

ILCMA LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Managing Staff Relations

RANDY'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT TRANSITIONS

Village Manager of Arlington Heights: 2014- Present

Village Manager of Clarendon Hills: 2011 to 2014

Assistant City Administrator of Batavia: 2000 to 2011

Consultant, S.B. Friedman and Company: 1999 to 2000

Graduate Intern, City of St. Charles: 1997 to 1999

County Board Member, DeKalb County: 1994 to 1997

KNOWLEDGE VS. PERSPECTIVE BASED LEADERSHIP



KNOWLEDGE VS. PERSPECTIVE BASED LEADERSHIP



REMEMBER, IT'S A DIFFERENT JOB!

- Usually, there will be someone to do your old job- let them!
- Just because you don't understand it, doesn't mean you aren't responsible for it
 - Use your staff to get you to understand areas beyond your comfort zone
 - Asking for information on how things work is not micromanaging
- Ask why- a lot

RESPECTING AND UNDERSTANDING DEPARTMENTAL CULTURE



BEING THE MANAGER THEY NEED YOU TO BE

- Treating people the same is not the same thing as treating them fairly
- Varying your management style is not the same thing as varying your values



BEING THE MANAGER THEY NEED YOU TO BE



- Translator
- Diplomat
- Counselor
- Parent
- Priority Setter
- Standard Bearer
- Coach
- Decision Maker

MAKING THE CHANGE TO A NEW ROLE

Outside Hire

What are they saying: *Who is this person and what is he or she going to change?*

Problem: *Fear of Uncertainty can cause Defensiveness*

Internal Promotion

What are they saying: *Based on what he/she has done before, I think he/she will....*

Problem: *Assumption that what you did in one role will be the same in the new role ie unfair expectations*

MAKING THE CHANGE TO A NEW ROLE

Outside Hire

What are they saying: *Who is this person and what is he or she going to make us do?*

Problem: *Fear of Uncertainty can cause Defensiveness*

Solution: *Clear Communication of Expectations and Values*

Internal Promotion

What are they saying: *Based on what he/she has done before, I think he/she will....*

Problem: *Assumption that what you did in one role will be the same in the new role ie unfair expectations*

Solution: *Clear Communication of Expectations and Values*

COMMON STAFF CHALLENGES FOR NEW MANAGERS

- **The Testing Department Director:**

- *After a week or two on the job, you have your regular one on one meeting with the Police Chief, Phil. He seems eager to please. He says “I like you. You seem like a manager that really supports his staff and doesn’t micro-manage. The Board made a good choice. I’ll tell you what, the last manager used to nit-pick all of my memos and second guess my personnel decisions. Can you believe that? At our level! I’m really glad that we’ve got the right person on the job. I know you would NEVER do that.”*
- *Discuss what techniques you would use to address and/or prevent this type of issue*

COMMON STAFF CHALLENGES FOR NEW MANAGERS

- **The Testing Department Director:**

- *Make sure they feel heard*
- *If someone seems to be “agenda setting” or “territory marking”, make sure you respond by making it clear you are being held responsible for their work and have a way that you like to see work done.*
- *Don’t just let it go, or put it off*
- *It will be harder to address the longer you wait*
- *Make sure that you set clear standards and expectations and repeat them regularly*

COMMON STAFF CHALLENGES FOR NEW MANAGERS

- **The Informal Underboss:**

- *You meet with the Director of Building, Bob, who reports to you about streamlining the permit process based on complaints you have been receiving. Bob has been with the organization for 3 years and seems eager to make the changes you suggest. He agrees with you and says he will check with the Planning Director, Sharon, who also reports to you to get her feedback on the changes. Sharon has been in her position for 20 years and is highly respected by other department directors. Sharon discussed the issue with Bob and tells him that she doesn't agree with the change. She approaches you to tell you her perspective. After an explanation you agree with her. You back off the suggestion based on the new information.*

A month later you and Bob discuss him working on a building code revision (unrelated to the prior issue). You both agree this would be a positive change. Some time passes and when you haven't heard from Bob in while on that issue, you ask him what happened. He said he talked to Sharon and she didn't think the change was doable so he backed off.

You call a meeting of Sharon and Bob to discuss the issue. Sharon does all the talking and Bob doesn't disagree with her or really weigh in, despite agreeing with you previously.

- *Discuss what techniques you would use to address and/or prevent this type of issue*

COMMON STAFF CHALLENGES FOR NEW MANAGERS

- **The Informal Underboss:**

- Tell Bob that you respect his opinion that you really want to hear from him on these issues
- When meeting with both routinely ask Bob for his input first
- When meeting with Sharon separately, tell her that she is very well respected by her peers but that you want to make sure some of the less tenured department heads have a chance to grow into their positions and you want to hear from all
- Clarify ground rules in group meetings to reinforce you want an open discussion without overtalking

COMMON STAFF CHALLENGES FOR NEW MANAGERS

- **Following the Legend:**

- *You are a new Village Manager. You are replacing an extremely well-liked incumbent who served in the role for 20 plus years and still lives in the community. He hired all of the current department directors and served as a mentor to many of the managers of area communities. However, once you get on the job you see that many of processes and programs the previous manager had in place are a bit antiquated and not up to your standards. You want to start to bring about change but are worried about it appearing that you are undercutting your predecessor's legacy.*

Discuss what techniques you would use to address and/or prevent this type of issue

COMMON STAFF CHALLENGES FOR NEW MANAGERS

- **Following the Legend:**
 - If it's broke, DO fix it
 - Seek lots of input before making major changes
 - Find internal “champions” for the changes when possible so you aren’t going it alone
 - Combat the “its always been done this way” with concrete examples of failures/difficulty
 - Remind them that one of the reasons the organization is successful is previous leaders never rested on their laurels- their programs were new once too
 - Draw upon, but don’t overstate your experience in our communities
 - Respect the culture, but still lead

COMMON STAFF CHALLENGES FOR NEW MANAGERS

- **The Non-Communicative Team Member:**
 - *Oscar is your Fire Chief. His department is well recognized in the region. His staff seems to be very competent and have great interactions with the public and other agencies. However, whenever you meet with Oscar, he does not communicate much about issues in his department or about himself. Whenever asked he will do what you requested of him or give you the information you required, but nothing more. During Department Head meetings he seems disengaged and says contributes very little. When you ask him how things are going his answer is invariably “fine”. And nothing more.*
 - *Discuss what techniques you would use to address and/or prevent this type of issue*

COMMON STAFF CHALLENGES FOR NEW MANAGERS

- **The Non-Communicative Team Member:**
 - For group settings, tell Oscar that he is a respected team member and that the group would benefit from his participation, consider asking him to be prepared to speak on a subject in advance and to be prepared
 - Ask him direct questions and give deadlines on when you want the information
 - Create more detailed meeting agendas
 - If he cancels a meeting, immediately reschedule

COMMON STAFF CHALLENGES FOR NEW MANAGERS

- *Its your bus*
- *You can always invite people to leave the bus*
- *While you have to be flexible, ultimately, they must be able to work with you, not the other way around*



COMMON STAFF CHALLENGES FOR NEW MANAGERS

- **What are some challenges you have faced so far?**

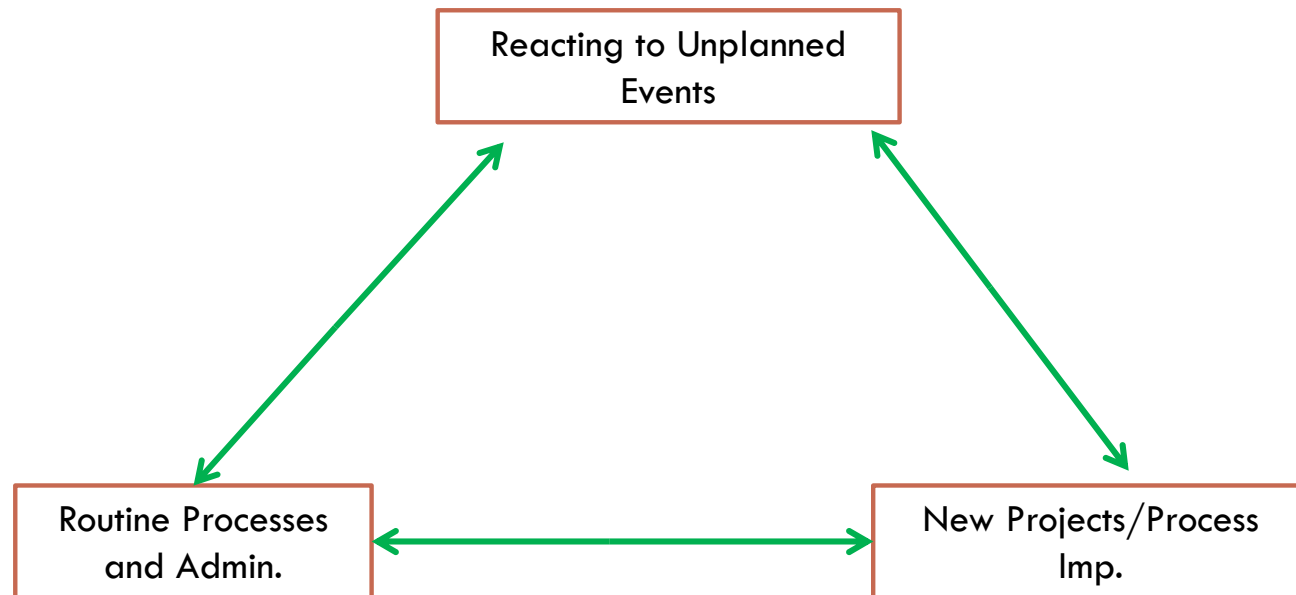
OPERATIONAL TENSION

Routine Processes
and Admin.

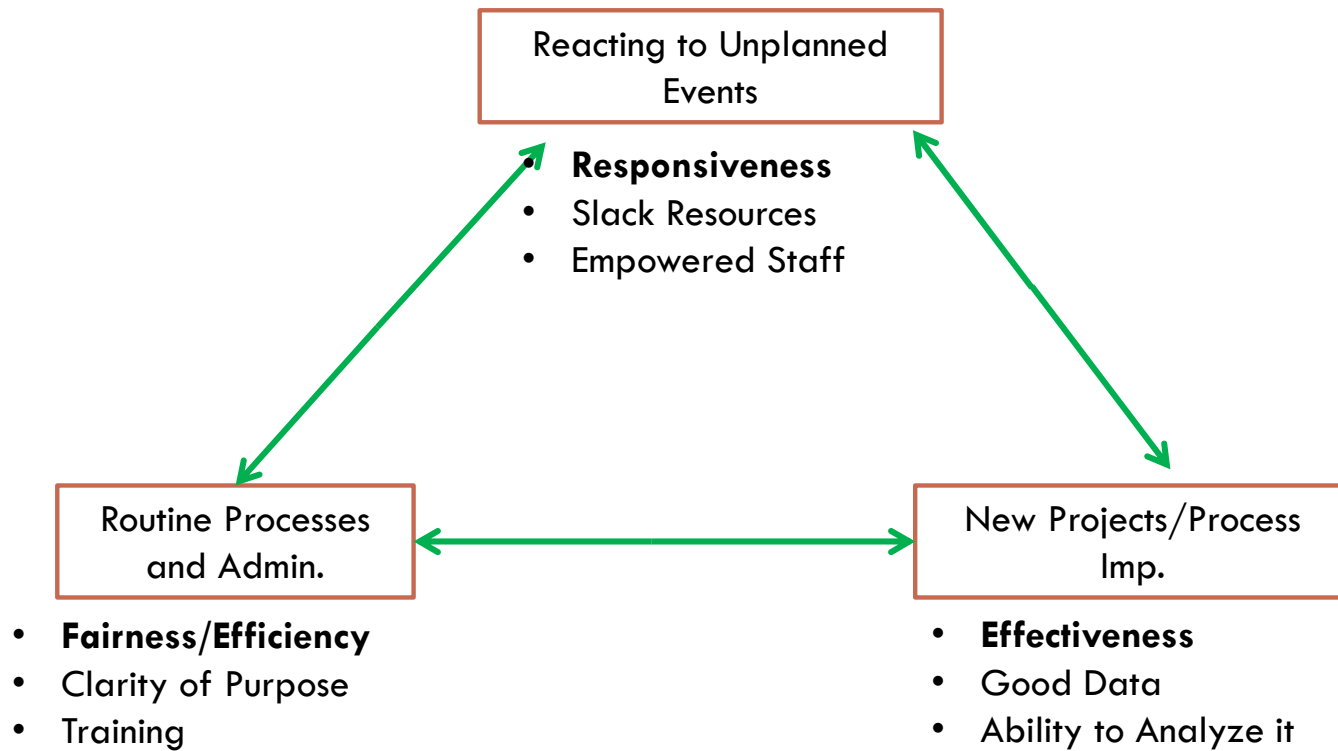
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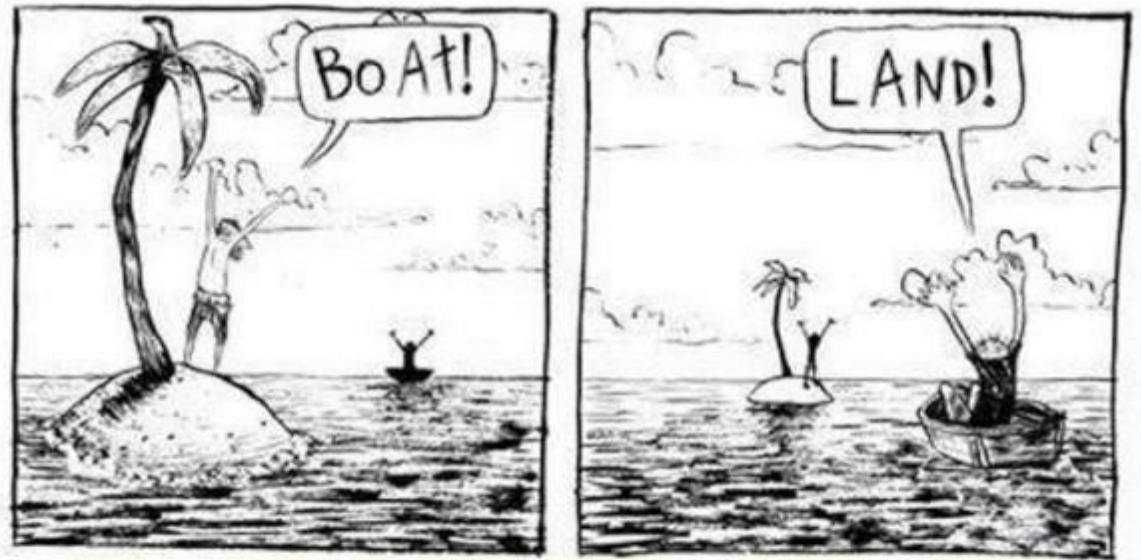


OPERATIONAL TENSION



PERSPECTIVE

- Talk to your peers
- You don't have to do it alone



Perspective...



QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION