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## Use of electronic communication in public libraries with special reference to the Central Public Library, Cape Town.

The Central Library in Cape Town recently moved into a new building with changed infrastructure and operational requirements. The communication method of printed staff shifts, venue bookings and diary updates in various workspaces, proved ineffective as scheduling changed too rapidly. This paper reports on a project which aimed to develop an internal communication method to enhance workflow in the Central Public Library.

Different communication tools were investigated, although the use of an electronic tool was focused on. One of the biggest challenges was working within the constraints of the different policies of both the Information Systems and Technology and Library and Information departments within the City of Cape Town. To introduce a new communication strategy into the library, McNabb's (2007) model for knowledge management subsystems was used to describe how one aspect of the library (e.g. internal communication) was used to change how the library performs.

The initial set up took approximately three months and an additional two months was used for staff motivation and training. The eight steps of change of Kotter and Cohen (2002) were used to strategize on how the people factor has influenced the change of the communication method. A general feedback session was organized and a self-administered questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions was handed out to 40 staff members to test usage and impacts. Thirty-one (77.5 %) completed the questionnaire.

The introduction of an electronic internal communication system into the library, ultimately changed the performance of the library positively. This tool addressed a wide selection of practical problems previously experienced. The effectiveness of the tool depends largely on the staff's commitment and regular maintenance of equipment.

The recommendation emanating from this study is that the use of a communal electronic internal communication system has a huge potential in the bigger public library environment. It can improve a library's performance, productivity and team collaboration. This in turn can lead to fast and effective service delivery within the organization in order to reach the ultimate goal of customer satisfaction.

### Summary

Curriculum Vitae

Christelle Lubbe:

I am a B.Bibl (ed.) graduate with 20 years of experience in public librarianship. Currently I am the Chief Librarian of Bellville Library, City of Cape Town. I completed a certificate in Project Management and passed the Carnegie Library Leadership Academy with distinction. I am a member of LIASA, PACLIG and ALN. I have attended and participated in several national and international conferences, committees and seminars making a difference to the profession. I delivered a poster presentation at IFLA conference, Milan, August 2009 and presented a paper at LIASA 8th Annual Conference. I published articles in Liasa-in-touch and Cape Librarian. I managed the Milnerton Library Adult Learning Centre that won the Western Cape Branch award of LIASA and 2nd place in Best Centre award in National Adult Learners Week.

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