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Utilizing the Power of Continuous Process Improvement in Technical Services

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Lamar Soutter Library, University of Massachusetts Medical School

Goal 1: Monographs from “Order to Shelving”
Major Recommendations:
- Reduce review period for approval books from 30 to 5 days
- Do not suppress “on order” records in OPAC
- Develop a “cataloging on demand” service for newly received books with guaranteed 48-hour turnaround
- Eliminate duplicative processes

Method
Continuous Process Improvement
- Many different methods and approaches
- How can we do things better?
- Uses “small steps” improvements
- Eliminate activities that have no value
- 80/20 rule: often said that processes account for 80% of problems while people account for 20%

One Approach: Value-Added Flow Analysis
1. Imagine yourself as the actual thing in process
2. Identify steps in the process
3. Determine if the steps add value:
   - The customer cares about it and recognizes it is important and correct (important to note that for Technical Services, customers are library staff and patrons)
   - The step physically changes the thing in process (moving/copying doesn’t count)
   - The step is done right the first time

Project Goals
Examine the efficiency of work processes in the Technical Services Department, with the goal of reducing the turnaround time by 50% or more for three specific processes:
1. Monographs from “order to shelving”
2. Implementing serials title changes
3. Handling of journal issues from “receipt to binding”

Goal 2: Implementing Serials Title Changes
Major Recommendations:
- Develop e-mail or electronic tracking system to be used by staff when title change is identified
- Test a goal of 10 working days for in-house systems to be updated
- Encourage staff and patrons to search OPAC for serials information
   - Discontinue manual updating of printed holdings list (print annually)
   - Provide more training and documentation

Title Change Processes

Goal 3: Handling of Journal Issues from “Receipt to Binding”
Major Recommendations:
- Discontinue keeping daily check-in statistics manually
- Develop priority list for binding
- Estimate binding costs for calendar year and submit in budget request
- Rubber stamp library name on top edge only of bound volumes
- Tattle taping a good insurance policy, but investigate reliability of less expensive tattle tape

Pilot Project In Progress: February - July 2004

Lisa Palmer, Jennifer Varney, Penny Glassman, Barbara Ingrassia, Elaine R. Martin
Medical Library Association Annual Meeting
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Conclusions
- Value-added flow analysis is a useful tool for continuous process improvement
- We anticipate project goals will be achieved
- Technical Services better able to serve its internal and external customers
- Technical Services staff will have more time available for other projects: image database, rare books cataloging, digitization of Clara Barton letters