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# PM

PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

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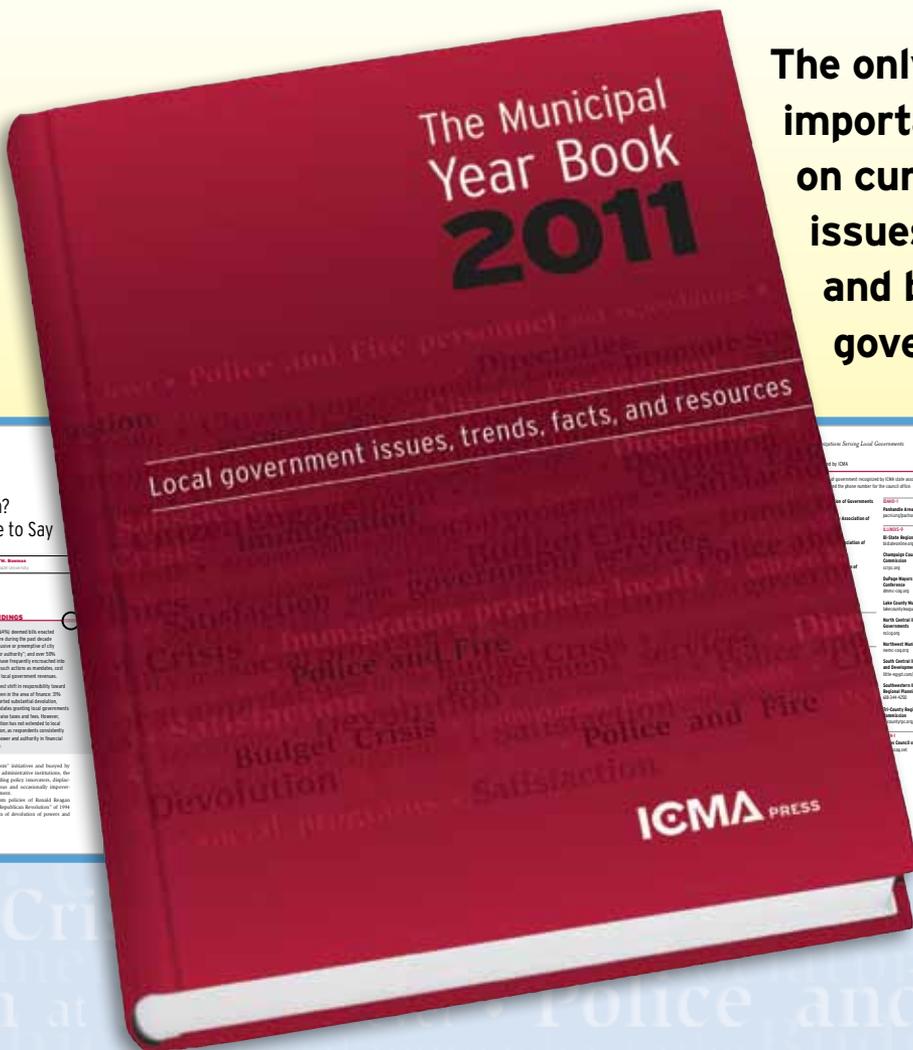
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# MANAGEMENT MATTERS IN THREE ACTS

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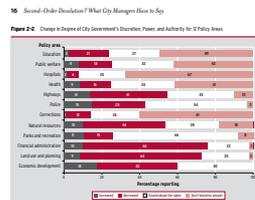


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City	Discretion	Power	Authority
Atlanta	27	27	27
Boston	27	27	27
Chicago	27	27	27
Denver	27	27	27
Dallas	27	27	27
Los Angeles	27	27	27
Minneapolis	27	27	27
New York	27	27	27
Philadelphia	27	27	27
Portland	27	27	27
San Francisco	27	27	27
Seattle	27	27	27
Wash. DC	27	27	27

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BY MARTHA PEREGO, ICMA-CM

# PRINCIPLES CHALLENGED

## Keeping your values in a tough job market

# PM

PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

*Public Management (PM)* aims to inspire innovation, inform decision making, connect leading-edge thinking to everyday challenges, and serve ICMA members and local governments worldwide in the pursuit of excellence in local governance.

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# ICMA

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**W**hen it comes to ethics, talk is cheap. You only know how meaningful your values are when they get tested by the most difficult of circumstances: when you have something to lose, tangible or intangible, by doing the right thing and when financial security is on the line. For many local government professionals, the current job market is testing both their fortitude and their values.

### Breaking into the Field

The job search was taking far longer than the new MPA graduate ever anticipated.

After months of sending out résumés and never getting past the first interview, she finally got an offer: assistant to the city manager in a large city. Although the professional experience would be awesome, the candidate was really concerned about her personal life. She had grown up in a small town. How would she cope in such a large place where she knew no one?

But the pressures of no income and loans to pay won out. She accepted the position and decided to just "suck it up"

about the personal life. After all, it's only a couple of years, right?

A week after she signed the offer letter, the town where she would really love to work and live invited her to an interview. Because she hadn't started work yet, she thought, why not go on the interview? What did she have to lose?

Just about everything.

Having accepted an offer, the candidate should stop interviewing and take the position accepted. Going on an interview after you have accepted an offer is like going on a date with someone new after you get engaged. It sends entirely the wrong message about your level of commitment.

If the first organization learns that you are still searching, don't be surprised if it withdraws its offer. After all, that organization's definition of hiring the best and brightest staff undoubtedly means they want people who demonstrate high ethical standards by honoring their commitments.

Searching for the perfect position in the public sector is difficult because transparency and merit-based hiring make for a long process. In today's

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\*ICMA Credentialed Manager (ICMA-CM)

shrinking market with tons of competition, it's even tougher.

Local governments, like any employer, invest resources in the recruiting process that end up being wasted by applicants who don't keep their commitments. Before interviewing for a position, take the time to check out the organization and the community to make sure that it would be a good fit professionally and personally.

If you have any doubts, don't take the position. But once you give your word and accept a bona fide offer, keep your commitment. Your reputation is one of life's intangibles that can be tarnished by a rash commitment or a selfish decision.

### Encore Adventures

After 20 years of county management in coastal regions, the manager and his spouse decided it was time for a new personal and professional adventure. The manager landed a position in a wealthy mountain resort community. The couple's relocation plan called for the manager to rent a house in the new community while the spouse remained behind to sell the family home as well as her business.

It was a good plan until the real estate market tanked. Now, after almost a year on the market and several reductions in the asking price, their house is still unsold. In fact, they can't even rent it. The spouse can't unload her business either.

Between the rent, mortgage, and cost of traveling to see each other, their personal savings are quickly diminishing. Filing for personal bankruptcy is an option they are discussing. Adding to the financial stress is the personal stress of being apart far longer than planned.

When the manager accepted the position, he made a verbal commitment to the city council to stay for five years. He meant it. He and his spouse were truly looking forward to enjoying the amenities of mountain living. On the professional side, he had enjoyed long tenures in his previous positions and knew that was a key to his success.

With no foreseeable end to his financial and personal woes, though, the manager is thinking about an exit strategy. A city manager position is open in another state. It's a desirable community, and it also enjoys a lower cost of living. By taking that position, he could reduce at least some portion of his expenses. His spouse's business opportunities potentially would be better, too.

But leaving comes at the added price of breaking his word. What's more important here? Keeping his ethical commitment or avoiding personal financial disaster?

The guideline on tenure in the ICMA Code of Ethics recommends a minimum of two years in order to render a professional service. One exception to the requirement is for unforeseeable, severe personal problems.

The economic crisis was certainly an unforeseeable situation for most of us. But it is also a universal situation, like the hurricane or other natural disaster that devastates a community and that affects everyone to varying degrees. In the wake of such an event, would it be okay for the manager to walk away from a professional obligation to the community to attend first to the damage or even loss of the manager's home?

It's an extraordinarily difficult choice to make. Yet many local government leaders in the midst of a disaster do put duty first. They remain on the job to make sure that the recovery plan for the community is properly executed. Only afterward do they turn their focus to the personal recovery effort.

In the end, the manager decided to honor his commitment and put duty first. On the personal side, he decided to explore every opportunity to avoid financial disaster, including talking with the city council about options for assistance. **PM**



**MARTHA PEREGO, ICMA-CM**  
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## IF YOU COULD TAKE BACK ONE MANAGEMENT DECISION YOU'VE MADE IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, WHAT WOULD IT BE?



**WILLIAM R. ROSS**

Town Manager  
Mansfield, Massachusetts  
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The combination of a horrible economic situation and a community and a council that were divided on some issues made me realize that my time as manager was limited.

The mayor approached me in May and indicated that the council had decided not to renew my contract when it expired the following January.

I told my partner about the conversation, and we prepared a separation proposal. I met again with the mayor, who reviewed the proposal and indicated the council would agree to it. I trusted the mayor to deliver on our agreement.

When I announced my retirement would take place later that year, I had only that verbal agreement. The city attorney objected to virtually every aspect of it.

The council seized on his objections and rejected all of the verbal agreement, leaving me with no recourse. I concluded that it was not worth fighting over the serious error I had made in trusting the mayor and council to live up to their part of the agreement. The lesson: get it in writing and have it approved in public.



**SHANA YELVERTON, ICMA-CM**

City Manager  
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Southlake has an unusually high profile for a city of its size and an extremely active citizenry. From time to time, this has led to a high number of open-record requests that are handled primarily by the city secretary, an employee who reports directly to the city council but coordinates her work closely with my office.

At one point, a large wave of complicated requests was received, and although I was aware of them, I incorrectly assumed they could be handled, business as usual. I did not look beyond the organizational chart and realize the potential impact of the situation on the overall operation of the city. I wish I had taken time to more fully understand the toll these requests were taking on the secretary's operation and the potential public criticism that she was facing.

Once the problem was identified, we used creative problem solving to fulfill our obligations under the law and relieve the workload pressure. We have since made changes to improve the process, and now I listen more carefully and act quickly.



**DE'CARLTON SEEWOOD,  
ICMA-CM**

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The management decision that I would take back involved communications to elected officials. When I was a city manager, a developer pledged funds to construct a new municipal building. The city had purchased property, hired an architectural firm, and started the process of designing a building when the developer wanted to meet.

The mayor, city attorney, community development director, and I attended the meeting. The developer announced that the company would not be able to honor its commitment to the project.

I decided to meet with the council in executive session to update them on this issue. That strategy backfired!

Councilmembers felt I wasn't keeping them in the loop. In retrospect, I should have called a special meeting or, at a minimum, sent out an informational e-mail to the council. What I learned: in this profession, communication and trust are extremely important, and as managers we need to do a better job of communicating and building relationships with elected officials.



**LAURA ALLEN, ICMA-CM**

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As I transitioned from the position of assistant to the position of city manager, I misread the council's sense of urgency in increasing Colma's economic development activities.

At the time, the town did not have a formal economic development program although the former manager had initiated an economic development project shortly before her retirement. When I became interim city manager, I did not make sure I understood what the council wanted in this area. As a result, the project floundered and, understandably, the council became frustrated.

Luckily, the council was willing to work with a first-time manager. I realized my mistake when I heard their disappointment, and I quickly adjusted priorities. The project got back on track, and the town's first economic development strategy was adopted in May 2010. **PM**

**EDITORS NOTE:** See complete June On Point response from Sharon Hammer online at [icma.org/pm/9305](http://icma.org/pm/9305).

# 1



## HEALTH RANKING OF U.S. COUNTIES

A report issued in March 2011 on the health of more than 3,000 counties demonstrates the relation of economic and demographic factors.

► [icma.org/countyhealth](http://icma.org/countyhealth)



## 2 IN KOSOVO

ICMA's global reach now extends to Kosovo through a program that seeks to help local officials meet the challenges of decentralization.

► [icma.org/kosovo](http://icma.org/kosovo)



## 3 GUSHING IN A GOOD WAY!

Cooper City, Florida, has achieved nearly twice its water conservation goal after just one year.

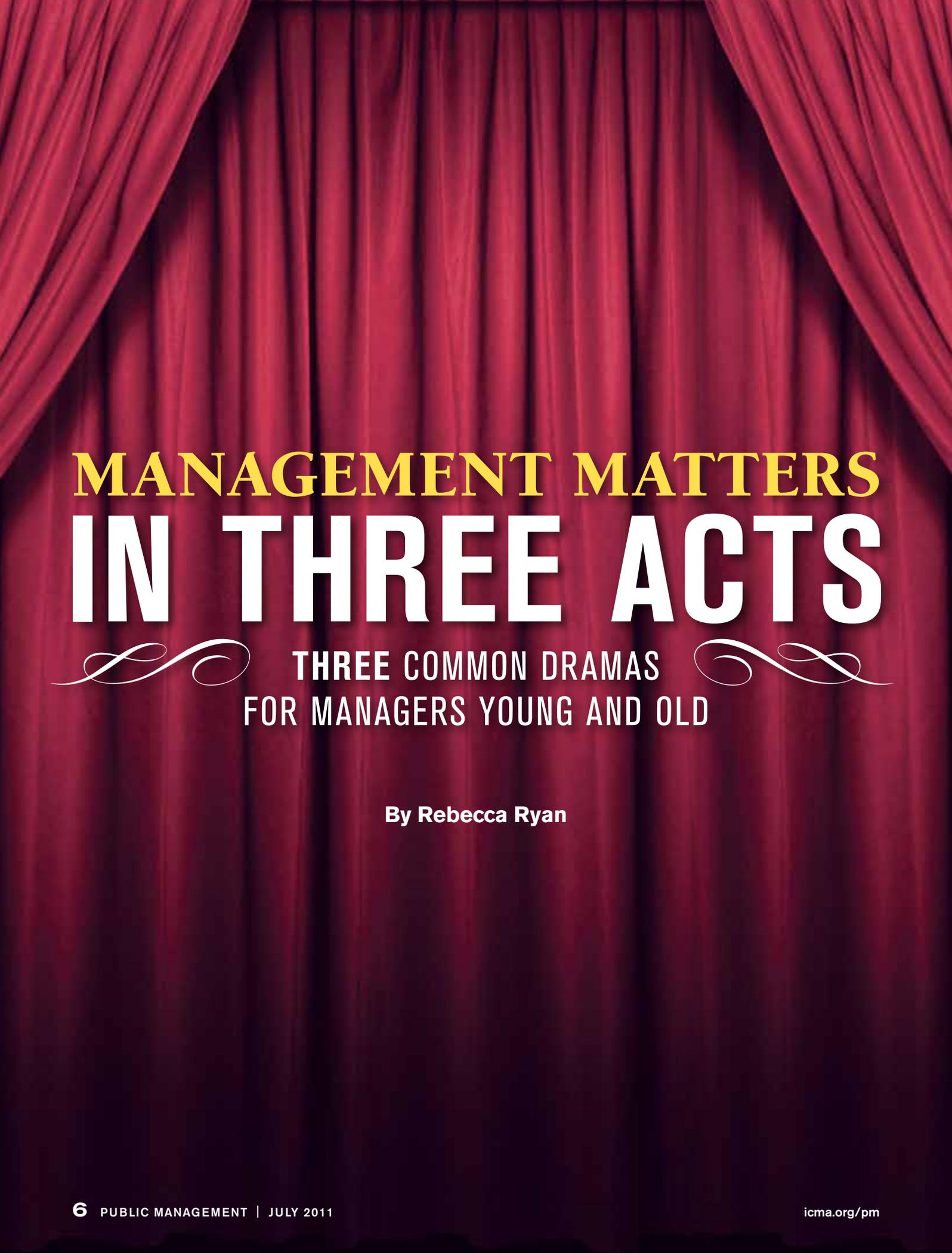
► [icma.org/coopercitywater](http://icma.org/coopercitywater)



## 4 WHAT TO PUT INTO AN ORIENTATION PACKET

A new orientation packet for elected officials in Holton, Kansas, can be helpful to others preparing similar information.

► [icma.org/Holton\\_orientation](http://icma.org/Holton_orientation)



**MANAGEMENT MATTERS**  
**IN THREE ACTS**

THREE COMMON DRAMAS  
FOR MANAGERS YOUNG AND OLD

By Rebecca Ryan



*I frequently get questions from managers, high-potential employees, and leaders on how to handle sticky management issues. Here are three situations that won't go away and keep showing up in my "Ask Rebecca" inbox, along with my advice on how to handle them.*

**ACT 1** *When Is It Time to Say "Good-bye?"*

Maybe you are a high-potential employee who feels that your talents are being underutilized. Maybe you daydream about going to work for a different city or county. Or maybe you're just plain bored in your current position, and wonder if the grass really might be greener someplace else.

If this describes you, here's my advice. Make sure that you really look at your reasons for being tempted to say "Buh-Bye."

**Some of the right reasons may be:**

- You have a big vision for how a local government could better serve its residents, and you just don't feel your current environment is ever going to "get it."
- You know you'll never be happy working for anyone else—you want the top management position.
- You're willing to do whatever it takes to be successful.
- People (colleagues and local government residents) like working with you, and you know you could fit in well anywhere.

**TAKEAWAYS**

- › Learn how to manage a boss who's micromanaging you.
- › Learn the two "R-words" that help managers of any age manage those older (or younger).
- › Identify if your job frustrations can be cured ... or if they're a sign that you need to find a different career.

**Some of the wrong reasons are:**

- You're mad at your council or one council-member in particular. *(Maybe you need a new council instead?)*
- You're feeling burned out. *(Maybe you need a vacation, not a new position.)*
- You believe you'll earn a lot more as a local government manager. *(This might not happen for a couple of years if you are serving in an assistant position.)*

The great news is, if you are leaving for the right reasons and you're really good at what you

# MANAGEMENT MATTERS IN THREE ACTS

do, you have every tool at your disposal to build a great person brand, develop referrals through your co-workers and social media, and position yourself in the market. The real gut check is whether you're willing to do it all for the next several years.

The closest parallel I can offer to being in a new management position is building a house. When you build a house, you have to make thousands of decisions that you literally have to live with. Same with a new job.

Only you know if you're leaving a current position for the right reasons or not. I strongly recommend a four-day weekend, a gigantic margarita, and a gut check (with friends, if that helps).

And if you decide you are ready to make the move, I'll be cheering for you!

## ACT 2 *How Do I Manage Up?*

Let's say you've just been hired as a manager. And you're south of 30 years old. And some of your team members are older than you. Maybe even twice as old as you. This is called managing up, and here's how to handle it.

First, realize that you're not alone. Managing people older than you is a topic that's always hot because it's so common in organizations.

The key? Ignore everyone's age and focus on two R words: respect and results.

Yes, you are younger than some of the folks on your team. You may also be more slender, left-handed, or a bigger fan of "American Idol." None of that matters. What matters is that you treat everyone—regardless of age or reality TV habits—with respect. If you start with respect for everyone, you're going to be a great manager.

Next, you want results. So long as people are performing and pulling their weight, you don't care if they're green or have three heads. You simply care

that they get their work done on time and accurately.

Respect and results. Focus there. (And then pass this advice along to "traditional managers" who oversee folks younger than they are. Same principles apply.)

## ACT 3 *What Do I Do When Micromanaged?*

One of the ways we develop individual talent is to assign people to difficult, stretch assignments. But sometimes the person who assigns the stretch project just can't let go. This sends mixed messages and leads to confusion or, worse, disengagement. Take it from this person:

**FIRST, REALIZE THAT YOU'RE NOT ALONE. MANAGING PEOPLE OLDER THAN YOU IS A TOPIC THAT'S ALWAYS HOT BECAUSE IT'S SO COMMON IN ORGANIZATIONS. THE KEY? IGNORE EVERYONE'S AGE AND FOCUS ON TWO R-WORDS: RESPECT AND RESULTS.**

*"Dear Rebecca: I'm a 27-year-old deputy manager and have high potential in my organization. I was recently asked to lead an important project. The city manager who asked me to lead it said, 'I trust you completely.' Yet now he's asking to check in every couple of weeks, and wants to be cc'd on every e-mail I send about the project. I admit, I'm feeling a little micromanaged! I can't tell if he really wants me to lead it, or if he wants to do it himself. By the way, the manager is 63. What do you suggest? Signed, Mike-romanaged in Melbourne."*

Here's my advice to Mike. For starters, this isn't a generational issue. It's a work style and control issue. Mike can't change his overbearing boss's behavior, but he can change his own. Mike has three options:

He can accept this manager's behavior and give him everything he wants: the e-mails, the additional check-in meetings, and the like.

Mike can ask the manager for clarification or ask him to change his behavior, or both. For example, Mike might say, "I know you could do this project yourself, but you asked me to lead it. I feel that I'm getting mixed messages. You said that you trust me, but you've asked to be cc'd on every e-mail and want to have additional meetings with me to talk about the project. If you really do want me to lead this project, I need a longer leash

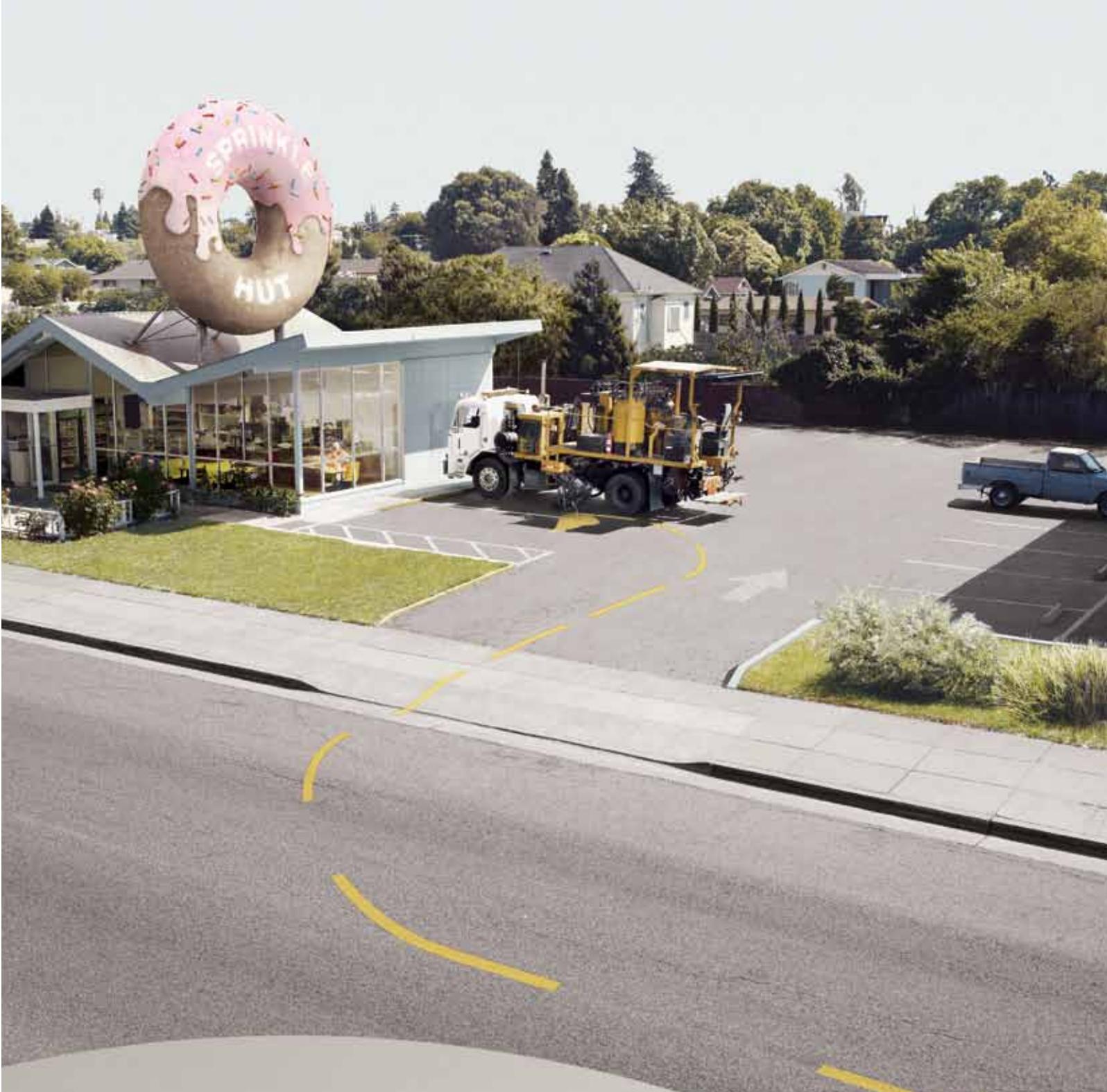
and more authority. So let's agree now about how often we'll check in, and how much leeway I'll have to run this project the way I want to run it."

The third option: Mike can excuse himself from the project.

One final word of advice to all of the Mikes out there: If you really want to be a future leader, I suggest Option 2. It will be a good experience for you and for your city manager. **RM**



**REBECCA RYAN** is founder, Next Generation Consulting, Madison, Wisconsin (rr@nextgenerationconsulting.com) and author of the book *Live First, Work Second*. She will be the keynote presenter at ICMA's 97th Annual Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on Tuesday, September 20. A version of this article originally appeared in *Accounting Today* magazine.



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By Evelina Moulder and Ron Carlee

# CONVENTIONAL & **UNCONVENTIONAL** APPROACHES TO SUSTAINABILITY



## TAKEAWAYS

- › Energy audits lead local government to identify cost savings from increased energy efficiency.
- › Mainstream sustainability efforts focus on energy reduction in buildings; fuel reduction efforts lag.
- › Cutting-edge efforts range from innovative water conservation to alternative energy production.
- › Engaging the community in energy reduction initiatives broadens the reach and benefit of energy-reduction efforts.

## WHAT ARE THE LEADING PRACTICES?

**S**ome elements of local sustainability programs may provoke controversy and policy debate, but ICMA's 2010 sustainability survey revealed that conventional energy reduction plans lead the way. By far, the most popular practice is conducting energy audits of government buildings (63 percent).

A number of communities, however, are on the leading edge and are extending their efforts beyond energy. This article provides a glimpse into conventional and unconventional approaches to sustainability.

### The Conventional: Cut Energy Costs

Energy audits provide baseline information to help local governments understand what they are spending on energy and their potential to lower costs through a variety of investments. Typical audits identify two general areas for cost-effective energy investments: lighting and heating/air conditioning. Accordingly, the three leading practices for energy reduction are:

- Energy-efficient lighting (56 percent).
- Energy management systems (46 percent).
- Energy-efficient HVAC systems (39 percent).

These are mainstream actions worthy of consideration by all local governments. On the cutting edge are solar installations (13 percent) and geothermal installations (7 percent). One of the cutting-edge efforts is in Genoa Charter Township, Michigan (population 19,641), which has installed a wind-solar hybrid system (see the mini case study later in this article).

Of additional note are efforts to reduce fuel costs, although it is interesting that fewer than half of responding local governments report purchasing fuel-efficient vehicles (44 percent). Only 24 percent of respondents have purchased hybrid vehicles, and less than 9 percent purchased vehicles operating on compressed natural gas (CNG). Installation of charging stations for all-electric vehicles is on the local government cutting edge—an action taken by only 5 percent of respondents.

**Figure 1.** Local Government Sustainability Practices.

Actions to reduce energy consumption	Local government has taken action (% reporting)
Conducted energy audits of government buildings	62.9
Upgraded or retrofitted facilities to higher energy efficiency office lighting	55.9
Installed energy management systems to control heating and cooling in buildings	46.4
Increased the purchase of fuel-efficient vehicles	44.4
Upgraded or retrofitted facilities to higher energy efficiency heating and air conditioning systems	39.3
Upgraded or retrofitted traffic signals to improve efficiency	37.1
Upgraded or retrofitted streetlights and other exterior lighting to improve efficiency	30.5
Purchased hybrid electric vehicles	23.7
Upgraded or retrofitted facilities to higher energy efficiency pumps in the water or sewer systems	23.4
Installed solar panels on a government facility	13.1
Purchased vehicles that operate on CNG	8.5
Installed a geothermal system	6.6
Installed charging stations for electric vehicles	5.3

### Beyond the Mainstream

Going beyond the tried and true, some communities are taking their sustainability effort into more innovative and experimental areas (Figure 1).

**Suffolk County, New York**, has a pesticide phaseout program and a fertilizer nitrogen reduction initiative.

The Food Policy Council in **Cabarrus County, North Carolina**, was established to help “. . . identify and strengthen the connections between economic development, food, health, natural resource protection and the agricultural community.”<sup>1</sup>

The boroughs of **Oradell and Westwood, New Jersey**, are testing recycled vegetable oil for use in diesel engines.

In **Kendallville, Indiana**, produce from a community garden is donated to a local food bank.

As suggested above, communities with a focus on sustainability pursue their efforts beyond the confines of the city or county administration building; they extend projects into the commu-

nity. A good example of a community effort comes from **Savannah, Georgia**, which is giving away low-flush toilets.

One can only imagine the jokes from naysayers; however, Savannah is showing water savings of approximately 30 percent. Other actions that local governments are taking to conserve water include:

- Acting to conserve the quantity of water from aquifers (33.5 percent).
- Using water price structure to encourage conservation (33.0 percent).
- Setting limits on impervious surfaces on private property (30.3 percent).
- Using gray-water or reclaimed-water systems (16.3 percent).

The ICMA sustainability survey affirms that there is no one approach that meets

We invite you to go to the sustainability group in the Knowledge Network at <http://tinyurl.com/3mjewq8> and share your story.

the needs of every local government. Not all local governments are in areas that have enough direct sunlight to make solar panels a worthwhile investment; not all have open expanses of windy areas that are good sites for turbines.

Water conservation is a more immediate concern in some parts of the country than in others. Nonetheless, local governments across the United States are finding and implementing sustainability initiatives that make sense for them.

What is the sustainability story in your community? ICMA is particularly interested in sustainability efforts that have reduced the cost of government, be they mainstream or cutting edge.

### Case Study 1: Low-Flush Toilet Giveaway and More—in Savannah, Georgia

In addition to actions to conserve the amount of water removed from aquifers, including the use of gray-water and reclaimed-water systems, every year Savannah offers vouchers to citizens to obtain a free low-flush toilet that saves almost 30 percent of water when it replaces the old flush toilets that used between three and seven gallons for each flush.

Savannah’s Water Resources Bureau offers the vouchers for a free, low-flow toilet to qualified applicants. The toilet voucher program is designed to replace old, water-wasting toilets with City of Savannah-approved models. Savannah’s program also requires residents to turn in their old toilets to the city, where they are reused—not discarded in a landfill—to stabilize riverbanks or crushed to resurface utility roads. The vouchers are for a point-of-purchase discount only; rebates will not be issued. Last year, more than 300 residents took advantage of the offer of a free toilet.

“The free low-flow toilets are a tremendous cost savings for our residents, and contribute to the city’s greater goal of conserving the precious resource that is safe, clean, reliable drinking water,” Savannah Water Resources Bureau Chief

## COMMUNITIES WITH A FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY PURSUE THEIR EFFORTS BEYOND THE CONFINES OF THE CITY OR COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING; THEY EXTEND PROJECTS INTO THE COMMUNITY.



**Figure 2.** Hybrid wind-solar installation in Genoa Charter Township, Michigan.

Bob Scanlon said. “It’s a win-win for the community.”

Toilets installed before 1993 use three to seven gallons per flush. Building codes required homes built after 1993 to install toilets that used only 1.6 gallons per flush. With the new Water Conservation Act of March 2010, all new homes must install toilets that use only 1.28 gallons per flush. Replacing the oldest, water-wasting toilets could add up to a household water savings of nearly 30 percent!

Savannah also offers free indoor and outdoor water conservation kits. The indoor kit provides faucet aerators, a low-flow showerhead, and dye tablets to test for leaking toilets. The outdoor kits

also provide faucet aerators, a stop-flow hose nozzle, and attachments for screen cleaning. The Water Resources Bureau provides tips on using gray water, keeping stormwater clean, teaching children about water conservation, and additional topics such as organizing truckload sales for low-cost rain barrels and composters.<sup>2</sup>

### Case Study 2: Hybrid Wind-Solar Installations—in Genoa Charter Township, Michigan

Five hybrid wind-solar turbines sit on a hill behind the town hall in Genoa Charter Township, which is located on a major interstate highway. The turbines have attracted many visitors who see them from the highway and are fascinated. As Township Manager Michael Archinal explains it, the project began because a resident was interested in putting a wind turbine on his property, but the existing ordinance prohibited it. The resident encouraged the township to investigate new technologies.

The traditional wind turbine is horizontal, with the large propeller pulling in wind horizontally. The vertical wind turbines spin on a vertical axis (Figure 2). There are no bird collisions, and they are extremely quiet, which means they also are better for residential use.

When the township decided to take advantage of the hybrid, which generates power from both the sun and the wind, they applied for and received an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Multi-Purpose Block Grant of almost \$95,000 from the Michigan Department of Energy and Economic Growth Bureau of Energy Systems. The source of the funding was the American Recov-

ery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

The township invested approximately \$10,000 and staff time. Fortunately for Michigan and the township, the firm that manufactures the hybrids they selected is Windspire,<sup>™</sup> which is located in Michigan.

When the wind speed is not generating energy, the solar panels often do so. Although in Genoa Charter Township wind was predicted to generate more energy than the solar panels, that has not been the case. Solar has produced almost twice as much energy as the wind.

The project has been immensely satisfactory, and, although it has not yet happened, if there is a positive net amount of power generated, it will go to the grid and reduce the township’s electric bill. The project has been effective in reducing electrical bills, reducing carbon emissions, and increasing awareness about alternative energy.

To see a YouTube clip of Genoa Township’s “Flip the Switch” ceremony, visit [www.youtube.com/watch?v=0mMAKVokf6Y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0mMAKVokf6Y). **PM**

1 “Food Council Seeks Members Interested in Economic Development,” Cabarrus County, North Carolina, April 20, 2010, [www.cabarruscounty.us/News/2010/April/Apr20\\_FoodCouncil.html](http://www.cabarruscounty.us/News/2010/April/Apr20_FoodCouncil.html) [accessed 3/30/2011].

2 “Environment and Conservation Index,” Water Resources Bureau, Savannah, Georgia, [www.savannahga.gov/cityweb/wsweb.nsf/7f37e875e28f82bf852573b000734946/53ec3d4fd19ca908852574490064df21?OpenDocument](http://www.savannahga.gov/cityweb/wsweb.nsf/7f37e875e28f82bf852573b000734946/53ec3d4fd19ca908852574490064df21?OpenDocument) [accessed 3/30/2011].



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– MARK TWAIN

By Daven Morrison and David Limardi, ICMA-CM

# OWNING THE HIGHER GROUND

How to maintain civil discourse  
when others don't

## TAKEAWAYS

From this article, readers will gain:

- › A perspective on the topic of civil discourse for public managers.
- › An understanding of the differences between political and managerial language, focus, and goals.
- › Insight into the motivations and techniques used by those intent on creating uncivil discourse.
- › How to avoid mistakes by using tactics that limit the impact of those who wish to inject chaos into an orderly environment.

For most public managers, working in an open forum is part of the job. The idea of a work life in a fishbowl is nothing new. Recently this situation has been compounded by the Internet,<sup>1</sup> which some have called today's "wild west." In our experience, every manager is familiar with the regular distraction and destructive aspects of the web. The web's mechanisms to produce and distribute seem endless.

Beyond the number of attacks, the often anonymous personal attacks can be particularly upsetting for the manager. The distress grows out of the seemingly limitless muckraking of individuals who work with selected facts and under a cloak of anonymity. Like the mechanisms, the individuals who produce the content seem limitless, too.

*All citizens are entitled to their own opinions, but they are not entitled to their own facts.* For many reasons, but mostly to counter the personal, offensive, and unfair attacks, the call for civil discourse is being made at a steadily increasing pace. The unrelenting onslaught is draining, especially for those managers working in organizations that do not have the resources to counter the accusations and distribute fact-based communications to the community.

For those who possess those resources, the work of responding can seem exhausting, especially when there is a crisis or a significant conflict in the community. Time is required to read the blogs, Twitter accounts, and e-mails. Questions on the part of the council or board as well as the leadership team must be answered. Aver-

age citizens expect access and responses to inquiries as well.

Communications in response to questions are expected to be instantaneous, and the longer the delay the greater the suspicion. In this way conspiracy theories and assumptions of corruption blow up fast.

But, what is perhaps most bothersome of all the aspects of managing the information is the lack of general civility in the messages. Cutting comments that are shared in passing with the manager as well as with the staff can be disturbing:

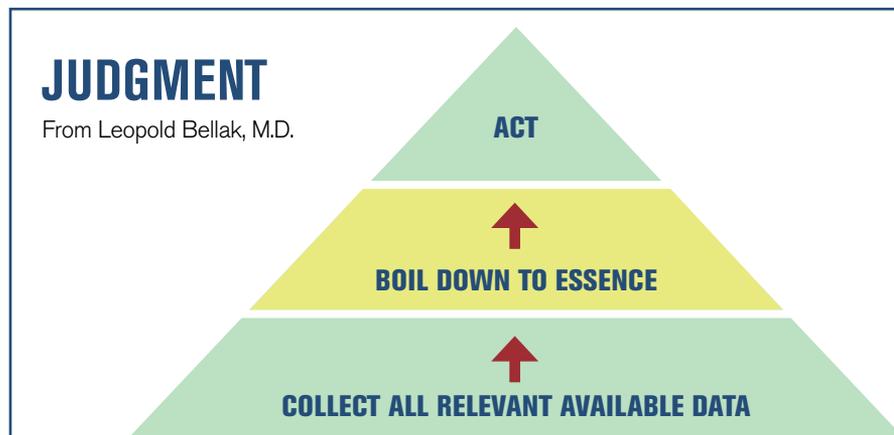
- "You would never make it in the real world."
- "You work for me; my taxes pay your salary."
- "All public workers are corrupt."
- "Public workers are unprofessional, and they aren't productive."

These insensitive and personal remarks are what wear down the manager over time. Combined with an absence of appreciation for the work that needs to be done, two or three hostile community members active on the Internet or at council meetings can cause a severe emotional reaction in a manager. We believe this atmosphere has caused assistant managers to reconsider becoming managers and has blocked strong private sector leaders from considering entering into the profession.

### Know the Bully's Tactics

Fueled and exacerbated by a long period of financial uncertainty as well as a national tone of extremely polarized politics, this trend will probably not change anytime soon. It is astute on the part of managers to consider what to do; it is also astute to decide what to avoid. Today, the equivalent of punching someone in the nose is sending an e-mail that somehow is supposed to

Figure 1. Components of Judgment.



**Figure 2.** Comparison of Political Language and Managerial Language.

	POLITICAL	MANAGERIAL
<b>FOCUS</b>	<p><b>How the message is perceived:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does this make me look?</li> <li>• What is my exposure?</li> <li>• How do I keep the people who support me enthused?</li> <li>• How do I persuade those who can be persuaded to my way?</li> </ul>	<p><b>How the message can get things done:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who is going to be responsible?</li> <li>• By when ought this be completed?</li> <li>• How much is this worth compared with another initiative?</li> <li>• How do the leaders in this organization make the best decisions?</li> <li>• How will we know if we did it well?</li> </ul>
<b>EXAMPLES</b>	<p><b>This is what the citizens expect us to do!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does this maximize value for the taxpayers?</li> </ul>	<p>The mechanics in facilities believe <b>it will take three months to convert</b> the engines to the new required specifications.</p>
<b>UNDERLYING MOTIVATION</b>	<b>Reelection</b>	<b>Completing tasks</b>

“teach them who’s boss and who has the facts right!” Thus, the first thing to remember in this atmosphere is not to act purely on your emotions.

Understanding what is happening is more important than taking a specific action quickly. Solid judgment is a simple and critical requirement. When taking action, the manager should collect all the relevant information, boil it down to the essentials, and then act according to what makes the most sense (see Figure 1).

Note that when done correctly, action is last:<sup>2</sup> It’s easy in the heat of the moment to take action first, before collecting data. More accurately: it is easy to *feel the need to take action*. What happens when people turn rude and insensitive and the discourse becomes uncivil?

The worlds of politics and management have competing goals, as shown in Figure 2. This impairs communication as each world has its own different type of language.

### Enter the Bully

When the discourse becomes uncivil, bullies who previously lurked can now make an appearance. The bully is not invested in the best resolution of an issue. A bully merely wants to be dominant, and that can include targeting the manager and trying to get the manager to look weak and foolish. The goal of the bully is to cause the person who is attacked to make a heated, impulsive response.

As children, we learned an emotional reaction is a trap, and the bully learned this also. The bully refines skills, too, and knows that without a response stakes are raised: the bully expands the conflict.

The underlying motivations of bullies come from their emotions. In our experience, the most challenging emotion for leaders to manage is embarrassment. Although unpleasant to experience, embarrassment and shame are emotions that allow us to adapt to

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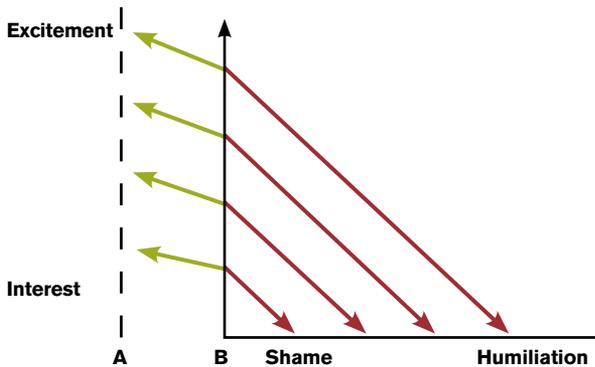
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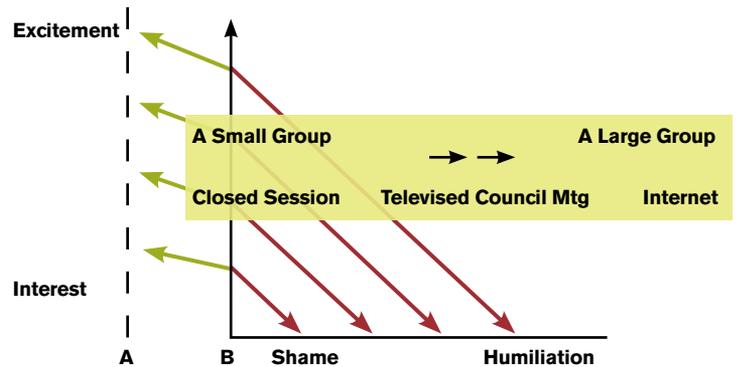


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**Figure 3.** How Shame Works. The more excitement someone shows, the greater the opportunity for shame and humiliation to be experienced.



**Figure 4.** How Exposure Magnifies Shame. A larger exposure of shame also increases the experience of shame—embarrassed privately vs. embarrassed in public.



our world. When we are children, shame allows us to stay out of harm's way, and as adults, shame keeps us from tearing apart our social fabric.

The absence of a shame competency causes much of the lack of civility. Examples include the hate radio on the AM dial, the rudeness of paparazzi, and the insensitivity of those who blog unfairly and destructively about our communities.

Biologically, we are all wired for shame, an emotion experienced as an interruption to positive emotions. We can feel a little bit of shame as a twinge of self-consciousness or an immersion in shame as profound humiliation.

We are most embarrassed when we are invested in sharing something, and the other person is not interested. Figure 3 shows how shame works from a low experience of self-consciousness to a high level of humiliation when person B expressed interest in person A and that interest is not returned.

### How does a bully relate to shame?

The bully appears to be insensitive to embarrassment. Inside, however, bullies are aware of and motivated by an acute fear of being shamed, and they have a strong motivation to avoid it. The emotions that motivate the bully include a mix of anger, disgust,

**COMBINED WITH AN ABSENCE OF APPRECIATION FOR THE WORK THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE, TWO OR THREE HOSTILE COMMUNITY MEMBERS ACTIVE ON THE INTERNET OR AT COUNCIL MEETINGS CAN CAUSE A SEVERE EMOTIONAL REACTION IN A MANAGER.**

contempt, and, at times when discovering a weakness, excitement.

Shaming others highlights weakness in others. Thus, bullies use shame for dominance in order to keep control. Threats to their power are met with a fierce defense. When the discussion becomes rational and moves in a direction where the bully will lose credibility or be perceived as weak, that is when bullies are most vicious.

In a larger arena, the bully will insert more chaos. Bullies are invested in avoiding being the loser in a battle; thus, the bully will inject chaos into an orderly process, particularly one that is heading to a loss. The recent financial crisis has led the politics of the right and the left to become particularly ruthless as the dollars have dried up, leading each to extreme efforts to bully the other side.

Both the political and the managerial languages have value. Neither is wrong in fact. The political side does have

value. Politics assists the community in deciding how to take action. But during the working through of budgets and priorities, the languages become mixed. The manager faces a difficult challenge when an elected official or a citizen decides to use politics to bully.

The purely politically motivated person is not speaking to those in immediate earshot but, instead, is playing a larger game. The politically motivated are invested in the process only to send a message to a larger audience. This is a second magnifier of shame: exposure. A manager needs to remember the capacity for broader shaming with a larger group (Figure 4).

### Understanding Informs Your Actions

Recognize that although bullies' comments are personal, they are a tactic. The intention of the bully is to provoke and cause managers to make mistakes. The attacks are the bully's worldview, not

the manager's. Their comments are intended to provoke reflexive action, but they must be done thoughtfully. For a manager, it does not make sense to counterattack or withdraw. The manager needs to acknowledge the context and move the conversation out of earshot if possible. The manager needs to direct the conversation to facts and to the purpose of the meeting.

Here are several essentials to understand about uncivil discourse:

1. There are two types of language for the public manager: political and managerial.
2. Shame reinforces dominance.
3. Bullies try to shame those who threaten their agendas.
4. Bullies fear shame and take extreme measures to avoid it.
5. Increased exposure equals amplified shame.

As a psychiatrist and as a city manager, we are both professionals, and as such we profess to have a higher set of ethics. It would be unnerving and even terrifying to some if either of us acted in the flippant, arrogant manner of those who fan the flames and use uncivil discourse as a means to their ends. Given this understanding, what remains for us as acceptable actions or guiding principles?

- Minimize the access of bullies to audiences.
- Don't respond in kind.
- Avoid political language.
- Drive the managerial language.
- Build your shame-tolerating muscles.

### How Are Your Insult-Deflecting Muscles?

Practice tolerating shame. It is merely a feeling. As a public manager, you have learned in your life to tolerate feelings of hunger, thirst, and fatigue.

[icma.org/pm](http://icma.org/pm)

Tolerating shame is a skill of the same order.

Managing insults and managing bullies are not skills to be taken lightly, and such management does not have to be done alone: use your team to game plan. When the team collectively observes and then establishes a strategy and tactics, those in the public arena can work against the bully.

### A Final Recommendation: Relish the Challenge

Currently, an opportunity exists to excel when times are difficult. Although today's challenges can bring out disruptive behavior, the environment may allow some of the toughest problems in your organization to be addressed. Times like these can allow us to innovate and recalibrate. The sleepy, barnacle-encrusted problems are now exposed and waiting to be worked on and changed.

To embrace this challenge may seem ridiculous. It may even seem impossible at times. But consider today what once seemed challenging in your past and that you have finally mastered. Passion for the management profession and pride in our work can be exhilarating for our peers and to those who will follow us. They can serve as antidotes to the attacks.

Own the high ground. **PM**

1 Daven Morrison, "Your Life in a Fishbowl . . . and on the Internet," *PM* 92, no. 4 (May 2010).

2 David Limardi, Carol Morrison, and Daven Morrison, "Know Thyself: Judgment Capability Factors," *PM* 90, no. 8 (September 2008).



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**DAVID LIMARDI**, ICMA-CM, is city manager, Highland Park, Illinois ([dlimardi@cityhpil.com](mailto:dlimardi@cityhpil.com)). All figures used in this article are the copyright of Morrison Associates, Ltd.

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By Rafal Hejne

# AMERICAN DREAM

VS.

# AMERICAN RESPONSIBILITIES

→ *Lessons learned from a global 5months5cities project.*



**BY 2050, 75 PERCENT OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION** will be living in cities that will be required to accommodate an additional 3.1 billion people. It is hard to believe, but in 1950 there were only two megacities—New York and Tokyo—with more than 10 million residents. Sixty years later, in 2010, we had at least 26 megacities.

By 2015, the number of megacities is expected to reach 33, with 27 in developing countries. Loving cities myself and devoting my career to city management, I decided to learn more about this fast-paced change.

With the 5months5cities project, I visited five of the world's largest cities: New Delhi, India; Mexico City, Mexico; Shanghai, China; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; and Johannesburg, South Africa. I spent a month in each place to develop an understanding of the place and learn about its major challenges.

These days, we observe a renewed optimism that cities can be exciting and creative places. Not denying that optimism, I observed that a new urban era requires a new model to manage our cities. Doing business as usual is not an option anymore.

In the United States, we should know the best and understand the importance of smart city growth. A lot of American local governments, however, still deal with the fatal consequences of urban sprawl and uncultivated growth.

## Enter Sustainability

The major focus of my city exploration was to see how sustainability is being practiced across the selected cities. Unfortunately, I was shocked at the extent to which cities are currently polluted. Despite the green populism present in each city, I observed that little is actually being done to put sustainable management practices in place.

We need to remind ourselves that in the United States many cities have not changed the way they operate and grow. People still do not want to change their lifestyles. Yet residents in the cities of the developing world look up to Americans and the American dream. They want to follow it.

Are cities in the United States sending them a clear signal that urban sprawl and overconsumption have failed and that it is not sustainable to continue like that?

When I arrived to New Delhi, the air was dark and cloudy because of smog. The health impacts of the city's air pollution are devastating. In 2009, approximately 10,900 premature deaths were due to the particulate matter pollution. Not surprisingly, Delhi was declared the "asthma capital" of India in 2009.

Growing traditional motorization and the absence of an efficient public transport system are examples of major factors that have contributed to Delhi's man-made disaster. It is estimated that 1,000 new cars enter Delhi's roads every day. Is this sustainable? The answer is short: no, it is not.

Air pollution, although present in all five cities visited, was not the only man-made environmental disaster I came across. Mexico City, with a

## THESE DAYS, WE OBSERVE A RENEWED OPTIMISM THAT CITIES CAN BE EXCITING AND CREATIVE PLACES. NOT DENYING THAT OPTIMISM, I OBSERVED THAT A NEW URBAN ERA REQUIRES A NEW MODEL TO MANAGE OUR CITIES.

population of more than 20 million residents, faces a severe water crisis. Less than 10 percent of Mexico City's water is recycled. The city transports water through pipes from a community more than 60 miles away.

Each year the city itself sinks by roughly 4 inches into the old lake bed on which it is built, as water is continuously pumped from wells. Some historical buildings in Zócalo, Mexico City's old town, have dropped more than 23 feet since 1891. Why? Again, the lack of respect for ambient environment led to the collapse of the local ecosystem.

### Current Models Fail

The environmental disasters in the megacities have been exacerbated by the division of these urban areas into bipolar communities, namely with extremely poor neighborhoods on one end and an unbelievably wealthy minority on the other. Unfortunately, the enormous economic growth that is currently happening in the five cities I visited benefits only a few.

In Johannesburg, the economic heart of South Africa, residential areas range from luxurious, wooded suburbs to shantytowns and squatter settlements. In Rio de Janeiro, sometimes called the wonder city, approximately 1.3 million people live in 750 *favelas* (the Brazilian equivalent of a slum). Worldwide, 1 billion people live in slums; a figure predicted to double to 2 billion by 2030. Unfortunately, social mobility in large cities is marginal.

Our current economic development

models, mostly created in our cities, fail to tackle the problem of social and environmental fairness. We cannot continue functioning like this. This is a dead-end road. Cities can be exciting places, but they must work hard to achieve fairness. We need to find a new way to manage city economies.

Changing the current models will not be easy, nor will it happen overnight. In the United States during the 1980s, using the principles of the new urbanism, we started the necessary change. Yet there still are communities that embrace car-oriented growth and suburban cultures.

Today we need to start taking into account the impacts of our actions in the short term and in the long term. In the United States we have even greater responsibility to do so since many developing nations look up to us and copy our solutions. Any development should find the best way to contribute to the environment, not destroy it.

### Environmental and Social Fairness

Such a simple principle, yet so hard to follow. Fortunately, we can learn from several smart projects in cities I visited. In Mexico City I came across "a story of Mexico City," an initiative that develops a comprehensive understanding of the place, including its geology, hydrology, culture, and sociology.

Such a deep learning process is necessary if we are to identify major leverage points that will allow us to heal a city. Development carried out this way will contribute to a place instead of destroying it or being no

better than neutral.

Shanghai's economy signaled the possibility—not just the desirability—of development without further harm to the environment if the right set of policy measures and appropriate technologies are applied.

From 2000 to 2008, Shanghai's environmental investment accounted for more than 3 percent of the city's annual gross domestic product. This is exactly what Global Urban Development (GUD), an organization located in Washington, D.C., advocates. GUD predicts that green economic development will be profitable and fair to everybody if done soon and done right.

GUD developed a sustainable economic development framework to assist places with growing smart. This goes beyond advocating solely for environmental protection. Especially in the developed world, we should be well past this stage.

GUD promotes a new approach to managing urban growth. It is based on environmental and social fairness. This sounds like a good start to me. I want our local communities as well as communities in the developing world to be flourishing 50 years from now. **PM**



**RAFAL HEJNE** was ICMA's 2007 Management Fellow based in San Jose, California. He created and self-financed this pro bono project to learn about city challenges around the globe. You can support Rafal's dream at [www.5months5cities.com](http://www.5months5cities.com). He currently works as part of a management program in the United Kingdom, working for the London Borough of Camden. He is also a fellow at Global Urban Development, Washington, D.C.

BY MERRETT STIERHEIM

# MY PRINCIPLES OF MANAGEMENT

As an Air Force veteran on the GI Bill 54 years ago, I took the most boring college class ever, with a professor who had the ability to put me into a deep sleep. He taught a freshman 101 business class, Principles of Management, and he taught it strictly by the book.

He droned on and on in an uninspiring monotone until the class bell blessedly rang. Being highly motivated, I knew that I had to memorize those principles to pass the course, and I did just that.

Through the decades that followed, as I managed increasingly larger, more complex jurisdictions, the importance of those long-ago-memorized management principles, which had become second nature to me, came increasingly into focus. It was a gradual awakening for me, like a tree growing slowly through the years.

Subtly, yet increasingly, I began to realize that the violation of one or more of those principles was often the root cause of a particular problem, and I was often puzzled why more senior administrators didn't use them, perhaps instinctively, to clear the haze from a problem.

As I became more experienced, I developed my own management style and added to the principles so that they reflected my management philosophies. I sometimes also shared the importance of one or more with professional colleagues although I felt a sense of possessiveness about them, not that they were in any sense original with me.

Whenever I had the opportunity to address or lecture younger public administrators, I shared the management principles because they reflected my value system and were some of the reasons, I felt, for my success. It seems so simple, like 101, but from my perspective it is very real.

The text from my freshman business class, which I lost along the way, was located in a New York City used bookstore by a former library director, and it cost me \$8. Needless to say, it is a prized book in my personal library. Not in any particular order and by no means inclusive or a repeat of the text, which offers more than 50 principles, here are some of the more important, modified principles:

- Establish clear lines of authority and communication responsibility (who is in charge and who is the responsible communicator).
- There can be no coordination without subordination or, said another way, delegated responsibility requires commensurate authority.
- Staff work should be complete; that is, a competent leader's challenge to staff is: don't pass problems to my desk without recommended solutions.
- Assigned responsibilities must include commensurate accountability.
- Empowerment is a management principle, the importance of which cannot be overstated.
- Both structured and unstructured feedback are important.
- Decisions should be made at the lowest competent level.
- Maintain important role distinctions between line and staff functions.
- It is organizational culture that creates a climate of participation and trust.
- Communicate effectively at all levels.
- Understand the importance of timing.
- Lead by example.
- Possess the willingness to take risks, and know when to do so.
- Conduct yourself ethically, honestly.
- Don't get too chummy or familiar

with either your subordinates or your elected officials.

- There are limits to how many direct reports an administrator can effectively manage
- Know when to draw the line.

No matter what you call it, every local government manager can and should have his or her personal list of principles, axioms, postulations, or management philosophies because in the exercise of an individual's management responsibilities the person will surely help shape the culture of the organization. It is also a good idea to write them down, reflect on them, and upgrade them periodically. **PM**



**MERRETT STIERHEIM**

Retired County Manager and now Resident of Miami-Dade County, Florida  
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BY DOUGLAS W. AYRES

# A PHILOSOPHY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT-OR OF LIFE, EVEN!

Anyone familiar with my *Right in the City* books (Volumes I and II) is entitled to know something about my philosophy of self and government. Here it is, warts and all.

**You Gotta Believe!** Believe in yourself. If you don't believe and if you don't watch out for yourself in a positive vein, not in a selfish way, no one else will. It is my belief that once one truly believes, the first and probably the foremost criterion to securing adequate status as a professional "whatever" is to be the epitome of professional.

Not just a professional "whatever your job is," but a professional administrator of consummate technical abilities and sensitivities, devotion to one's assignments and elected officials,

and dedication to making the latter look good in spite of all their foibles and warts.

The charge is: make your bosses and organization look good, in spite of everything and anything. Don't lie, cheat, or steal, but make all look good, always. They get all the credit and any blame is yours.

**Do Not Criticize!** It is not appropriate to criticize the manager, mayor, or any other official or corporate board of directors, or to "play politics," whatever that might mean in your community or organization. One must be a team player, in every possible meaning of that phrase. Local government already suffers from an image problem, so anything negative that any public official does to add to that negativism is reflective of that person and likely will and should be reflected in his or her status, stature and, ultimately, compensation and perks.

**Telling Tales.** I can tell tales about government and management because with more than 50 years of experience, I earned that right. I didn't criticize, complain, or discuss anything but positives when departing any employment, even when fired and the mayor made himself city manager. Reaction only reflects negatively on both the departee and the organization.

Now, after several decades, it is my turn to comment. I appropriately demurred on that chance decades ago. To get here, I dog-trotted through life and made my contribution to America. It shows materially in Salem, Virginia; Melbourne, Florida; Salem, Oregon; Inglewood, California; and Leisure World/Laguna Hills, California. And it shows in lesser but significant ways in hundreds of other governments where I assisted, advised, and aided those in charge to accomplish constructive things.

**Fill Vacuums!** There are many vacuums around a city hall or corporate headquarters. These vacuums are the things that people don't wish to do,

or do badly, or tardily—important things like acting as staff to a politically vital ad hoc commission created to put down some rebellion. It has been my experience that filling those vacuums is necessary and exhilarating. And, in the bargain, one learns a lot and fulfills an organizational or public service need.

And eventually that service will be recognized. And it will be personally fulfilling. I have done a myriad of things others either were unwilling, unprepared, or too scared to do. One must be willing to "go the extra mile" and truly take risks for the organization and, ultimately, secure some measure of recognition and respect—but only if earned.

Take your destiny into your own hands. Don't complain if things do not go well. Make things happen. Learn from your mistakes and those of others. But always be prepared—in detail. Luck is something that happens to those who plan it. Bad luck is being involved in an event over which you had absolutely no control, like an airplane crash.

**What to Be.** Be loyal, not threatening; be factual, but firm; and, above all, earn your way by good words and deeds into a position of organizational respect. Be professional in thought, beliefs, and especially in demeanor. I was offered a bribe only once in my 47 years of public and corporate service. I am convinced my businesslike approach and obvious professional attitude dissuaded at the starting gate those who might have been so inclined, and there are plenty of those so inclined.

Absolute honesty is absolutely required! But one cannot be holier than thou about it. Just emanate ethics and integrity, even if few recognize or appreciate it. The organizations with which I was affiliated had reputations for being squeaky clean, nonpartisan, nonpolitical, professional, above reproach, and absolutely reliable. We planned in exhaustive detail and met schedules. The image projected, I believe, was responsible for the good things that

happened to the jurisdictions for which I worked and to me.

**Leading.** Be a team builder and leader. Remember the organization is not yours, so eschew use of the possessive "my" and "mine" and the single-handed "I" and "me." Make it "we," for the "we" will get things done, provided "you" have created a team and are its true leader. Use of the organizational "we" in this book will be noted, for these "Tales" were created by "us," as a "we" organization, but reported by "me."

A manager legally may be given authority over an organization, but will have an impact only when authority is granted by those comprising the organization because the manager earns it, and mutual respect is secured with "them," whoever "them" might be. But, do not suffer fools well.

**Government Efficiency.** Government can be as well managed, responsive, and effective and as well financed as solid corporations are. But a large number of obstacles need to be overcome, the largest of which is the lack of truly dedicated governmental administrators with both a sense of honor and duty and of humor. And commitment!

Both *Right in the City* books of my management tales attempt to convey those vital elements of honor, duty, professionalism, enthusiasm, commitment, and, of necessity, humor.

Importantly, if you aren't having fun in your job, perhaps it is time to change organizations or even your field of endeavor. Life is too short to not get laughs out of work and world! **PM**

**Editor's note:** This copy is extracted from the book *Right in the City: (Volume II) More Bizarre Tales* and accompanies *Right in the City: (Volume I) A Dog's Tale* with combined 718 pages and 156 instructional and humorous "tales." Copies of both books are available. For more information, contact Doug Ayres at [dougsedona@esedona.net](mailto:dougsedona@esedona.net).



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BY ERIC TROGDON

## EXTEND YOUR PROFESSIONALISM

**A**s a public professional who is sometimes responsible for speaking to groups, you might begin to realize that incredible feeling of delivering great in-house presentations and coming up with a snappy response to an individual's question from the floor. Practice builds your confidence, and you start nailing presentations and holding effective meetings. You are asked to speak in front of some 220 professionals.

You know your subject and have a well-planned and practiced presentation. Now what? My answer is, "Go for it!"

Here are a few steps that will help bring your presentation—and you—to a higher level. These steps are often overlooked but play a vital role in making a manager be seen as a professional in the management field as well as a professional presenter.

**Research your audience.** When asked to give a presentation, find out whether a meeting or session planner is available. I try to interview the planner and gather as much information on past presentations the group has experienced, making sure to get the good, the boring, and the ugly.

What did the group enjoy and speak positively about with past speakers? What happened when some presenters didn't make the grade? I also ask about the top three issues the group is facing. Are there any subjects I should stay away from?

If at all possible, try interviewing at least three members of the group, obtaining their perceptions of the coming event, their experiences, and what they expect from your session. If you prefer an interactive presentation and want to call on people during the session, make contact ahead of time with the people you might want to use. It can be a bad experience to find out after the event that they were uncomfortable being singled out.

Also, if possible, you can follow up by sending pre-program questions to the

meeting planner. With additional background on the group, you can analyze and use that information to customize your presentation.

**Build relationships and ask.** Take time to get to know the person who asked you to speak. Understanding that person's expectations and history with the group and organization can be helpful. Try to uncover small, hidden things about the group that can be used in your presentation. Including positive information that puts the attendees in a favorable light helps personalize the presentation and makes it more engaging.

You have to form a good relationship with the planner and help relieve some of the planning stress. Stay in touch during the planning process, and make sure that all items are taken care of before the day of the presentation.

**Build your power.** To be successful at the podium, you need to have power. This is viewed as energy and passion for your topic. Audience members have to be pulled into your presentation through excitement and anticipation.

A technique to use is bringing physical movement and action on stage. Move around or, if appropriate, encourage participants to interact during your presentation. You need to remember the audience is live and most times can pick up on how any presenter feels that day.

If you are enjoying the interaction, so will they. Don't forget to care for your body; it can be your most important resource in any presentation. A strong body supports a strong presentation. Participating in a physical fitness activity several hours after your session is a great way to burn off any post-presentation adrenaline.

**Own the stage.** When giving a presentation, remember the podium and stage are yours. Take control, and get rid of distractions. All items on and around your presentation space will be visible to the audience and can add or take away from

a great presentation. If, as a manager, you make a good number of speeches and are comfortable doing so, create a stage and audio setup sheet and send it to session planners in advance.

If you can, after you arrive, help with any stage setup details and issues that may take away from the presentation.

**Create a strong introduction.** You will know what is appropriate before you make a presentation, but it might be best if the audience learns about who you are and what you've done prior to your presentation. Develop a strong introduction that will be read before you start speaking; it will help build your credibility. It might take you months to craft and hone the one you ultimately use. Ask friends and business acquaintances to help you develop it.

Your introduction should tell the audience what you do, who you are, what you have done, and why you have credibility. I recommend adding a line so the person reading your introduction will get a laugh from the audience. It allows the introducer to have fun, and the audience is more prepared for your humor.

**Become the professional.** As a manager, you might know that experience will help you build strong and exciting presentations. What you do on stage can touch people emotionally, giving them hope and encouragement.

Never allow distractions to take away from your ability to be a great presenter. Take the extra steps to research your audiences. Develop your physical power on stage, take ownership and control, and allow the audience to help make your next presentation even better. **PM**



**ERIC TROGDON** is a speaker, trainer, and mediator who founded an international mediation and training company in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, Canada ([www.erictrugdon.com](http://www.erictrugdon.com)).

For information and examples of introductions, location setup, and pre-program questions, visit [www.stepscanada.ca/meetingplannersbureaus.htm](http://www.stepscanada.ca/meetingplannersbureaus.htm).

BY LEDY VANKAVAGE

# NEW DOJ RULES ON SERVICE DOGS

Communities prompted to repeal or amend breed-specific laws

Some local governments attempt to regulate dangerous dogs by enacting breed-discriminatory ordinances, most often “pit bull” bans. Recently, the federal government found a way to keep citizens safe without discriminating against breeds of dogs, particularly service dogs. “State and local government entities have the ability to determine . . . whether a particular service animal can be excluded based on that particular animal’s actual behavior or history—not based on fears or generalizations about how an animal or breed might behave.”<sup>1</sup>

On the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) released its “final rule in order to adopt enforceable accessibility standards.” The ruling addresses issues raised in Title II of the ADA, including state and local laws that regulate or prohibit certain breeds of dogs, particularly for disabled persons who have service dogs of the restricted breeds.

Understandably, the DOJ states that federal law trumps any local breed-discriminatory law, adding: “The [DOJ] does not believe that it is either appropriate or consistent with the ADA to defer to local laws that prohibit certain breeds of dogs. . . .” This ruling clarifies that localities and states with breed-discriminatory ordinances must provide an exemption for service dogs of the prohibited breed.

In light of the new DOJ rule and because of the high cost of enforcing breed-specific legislation, localities are repealing their breed-discriminatory laws and replacing them with laws regarding reckless owners and breed-neutral dangerous dogs.

One such city is Topeka, Kansas. It

repealed a long-standing breed-specific law targeting pit bulls and replaced it with a comprehensive, generic dangerous-dog law. According to a memo from the Topeka city attorney’s office,<sup>2</sup> studies show that cities with breed-specific laws aren’t any safer than cities without such laws. Stronger laws against aggressive and dangerous dogs—laws that hold the owners responsible—were seen by the city as more effective.

The Topeka city attorney’s office also noted problems of determining the heritage of a mixed-breed dog in this era of DNA testing. After all, if a city enacts a breed-discriminatory law, it has the burden of proving the heritage of the dog.<sup>3</sup> The Topeka memo states, “Mixed breed dogs make the breed specific legislation difficult to enforce. Absent cost-prohibitive DNA<sup>4</sup> testing, it is difficult to prove beyond a reasonable doubt the breed.

The city attorney’s office in Topeka also cited the high cost of enforcing breed-discriminatory laws as a main reason to jettison them. The city believed the money could be better spent on dogs that it can show are dangerous rather than just punishing an entire breed.

The Platte Institute for Economic Research backed up that assessment by issuing a report entitled “Pit Bull Ban a Waste of Tax Dollars.”<sup>5</sup> Saving tax dollars by repealing these laws reflects a national trend that has been tracked by Best Friends Animal Society.<sup>6</sup>

Economist John Dunham<sup>7</sup> calculated the cost of enforcing a breed-specific law targeting pit bull terrier-type dogs for every city, county, and state in the United States.<sup>8</sup> Since the fiscal impact calculator came online in May 2009<sup>9</sup> ([www.guerrillaeconomics.biz/bestfriends](http://www.guerrillaeconomics.biz/bestfriends)), an overwhelming majority of counties and

cities considering a breed-restrictive law have decided against it. Most have enacted generic dangerous-dog laws, and some rightly target reckless pet owners.<sup>10</sup>

Through a grant from the American Bar Association, the Tort Trial and Insurance Practice Section (TIPS) is offering a free copy (while the supply lasts) of its book, *A Lawyer’s Guide to Dangerous Dog Issues*,<sup>11</sup> to any public administrator or attorney working on the subject of dangerous dogs. If you are interested in receiving a copy, e-mail the chair-elect of the ABA TIPS Animal Law Committee at [ledyv@bestfriends.org](mailto:ledyv@bestfriends.org). **PM**

## FOOTNOTES

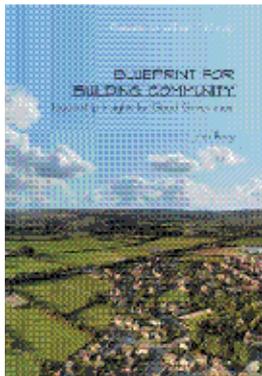
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BY ROBERT BEEZAT

# PRINCIPLED, PRACTICAL, AND PERSONAL



The book, *Blueprint for Building Community: Leadership Insights for Good Government*, by author John Perry, is one of the best things I have read about city management in my 42 years in the profession. I wish someone had written a book like this

when I was beginning my work in local government management.

It also would have been helpful to pick up a book like this in the middle of my career. Now that my local government career is pretty much over, I read Perry's book and it helped me think about what in my career was successful and what was less than successful. No surprise: I could have done some things better, and Perry's book would have been a help to me in doing so.

"We will fight for the ideals and sacred things of the city, both alone and with many," is part of the Athenian code. This book starts with that premise and motivation and traces a 38-year career in community building and management that, like most local government man-

agement careers, had a lot of successes and some disappointments.

Building community as a primary task of the manager is something we all hear about. But I have met few people in the profession who have made community building the central focus of their careers. Perry has written it down with an easy-to-read and entertaining mix of ideas and ideals, professional and personal stories, and practical suggestions as he confronted real issues and challenges that all managers face. **PM**



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BY KATHERINE BRACKETT

# BAPTISM BY FIRE

It's not always easy being a young administrator

**A**t age 26, I am currently the youngest city administrator in the state of South Carolina. Although still new to the profession, my first two years in the job have been quite eventful. Without question, the most significant decision I have made thus far concerned how to fund my community's water project. Perhaps you heard something about that decision. You see, Pickens is the little city that turned down \$16 million in stimulus funds last year.

But I am getting ahead of myself. Let me tell you how I was initiated into the profession.

Two days before my 24th birthday and two months before I received my

class. She advised me to contact a local staffing firm, and within a few days we had found a replacement.

As soon as we began to think we were in the clear, our temporary finance/HR director told us we had another problem. Further investigation revealed there were virtually no personnel files, no OSHA logs, and a number of other missing items.

In a panic, I picked up the phone and called my professor again—this time to let her know I would not be in class that evening. In the same sentence, I asked if she would work as a consultant to get the HR department back in order. After a little negotiation, she agreed; and during the next few months my new (albeit tempo-

## SIX MONTHS AFTER MY START, I WAS PROMOTED TO ADMINISTRATOR, AND BOTH THE INTERIM ADMINISTRATOR AND MY PROFESSOR LEFT US.

rary) team and I got the city back on track. MPA from Clemson University, I was abruptly promoted from intern to assistant administrator of Pickens when the former administrator moved to another job. I was extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to work for six months with a retired administrator who was serving as the interim manager.

### Keeping Up

So there the two of us sat, desks facing each other, in about week six of sorting through city business, when the finance/human resources director, a 20-year employee, walked out the door. As we scrambled to make a work plan, we uncovered a paper box of unpaid and mostly overdue invoices. As the days went by, we called businesses and slowly managed to clean up the disorder.

Needing to fill the finance/HR director position immediately, I called and asked for advice from one of my professors, who teaches a human resources

class. She advised me to contact a local staffing firm, and within a few days we had found a replacement.

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rary) team and I got the city back on track. Six months after my start, I was promoted to administrator, and both the interim administrator and my professor left us. After the dust settled, I took a deep breath, jumped in, and have not yet stopped. This is the part I call "baptism by fire."

I immediately reached out to the experienced administrators across the state and took my questions, ideas, and even the current audit to any of them who would listen. I quickly learned this profession creates a certain bond among managers, and I have been supported and encouraged every day and had every rookie question answered respectfully.

ment team, who at this point still thought of me as the "intern." The perception was that "this new administrator can't seem to figure out how to complete a budget" and that I was trying to make a point by canceling the new vehicle orders and not giving employees a raise.

### Putting It Out There

During the past two years, however, we have slowly built good relationships on the management team, even while we cope with salary cuts and frozen projects. Once we all found a way to operate in this environment, we began to build a new level of tolerance, and I began to make Pickens my own.

As I work on my second budget, I look at where we are now and at the whirlwind of projects that are in progress. In my first two years, we gained national media attention in the *New York Times* when we turned down \$16 million worth of tempting stimulus funds slated for a water plant renovation project.

This was done because of the strings attached to the funds and the amount of borrowing required before ever receiving any of the "free money." Instead, we scaled back this shovel-ready rehabilitation project and are currently preparing bid documents for a \$4 million version of it. We also refinanced six outstanding revenue bonds dating back from the 1950s and actually found hundreds of thousands of dollars sitting in reserve accounts. We used this money to pay down the debt, pay off all the funding agencies, and roll it into one new bond that saved the city \$1 million over the life of the debt.

Looking back now as I approach my two-year anniversary as administrator, I realize my baptism-by-fire induction to the profession forced me to grow quickly in the job. As difficult as it was at times, I wouldn't trade the experience for anything! **PM**



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