

## **THE FIRST 100 DAYS AS A CITY MANAGER “THE DO’S AND DON’TS”**

### **Task # 1 Build Relationships**

With City Council individually and collectively-Use a system of regular communication e.g. personal meetings, weekly briefing report. Learning their priorities by tabulating individual lists or preferably by conducting a goal setting workshop. Focus on what’s important to them; don’t try to set their agenda.

With Management Team, individually and collectively- Early on, obtain resume, department organization chart, prior 3-year financial summary, top five accomplishments, top-five challenge, critical issue to be faced in next six months. Conduct personal meeting with each as well as team meetings. Let everyone know who you are, what your passion is, what your expectations are, how people can work best with you. Hopefully, your openness will prompt a reciprocal response from your managers. Get to know your managers in order to learn about the capacity of the organization. As time permits, repeat this process with lower levels of managers until you have a feel for the organizational capacity and/or weakness. Make it fun, have a team-building workshop as a companion to the goal setting workshop with Council. Develop a values statement or guiding principles for how our work should be done.

With Employees and Union Leadership-MBWA; get out of the corner office and take a look at you organization and community. You can also visit with employees as you move about. You may not have time to meet all employees during this time, but the stories of the interaction you do have will circulate, fast. Take a genuine interest in what people are doing at their jobs. Listen more than you talk and be sure to take notes. You’ll receive a lot of small requests that can be easily honored. Follow-up. Don’t offer something if you can’t possibly deliver.

With Key Community Leaders and Business People, School Leader, Media- As time and issues permit you will have time for contact with people from these various groups. Take advantage of offers for introductions, visiting service clubs for breakfast or lunch – you still have to eat!

### **Task # 2 Keep Your Eye on Core Functions**

Make sure major systems are functioning and not experiencing troubles. Water and sewer services, garbage services, police and fire services, streets and parks maintenance – the basics – need to be operating well and be reliable. Ask a lot of questions, get out on ride-alongs, look into processes, but don't micro-manage. Some will feel threatened by your continuous quest for information, be reassuring and explain why you are asking a particular question. Keep in mind that some employees will take everything you say more seriously than you intended and may interpret your intentions in ways that you never imagined. Take command of the English language and be very conscious of the messages you leave. Remember, a breakdown in services can become a crisis and not a lasting image you will want for your first 100 days.

### Task # 3 Assess Financial Condition

Review the past three to five years of annual financial reports to determine present and future financial condition. If there is no financial forecasting, start working on it. Review the budget and the financial management processes, including investment and cash handling practices. If you discover problems, begin to take corrective actions. Make sure your management team understands your analysis and inform the Council as soon as practical. Remember, any changes you make will be scrutinized internally as well as externally. Use a communication process that will assure "no surprises" for managers and the Council alike.

### Task # 4 Become a Champion and a Hero

Every community, every organization needs something fixed or changed in a modest way. But, it takes someone to identify it and take the initiative to get it done. Find several of those issues and fix them. One way to learn about such things is to simply meet as a focus group with a few employees and hear them out. Secretaries and assistants from all departments are good sources for this type of information. It may be a small thing but you will be appreciated and recognized for the courage to act and you will also send a strong message to your employees, hopefully inspiring like constructive behavior. Don't be overzealous though. Sometimes the adage, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" truly applies.

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