

Preface

There are three kinds of organizations: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who wonder what's happened.

Anonymous

This opening quotation is equally and even probably more applicable to those individuals who are today's leaders and those who aspire to be in the future than to organizations. It paraphrases the very essence of management and leadership; that is, to position and make things happen in an unpredictable, challenging and changing world. My desire in writing this book is to capture the essence of leadership that makes things happen and infuse these into a management textbook/handbook for people who wish to be the future leaders of information services. These future leaders and their associates may already work in small to medium sized organizations, or be embarking on their first or subsequent career as a student in information services, librarianship, records management and information and communications technology (ICT). The book therefore has a dual purpose: as a management handbook as well as a management textbook.

Organizations, leaders, project managers and individuals take a journey of life, along the path of which they encounter challenges and opportunities that arise from within or through external forces. *Managing Information Services: A Sustainable Approach* has been written to equip them for this journey in an age of uncertainty. A continued theme throughout the book is the need to shift mindsets and strategically position and transform information services so that they are on the pathway to a sustainable and promising future. Continuing with this analogy, organizations and individuals have to map out their future direction and be ready to take up the challenges and potential openings, to adopt new mindsets and create new directions and successfully manage dilemmas and obstacles as tomorrow's opportunities, as well as make the right decisions as to which path to take in rapidly changing business and societal environments. The underlying philosophy is that anything is possible and, if looked for, solutions can be found for even the most exceptional and extraordinary circumstances.

The book is a further edition in the series of *Managing Information Services* by the same author. When I was first approached by my managing editor at Ashgate to write a third edition (which because of a change in title is the fourth book on the topic of managing information services) we discussed how much change was needed from the previous edition. A subsequent visit to several universities in the United Kingdom where the book is set as a text or required reading provided a new perspective. Whilst the pragmatic and passionate approach to *Managing Information Services* has been retained, the book has been substantially revised and rewritten and there is now greater emphasis on the 'why'. This change in emphasis and perspective is immediately evident in the new framework and structure of the book, as well as the different emphasis in chapters, particularly in Part II, *Strategy and Planning*. It also flows through to the focus and content.

Common themes that centre on leadership occur throughout the book and include:

- Instilling a passion for what can be possible in the future through dynamic leadership and innovation that involves vision, personal energy and commitment;
- Encouraging others to succeed beyond their dreams by creating an inspiring environment, sharing enthusiasm and generating the desire to excel;
- Turning challenging environments into opportunities; especially where the information service has been energized from within;
- Rethinking information services in a virtual age so that they are sustainable yet dynamic;
- Instilling flexibility to withstand strategic shocks and cope with unpredictable and changing circumstances;
- Adopting a customer- or citizen-centric approach and using technology to enable self-services that reduce costs and deliver 24x365;
- Integrating services to provide a rich service delivery experience;
- Using vitality, quality and innovation as tools that can be used to enable products and service offerings to exceed customer expectations; and
- Engaging in change and unlocking ideas in order to create the next advantage ahead of others.

This edition continues the theme of integrating the disciplines of librarianship, records management and archives, information systems, computing and telecommunications to promote an integrated approach, as well as the scenario in which institutions such as art galleries and museums that have similar cultural and social capital business drivers to libraries join forces to give a rich integrated customer experience. Rethinking service delivery away from their traditional siloed institutional, professional and media focus towards an integrated multimedia approach can also place services on a more sustainable footing as well as delivering a richer and more efficient citizen centric experience.

Managing Information Services: A Sustainable Approach adopts the reality that information services exist in a market space, rather than the traditional market place. This is a global, connected and always on environment where integrated multi-channel service delivery is required to meet different customer and workplace generational needs and expectations. It is also an unpredictable world where seeking competitive advantage and managing change is not good enough. Successful organizations need continually to invent the next advantage and make themselves financially, environmentally and physically sustainable, using bright ideas, information, knowledge, creativity and innovation to do so. They must also build individual and organizational capability to create, engage and sustain change and protect their corporate reputation in the global media environment.

Ensuring success and sustainability in this environment requires concentration on five critical success factors:

- Understanding the changing environment;
- Strategy and planning;
- Leadership and innovation;
- Governance and social responsibility; and
- Customer and market focus.

The concept of the parent organization is used throughout the book. This refers to the corporate environment in which the information service operates. It may be the local

government authority, government department, private sector organization, research centre or academic institution. It is an important concept as the environment of the parent organization often shapes the environment of the information service. Within this environment, the information services manager plays a role in transforming the information service as well as contributing to and working with executive management to transform the parent organization. Many of the topics are scalable in terms of understanding the management issues at different levels within the parent organization. For example, they can be used for reference to assist in the day-to-day management activities of the information service. They can also be used to provide an understanding of the wider organizational management issues that occur in the parent organization.

Orientation

Part I, *Management Influences in a Changing Landscape*, addresses the first critical area that needs to go well. That is, an understanding of the concept of management and its importance in transforming organizations in a world of global and local challenges. It provides context to the challenges of managing for the future and survival in an uncertain and unpredictable environment, where sustainability is critical to success. It identifies different mindsets and approaches required in this environment. It also describes the various managerial roles and responsibilities, skills and mindsets that can be found in organizations. The second chapter provides context to the unpredictable and chaotic environment in which information services operate. It considers the drivers of change and the strategic influences being felt in both the internal and external environment and also explains the internal environmental characteristics that sustain organizations and which are most likely to be found in successful organizations.

Part II, *Strategy and Planning*, acknowledges the importance of planning for the future. It provides an integrated approach to strategic and scenario planning, as well as the specifics of how to plan, attract and retain the best and most talented workforce, ensure value for money and a cost-sustainable future through sound finance practices, strategically manage knowledge and information for competitive advantage and profitable business outcomes, and to take a smarter approach to technology and other strategic assets. Whilst there is a chapter devoted to managing each of the resources in a sustainable manner, the underlying approach is that they are planned as an integral part of the strategic planning process.

Leadership is a further critical factor in ensuring success and sustainability in uncertain environments. It involves engaging change and creating the right innovative corporate environment for environmental and organizational sustainability as well as smoothing conflict situations, motivating and communicating with individuals and groups. *Leadership* is the theme of Part III of the book. There are chapters on:

- Leadership roles and responsibilities, especially those in effectively managing diversity brought about by having different expertise and multiple generations in the workplace and in positioning the organization as an employer of choice;
- Developing and managing a strong, ethical and high-performance values-driven corporate culture, such that it is able to cope with uncertainty through managing in a sustainable way, supported by flexibility, innovation and change from within;

- Creating an innovative environment that is the basis for ensuring that the organization is equipped to think differently, turn risks into opportunities and secure new advantages ahead of others;
- Building and shaping an organizational capacity to think differently, to be innovative, to create and embrace change to sustain the organization in an unpredictable world, as well as developing ownership and commitment to action where change is energized from within;
- Managing group dynamics and leading teams of people to achieve outcomes as a group rather than as individuals and to enable people to effectively work across more than one team;
- Managing and resolving conflict that inevitably occurs through change as well as negotiating win-win outcomes that is a necessary element of good leadership in transforming organizations and managing change;
- The nature of politics and political behaviour from both an individual and organizational perspective;
- Strategies for developing policy to ensure that individual interests are managed for the greater good and that individuals within the organization are moving forward in the same direction;
- Personal communication and networking; and
- Ensuring the well-being of individuals not just from a social responsibility perspective but also as a strategy for workforce sustainability in which Generations X, Y and the Millennials have expectations that their well-being will be considered by the employer.

The theme for Part IV is *Governance and Social Responsibility*; which is a very necessary requirement in times of global uncertainty and need for sustainability. It includes a new chapter on managing for sustainability as well as corporate governance principles, ethics, codes of conduct, and different forms of capital. Power, influence and authority are brought together and considered in a chapter on accountability. Decision making is given a higher priority in ensuring transparency in organizations and a section is included on understanding perceptions and intuition. The chapter on evaluating benefits and performance addresses how to realize benefits, to enhance the return on investment through adding value, price for services, as well as strategies for measuring and evaluating performance.

The competitive global environment is introducing new risks for organizations. Risk factors increasingly involve security, including information security, physical security and the risk of damage to the organization's reputation and image. All of which can have financial, political, competitive, legal, human or technological impacts. With this in mind, risk management and security make up the remaining chapters in Part IV.

The final and most critical success factor is having a customer and market focus in service delivery. Part V, *Customer and Market Focus*, deals with defining and managing the end products and services that result from all of the other activities in the book. It contains chapters on strategic marketing strategies to increase the competitiveness of the information service and its parent organization, managing the corporate image and ensuring service quality. These ensure that services and products are delivered in multi-channel environments that meet the needs of customers.

The final part of the book, *Success and Sustainability*, brings all of the parts of the book together in explaining the sustainable approach.