

Kyle Handke Final Reflection

Prior to this course I had very little experience with cultural organizations and I certainly was not aware of everything that is required to operate one ethically and effectively. As we have learned this semester, cultural organizations incorporate knowledge from many different disciplines and have to meet requirements that other organizations do not. Because of this it is important to understand what and why these facets are so crucial to their operation. Here are some of the major takeaways I learned throughout this course.

Organizational design was something that I should have been more familiar with given some of my previous experience with organizations (Andreas and Brettel, 2011). While many of the organizations I have worked with would not meet the criteria for a cultural organization, the lessons learned in this class have made me consider the importance of the organization's design. After taking into consideration what was covered in this course I believe that design can impact everything in an organization.

Without an organized layout, I believe an organization is unable to operate effectively unless its design is clear and well structured. Since the flow of all other aspects and responsibilities will follow this, clear delineation between the facets of the organization is crucial to its precise and ethical function (Andreas and Brettel, 2011). Even with my limited experience, I can see how a clearer and more organized structure could have solved many of the issues I have encountered with organizations in the past.

Similar to design, leadership can have an enormous impact on an organization's overall operation. Unlike design, my past experiences have all had strong and effective leadership but the information we covered this semester gave me some thoughts about how to improve myself

in this area. My job often requires me to perform responsibilities that my immediate supervisor and/or manager are usually responsible for.

When this happens, I have to make decisions that will affect their positions and that of my colleagues. This can seem overwhelming especially when there is a lot of money or inventory involved. Learning about the immensity of leadership in cultural organizations has helped because of the guidelines and processes that these individuals follow. Lately, I have used my company's "mission" and objectives as a guide for my decisions in these situations similar to someone in a cultural organization.

Reading about Sarah Rasmussen and her leadership role at Minneapolis' Jungle Theater was an eye-opener and really highlighted some of the major challenges that cultural organizations face. This particular article also explained how cultural organizations have unique requirements to meet simply because of their status as cultural organizations (Hewitt, 2018). This could be considered comparable to the regulations in the industry I work in. Decisions I make will ultimately have to ensure that my company is meeting a certain standard.

Management and governance are imperative to the proper function and maintenance of any organization cultural or otherwise. Without this, an organization is not able to allocate its assets, resources and time in an organized and effective manner. There is also the issue of maintaining the organization's status as a cultural organization and ensuring accountability (Regan, 2018). This is where the authority and oversight of the management and governance is so vital in maintaining the organization.

Much like the aspects of leadership I mentioned, there are many things I have learned during this course that apply to my daily life. Planning and decision making are tied directly to leadership, management, and governance. Without the former, the planning and decision-making

are automatically compromised and not as strong as they should be (Regan, 2018). If those in leadership and decision-making roles are unable to effectively do their job, then any of the planning they do or decisions they make will consequently be weak.

For me, the course highlighted the importance of, and connection to, leaders, management and governance when considering planning and decision making. As with management and governance they were a few areas of my life I was able to relate this information to. With some of the organizations I have been involved in, the leadership was not a problem but there were some issues with planning and decision making, while this could've been related to leadership, management or governance, I can see how other weaknesses could lead to issues such as these.

Operations and finances were interesting to explore and during this course I have learned that there is more to an organization than meets the eye. While the image of an organization is important for its success, there are many things that the public does not see with the operations or "behind the scenes" aspects that are essential for maintaining the organization (Regan, 2018). This is true of any organization even if it is not cultural, but since cultural organizations tend to have stricter requirements for maintaining their status, proper financial oversight is necessary.

Considerations about the sources and continuity of financial resources that we covered in this course can be applied to other areas of life. There is more to it than staying within a budget or appropriation of funds. The source of money including any reputation or controversies accompanying it can be counterproductive for a cultural organization (Regan, 2018). The article I did on some museums turning down donations showed me the importance of considering the long-term effects of funding and how ethics need to be considered when accepting funds.

Having strong operational and financial management can make all other aspects of an organization run optimally. Without the combination of resources and effective oversight of them, an organization may not be able to achieve its goals and may not be able to endure. When reading the article about Sarah Rasmussen, it became clear to me that there has to be synchronicity between the management and other personnel within an organization (Hewitt, 2018).

Cultural organizations in particular should be structured in such a way that management has authority to act upon situations and decisions without delay. However, this should be offset with a system that enables management to be held accountable should the need arise. This is a delicate balance and can be a major challenge for organizations but the article about Sarah Rasmussen was a good example of how this can be achieved with involvement from everyone (Hewitt, 2018).

While operations and financial management are both important, the source of an organizations funding is also important in maintaining ethics. As I mentioned before the money an organization uses to finance its operations should be considered before it is accepted. The article I read regarding ethics for our discussion talked about museums in the United Kingdom rejecting money from donors whom they felt had profited at the expense of others (Kennicott, 2019).

During that discussion, others in the class seemed to agree with the decision of the organizations in the article. After reading the article and discussing it with others, I strongly agree that organizations and cultural organizations in particular should weight the benefits of donations and other funding with the potential risks to their reputation if they accept funds from a controversial source.

Everything we covered in this course had certainly broadened my knowledge of cultural organizations and their unique challenges. As I continue to work at my internship and expose myself to more cultural organizations in general, I am noticing very important details I would not have been aware of if I did not take this course. Whether I continue to apply variations of these lessons at my current job or utilize them more specifically in a future career, I know I will benefit from the knowledge gained during this course and the discussion with others.

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