

LLAMA Dialogue with Directors Discussion Group

2019 ALA Annual (Washington D.C.) – June 24, 2019

30 attendees were at this session.

Announcement: Brian Gray, founder and moderator since 2005, announced the two new co-moderators will take over starting ALA Midwinter 2020.

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Topics Covered

- Changing Culture
 - Empower staff to make changes
 - Set clear expectations
 - Set framework for feedback and involvement
 - Create partners in transition
 - Make it seem like it was “their idea” – i.e. people come to the same conclusions leadership did
 - What are the outcomes you want? Make it group driven when possible.
 - Introduce problem and let group come to the solutions.
 - Not a quick process; could take 3-5 years
 - What can be done to benefit staff in order to build trust?
 - Sometimes you need to put pressure on and just say “do it”
 - “Knock over the apple cart” but help clean it up
 - Speak to accomplishments and what you did to improve
 - See the enjoyment

- What do you do to improve people's live (i.e. to make a difference)?
- During cultural change, some people may need to leave.
- State a culture statement, vision, mission, etc. – Build around it
- Hiring & staffing
 - Match talents with needs
 - Hire for passion; situational analysis questions; hire for customer service
 - Example question: How do you respond when several people come to desk at the same time?
 - Active recruiting: look outside libraries (phone stores, hotels, etc.)
 - Rotate staff around
 - Send staff out to successful organizations, such as a week at a museum
 - Interview question: "Tell me about a time..."
 - Recommended blog: Ask A Manager (Alison Green): <https://www.askamanager.org>
 - Overcoming bureaucracy in hiring
 - Emphasize cost of hiring the wrong people to influence the process
 - Higher people at lower levels and allow them to move up (i.e. build in-house through promotion)
 - Educational requirements
 - Changes in requirements may take a long time within an organization
 - Do not over-strict requirements to lose good candidates
 - Move from needing a degree to "lifelong learning" and matching needs of the organization
- Faculty and union environments resist to change
 - Set expectations in evaluations process to push for change
 - Present problem/challenge and let them develop the answers
 - Transfers sometimes needed
 - Partner with people that model good behaviors
 - What do people like?
 - What is in writing and formal?
 - Align job descriptions, strategic plan, and objectives
 - Clear timelines
 - Do not just add new tasks; what can be changed or stopped
 - Be flexible; negotiate the change
- Problem employees
 - Use HR and documentation in the change process
 - Issue a memo to formalize the process after a meeting
 - Procedures based on organizational policies
 - Model: Situation – Behavior – Impact Feedback
 - Sometimes a witness is needed in meetings
 - Differences between discipline versus coaching versus firing
 - Utilize employee assistance program if available
 - Difference in documenting discipline versus manager records of coaching
 - Move person to success = new skills, new role, etc.
 - What do you love?

- Reframe conversations
 - Recommended book: Primed to Perform: How to Build the Highest Performing Cultures Through the Science of Total Motivation Hardcover (2015; Neel Doshi & Lindsay McGregor)
 - Rewards programs
 - Employees fill out form to nominate people, poster and award presented at staff meeting; recommends hidden good deeds
- New LLAMA discussion groups coming soon!
 - Solo directors
 - New library directors
 - LLAMA also exploring more virtual opportunities