

***Mistakes in Academic Library Management: Grievous Errors and How to Avoid Them* by Jack E. Fritts Jr. (Ed.) Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009. 132 pp, ISBN 9780810867444**

Reviewed by Anthony Prince, Jr., *Library Information Specialist II (cataloger)*, University of Missouri-Kansas City

It would be difficult to find a book that tackles more topics in library management in fewer pages than Jack E. Fritts, Jr.'s handy volume. Fritts, who provides the introduction to this rather brief book, succeeds in creating a collection of essays that outline the challenges that often arise in library management and demonstrate effective ways to meet those challenges. Each chapter, contributed by a different author, follows the same basic formula: presenting a scenario that highlights a number of problems relating to library management followed by a discussion of concrete solutions to the problems.

The chapters are concise, manageable, and practical. By design, it is not a book about management theory or a textbook. It offers practical scenarios, from navigating campus politics in the chapter, "Keeping Your Library on the Right (Correct) Side of Campus Politics," to the chapter, "Developing Power and Influence as a Library Manager." The ideas in this book are not substantially new or groundbreaking, but the presentation and concise exposition make it an appreciated guidebook. If looking for a broader look at library management, consider the older but still relevant, *The Library Manager's Deskbook: 102 Expert Solutions to 101 Common Dilemmas* (Carson, Carson, & Phillips, 1995).

In *Mistakes*, each chapter is a short essay outlining a scenario, which means the book lacks in-depth examination of theories behind the situations presented. For that, readers may consult the standard text in the field, *Library and Information Center Management* (Stueart & Moran, 2007). *Leadership Basics for Librarians and Information Professionals* (Evans & Ward, 2007) is also good for its more detailed investigations into leadership.

Do not be fooled by the word "academic" in the title; this book is just as applicable to situations in public libraries, and the editor makes this point in the book's introduction. While it is true that each scenario is built around the model of the academic library, there are few times that these same problems would not arise in a public library. For example, the chapters, "Communication: A Two Way Street," "Staffing for Success," and "Knowing Your Library User," all deal with problems that are inherent to any library or any organization. Keep in mind, however, that a school or special library may find it more difficult to apply the lessons of this book.

Depending on how new the readers may be to the library profession, they may not yet be in a position of leadership. This manual may help those librarians better understand their own supervisors and library administrators. Recognizing the potential follies of leadership is a primary purpose of this book, and understanding the mistakes of our own supervisors and administrators can help us better deal with the possible fallout. This work is recommended for library administrators, particularly those new to a leadership position, or those hoping to move into one in the near future. Although highly informative, it will prove less practical to librarians not in a leadership role.

References

Carson, Paula Phillips, Carson, Kerry David, & Phillips, Joyce Schouest. (1995). *The Library Manager's Deskbook: 102 Expert Solutions to 101 Common Dilemmas*. Chicago, IL: American Library Association.

Evans, G. Edward & Ward, Patricia Layzell. (2007). *Leadership Basics for Librarians and Information Professionals*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.

Stueart, Robert D. & Moran, Barbara B. (2007). *Library and Information Center Management* (7th ed.). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.