

COMPREHEND THE CASE SITUATION:

The first directives given to a new library director are: To eliminate one full-time position as determined by the director and create a new teen services program for the growing teen population in this community. Current full-time positions are: the Library Director, Assistant Director, Children's Services Librarian, Circulation Librarian, Reference Librarian, Cataloging/Technology Librarian, and Genealogy/Adult Services librarian.

The children's librarian has a strong affinity with the young children, usually under the age of six, but has difficulty relating with children over the age of six. There is a program for the ages 9-12, but it is limited to the volunteer work of a local teacher.

The Cataloging and Technology Librarian admits that the library has marginal demand for original cataloging, but is the on-site technical guru. The Genealogy and Adult Services Librarian has been around the longest and runs a very successful genealogy program with strong participation and financial support from the community. No additional information is provided about the Circulation or Reference Librarians.

One of the directives includes rewriting job descriptions in order to reflect the elimination of one full-time position, while creating enough funds and manpower to start a new teen services program. Ideally, this task can be accomplished while still maintaining relationships of trust with the current employees.

DEFINE THE PROBLEM:

Eliminating a job is always difficult, but this is complicated further given the newness of the relationships between the new director and current employees. The director is hindered by the limited information regarding each person's set of skills and

what falls under their job description. Information is primarily second hand in nature, with limited personal interactions. While tasked with the unenviable situation of increasing library services while eliminating forty paid man-hours per week, this is a situation that must be handled with delicacy and diplomacy.

KEY PEOPLE:

- *Genealogy/Adult Services Librarian*: The division is well run with strong community support, eliminating this position would be undesirable.
- *Cataloging/Technology Librarian*: With most of the library's cataloging needs being met through electronic systems, this division has become partly obsolete; however, it is still important to have someone around with this skill. In addition, anyone who has had to wait for off-site I.T. to respond to an immediate problem understand that getting rid of the technical go-to guy can be a severe hindrance to the efficiency of day-to-day operations. Eliminating this position would be undesirable.
- *Children's Services Librarian*: This individual appears very knowledgeable in her area, but seems to lack the ability to adapt to serve the growing demands of her division.
- *Circulation Librarian*: Managing material transactions is vital to the operation of any library; however, the case study provides no specific details regarding this librarian.
- *Reference Librarian*: Assisting patrons in successfully defining and looking for the material they are seeking is central to the mission of any library; however, the case study provides no specific details regarding this librarian.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

The Library Director should begin with a meeting where the mandates of her supervisors can be addressed; specifically the need for one position to be eliminated. The Director should stress that this is not something she wants to do, but something her supervisors require. On the downside, this frankness may cause people to fear for their jobs and start the process of seeking employment elsewhere. On the upside, if someone is already looking at relocating they can discretely let the director know so that one of their colleagues doesn't lose their job. The goal of the meeting is not to prompt someone to sacrifice themselves, but provide an opportunity. Additionally, creating lines of communication, even when the information is undesirable may help establish foundations of trust for the future.

Without knowing the specific skills and contributions of the circulation and reference librarians, the general definitions appear to be conducive to merge with another managerial position, such as the Cataloging and Technology librarian. Depending on the specific set of skills, the Cataloging and Technology Librarian may be well suited as a Reference "go-to guy" or he may be more comfortable in Circulation. Regardless of which position is selected, he seems very capable of handling the additional task, especially given the minimal load presented by Cataloging for this library.

In order to address the directive for the addition of Teen Services, the director should announce a job opening of a Youth Services librarian. The Children's librarian should be informed that her position will fall under this new position but will be reduced to part-time. Although the Children's Librarian has expressed discomfort when dealing with the older children, she would still be an asset to the program, if she elects to stay. If the

librarian elects not to stay, she can be guaranteed employment while she seeks to secure employment elsewhere. She and the other released librarian would be encouraged to apply for the new Youth Services position.

The new Youth Services program will be in need of additional funding. The possibility of borrowing from the Genealogy funds was mentioned in the case study, but I would recommend alternative solutions. It is obvious that the Genealogy Librarian has significant community contacts. Petitioning for funds is primarily the job of the library director, but collaboration with the Genealogy Librarian's contacts may result in finding local support for programs that would target the children and families of the community. An open house celebrating the initiation of this program would be an excellent opportunity to outline the goals of the program and to build support networks to assure the success of the program. In addition, the local newspaper would be contacted with a press release about the new addition to the library, giving the program some much needed publicity. The key to the success of the program is to use everything in the Director's arsenal to advertise and generate support. If there has been an influx of vandalism in the library, it is nearly certain that the phenomenon is not localized, but is affecting the rest of the community. It shouldn't be hard to convince the community how programs like these can benefit everyone.