

Flexibility and responsiveness the key to success

Moya Lum, AMP Corporate Research Centre

As of November 1998, AMP's Information and Library Services (ILS) ceased to exist. From its ashes rose the AMP Corporate Research Centre. This was preceded by the appointment of a knowledge management officer to the existing library, archives and research team and was the culmination of a number of decisions made by the manager of the division, Janet Travers, to redirect the focus of the ILS team.

We have positioned ourselves as consultants and solution providers in the area of information and knowledge management, database design and development. Current projects include an AMP award-winning Virtual Law Library, an electronic photo compliance library, a corporate portal, and the first AMP global intranet.

We think this is a logical extension of the range of skills available and have not hesitated to initiate the changes necessary to continue down this path. We do not wait until we are asked to prove our value but go out to demonstrate it constantly in our interactions with senior management. It is difficult to put a quantitative value on our services although in the past we have made estimates based on the value of time saved and knowledge gained. We have recently initiated a feedback system where clients let us know with the click of a button, whether our research/service was adequate.

I do not think that there will be any

one time where we can say 'we have proved our value' and relax. We need to recognise that in order to survive constant change, libraries must build the expectations of their clients and be prepared to meet those expectations.

It has been the flexibility and responsiveness of library staff and management, and the willingness to let go of outmoded ways of operating, that has allowed us to survive. We never forget that our primary purpose as a special library is to respond to the needs of our parent organisation. The term 'library' has not fallen out of favour and our more traditional library functions such as book and journal circulation and SDI still exist for the benefit of all AMP employees. Indeed research is still a major part of our activities. In 1998 however, we needed a name that reflected the broader range of skills and services that we were beginning to supply.

We have taken the initiative in building on our existing information management skills and expanding them to encompass the new technologies. We make it a priority to understand the organisation and its operating environment and culture and apply this knowledge to the range of services supplied.

AMP has had a formal library since 1956 when a librarian was first appointed by the head of the Economists Division. The next forty-four years would see the library grow and shrink during the late 1980s and early 1990s



Back: *Carolyn Bruyn, Chris Reid, Pam Barnett, Janet Travers, Cathy Beale.* 2nd row: *Bruce Andrews, Michele Delaitre, Christine Benneian, Moya Lum, Shelby Ashelford.* front: *Denise Hughes*

— in reaction to various corporate reorganisations, the impact of new technologies and a rapidly changing economic environment. The library has in its time been a part of the Economists Division, Strategic Planning, Human Resources and is currently residing with Group Communications. Being moved about and adjusting to different management structures has not deterred a long line of AMP library managers from placing themselves at the cutting edge of technology and information management. In fact it has been an encouragement to seek out new opportunities — whether it be the introduction of an automated library system, pioneering the use of the internet as a research tool, or building a corporate intranet.

The Corporate Research Centre will continue to adapt and lead change to ensure that AMP has a world-class service. It is our only reason for existing. ■

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