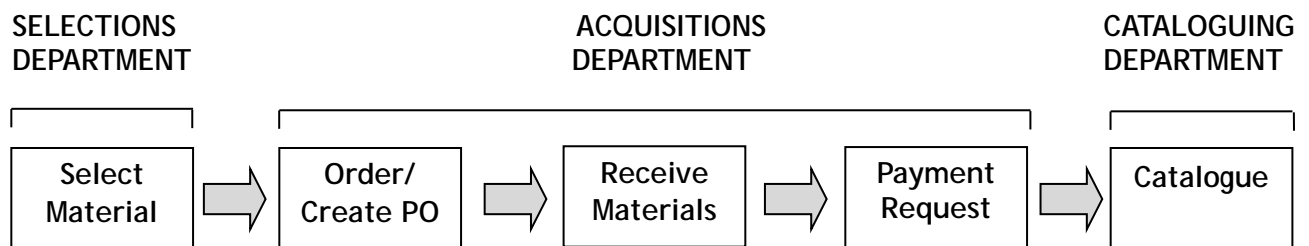


December 12, 2014

Vancouver Public Library Books and Materials Selection and Acquisitions Audit

Background

Books and materials acquisitions for the Vancouver Public Library (VPL) account for approximately \$4.6M (11%) of the total \$43.7M expenditures. This includes print materials, electronic books, audiovisual materials, etc. This process relies on two main departments: Selections and Acquisitions.



Selections:

Formed in 2010, the Selections team currently consists of eight members with the mission of consolidating materials selection from individual branches to a system-wide approach and strategy.

The Selections team regularly reviews publisher catalogues for new materials and selects titles to order based on VPL's Collection Development guidelines, popularity and circulation of author.

Acquisitions:

The Acquisitions team consists of 12 members: an Assistant Manager, two librarians and a team of eight library assistants with a team leader. The library assistant team is responsible for ordering, receiving and paying for library materials. Duties are rotated amongst members of the team on a weekly basis.

VPL uses Horizon, a library management system used to order, acquire, receive, invoice, catalog, circulate, track and record shelved materials.

There have been a number of significant changes at VPL these past few years with management guidance towards stronger controls and creating a more cost-effective and efficient library system.

Scope

The audit objective was to provide reasonable independent assurance that the existing internal controls and business processes relating to Selections and Acquisitions are adequate

and effective. The work included reviewing policies and procedures in place to ensure the selection and acquisition process meet VPL objectives.

Conclusion

While there has been strong management commitment towards becoming a more efficient and effective library organization, a stronger control environment over the Acquisitions process could facilitate the achievement of strategic goals. Implementing proper policies and requiring stronger oversight over the approval process will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the business process.

The more significant findings and recommendations include:

- **Implement an Acquisitions Policy:** The Acquisitions department should establish a Policy outlining the scope of the department, general objectives, purchasing policies and conflicts of interest and ethical behavior. This Policy is important as it serves as a guiding principle for the department. Implementing this would facilitate a more consistent acquisition approach amongst the team.
- **Establish a formal approval process for addition of new vendors:** The current process for adding new vendors in Horizon needs improvement. All members of the Acquisitions team have authority to add new vendors into the Horizon vendor list with verbal approval. This creates an opportunity for staff to add invalid or related vendors without proper oversight. It is important to formalize the approval process and ensure all approvals are adequately documented.
- **Establish a purchase order approval process:** Currently, all staff in Acquisitions have the authority to create purchase orders. This poses a risk of ordering material not approved by Selections and not needed by VPL.

VPL management has agreed with the report's findings and recommendations and have begun to act upon them.