

## **A systematic approach for human resource development through a knowledge audit: a case study in a university library.**

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### **Abstract**

The research reported in this paper outlines a knowledge audit conducted at the acquisitions department of the main library of the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. It was observed that the performance quality of the department has declined recently due to retirements of experienced staff and less experienced new staff taking over the responsibilities. The new staff has to depend on the supervisory staff and the co-workers to learn the work, as clearly codified procedures or job descriptions are not available. This has affected the quality of the departmental performance. This situation needed urgent attention of the library management as acquisitions department is the heart of the library for developing its collection. In order to study the issues systematically and to identify the remedial measures, the researcher exploited the concept of “Knowledge Audit” from the Knowledge Management discipline.

Methodology employed for the research consists of five stages; 1) Sketching a process map which elucidates the main functions of the department. 2) Analysing all the specific tasks accomplished to complete each of these main functions. 3) Preparing an inventory of tacit and explicit knowledge resides in the department. 4) Drawing a knowledge map in the form of a structured matrix which visualises the current status of departmental knowledge assets and 5) Making recommendations for systematic development of human resources to suit the present and future functions in the department.

Such a knowledge audit has not been reported so far in any of the Sri Lankan libraries. Thus the initiative produced valuable management information which could be used for several purposes. The outcomes of the study consist of five unique products which include a process map, a task analysis, a knowledge inventory, knowledge need analysis and a knowledge map related to the acquisitions department. It has also paved the way to generate job specifications and corresponding person specifications for all staff categories in the department. The exercise also provided the necessary experience to extend the knowledge audit to the other departments so that a comprehensive knowledge audit of the entire library could be conducted in future.

**Key Words:** Knowledge Audit, Knowledge Inventory, Knowledge Map, Knowledge Need Analysis, University Library