

# Establishing a Strong Management Foundation

## Improving Governance through Good Management

*George B. Cuff, FCMC*  
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# Timing!

**“Some people can stay longer in an hour  
than others can in a week.”**

William Dean Howells, American writer

# **What Do I Know from Learning & Experience?**

# What Do I Know (1)

- Good management should never be taken for granted
  - Management skills quite unique
  - Management attitudes not easily developed
  - Desire for continuous learning an indicator of ongoing success

## What Do I Know (2)

- Calibre of management impacted by degree of integrity
  - Character not something to be turned on and off
  - Principle of “first step” applies
  - Everyone has personal challenges; how we respond differs
  - Subordinate staff relish being able to look up

## What Do I Know (3)

- There is a gulf between a department head and a SAO
  - Not all senior staff will become quality SAOs; nor do all want to be
  - One level from Council not same as
  - Specialized knowledge not the ticket to success
  - Important for an SAO to mentor quality management practices

## What Do I Know (4)

- Quality managers thrive in challenging situations
  - Most middling managers can make do when times are good
  - Tougher times beg for strong-willed, disciplined and ethical people

## What Do I Know (5)

- Quality managers leave the politics to those elected to do so
  - Elected officials elected to govern; managers appointed to manage
  - Quality managers place real importance on Council orientation process
  - Quality managers understand the beauty of policies

## What Do I Know (6)

- “Tone at the Top” set by Mayor, Council AND SAO/Band Manager
  - Every statement; every action; every opportunity to gossip or engage in locker room humour speaks to “tone at the top”
  - Your respect (or lack thereof) speaks more to your maturity than theirs
  - You are responsible for you & those reporting

# The Hallmarks of Professionalism

## **Professional Management Requires(1)**

- The best you can deliver day in and day out
  - Support for the direction of THIS Council
  - Professional treatment of each other, members of Council & the public
  - Quality, succinct analysis of issues; first class reporting of advice
  - Understanding the impact of policies
  - Desire to be a desired employer

## Professional Management Requires(2)

### ➤ Stewardship

- Acceptable, courteous service to public
- Willingness to carry out Council decisions
- Conduct your work responsibilities with integrity/respect
- Staff, Council, public treated with care
- Respect for privacy/confidentiality of what you do

## **Professional Management Requires(3)**

- A healthy and realistic and positive self-image
  - Important that you see yourself as a professional
  - Difficult for some to move past the scars of youth; negative comments ring for years
  - Confidence is a far cry from arrogance

The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low and achieving our mark.

Michelangelo

## Roles: SAO

- Provide leadership
  - ❖ Identify new opportunities for your community
  - ❖ Guide Council/management on strategic plan
- Policy Advisor to the Mayor and Councillors
  - ❖ Provides sound, unbiased advice
  - ❖ Signs off on all reports
  - ❖ Ensures that Council understands implications of all recommendations
  - ❖ Provides a “heads up” on emerging issues
- Conduit of Council Decisions to Administration
  - ❖ Ensures that all administration aware

## Roles: SAO (2)

- Implementer of Council Decisions
  - ❖ Maintains control of the key issues
  - ❖ Ensures mechanisms in place
- Quality Control Counsel
  - ❖ Assesses all reports to Council for completeness; signs off
  - ❖ Provides guidance to staff
- Mentor to Senior Staff; Team-Builder/Protector
  - ❖ Develop a corporate team
  - ❖ Provides guidance to department heads
  - ❖ Provides counsel on tough issues
  - ❖ Protects staff from any attacks by Council

## Roles: SAO (3)

- ❑ Gatekeeper/Monitor of Civic Resources
  - ❖ Ensures resources used effectively
  - ❖ Monitors risk
- ❑ Advocate of Administrative Change
  - ❖ Reviews the organization regularly; discusses with senior staff; makes any needed changes within policy
- ❑ Liaison to Counterparts in the Territory (i.e. LGANT)
  - ❖ Maintains contacts with colleagues in the region; serves on committees; seeks ways to improve local and regional government

# Roles of Executive Management (1)

- Advisory
  - Provide first-rate advice to the SAO
  - Advise on the need for new/revised policies
  - Advise staff reports of direction, timelines, priorities, handling personnel issues
- Management
  - Manage departments/services within established policies
  - Recruit intelligently; develop carefully; promote responsibly
  - Involve department in developing key decisions & business plans
  - Delegate authority appropriately
  - Communicate-up, down, across, out
  - Discipline promptly, quietly, effectively

## Roles of Executive Management (2)

- Leadership
  - Stay focused on the primary client; decide who that is
  - Stay on top of emerging issues and ideas; manage proactively; think broadly; see farther
  - Assess structure and people; build in performance measurement
  - Practice principle-based, policy leadership
- Team-Building
  - Hear the voices from below; open to new ideas
  - Provide guidance re: expectations & results
  - Ensure that staff re informed, feel engaged, appreciated
  - Mentor; identify the future

# Roles of Executive Management (3 of 3)

- Assessment
  - Assess people, practices re: continuous improvement
  - Provide feedback
  - Encourage ongoing professional development
  - Focus on succession planning
- Image-Building
  - Help the public feel engaged, listened to and important
  - Develop an external network of significant others
  - Identify avenues for improvement in service delivery
- Interdependence
  - Ensure that department linked to others; promote collegiality

# Council's Expectations

# Expectations

- First rate advice
- Understand and follow the legislation
- Carry out Council decisions within policy
- Be respectful to community input
- Practice a high level of integrity
- Be one who always seeks to do his/her best
- Show respect for all members of Council
- Ensure that all have access to information
- Respond quickly to Council requests

# How to Support Your Council

- Orientation
  - Schedule & plan the orientation in advance
  - Focus orientation on governance
- Strategic Plan
  - Help Board/Council determine “its” agenda; highlight key community issues
  - Listen to them & show evidence of that; Illustrate how their priorities are impacting business; do not denigrate their impact

# How to Support Your Council

- Policy Framework
  - Provide Council with the policy bank
  - Offer assistance within policy constraints
  - Identify governance issues on every report
- Protocols
  - Practice internal protocol & respect
  - Treat each Councillor with respect
  - Refute criticism of others

Plan with the end in mind...what will others say about me when my day is done? What will be my legacy?

# **Criteria of an Effective Department**

# Criteria of an Effective Department

- Clarity of mandate; position responsibilities
- Focus on the strategic priorities
- Sound, realistic Business Plan
- “Issues Management” dossier
- Sense of collaborative team leadership
- Coherent organization structure
- Planned mentoring

## Criteria of an Effective Department (2)

- Clearly understood parameters/policies
- Sound recruitment, evaluation, compensation practices
- Effective, monitored communication
- Focus on integrated service delivery
- Desire to serve effectively, responsively
- Planned training and development

## Criteria of an Effective Department (3)

- Recognition of the importance of accountability
- Senior leaders who exhibit integrity
- Senior leaders who accept authority & discharge it wisely
- Communication of and development of shared values
- Clearly defined policies and procedures; staff who understand the difference
- Being prepared to act
- Awareness of “best” practices

# The Need to Add Value



If you see a  
snake, just kill it.  
Don't appoint a  
committee on  
snakes.

H. Ross Perot

# The Messages

## Some Suggestions (1)

- Understand the parameters of your own role
- Determine what a Council is expected/entitled to do
- Arrange for training on governance
- Ensure agenda is focused on Council's role; gradually reduce amount of "administrivia"
- Ensure that your personal ethics and workplace ethics are consistent
- Develop quality friends/accountability partners in the profession or in your circle of friends
- Resist any attempt by any member of Council to take on your roles

## Some Suggestions (2)

- Picture what you want the system to reflect: what corporate values
- Counteract any undermining of your staff; be a champion
- Be a change agent; get out of any ruts
- Attend at least a course per year; mentor learning
- Stay away from any personal friendships
- Do not get sucked in by one part of Council
- Act on audit recommendations quickly
- Study the literature; find out what other organizations are doing to improve

## In Summary

- Study and then practice management and leadership
- Bring clarity to your own role
- Understand the expectations of others; identify those whose leadership style you want to emulate
- Raise the bar in your department; seek out the ideas of others
- Practice high ethical standards
- Plan your departure before others do!
- Be accountable to the finish line



## Please Remember

- Books available [www.municipalworld.com](http://www.municipalworld.com)
- Videos on [www.georgecuff.com](http://www.georgecuff.com) website for your Council
- Mission to Romania: assistance to a children's camp: contact George if you are interested in how you can help
- Questions: contact George at [george@georgecuff.com](mailto:george@georgecuff.com)

## **Questions/Comments?**

**Additional Information...**

**[george@georgecuff.com](mailto:george@georgecuff.com)**

**780.960.3637**