Review of Fundamentals of Technical Services Management, by Sheila S. Intner, with Peggy Johnson

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This slim volume, weighing in at just 158 pages, could be unfairly cast as a boiled-down version of Intner, Evans and Weihs' earlier 544 page epic, *Introduction to Technical Services* (Libraries Unlimited, 2002). Much has changed in the intervening years; indeed, much of technical services operations continue to change at a remarkable rate. It is truly a valiant author who attempts to tweeze this ball of mercury by capturing the workings and management of the array of services performed by technical services departments in today's ever-evolving technology environment.

However, the operative title word here is *management*. It could be suggested that the fundamentals of managing, whether operations or people or both, are as difficult to elucidate as writing a job description for a 21st-century, change-agent librarian, yet the authors offer a well-organized gloss of the spectrum of technical services operations described in the context of best practices. They also describe, in brief sidebar case studies, charts, and best-practices summaries, recommendations and approaches for organizing, managing, and evaluating ongoing technical services operations.

In ten quick chapters, with two supplied by long-time collections-development librarian Peggy Johnson ("Planning Technical Services Policies and Programs" and "Evaluating the Department"), Intner covers the gamut of topics including vendor relations, staffing, budgeting and planning, administration and organization of a department, responsibilities and authority of managers, relations with other library

entities, evaluating operations and personnel, and a chapter on the "Impact of Digital Resources." Most chapters conclude with a recommended readings list of recent and authoritative literature for deeper investigation of the topics at hand.

Although the coverage is extensive, it is not deep (indeed, entire books have been devoted to the aforementioned chapters), but that does not detract from the authors' stated intent to "describe typical issues, problems and situations … and to suggest solutions and methods of dealing with them" (p. vii). This is a "greatest hits" package, if you will, with short, concise, and illustrative descriptions of work situations, workflows, or evaluation techniques that might be applied to a variety of technical services aspects or operations regardless of the size or complexity of the department.

This book does not expend its energy on the kinds of management or communication techniques common to the hundreds of trendy management-speak manuals available at the local book dealer. It is purposefully contextualized to the technical services environment and offers just enough advice on communication style and best-case approaches to avoid the hackneyed re-phrasing of homespun advice that often predominates these kinds of management guides.

I appreciate texts that clearly state their intent and manage to meet that goal. The authors write in their preface that the audiences for this book should include " … new department managers … seeking help with their new duties … students and faculty doing course work in technical services … practicing technical services librarians who want to become managers … " That is a broad and varied constituency, and an ambitious communications goal, and given today's environment of our graying profession and often vexed succession planning initiatives, this is a much-needed primer for librarians in training or those interested in advancement into administrative roles.

The authors manage to achieve their stated intent by offering us not the last word in technical services management, but a clear and comprehensive map with which to chart our future course.