Practice Guide 1. London, UK: Society of Archivists, 1993.

Promoting Records and Archives Services

D'Orleans, Jacques. *The Status of Archivists in Relation to other Information Professionals in the Public Service in Africa: A RAMP Study.* (RAMP Study PGI-85/S/2). Paris, FR: UNESCO, 1985.

* Finch, Elsie Freeman, ed. *Advocating Archives: An Introduction to Public Relations for Archivists.* Metuchen, NJ: Society of American Archivists and Scarecrow Press, 1994.

Hachi, Omar. *The Status of Archivists of Public Services in the Arab Countries: A RAMP Study.* (RAMP Study PGI-86/WS/18). Paris, FR: UNESCO, 1986.

Levy, Sidney J. and Albert G Robles. *The Image of Archivists: Resource Allocators' Perceptions.* Chicago. IL: Society of American Archivists, 1984.

Tanodi, Aurelio. *The Status of Archivists in Relation to other Information Professionals in the Public Service in Latin America: A RAMP Study.* (RAMP Study PGI-85/WS/13). Paris, FR: UNESCO, 1985.

Taylor, Hugh A. *Archival Services and the Concept of the User: A RAMP Study.* (RAMP Study PGI-84/WS/4). Paris, FR: UNESCO, 1984.

Van Laar, Evert. *The Status of Archives and Records Management Systems and Services in African Member States: A RAMP Study.* (RAMP Study PGI-85/WS/3). Paris, FR: UNESCO, 1985.

Communication

Carnegie, Dale. *How to Develop Self Confidence and Influence People by Public Speaking*. Cheswold, DE: Prestwick House, 1995.

Campbell, John. *Speak for Yourself*. London, UK: BBC Business Matters Management Guides, 1995.

Jay, Anthony. *Effective Presentations*. London, UK: Pitman, 1996.

Evaluation

McCarthy, Paul H. *Archives Assessment and Planning Workbook.* Chicago, IL: Society of American Archivists, 1989.

Activity 27

Check your institution's library or resource centre. What books or other resources do you have about planning and evaluation issues? Are any of the publications listed above available in your institution? If so, examine two or three of them and assess their currency and value to your institution. If not, identify two or three publications you think would be most useful to help develop or expand your professional library. Devise a plan outlining how you could realistically obtain copies of these.

SUMMARY

This lesson has provided an overview of the entire module, *Strategic Planning for Records and Archives Services.* It has then discussed how to establish priorities for action and suggested that the main priorities for action are often as follows:

Priority 1:   Identify the key management issues facing your institution

Priority 2:   Prepare a strategic plan for your institution

Priority 3:   Plan a project that would enable your institution to attain one of its key objectives

Priority 4:   Persuade senior management of the benefits of an effective records and archives system

Priority 5:   Evaluate the management system within your institution.

The lesson then outlined ways to find out more information or get help with planning and evaluation issues. The lesson concluded with a discussion of valuable information resources relevant to planning and evaluation.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. In your own words, explain the reason why the priorities proposed in this lesson are offered in the order they are in.

2. Indicate two of the organisations listed in this lesson that you would choose to contact first and explain why.

3. Indicate two of the publications listed in this lesson that you would choose to purchase first and explain why.

ACTIVITIES: COMMENTS

Activity 25

Every institution will find itself at a different stage of development in terms of strategic management. The priorities established will have to take into account the particular needs of that institution, the region and the country. However, it is wise to begin by identifying management issues that could be addressed through strategic planning, then using the strategic planning process to improve urgent issues first. Overall change takes a long time and is best done gradually and with the support of senior management. A good beginning can help gain that support.

Activity 26

If resources are limited, it is wise to communicate with national organisations first, as they can set your requirements in the wider national administrative context. However, you should also use international organisations to obtain information on best practice elsewhere to set against the national situation. Valuable information can be passed on to your organisation through the international group, which can save resources for all.

Activity 27

It is important to begin with general information and ensure you have a good resource library of introductory and overview publications before developing a more specialised library.