Best Practices – Promising Initiatives at TCS

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Abstract. Best practices are implemented for better performance of the organisation - they improve productivity, increase efficiency of operations and also help in optimization of resources. They are generally accepted as superior to any alternative. The use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and digitization have changed the organizational culture of libraries. New well defined, user focused best practices using ICT in the library field are being initiated to ensure success.

This paper describes some of the best practices followed at Information Resource Centre (IRC), Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), a global leader in IT services.

Paper discusses importance and benefits of introducing best practices such as Internal Audit, Webex Review Meet, Pop up library and Book for Book at TCS IRCs. These are the processes that are being implemented to improve IRC's processes, activities; optimization and deliver value add services to its users.

1. Introduction

The use of information communication technology and digitization is changing organizational culture of libraries. Customer focused technology assisted services or processes are being implemented for success. Sometimes it is observed that some people or departments in the organisation seem to outperform others. Why? They have a process in place that helps them to excel.
 In an organisation when freshly introduced process, leads to reach determined objectives more effectively it is known as 'best practice'

The term "Best Practice" is rapidly becoming a buzzword. Every organization claims to have implemented a "best practice".

A best practice is a process driven by objective. It's a process that gives you the best opportunity to achieve your objective, in current circumstances. In other

words, it's the combination of activities that are most likely to achieve your objectives efficiently in the given situation.

The objectives could be:
- Better customer satisfaction
- Optimization of time spend on particular process
- Optimization of resources
- Cost optimization

The best practice model is not fixed, it changes as circumstances change and as new learning is gained. Any best practice, if it is implemented across the department or organization, then it is no longer a best practice - it becomes a 'common practice' and one cannot call any practice as "best practice" unless it has an impact that can be measured.

Best practices, when implemented, lead to better performance of the organisation. It is generally accepted as superior to any alternatives in a given situation.

2. Promising Initiatives at TCS

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), a part of the Tata Group, is a global leader in IT services, digital and business solutions with a comprehensive industry expertise and a global network of innovation and delivery centers.
TCS takes pride in having a unique Corporate Information Resource Centre (IRC) with a large network of 61 IRCs in India spread across 14 branches. Winner of the Special Library Association (SLA) Centre of Excellence Award, 2009, for its high-quality processes and benchmarks, and an exemplary application of management techniques and tools, TCS Information Resource Centre (IRC) consistently aligns its services to the organization's global business needs and helps it maintain a competitive advantage.

In TCS, learning and sharing is one of core values. Best practices of Information Resource Centre are shared and adopted within 14 branches of Information Resource Centre across India. These best practices were initiated with a view of improving internal process or optimization of resources or customer satisfaction.

TCS IRC encourages new initiatives at branch level, it is also one of the measure in IRC's Balanced Score Card. The balanced scorecard is a strategy performance management tool. TCS IRC's balanced Score Card consists of measures ie IRC's activities planned for that year with targets. Some of these new initiatives are then identified as best practices for deployment at unit level. All branch IRCs submit their new initiatives in a prescribed template to the selection committee. Template includes description of new initiative, purpose of initiating it, detailed information about process and why it is called a best practice which includes justification and benefits. Each branch IRC uploads

their new initiatives in prescribed format on internal portal known as Knowmax. IRCs who submit new initiatives have to fulfill below criteria.

- It should be a new idea or thinking that has value / utility - brings about process/ product enhancement, increases productivity or reduces cost / timeframe
- Should not have been documented or practiced in any of the TCS IRCs so far
- Should have potential for deployment across
- Should be implemented successfully with effectiveness & tangible results for at least 6 months.

Selection committee reviews all the initiatives submitted by branch IRCs and selects new initiatives that fulfill best practices criteria.

This paper describes selected 4 best practices that have benefited TCS IRC, two of which are implemented for improvement in internal processes & two best practices have been deployed for customer benefit.

2.1 Best Practice -Internal Audits at TCS

Whether it's an organisation or department, audits are integral part of any organisation. Internal audit is a systematic, disciplined approach. Audits are mostly carried out by external people or organizations to assess one's performance against key performance objectives or targets and to recommend some value add practices. In the library it is conducted for continuous review of the effectiveness of control systems and internal procedures.

Now let's have a look at advantages of having internal audit over external audits:

Parameters	External Audit	Internal Audit
Domain Knowledge of an auditor	Mostly theoretical, May or may not have practical knowledge	Practical and in depth
Conversant with Library Management Database in use	May or may not	Expert in handling LMS
Objective	To check compliance to process	To check compliance to process with recommendations for improvement
Frequency	Annual	Half yearly/ Quarterly/ throughout the year

Focus	Identify risks and reduce	Optimize process/ task to achieve greater efficiency
Limitations / Covarage	As per Auditors Checklist	Covers beyond checklist

Table-1 External audit vs Internal audit.

Initially, TCS IRC's audits were being conducted by auditors from within the organisation but from different departments. In the year 2012, for the first time the IRC audit was conducted by IRC associate from another branch.
Within TCS IRC, internal audit was initiated with the purpose given below.

a) Purpose
- To ensure the 100% compliance to quality and processes
- To monitor and evaluate the processes of IRC
- To add value and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of IRC's operations / processes
- To get acquainted for the external audits especially for new joiners
- To identify shortcomings, if any.

b) Benefits of internal audit

- It helps in keeping IRC records up-to-date
- It facilitates timely action
- It ensures 100% compliance to processes
- It adds value as internal auditors from same field who are well acquainted with all the procedures, can find the gaps or problems easily and provide the solutions which may lead to improvements.
- It helps to evaluate the performance of auditee during appraisal.
- It prepares IRC staff to face organization's external ISO audit.

Apart from above listed benefits major change was, these audits are being conducted by branch IRC heads, i.e. one IRC branch head audits other IRC branch head and it's not just limited to checking the compliance of the processes but it adds value as there is knowledge sharing and discussion between branch IRC heads. It also helps to streamline the processes.

2.2 Best Practice - IRC's WebEx Review Meet
WebEx is a company's application that provides online meeting, web conferencing and videoconferencing facility.

a) Purpose
For a team to be focused, performance or goal oriented periodic review meetings are essential. Each branch IRC in TCS has around 8-10 IRCs spread across city. In this situation, it's a challenge to have regular review meets as it involves travelling of team and closing IRCs.

With a view of cost cutting on conveyance and avoid travelling hassle of team, TCS IRC started conducting webex review meets using ICT. The biggest advantage of this webex meet was that it didn't disturb the normal working hours of IRC.

b) Benefits of webex review meet
- It adds value as it does not disturb working hours of IRCs hence no inconvenience to users.
- It saves the conveyance of team travelling to and fro to meeting venue.
- Participation of team is 100% as it's through online.
- It also saves time of IRC team

The meeting had fulfilled all the objectives of review meet in person with added advantages of cost saving without hindering IRC activity.

For example, in TCS Mumbai there are 13 locations where there are physical libraries managed by professional staff. All these locations are far apart from one another. For a quarter review meet all 13 members used to travel to meeting venue spending on an average 1 hr. Not only this would add conveyance to company but there was 13 hrs of manpower that was being unproductive and in addition, all 13 libraries were used to be closed which was real inconvenience to users.

2.3 Best Practice - Book for Book
It's a book exchange facility where associates exchange their personal book with colleagues.

a) Purpose
Every library has a collection development policy. As per TCS IRC's collection development policy, fiction is not included in the collection.

In customer surveys that is being carried out every year, associates were demanding inclusion of "Fiction" books to the collection. Associates' constant demand for fiction and light-reading books versus the IRC collection policy that disallows it, created a gap between the IRC and its users that was difficult to fill. In TCS this issue was addressed by connecting associates who are willing to share their personal fiction collection, thus bridging the gap of demand & supply.

In "Book for Book" practice, interested associates were asked to donate a fiction book which they can exchange with their colleagues. IRC provided a platform for associates to exchange / discuss books without any additional cost.

b) Benefits of Book for Book

- Associates' long prevailing request for fiction and light reading is addressed
- Improved customer satisfaction
- IRC is a catalyst of the 3Rs (Reduce-Reuse-Recycle) among associates with respect to promoting reading habits.

At TCS, we have around 200-225 associates per month who exchange books through this "book for book" initiative. Associates are happy to avail this facility as there is no record of these transactions and no pressure to remember due date. Its user's choice hence popular & in practice.

2.4 Best Practice - Pop Up Library
Pop up library is a TCS IRCs outreach service that is made available to users where there is no physical set up of library.

a) Purpose
TCS IRC has a policy of having physical library setup at offices with large number of employees. Small offices or client sites are served with online services. Enthusiastic and committed staff members of IRC initiated visiting TCS locations where there is no physical IRC with proper planning.

During their visit, latest technical and management books were displayed at particular location without IRC and along with marketing that highlights IRC's services. This gave an opportunity for users to interact with IRC staff which creates a personal bond between the IRC staff and users.

Scheduling "Pop up library" at regular intervals at locations where there is no library or participating in road shows to connect with users to spread library message that we have all that you need has created better customer satisfaction. Having pop up library is a "win-win" situation, which benefits both, users as well as librarians. This way, IRC staff can market its services effectively. While on other hand users don't have to visit library thus saving user time.

b) Benefits of "Pop up Library"
- Increased customer satisfaction
- Saves time of user
- It's cost effective than that of having physical library
- It serves as a best platform to market library services
- Creates platform to display books on specific subject
- Increased ROI by maximum usage of books

3. Conclusion
Library and information Centre's are considered as a nonprofit centers and its existence and success depends upon planning, marketing and innovation. Hence to stay relevant and connected with users introducing new practice for increased productivity or optimization or customer satisfaction is the need of hour.

Internal Audit, Webex Review Meet, Pop up library and Book for Book these promising initiatives discussed in this paper have added value by increasing customer satisfaction, reduced cost or timeframe.

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