


 Search

[HOME](#) | [JOURNAL](#) | [PAPERS](#) | [RESEARCH](#) | [FOCUS AREAS](#) | [SUPPLIERS](#) | [AWARDS](#) | [NEWS](#) | [EVENTS](#)

## OutsourcingInformationTechnology.com

[home](#) > [topic areas](#) > [information technology](#) > outsourcing's i...

### READ ABOUT IT

[Current Stories](#)  
[More Stories](#)

### PAPERS

[Achieve Lowest Total Cost of Ownership with a Unified Global Delivery Model](#)
[The Software Testing Edge: Innovative New Tool Suite Enhances Productivity](#)
[Seven IT Strategies to Help Survive the Downturn](#)
[How Organizations can Elevate Business Performance through Advanced Document Process Management](#)
[Industrialize Your Applications Delivery to Achieve High Performance](#)
[The Power of Partnering in Accomplishing Your Green IT Agenda](#)
[Taking a New Approach to Business Challenges Using Managed Services IT](#)
[Gaining Greater Performance and Flexibility from Next Generation IT Outsourcing](#)
[Suppliers Corner: Augmentum Helps Players Take Advantages of Opportunities in Healthcare IT 2.0](#)
[Guidebook - Evaluating the Business Impact of Oracle On Demand](#)
[Leveraging Information Technology Infrastructure Library \(ITIL®\) Best Practices to Attain Organizational Maturity](#)
[Total Cost of Ownership: Analysis of a Global Service](#)

## Outsourcing's Impact on Corporate Archiving and Library Functions

By Kathleen Goolsby, Senior Writer

[For More Info](#)   [Printer Friendly](#)   [ShareThis](#)


Preparation for October 31, 1997--the 40th anniversary commemorating the year that Toyota began doing business in America--posed a challenge for Ron Kirkpatrick, who is now National Manager for Executive/Internal Communications at Toyota Motor Sales USA. His boss at that time was tasked with developing resources for the anniversary.

"I remember that my boss and I were in a small office with a bunch of cardboard boxes," recalls Kirkpatrick. "We didn't have a Web site, and we didn't have any photos in house. So we bought a photo collection from a former PR photographer who took a lot of photos for Toyota from the late 60s to the early 80s. We were on our hands and knees--I in a suit and she in a dress--looking through the photos in those boxes."

"We really didn't have any place where we could go to get information for our history," Kirkpatrick says. "We had to create things from scratch most of that year. Our 40th anniversary taught us that we needed to set up an official corporate archive to preserve Toyota's history."

Deborah Schwarz, President and CEO, Library Associates, remembers that 11 staff members of her company--an outsourcing service provider with management expertise to run libraries, record centers, archives, and other information processes--were already on site in 1999 at Toyota's Torrance, California headquarters, starting a business research library for Toyota Motor Sales USA. Toyota eventually shuttered that library and shifted the focus to retaining and indexing corporate knowledge. They then brought on board Library Associates' consultants to structure the physical archive and an electronic one to reside on Toyota's intranet.

Kirkpatrick says Toyota didn't have the archival expertise in house and didn't want to create a full-time position for creating an archive or for managing it on an ongoing basis. "We believed this was an important operation, but we tend to run things very lean."

### Transforming the Business of Corporate Libraries

As in the Toyota scenario, Schwarz says a lack of resources and expertise--rather than cutting costs--is usually the driver for outsourcing library and archival services. Library science was historically a low-paying profession compared to other careers requiring a master's degree; this resulted in a labor shortage. Another driver for outsourcing library functions in many corporations, law firms, and hospitals is that this is non-core work for them.

Others outsource because they want to transform the library function. "They want us to redefine and reorganize the function, conduct staffing and needs assessments, and come up with a whole new paradigm," says Schwarz.

The transformation request often happens in the process of going from a traditional library with books and journals to a digital library. In other cases, need arises because the library, over a period of time, lacked leadership. "In these scenarios, they outsource to turn over the library to a viable company that provides management. To get the library organization going again, we usually need to do a lot of clean-up, put systems in place, and even establish policies and procedures that weren't there before," says Schwarz.

Sometimes the lack of management causes the library to basically "die." She recalls a corporate client in that situation five years ago. "There were still books on the shelves, and the staff processed things. But items weren't catalogued correctly, and no one came in for research. The library wasn't performing its function. We had to ramp up the engine and start all over again."

In rebuilding that library to be more functional, the Library Associates team turned it into more of a virtual library. "We didn't get rid of the books entirely, but our emphasis in service shifted to what we could do over the company's intranet, as opposed to sitting and waiting for people to physically come into the library," says Schwarz. Today, a Library Associates team manages a thriving library for the company.

### Modern Library Functions Require More Expertise

Schwarz explains a significant cost benefit of outsourcing to achieve expert library management. "One big impact--although you won't necessarily see it on a balance sheet--is how the library on-scene assistants improve the time efficiency and effectiveness of an attorney (or another person who is billing time to clients). These days, this is certainly a very important point of a library surviving."

Private-sector libraries are cost centers and, as such, must justify their existence and continually reduce or contain costs. Cost savings result from expert management and through such activities as negotiating better licensing contracts for content and making better purchasing decisions.

The expertise required of librarians these days extends beyond the skills many long-time career librarians possess. As Schwarz explains, "Today they need to know how to negotiate content licenses and contracts. Content providers are tripping all over themselves to offer content, so a lot of it's duplicative, and the librarian has to do some analysis there. The librarian is also responsible for making sure the organization adheres to licensing agreements and complies with copyrights."

She adds that librarians now must analyze usage statistics and do costing analyses. "Librarians today need skills

### SPONSORS



### ADS



[Desk](#)

they didn't need 20 years ago. The job today is more of a business-management position and less pure library-science work," says Schwarz.

[Undertaking](#)[Data-Protection](#)[Initiatives in](#)[Enterprise Systems](#)

Librarians in today's libraries with digital assets also need to be good at training. Using digitized content is not intuitive to many library users. "Training is a constant," says Schwarz. "Librarians also need to continually be sure that the resources and data available are current and still accessible, that the links are correct, and there are tutorials."

[Impact of Web 2.0 on](#)[Outsourcing](#)

"Today there is a very different slant on providing information and research," says Schwarz. "An individual with a Master's in Information Technology and a library degree is a very sought-after person." Still, it's non-core to most businesses and thus something they seek to outsource these days.

[Demystifying IT and](#)[Business Alignment](#)[through Tightly](#)[Integrated Process](#)[and Tools Model](#)**Archival Tips**

Kirkpatrick cites another benefit to outsourcing information management functions. "With Library Associates, we can easily expand and contract the staff size, depending on our needs. For instance, right now, we have three of their people working full time on our site because Toyota's 50th anniversary is coming in 2007 and it's a very busy time from an archive and historical standpoint."

[Best Practices:](#)[Integrating a](#)[Multishore Strategy](#)[into your Global IT](#)[Organization](#)

A year or two after the 50th anniversary, when the work volume settles back down, they may contract back to one or two people--depending on the ongoing level of need for research questions as well as preserving Toyota's information both electronically and physically.

[Intel's Second-](#)[Generation vPro](#)[Platform: A Steroid](#)[Shot for Desktop](#)[Outsourcing?](#)

These days, when key Toyota publications come out, the Library Associates team transfers those to the Web site as quickly as possible. "We're trying to keep up with the history now as we write it, as opposed to going back and reconstructing it," says Kirkpatrick. Toyota Motor Sales USA's information services department provides electronic access so that the Library Associates team can update the archival and anniversary Web sites on a regular basis.

[2008 Market](#)[Predictions: FAO,](#)[Global Sourcing, HRO,](#)[ITO, and PO Markets](#)

They also maintain a physical archive for hard copies of old car manuals and press kits from the 60s through much of the 80s. "Sometimes we need to see the original specs on a vehicle for legal or repair purposes," says Kirkpatrick. "Two of our biggest users of our physical archive site are police departments and our lawyers. Maybe a car was used in a crime and they're trying to identify it; they'll need certain specifications."

Over the past 10 years, the Library Associates team at Toyota focused much of its effort on readying Toyota for its upcoming 50th anniversary. Kirkpatrick says it's something Toyota could not accomplish as well in house. "We get busy with so many other things, so it would be easy to overlook it."

Generally, companies don't realize they need an information archive unless there's a major historical milestone or a critical piece of business information that they need. "We're able to tap into that information now and capture not only our current knowledge base but also some of the historical information that has served us well in the past and may be a good example for something in the future," says Kirkpatrick.

He adds, "An archive, which preserves valuable ideas and the best thinking of the people who have been in an organization over the years, is a key component of knowledge management." But it's a labor-intensive and time-consuming activity that is best handled by the efficiencies of an outsourcing provider.

His advice for other organizations considering establishing an information archive is to "start early and retain a good advisor on what items to keep." A first step is to understand which pieces of knowledge are important to keep and know what to filter out. Determining where to find the items to keep is the next step.

Schwarz has advice, too. "Take a serious look before you close down a library to take it off the budget. Sometimes people make cost-based decisions too quickly and don't give them the proper amount of thought. Retain a library and information-management consultant to conduct a needs assessment and determine the best way to provide the functionality."

**Lessons from Outsourcing Journal:**

- Many corporations, law firms, and hospitals outsource library functions because this is non-core work for their business. Some also outsource because they want to transform the library function.
- A significant cost benefit of outsourced library expertise is the on-scene assistants' help in improving time efficiency and effectiveness of an attorney (or another person who is billing time to clients).
- Private-sector libraries are cost centers and, as such, must justify their existence and continually reduce or contain costs. Cost savings result from adding expert management, negotiating better licensing contracts for content, making better purchasing decisions, and eliminating headcount.
- Outsourcing library and information-management services facilitates quick ramping up or down of staff size, depending on the buyer's business needs.
- One reason for outsourcing library functions is that the expertise required of librarians these days extends beyond the skills that many long-time career librarians possess. The librarian function now involves analytic skills and is more of a business-management position than pure library-science work. The necessity for these skills increases the compensation that an organization must pay for in-house library staff.
- An archive that preserves valuable ideas and the best thinking of the people who have been in an organization over the years is a key component of knowledge management. But it's a labor-intensive and time-consuming activity that is best handled by the efficiencies of an outsourcing provider.
- Organizations considering closing down a library to take it off a budget should first retain a library and information-management consultant to conduct a needs assessment. Outsourcing the functions that need to be retained, or outsourcing the transformation to a digital or virtual library may be the best way to provide the desired level of library services while still reducing the cost.

Publish Date: January 2007

[✉ For More Info](#)

[🖨 Printer Friendly](#)

[ShareThis](#)

Copyright © 2007 - [Everest Partners, L.P.](#)

[\[Previous Story\]](#) [\[Next Story\]](#)

[HOME](#) | [JOURNAL](#) | [PAPERS](#) | [RESEARCH](#) | [FOCUS AREAS](#) | [SUPPLIERS](#) | [AWARDS](#) | [NEWS](#) | [EVENTS](#)

Copyright © 1997 - 2009 - [Everest Partners, L.P.](#)  
Two Galleria Tower, 13455 Noel Road, Suite 2100, Dallas, TX 75240  
PH: 214-451-3000 FAX: 214-451-3001  
Comments about our web site? [Contact Us](#)