

Alberta Clarion

Society of Local Government Managers

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Management Competencies

Managers, traditionally, have usually been selected and/or promoted on the basis of technical competence. The best Engineer has been promoted to head the Engineering Department, the best Accountant the Finance Department and so forth. The same can be said for the Chief Executive Officer in the private sector or the Chief Administrative Officer in the public sector. The individual selected has usually been someone who is technically competent in at least one of the organization's main functions and someone who is familiar with all aspects of the organization as a whole; someone who "knows the industry" or someone who has "come up through the ranks".

There has been little if any emphasis on general organizational or people management competencies. The knowledge and ability, for example, of how to create a productive workplace where all employees are intrinsically motivated to take ownership and to be accountable for results has not been a required competency. This has not been necessary as the traditional management style has been to control the way people work; to control what they do, how they do it and every other aspect of their work. This has been the primary function of the manager. The people side of the business has been considered the "soft" side that really doesn't impact the bottom line as long as everyone does what they are told.

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2009 CLGM AWARDS

The Society of Local Government Managers awarded the professional designation "Certified Local Government Manager" to eight members at the Society's Annual Awards Ceremony & Banquet.

Municipal Affairs' Assistant Deputy Minister Michael Merritt addressed the recipients of the professional awards on behalf of the Alberta Municipal Affairs; noting the important role that this society plays in the fabric of municipal government in Alberta.

Dr. Doug Knight, Director of Government Studies, and Don Johnson, President of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts & Counties offered congratulations to the recipients of CLGM awards.

The 2009 CLGM Recipients are:

- Aleta Neufeld
- Linda Reynolds
- Cathy Chan
- Dean Screpnek
- Garry Roth
- Kelly Kloss
- Murray Millward
- Colleen Thome

Tom Marriott, Brownlee LLP presented the 2009 SLGM Award of Excellence to Douglas Topinka, CLGM, Town of Athabasca's Town Manager. Mr. Topinka received a cash award of \$3,000.00 to be used for a program of study and a keepsake award a bronze "Mountain View Buffalo" drafted by C, Martens, Lost Wax Bronze Inc, Coaldale Alberta.

For more information on the "SLGM Award of Excellence" go to www.clgm.net

Certified Local Government Manager

Society of Local Government Managers of Alberta

Registered under the Professional and Occupational Associations Registration Act the Society is a legislative regulated body that issues the professional designation "Certified Local Government Manager" (CLGM). Need to know more? www.clgm.net

Management Competencies (continued from page 1)

This traditional view of management competence is still, unfortunately, prevalent in many organizations. There is a growing recognition, however, that the only real and sustainable competitive advantage left is in human productivity and creating an organizational climate that supports and enhances it. We need employees who take ownership of their work, who can problem solve, and who display initiative and creativity. Management's primary responsibility today, therefore, is to create and sustain such an organizational culture. This requires a far more democratic management style as well as different organizational structures and processes. As a result, managers today require more than just technical competence. This is equally true of the first line supervisor as it is of the Chief Executive Officer.

The main desired competencies for managers according to a generic management competency model outlined in "Competence at Work" by Lyle and Signe Spencer are:

- Impact and Influence
- Achievement Orientation
- Teamwork and Cooperation.
- Analytical Thinking
- Initiative
- Developing Others
- Self-confidence
- Directiveness / Assertiveness
- Information Seeking
- Team Leadership
- Conceptual Thinking

These are not purely technical competencies. These are competencies for managing people and the overall organization.

The Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators lists the following as top ranked training needs:

- Communication techniques
- Performance counselling and coaching
- Change management
- Conflict resolution/negotiation
- Strategic planning/thinking
- Business analysis
- Creative problem solving
- Team building
- Results-based action
- Staff motivation

Again, these are primarily competencies for managing people and the overall organization; they are not technical competencies.

The National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) in the United States says that, "Local government administrators must be

integrative managers and administrators par excellence. Within the local government organization, they must provide staff leadership, design and implement change, improve productivity, and set the tone for high standards of performance among staff."

My partners and I mentor students from some of these academic programs. We are constantly shocked at the lack of knowledge that these students have been provided regarding productive management practices and the best current literature regarding these practices. Many of the relevant courses are also, unfortunately, taught by academics with little actual work experience. It is interesting to note that most of the best courses available that teach up to date management competencies are available through extension programs and continuing studies programs. Most of these courses, however, are only available to the mature working student; they are not offered as part of the normal degree or diploma programs.

Some of the academic experts in the field of management studies are also expressing their concerns based on some extensive research. A recent research paper, "The End of Business Schools? Less Success Than Meets the Eye", by noted Stanford University Business Faculty professor, Jeffrey Pfeffer, author of "The Human Equation", and Christina Fong, states that the MBA degree does not really serve any useful purpose. They conclude that the MBA degree does not produce more income or greater success in the business world and that the research done by the academic institutions involved has had little if any impact on day-to-day business practices. They state that, "a large body of evidence suggests that the curriculum taught in business schools has only a small relationship to what is important for succeeding in business." They refer to one study in which many critics felt that, "quantitatively based analytical techniques received too much attention, while there was little attention given to developing leadership and interpersonal skills." Another study noted that, "contemporary business education focuses on the functions of business more than the practice of managing."

We are in short supply of capable leaders and managers. How can we hope to fill this shortage if we are not providing the education and training in to day's required competencies? Next we will examine how the lack of these competencies is why, unfortunately, many managers get terminated; it is not for any lack of technical knowledge and ability. *Productive Workplaces*

Visit our web site www.clgm.net

Kill Procrastination - Be Action Orientated

Kill procrastination, before it kills you. With an action-oriented, do-it-now attitude you get more out of your day. When you complete the unpleasant or hard jobs first and act on the big tasks, little bites at a time, you trim anxiety and stress while gaining self-respect and self-confidence. After you exert this type of discipline long enough, you will establish a routine and make a new habit. Behavioral studies suggest that if you do something every day for 21 days, it becomes a habit. Be action oriented for the next 30 days and you will master procrastination.

Avoid procrastination. Procrastination is the process of habitually putting things off. It is tempting to make excuses: "I don't have the time", "I think they said they were going to be in meetings all day, so I didn't call", "This could take forever; I'll do it when I have a spare day." Procrastination can cause you to miss deadlines, leading to lost opportunities and income, lower productivity and wasted time. It will lower your motivation, heighten your stress and generate frustration and anger. Is this the way you want to live?

Take control of your life now! Reverse the procrastination habit by being as clever about completing things as you have been about putting them off. Don't expect to find time to achieve your goals. The only way to get time is to make time. Start by committing to a do-it-now mentality.

A do-it-now attitude makes you a self-starter - a person who can recognize a need and take appropriate action without waiting to be told to. As a self-starter you will avoid the pressure, frustration and anxiety that come from having others tell you what and how to do things. You exercise your creativity in solving problems and doing work. As a result, you are more productive. You take maximum advantage of every opportunity, your sense of timing sharpening. You seldom miss something you want because of being late. Your services become more eagerly sought-after.

This type of do-it-now attitude will also help you overcome your resistance to dealing with unpleasant tasks. Don't delay your gratification by delaying the unpleasant tasks. By tackling them first, you get them over with and can get on with the more pleasant things in life.

Here are some action-oriented techniques to apply each day

Determine your most productive time of the day and dedicate it to "I" time. "I" time is for you to do whatever you have to do that will bring you closer to achieving your goals. It may be as simple as visualizing the accomplishment of your goals. The point is to dedicate the most productive time for the most important person in the world.

Once you have set your goals and have prioritized the actions take your annual goals and break them down into months, weeks and days. Do the same with each day's activities. Request a free soft copy of the Monthly Monitor chart* to monitor yourself on a daily basis for the next 30 days.

The first two letters of goal are go. Now it is time to get going. End each day by writing a prioritized to-do list for the next day.

At the end of each week and month do the same for the next week and month. Get organized. Use a daily planner. You will be better organized if you write down everything.

Clear your mind of clutter. Solve problems while they are small. Whatever you do, do it once, to the best of your ability, and move on. Question all tasks to make sure they are worthwhile. Do the worst or hardest jobs first.

Be decisive and remove time wasters from your activities. When evening comes and your next day's to-do list is written, celebrate. Action that gets rewarded gets repeated.

An action-oriented person is proactive. When you are proactive, you have initiative - you can see a need, figure out how to best satisfy it, determine the appropriate time to take the right action, and proceed. When you are proactive, you lead. When you lead, you take control of yourself and get what you want out of life.

"Discipline is the key. Discipline is respecting a commitment to yourself and doing what you have to do, even when you don't want to do it." ☐

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"Working with you to provide professional local government management"

A Few Pointers on Internet Manners

Have you ever received an email that's written as if the sender was, from another planet? -- Or, been copied on something of no interest to you - and with 2' pages of email addresses before you find the message? I'm sure you have, and I'm sure most of you find that as annoying as I do. Conversely, maybe you, as I have been guilty of doing something similar on occasion – without thinking because we didn't know any better, particularly when we were new", to the "net" and emails. _So, how can we avoid the most obvious faux pas?

Well, first of all there is simply, the "case of good manners" Sounds antiquated? Maybe" but "good old-fashioned manners on the net will do as much for your personal branding and professional stature as any Schmoozing.

The more information you gather the better

After all, we seem to spend an awful lot of time on the net these days. So, if you are concerned about how you appear to others - and trust me, appearance is important in business, then think ... or lurk before you leap, as it is called in netiquette speak.

Let's start with emails. First of all, take the time to address each person to whom you are sending an email as you would address someone to whom you are writing a letter, and end with a greeting of sorts, just as in a letter. Also, use proper sentences, good grammar and spell check before hitting the send button. Oh, I can just hear some of you saying... forget it, the point of email is that it's supposed to be fast and easy to use so why bother with spelling and punctuation! Why? Because if you don't bother, it tells people that you don't care enough about them to take the time to do it right. How do you think a client or prospect would view your poor communication style when it comes to doing business with you? Or a colleague, or your boss? Why take a chance of upsetting someone's sensibilities for the sake of saving a few seconds?

The same goes for joining a chat room/ discussion group. Lurk - or listen - first, just as you listen before you speak when joining a group of people talking at a function; you don't just join in with a comment before you have a very good sense of what's going on. You may even decide that the present discussion isn't for you after all, and you have saved yourself possible embarrassment by an untimely or disconnected comment. Good manners usually save the day, any time!

But there is more to it than simply good manners. In fact, there are some commonly agreed to netiquette "rules" when using the Internet. Since there are several good websites you can tap into to read more, I won't give you loads of details here, but will highlight a few of the main points.

Remember there is always a real person at the other end, so don't offend.

1. Properly identify the topic in the subject line (allows the recipient to decide whether message is of interest or not).
2. Use proper introductions and sign-off, sentence structures, grammar and spell-check.

3. Keep messages short and to the point; common abbreviations are acceptable in casual messages.
4. Remember that anything you write in an email can re-surface, particularly items posted to a newsgroup or in a chat session.
5. Remember that private e-mails ought to remain private. Particularly now with FOIP, PIPEDA and various provincial privacy legislation in place, you may want to obtain the author's permission to pass it on. At least, if in doubt, err on the side of caution.
6. Edit email threads before responding; remove parts that are not necessary for the ongoing communication (shows consideration for the recipients' time and bandwidth, and the online environment)
7. Don't use "respond all" if not asked for.
8. When sending a message to a large group, use the BCC feature, unless a CC has been requested or agreed to (keep in mind FOIP, PIPEDA and other privacy legislation).
9. Minimize/zip large files before attaching them (many have limited capacity on their server)
10. Don't spam, and don't forward jokes unless you know the recipient's sense of humour well.
11. Lurk before joining a chat room/ discussion group, e.g. get a feel for the group, its culture, language, type of issues discussed, etc. before you post a comment or a question.
12. Don't "flame" anyone (post or email a criticism or very strong opinion) unless used in a constructive way to correct bad manners or misinformation.
13. Count to 50 before you reply to a nasty comment or message. In other words, cool down.
14. Be cautious when using "smileys" (emoticons); know what each means before using one.

As you can see, there are rules that govern our use of the Internet. Although they are not laws (except for FOIP, PIPEDA, etc.), they are good, sound suggestions for how to behave and interact with others on the net. So, take some time to become familiar with the most common rules and learn where to go when you need to check for others. In sum, mind your manners and be professional. Become a good "netizen" (another net term you'll see when you read more); you'll set a good example and be respected for it! ☐

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