

Management Functions in Recreational Therapy

By David R. Austin, Bryan P. McCormick, and Marieke Van Puymbroeck (2016)
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My first glance into this concise, 236-page paperback book with 14 chapters fell on this highlighted quote: “The best way to predict your future is to create it” (Abraham Lincoln, p. 49). Having used various quotes over the years to stimulate discussion in the classroom and to motivate myself, I had to read the surrounding paragraphs to uncover the connection of meaning the authors might have had for selecting this quote to use in this place. Even though I cannot tell you the exact meaning or intention the authors may have had, this did lead me to read the section on planning where I found the quote.

Quotes are one of several structures for each chapter. Other similarities in the structures for each chapter include objectives and key terms that begin each one. Most chapters have a summary or conclusion and all have references used for that specific chapter. Another structural format that students (and others!) will use is the index at the end of the book. Bullets and tables are found throughout the book as well.

The authors have designed a book that can be used in the classroom but also can be helpful to the practitioner. A wide range of topics is introduced with many ideas for exploring further. The references provide a springboard for further examination of topics. For example, in the final chapter on Issues and Concerns for Managers, a resource on best practices for mentoring, found through the U. S. Office of Personnel Management, provides a list of 17 effective items for setting up a program.

Besides the Planning and Issues chapters, 12 other ones invite further exploration on managing and recreational therapy. Starting with an Introduction chapter, followed by Recreational Therapy and Management, then one focused on Understanding the Health Care Environment. Next a chapter introduces Basic Management Functions; the next five that follow focus on each of the basic functions of management. Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Influencing, and Controlling blend some recreational therapy content with typical management information. For example, on p. 68 in the Planning chapter, content on intervention protocols and the American Therapeutic Recreation Association Standards of Practice are included in the discussion.

The next three chapters focus on areas of supervision: Internship, clinical, and volunteer. The Internship and Clinical Supervision chapters provide an introduction

for practitioners and faculty to establish a foundation for collaboration. Even though the chapters are brief, the topics within them give a structure for further examination of the ideas and topics.

The next to the last chapter introduces marketing. Again, the chapter is brief yet direct and contains information to explore further. As I read this chapter, it motivated me to think of other resources I had used or other ideas to connect to it. Harkins and Bedini (2013) conducted a local study that I use on a regular basis in one of my classes. They frame their survey of health care administrators on a marketing theory. Results from their study enlighten and encourage students in marketing recreational therapy.

As mentioned, the last chapter focused on Issues. These included topics such as politics, burnout, and networking. This chapter had many opportunities for further exploration. Another topic area that could have been included in this chapter or an additional chapter would be a focus on diversity or culture within recreational therapy.

Most of the references or resources selected by the authors highlight hospitals, clinics, medical centers, or similar settings. Although the information provided can be used in most any setting where recreational therapy is practiced, a broader perspective might be suggested for managers-to-be. Adding references or resources from varied environments such as the outdoor setting, education setting, residential youth setting might be helpful. Even tips on applying management to a private practice would be useful.

My review of this book did not include looking at any of the materials available for instructors. Those resources may be helpful for using the book in the classroom. However, this book on management can be very useful as a reference or resource in a work environment as well as for the college setting. Practitioners can use the information within their organizations or agencies in many ways. As the authors state using a quote from Tom Stewart (p. 194), “Internal marketing is probably much more important than external marketing...”

References

Harkins, L., & Bedini, L. (2013). Perceptions of health care administration regarding recreational therapy in North Carolina. *Annual in Therapeutic Recreation, 21*, 16–31.