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Management Basics for Information Professionals, 1st ed. [Book Review]

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***Management Basics for Information Professionals*, G. Edward Evans, Patricia Layzell Ward, and Bendik Rugaas. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, c2000. 560p. \$55 (ISBN1-55570-370-4)**

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Management Basics for Information Professionals is primarily an introductory text "intended for students in library and information programs." (p. xvii) I selected the previous edition under a slightly different title for my management course as the best available. In this review, however, I will be evaluating the title for its secondary goal since the authors also intend it for "information professionals seeking a broad, current overview of library and information center management." (p. xvii) The three authors bring a rich mix of experience and nationalities though the book retains a decidedly North American perspective. The American Edward Evans and the Norwegian Bendik Rugaas are both library directors while Patricia Ward from the United Kingdom is a library educator.

In its 560 pages, the book provides comprehensive coverage of the subject. Two chapters deal with the history of both general and library management theory followed by a chapter on environmental issues. Ten chapters cover the "soft" topics of knowledge and skills including decision making, communication, and leadership. The next four chapters treat the "hard" topics of managing personnel, fiscal, technological, and physical resources. The book concludes with an epilogue that examines future trends as information technology leads us towards the virtual library.

I find much to praise in this book. It is exceptionally well organized with a detailed table of contents and large number of sub-headings in the text. The authors provide figures and tables to give concrete examples of the topics under discussion. They also intersperse each chapter with text blocks "For Further Thought..." and "Tip." Each chapter concludes with a summary, references for items cited in the text, and two generally extensive and up-to-date lists for further reading--one from general management literature and the other from libraries and information services sources. The two indexes, name and subject, are above average.

I also have significant concerns. With an imprint date of 2000 and readings from 1999, I would have expected the book to be more current. Total Quality Management is no longer a "hot topic" after the nose dive of the Japanese economy; my institution abandoned TQM at least five years ago. But the authors devote 15 pages to this subject. Perhaps the most prominent management concept à la mode, "knowledge management," the "knowledge organization," or "the learning organization,"

does not appear in the index though the online version of ABI/Inform gives over 10,000 hits from 1986-1998. In their defense, the authors do discuss e-mail and the Internet.

The book, like most management texts, is biased towards management practice in large bureaucratic organizations. Librarians in small academic libraries will find large sections that deal with complexities of little importance to them.

Finally, I have difficulties with the smug, assured tone that pervades this book though I admit that few textbooks escape this criticism. While the authors occasionally introduce varying points of view, I have been an administrator for over twenty years and recognize the ambiguities and uncertainties of library administration. I wish that successful management were as easy as following a set of codified rules. I believe that the inclusion of a few case studies would help the reader put theory into practice and recognize that applying general principles to specific examples is not as easy as it seems.

I would recommend this book to academic librarians who need a quick, comprehensive overview of management practice in libraries. Such a librarian might be interviewing for the first management position or may need a quick refresher course to make up for not having followed the management literature. For those who need information on specific management topics in libraries, I believe that they would do better to seek out targeted articles or books either in general management or library management literature depending upon their needs. Such resources can be more current, better integrate research, and include examples and case studies--a favored management learning strategy for many of us.