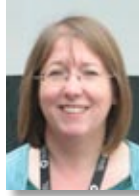

Achieving more with less: acquisitions in hard times



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INTRODUCTION

It's the all too familiar picture... campus consolidation, staff redundancies, a dwindling book budget, mountains of boxes of new books, processing delays due to a lack of staff and an outdated acquisitions workflow that hasn't caught up yet with a changed workplace. This is undoubtedly a familiar scenario for many institutions and was the situation at Buckinghamshire New University (Bucks) in the first half of 2010.

BACKGROUND

Change was needed to improve our labour- and time-intensive acquisitions process which already used electronic data interchange (EDI) ordering and some outsourced book supplier processing. Shelf ready acquisitions seemed the best way forward, but at a price. In 2010 we were faced with the need to change our acquisitions processes but with no additional monies to invest to achieve this. However, almost a year on, we are running a smooth and efficient acquisitions process which is already showing improved order supply times and has made a positive impact on staffing resources and tasks within the library team. All this has been achieved without major financial investment, with just a closer look at our staff and technical resources and a drive to maximise systems and technical expertise we already had.

PROJECT SEEDS ARE SOWN

In May 2010 we listened to an enlightening presentation, 'Re-engineering workflows with dawsonenter', by Marilyn Clarke of Imperial College at the Dawson Day in London, hosted by Dawson Books, our major book supplier. We were excited at the prospect of introducing a similar acquisitions workflow using the 9xx ordering process, given that Imperial College is a fellow-SirsiDynix library user. However, the cost of purchasing the 9xx module from SirsiDynix proved prohibitive for our budget. We therefore arranged to visit Brunel University, another SirsiDynix user who run EDIFACT (Electronic Data Interchange For Administration, Commerce and Transport) book quotes (quotes) ordering with Coutts. Their advice and knowledge proved invaluable in showing us the potential of 'quotes ordering', which did not need additional software purchase but would still streamline our acquisitions processes. A potential stumbling block was that Dawson Books had not tested quotes ordering with SirsiDynix customers yet but could offer the 9xx ordering method. With advice from Georgina Parsons at Brunel and our newly appointed Systems and Research Librarian, Elizabeth Chamberlain, we approached Heather Sherman, Sales Development and Support Manager at Dawson Books with the request that we start testing quotes ordering with them. In September 2010 Bucks became the first SirsiDynix customer in the United Kingdom to run quotes ordering with Dawson Books. Our new acquisitions process was achieved from inception to delivery in the short space of four months with the input and cooperation of many key people and the coordination of a number of important factors.

Having expert staff in the right place, at the right time and asking each other the right questions underpins the success of our acquisitions project. When Elizabeth Chamberlain re-joined the Library Team in July 2010 with responsibility for Symphony, our library management system, we felt we now had the expertise to drive our project forward. She started looking at the reports we would need to run in the background on Symphony to enable the smooth transfer of bibliographic order data between the dawsonenter¹ service, Dawson Books' bibliographic database and Symphony. With the SirsiDynix manual in one hand and helpful advice from Georgina Parsons at Brunel University and SirsiDynix in the other we started testing the transfer of bibliographic data to Dawson Books where we were

assisted by Heather Sherman and the Customer Services team.

DAWSON BOOKS' DEVELOPMENTAL WORK

Dawson Books have had a long history of supporting the Unicorn 9xx workflow, which uses MARC records to transmit the bibliographic and purchase order data to the library management system. However, using the EDIFACT EDI standard for quotes ordering meant that Dawson Books would now be handling quotes files of orders with the same data elements but the file structure would be totally different. Dawson Books began by approaching SirsiDynix to understand how quotes had been implemented and were provided with details of the key data elements that needed to be included in the quotes files. David Thomas at SirsiDynix worked with Dawson Books on the initial testing so that by the beginning of August 2010 they had a first version of a working quotes file. During August, testing started in earnest between Bucks and Dawson Books and by the end of that month we were able to demonstrate that the quotes process was working. Once we started to input live orders it was imperative to capture the location and loan types as part of the quotes process to ensure that when these were returned as EDI orders, the books would be serviced correctly as part of the shelf-ready workflow we had set up. Dawson Books undertook further testing to ensure that the location and loan type data was being sent back correctly in the EDIFACT book quotes file so that it would then appear in the correct fields of the orders being created within Symphony.

The final piece of the puzzle was to capture and return classmarks successfully. As with location and loan types, it is imperative to capture classmarks correctly if they are to be part of an effective shelf-ready workflow.

TASK ALLOCATION

We looked carefully at our old acquisitions workflow and identified tasks and areas of duplicated effort. We also identified the stages in the workflow where delays had occurred due to lack of staff and the labour-intensive nature of the task. With this in mind we planned a more streamlined acquisitions workflow to avoid duplication of effort, automate and outsource more tasks and reassign tasks within the library team so as to maximise staff resources. We also wanted to move more towards a paperless office, in line with the university's policy of saving costs.

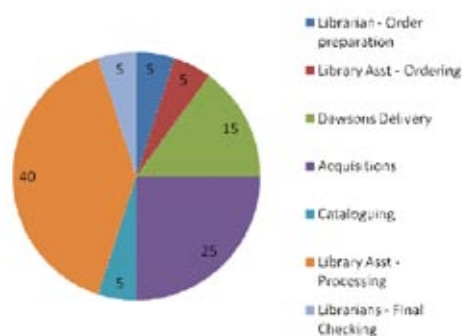
We have seen a dramatic shift in the reallocation of tasks within the library team. Library assistants now have more time to spend on other team tasks. Outsourcing and a better use of technology has reduced the manual nature of our acquisitions workflow and removed duplicated effort. Our Cataloguer has seen her workload increase, however, with more pre-order Dewey classification checking, loading of copies and the loading and editing of MARC records to in-house requirements.

This stage of the process can take a day and a half from entering book data to Dawson Books receiving the firm EDI order with minimal human effort and better use of system processes.

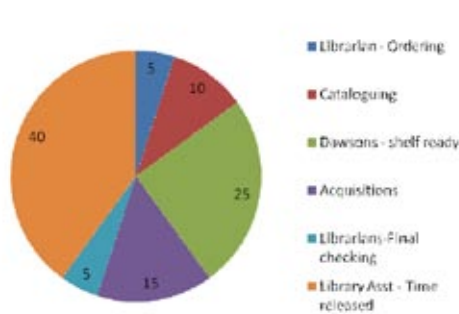
Another backlog we identified in our workflow was the amount of in-house processing we still carried out. When boxes of new books arrived, they would be delayed by time consuming physical processing, accessioning and labelling. Therefore, Dawson Books now do more of this processing for us with no further costs as this falls

Task Allocation

Pre-Quotes Ordering 2009/10



Quotes Ordering 2010/11



Old v New

Paper order forms for new books have become a thing of the past. We no longer have a backlog of paper forms waiting to be input by one team member to download MARC records from OCLC and create order records to send off by EDI. The librarians now input their own book and e-book requests directly into dawsonenter. This has saved time and resources in that this part of the process is paperless, the book order information is only being keyed in once, which minimises error, and librarians have responsibility for their own orders. The development in book suppliers' bibliographic databases has enabled this. The book order requests start as quotes in dawsonenter. We have set Symphony to run the reports called EDIFACT file ftp retrieval, EDIFACT file receiving and EDIFACT book quotes which retrieve the quotes data from Dawson Enter and turn it into orders in Symphony. With minimal effort, we then set the orders to go EDI back to Dawson Books the same day using the EDIFACT file transmission report.

within the terms of their Joint Academic Consortium Book Agreement. The majority of our book orders are shelf-ready with minimal in-house checks. The time taken for new books to make it onto the shelves ready for borrowing has been dramatically reduced. In January 2010, a typical order would take, on average, 39 days from the order date to the books going on the shelves. By January 2011, this had been reduced to an average of 16 days.

We now pay for MARC records from Dawson Books and have reduced the amount we pay for our subscription to the OCLC service, which we still use for retrospective cataloguing, to help offset this additional cost. Receiving MARC records in batch files after the EDI orders have been placed has necessitated a re-think in procedure. In our old workflow we used to download a MARC record from OCLC and attach it to the EDI order. Now we receive emailed MARC records with the ordered books and use the MARC import facility within Symphony to load these records.

This procedural change has been a learning curve for our Cataloguer as she needs to notify Dawson Books of classmark differences for labelling books to our in-house requirements before the books are received. However, dealing with MARC records and loading items is more streamlined and efficient. The majority of orders are now being received, loaded and MARC records edited the same day by the cataloguing and acquisitions teams.

TESTING AND TROUBLESHOOTING

Being the first SirsiDynix customer to run quotes ordering with Dawson Books meant there was much testing and troubleshooting required to find solutions to ways of mapping processes to our new workflow. We monitored closely the transfer of bibliographic order data at every stage. The problems we faced were relatively few in number and focused on the field to use in dawsonenter in order to flag in-house classmark preferences as notes fields do not transfer data well via EDI. Dawson Books had to change their internal programmes to receive classmark changes in the classmark field as opposed to the 'notes to vendor' field. Dewey re-classification during the order process has, on occasion, resulted in spine labels that are different from what we expected. We had problems with ftp files causing errors in EDI reports, the multiple duplication of the same order title by the EDIFACT book quotes report and the incomplete set up of our ebook ordering workflow. Lastly, an account location change by Dawson Books, to remedy internal routing of our orders, led to holding code errors in our EDIFACT book quotes report. With hindsight and an overview of all that we have achieved, these teething problems now seem minor, even if that was not the case at the time.

	Quote Ack	Purchase Order	ISBN	Title	Author	Publisher	Edition	Quantity	Price	Total	Classmark
203											
204											
205											
206	01/04/2011	bnu-2100843	9781904984030	Teamwise	Celia Athr	Research i		4	15.00	60.00	*361.32 ATH*
207										60.00	
208											
209	01/04/2011	bnu-2100844	9781860163180	The assessment	Clinical St	Royal Coll		3	7.00	21.00	*618.97 ROY*
210										21.00	
211											
212	01/04/2011	bnu-2100845	9780080963242	Team roles at w	R. Meredi	Butterwor	2nd ed.	1	23.47	23.47	*INTERNET*
213										23.47	
214											
215		bnu-2100846	9780443101021	Ross and Wilson	Anne Wal	Churchill	110th ed., i	5	13.99	69.95	E*612 WAU*
216										69.95	
217											
218	01/04/2011	bnu-2100847	9781609130046	Essentials of nur	Denise F.	Lippincott	7th ed.	3	24.95	74.85	E*610.73072 P
219										74.85	

Classmark specification from classmark field in dawsonenter downloaded to Excel

Display Order : Display Order BNU-2100844; 2010; WYCOMBE; DAWSONEDI

Description: The assessment of pain in older people / Clinical Standards Department at the Royal College of Physi

Order Orderline Segments Invoices Order History Serial Controls

Bibliographic info

Call number: *618.97 ROY*
 ISBN/ISSN: 9781860163180
 Personal Author: Clinical Standards Department at the Royal College of Physicians
 Title: The assessment of pain in older people
 ISBN: 9781860163180
 Publication info: Royal College of Physicians, 2007.

Orderline extended information

Quotation line number: 1377473

Dates

Date ordered: 4/4/2011 Date mailed: 4/4/2011

Price and quantity

Unit price: £7.00
 Quantity: 3
 Extended: £21.00
 Multi parts: N

Classmark specification uploads into the call number field in Symphony ready for EDI to Dawson Books

NEXT STEPS

The next stage of the project is to test EDI invoicing and set up the reports in Symphony that will automatically receive and load orders. These processes will be tested before the end of the current academic year and, subject to successful results, made live from September 2011. This will remove yet more manual tasks from the workflow.

The importance of professional networking, collaboration and sharing experience cannot be underestimated. We would like to acknowledge the support and professionalism of Heather Sherman and the Customer Services Team at Dawson Books. Without it our project would not have progressed as quickly or as successfully. In the current hard economic times we have echoed the ethos of Bucks New University by ensuring that our project has maximised our human and technical resources. We have been flexible as we have faced change and achieved improvements without incurring further costs, and we have shown that more can be achieved with less.

NOTES

1 <http://www.dawsonenter.com>