

Show-Me the Money

Budget Cuts at the Missouri State Library

LISGSA Conference

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Introduction

Libraries rely on taxpayer dollars.

In 2012 new Missouri Secretary of State
elected.

Substantial budgets cuts followed.

Community backlash.

Case study of change management.

Background Information

State libraries administer IMLS grants.

Other responsibilities.

State budget grew \$1.6 billion between
2009 and 2013.

Jason Kander had reputation as
progressive.

Background Information

Bipartisan twenty year history of stability.

55% and 44% cuts respectively to two library divisions.

Missouri Library Association fought changes.

Literature Review

Lewin (1951) three step model.

Beckhard (1969) four processes.

Thurley (1979) four strategies for change.

Fernandez and Rainey (2006) eight factors of successful change.

Roots in business world.

Literature Review

Strike (1993) provides model promoting autonomy for teachers.

Accountability and efficiency focus of bureaucracies.

ALA (2004) values emphasize focus on democracy.

Cultural institutions.

Methodology

Semi-structured interviews and Sunshine Request.

Snowball sampling.

One former employee, one legislator, and five directors.

Did not seek to determine if successful or not.

Methodology

Identified emergent codes.

Conceptualized Kander as change manager.

Coded with eye for democracy and autonomy in profession.

Research Results

Interviewee One

All the sudden databases weren't getting renewed and the purchasing card for magazine subscriptions had been revoked. This threw up a red card for me and I started looking for a different job.

Research Results

Interviewee Two

[To] force Kander's hand we had to go to the press. This cost us money, but the Board made this decision. Everyone's emotions are clear in the stories. Eventually, we realized this decision was being made without input from the library community.

Research Results

Interviewee Three

It's disconcerting that during the process he did not consult with the State Librarian or the Council on Library Development. If I recall, he mentioned one way that his staff analyzed the Library was to go to a bunch of [...] websites to see what others are doing.

Research Results

Interviewee Four

The process was a total failure to communicate vision. Emotions got involved. The library side wasn't listening because of the way it was handled. It was a very critical, critical change [...] and [...] I thought it was a poor choice not to engage the librarians in the process.

Research Results

Interviewee Five

My take is that we were always going to disagree. The issue, to me, was about how it was done. I will say, though, that in the wake of this Secretary Kander called me three times [...] asking for input. If there is a silver lining we made clear the Secretary can't just do things and expect us to stay silent.

Research Results

Interviewee Six

The problem was not reallocating funds or cutting staff. Those are within the parameters of his position. The problem was the process and communication.

The best leaders have a way of presenting an adversarial position in a way that people understand their motivations.

Research Results

Interviewee Seven

When a person comes into office they have goals. It's impossible to make everyone happy, but to accomplish their vision they have to act. Knowing that some will disagree can cause them to strike while the iron is hot – they need to get things accomplished before opposing groups mobilize.

Discussion

Value placed on discourse and debate
by library participants.

Political actors value ability to enact
policy.

Lockean liberalism (accountability).

Habermasean democracy (autonomy).

Discussion

Why wasn't Secretary's Council on
Library Development used?

Inability of MLA to influence outcome
via advocacy.

Conclusion

Libraries are cultural institutions and not bureaucracies.

If treated like traditional organizations, then change will be hard to manage.

Consider organizing control of State Library by department purpose.

Management must consider values.