

OFFICE MANAGEMENT

Financial Management Training Module 4 of 4



MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND
PROVINCIAL COUNCILS



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2008



**MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
AND PROVINCIAL COUNCILS**



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PREFACE

The Asia Foundation (TAF) implemented the Transparent Accountable Local Governance (TALG) Program with financial support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) from January 2005 - September 2007. The Foundation's main counterparts were the Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Councils and the Sri Lanka Institute of Local Governance. The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and Environmental Management Lanka (EML) provided additional technical assistance and support.

The TALG Program developed a number of training modules and publications as part of its institutional strengthening programme for Local Authorities (LAs) in Sri Lanka. Each of the TALG training modules was used to train officials in thirty-five Local Authorities in Southern, Eastern, Central, North Western, North Central and Uva provinces. These were very successful in promoting effective, transparent and accountable local governance. Preparing the training modules was a painstaking process and support from the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) enabled The Asia Foundation to complete and publish this and the other publications in the series.

INTRODUCTION

Through the interventions made by the Foundation for the betterment of the Local Governance system in Sri Lanka, publications were developed in the following areas:

- Citizen Participation
- Local Planning
- Service Delivery
- Financial Management
- Policy and Regulations

These publications range from one-page documents of Leading Practices to Training Modules. Major categories of the publications are:

- Training Modules
- Guidebooks
- Reports and Documents
- Video Films
- Computer Applications

TALG developed many training modules mainly in the areas of Financial Management and Service Delivery. **Office Management** is Module 4 under Financial Management Training. Other training modules in the series include:

Module 1: Financial Reporting and Cash Management

Module 2: Revenue Enhancement

Module 3: Grant Management and Donor Relations

Users should note that there are a range of TALG publications including Technology of Participation and Resource Directory for Local Authorities that can be used by LAs to create an enabling environment for performing better financial management.

About this Training Module

Module 4: Office Management

This module, Office Management, is based on previous training sessions conducted under TALG, which covered all the necessary office management procedures and activities required to improve officers' skills in the subject area. Training was provided on how to treat the citizens as customers and how to provide customer oriented services at the LA.

What is Inside this Module

These TALG training modules can be used by different users, ranging from beginners to practitioners, and from those working in LAs to those working as partners with LAs. This publication contains all of the resources required by trainers to deliver a two-day workshop in Office Management.

The Office Management training module provides learning materials and exercises on how to efficiently and effectively manage an office and covers a range of subject areas e.g. personnel management, office layout, developing procedures and processes, ethical behaviour etc.

A CD is provided with this training module, which provides a 'PowerPoint' version of the reference materials that can be used during the training workshop.

The Main Objectives of this Module

- To provide guidance to the officials who engage in office management for LAs in Sri Lanka.
- To provide knowledge, skills and tools in office management activities in a systematic manner.
- To assist LAs to deliver efficient and effective services, by ensuring better office management.
- To assist LAs to adopt new methods and techniques in office management.

How to Use this Module

The resources in this publication may be used:

- To enhance knowledge in this specific topic.
- To share the knowledge with others.
- To support a training programme and awareness campaigns.
- To improve the existing system and performance monitoring.

Learning materials will provide guidance to all decision-makers and staff who are involved in office management activities.

1. UNDERSTANDING YOUR ORGANIZATION

When considering how to make an organization work more efficiently and effectively, it is critical to understand the purpose of that organization.

Knowing the mission and having a vision for your LA will help you to stay focused on the purpose of the organization. Many organizations develop Mission Statements that describe what the organization is supposed to do. A Vision Statement describes how the leaders of that organization wish to be described, such as “Superior service that’s responsive and cost justified”, or “The best Local Authority in Sri Lanka”. These may sound similar but they are not. One describes the responsibilities of the organization and the other describes a qualitative state that the organization aspires to. Organizations also develop Value Statements that list qualities that are important in achieving the mission and vision of the organization.

Developing a Mission Statement

1. At its most basic, the Mission Statement describes the overall purpose of the organization.
2. If the organization elects to develop a Vision Statement before developing the Mission Statement, ask “Why does the image, the vision exist - what is its purpose?” This purpose is often the same as the mission.
3. Developing a Mission Statement can be achieved through a wide variety of alternative processes. Participants may use methods ranging from highly analytical and rational to highly creative and divergent, e.g. focused discussions about the legal basis for the organization or through sharing of divergent experiences around daydreams, sharing stories, etc. Therefore, work with the key stakeholders about how they would like to arrive at the description of their organizational mission.
4. When wording the Mission Statement, consider the organization's products, services, markets, values, concern for public image and maybe the priority activities required for survival.
5. Consider strategies resulting from the strategic planning processes.
6. Ensure that wording of the mission allows management and employees to infer some order of priorities in how products and services are delivered.
7. When refining the mission, a useful exercise is to add or delete a word from the mission to realize the change in scope of the statement.
8. Assess how concise the wording is in the Mission Statement.
9. Mission Statements should include sufficient description to clearly state the mission of the organization.

Developing a Vision Statement

1. The Vision Statement is a vivid description of the organization, which creates a sense of desire.
2. Developing a Vision Statement can be achieved through a wide variety of alternative processes. Participants may use methods ranging from highly analytical and rational to highly creative and divergent, e.g. focused rational discussions or through sharing of divergent experiences around daydreams, sharing stories, etc.
3. Developing the vision can be the most enjoyable part of planning, but the part where time easily slips away.
4. Note that originally, the vision was a compelling description of the state and function of the organization once it had implemented the strategic plan, i.e. a very attractive image towards which the organization was attracted and guided by the strategic plan. Recently, the vision has become more of a motivational tool, often including highly idealistic phrases and activities that the organization cannot realistically achieve.

Developing a Value Statement

1. Values represent the core priorities of the organization's culture, including what drives members' priorities and how they truly act in the organization. Values are increasingly important in strategic planning. They often drive the intent and direction for 'organic' planners.
2. Developing a Value Statement can use methods ranging from highly analytical and rational to highly creative and divergent, e.g. focused discussions, divergent experiences around daydreams, sharing stories, etc. The participants should discuss and decide on the method they wish to use to arrive at their organizational values.
3. The organization should establish four to six core values within which it intends to operate. Values should reflect LA citizens, stakeholders, employees and the environment.

Exercise

In your table groups, discuss whether your organization has a Mission Statement. If not, who should be responsible for developing one? Which participants should help craft it? Must it be adopted? How general or specific should it be?

1.1 Customer Service

What is customer service and how do you identify when it is good? Discuss.

All employees and volunteers of your LA should endeavour to provide customers with responsive, consistent and effective service.

What does consistent mean? Discuss.

Quality service should be delivered to meet the needs of the diverse members of your community.

What do you think the word 'quality' means? Discuss.

In each case you must carefully consider the knowledge and perspective of the customers and respond to their ideas and concerns.

1.2 Requests for Service and Complaint Tracking

Sometimes the party contacting the LA is lodging a request for service or making a complaint. Another hallmark of good customer service is to establish formal procedures to process these requests and complaints.

Establishing formal procedures enables you to track each service provided and administered across departments. You can assure the electorate that their needs are being addressed both within the designated time limit and service level that your LA has adopted. This guarantees equal service and reduces the perception that some citizens are given preferential treatment.

This process can be as simple as a form that has the name of the party making the complaint or request for service, their contact information (address, telephone, etc.), the name of the person receiving the complaint, the date, the item that they are calling to discuss and the person to whom the complaint or request was forwarded to for action. Similar information can be kept in a complaints book. In the 'response' section of the form, the resolution to the request or complaint is recorded, e.g. broken limb of tree on Main Street cleared by maintenance worker on 27.10.06.

There should also be an area for comments and/or additional follow-up if the situation is on-going. All the forms should be kept in a binder and reviewed weekly until completed. Each week, constituents should be contacted regarding their complaint and/or request. The forms are kept in a binder until each is resolved. Once resolved, it can be moved to another location for monthly or quarterly review. The review enables the responsible manager to evaluate the level of

service being provided and whether targets are being met. For example, if a LA's adopted level of service is to respond to all resident queries within three days, then the responsible manager should be measuring responsiveness to see if that standard is met. The manager should be measuring the percentage of time when the LA met their standard on response time and percentages of time when it was met in 4 days, 5 days etc. This simple process enables the LA to evaluate their service, review procedural changes and/or refine their service standard.

1.3 Dealing with Angry Customers

Sometimes, there is no pleasing a citizen and letting them vent and air their frustration may be all that staff and management can realistically accomplish. The main function is to provide empathy to the complaining party so that they feel heard and understood. In a sense you are soothing them and validating their point of view. While this may seem as though you are agreeing with them, this is not the same thing.

Empathy is a form of understanding. You can empathize with a constituent's complaint without agreeing with them.

Empathy Techniques		
Skills	Explanation	Example
Attending, Acknowledging	Providing verbal or non-verbal awareness of the other.	Eye contact.
Restating, Paraphrasing	Responding to a person's basic verbal message.	"I hear you."
Reflecting	Reflecting feelings, experiences, or content heard or perceived through cues.	"You sound angry."
Interpreting	Offering a tentative interpretation about the other's feelings, desires or meanings.	"I can see how you would feel frustrated."
Summarizing, Synthesizing	Bringing together in some way feelings and experiences. Providing a focus.	"All of this must be hard to deal with."
Probing	Questioning in a supportive way that requests more information or that attempts to clear up confusion.	"How did you come to understand that your service would be at this level?"
Giving Feedback	Sharing perceptions of the other person's ideas or feelings. Disclosing relevant personal information.	"I felt in a similar way when"
Supporting	Showing warmth and caring in one's own individual way.	"I'm sorry you feel that way."
Checking Perceptions	Finding out if interpretations and perceptions are valid and accurate.	"Do I understand correctly, that you wanted...?"
Being Quiet	Giving the other person time to think as well as to talk.	" _____ "

Exercise

Within your table group, select some 'players' and use some language with one another that shows empathy about a garbage collection complaint, without agreeing with the complaining party.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

All Organizational Structures have Common Features

- Composed of individuals and groups of individuals.
- Orientated towards achieving common goals.
- Groups have different functions.
- It is intended to provide rational coordination.
- Provides continuity over time.

Principles of Organizational Design

1. Unity of Command - Every person in an organization should be responsible to one superior and receive orders from that person only.
2. The Scalar Principle - Decision-making authority and the chain of command in an organization should flow in a straight line from the highest level to the lowest. It evolves from the principle of unity of command. However, this may not always be possible, particularly in large organizations or in research institutions.
3. The Responsibility and Authority Principle - To successfully perform certain tasks, proper authority must accompany responsibility. Those responsible for performance of tasks must also have the appropriate level of influence on decision-making.
4. Span of Control - This refers to the number of specialized activities or individuals supervised by one person. Deciding the span of control is important for coordinating different types of activities effectively. Some of the important situational factors which affect the manager's span of control are:
 - a) Similarity of functions.
 - b) Proximity of the functions to each other and to the supervisor.
 - c) Complexity of functions.
 - d) Direction and control needed by subordinates.
 - e) Coordination required within and between units.
 - f) Extent of planning required.
 - i) Organizational help available for making decisions.

It is generally too difficult for an individual to effectively manage more than 7 to 10 employees who are directly reporting to that individual.

Issues in Organizational Design

Allocation of Decision Rights

There are trade-offs involved in decentralizing or centralizing decision authority. Also, decisions have to be made on how to organize subunits, for example, around products, functions or geography. The private sector has tended to decentralize decision-making to take advantage of information and other technologies and to respond to competitive pressures for timeliness and quality. Public organizations have traditionally kept greater centralization of authority and functional organization. One obvious reason is the political risks of bad decisions. However, even public organizations

are now moving to more decentralized styles to meet citizen needs for flexibility and responsiveness.

In allocating the authority to make decisions, it is useful to differentiate among the following steps in a decision-making process because the centralization-decentralization question is not an 'either/or' option. There is a continuum of options available: initiation of proposals; choice of the decision to be implemented; implementation and monitoring. Initiation and implementation are ministerial, whereas choice and monitoring are elements of control. To avoid misaligned incentives or conflicts of interest, decision control and decision implementation are often separated. Decision control is centralized to make sure the decisions are consistent with broad organizational goals. Decision implementation is decentralized to take advantage of specialized information at lower levels. However, there are situations that call for centralized decision implementation, for example, when significant innovation is called for and lower-level managers lack the necessary expertise and information to initiate change. Similarly, when decisions require local information not readily available to central managers, they are delegated to local managers. The optimal allocation of decision rights in an organization depends on a complex set of factors, including the following:

- **Managing the location of specialized knowledge cost effectively.** If unit managers have important knowledge that cannot be easily communicated to higher levels, decision-making is likely to be decentralized.
- **Technological change that renders existing specialized knowledge obsolete.** Unless knowledge of new technologies can be easily transferred to lower-level managers, decisions involving choices of technology will be centralized.
- **Benefits of rapid decision-making.** Centralized decision-making tends to be slower because it requires more communication.
- **Training and motivation (incentives) of workers and managers at different levels.** Decentralized management need to be well-trained and motivated.
- **Requirements for and costs of coordination across sub-units within an activity, as well as communication of information up and down the management hierarchy.** If information transfer is poor, central managers will not be able to make well-informed decisions and communicate them effectively. If considerable coordination across units is required, decisions may be made at higher levels.
- **Ability to monitor decisions and outcomes.** If management cannot easily monitor decisions made at lower levels, they may prefer to keep more decision-making authority.

One additional factor that is important in public organizations is the ability to change existing constraints. For example, the factors listed above may lead to decentralizing operational decisions, allowing the low level manager to freely allocate his/her resource mix subject to an overall budget constraint, or perhaps an output target. If laws and regulations that limit resource flexibility remain in place, decentralization becomes less beneficial and therefore a more centralized strategy is best.

Outsourcing is an important element of the allocation of decision rights. Outsourcing decisions are assigned by determining the structure of the organization. 'What' and 'whom' to outsource to is typically assigned to whoever has authority over the production process. However, some contracting requires highly specialized skills and generally decisions here are assigned centrally. Increasingly, simpler contracts (including minor purchases) can be handled at lower levels and even larger purchases are authorized locally, even though they may be purchased centrally with discounts.

Issues in Developing Organizations

Specialization – Specialization facilitates division of work into units for efficient performance. According to the

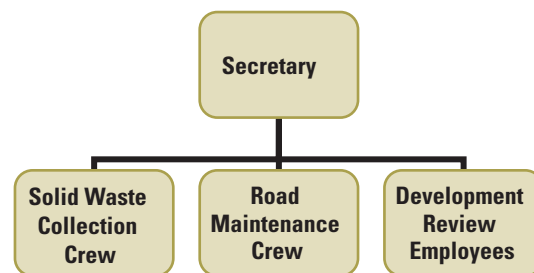
classical approach, work can be performed much better if it is divided into components and people are encouraged to specialize by components. Work can be specialized both horizontally and vertically. Vertical specialization refers to different kinds of work at different levels, such as project leader, field staff, etc. Horizontal specialization is where work is divided into departments like administration, accounts, etc.

Specialization enables application of specialized knowledge, which improves the quality of work and organizational efficiency. At the same time, it can also influence fundamental work attitudes, relationships and communication.

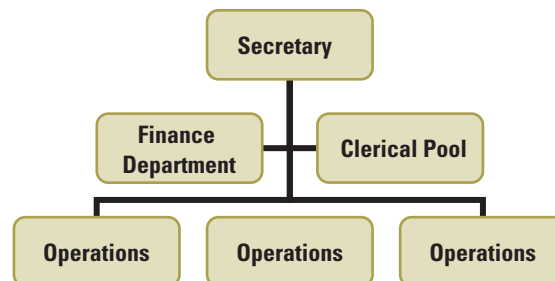
Coordination – Coordination refers to aligning the objectives and activities of specialized departments to realize broader organization-wide objectives.

Producing Organization Charts

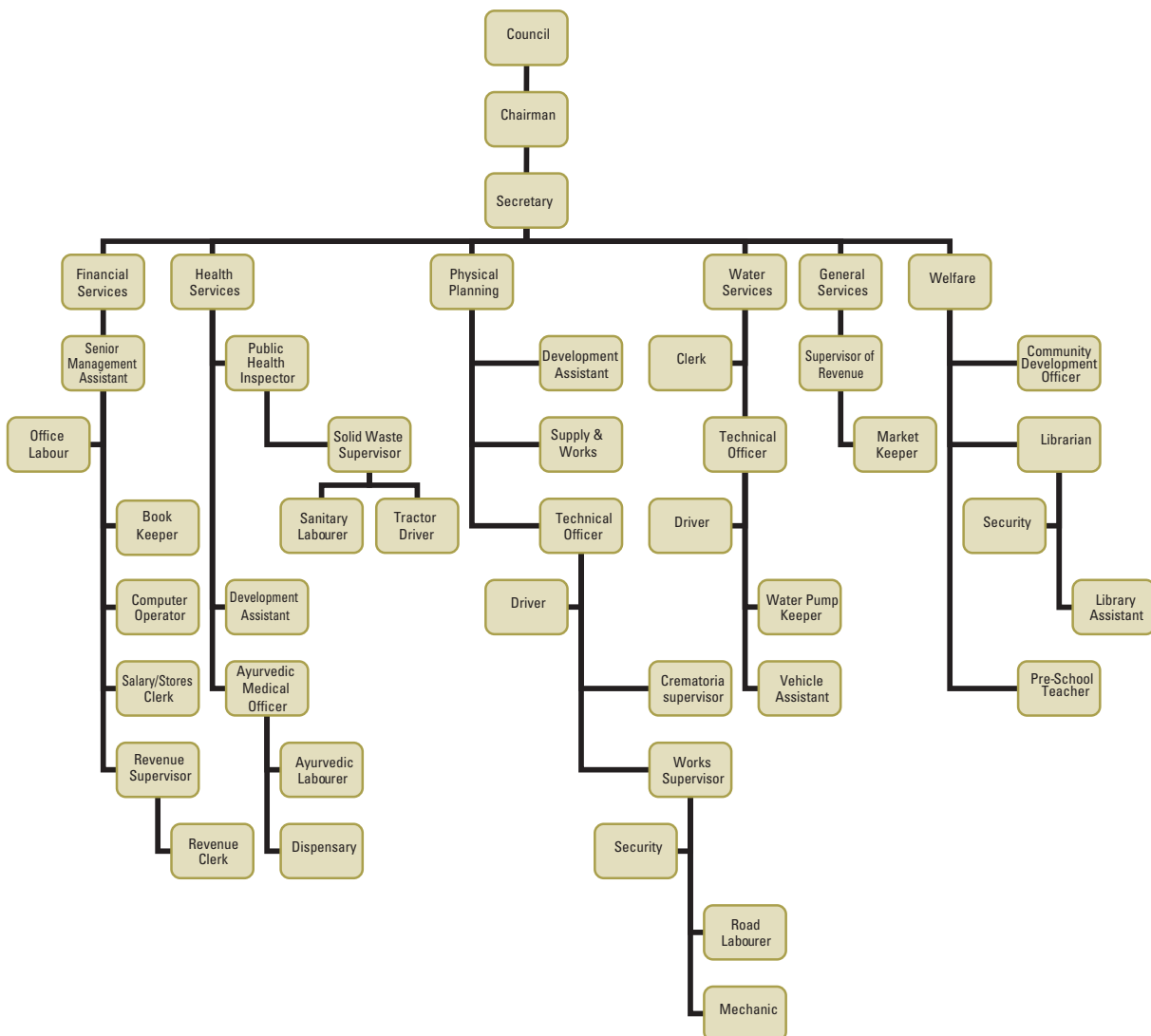
Line relationships (directly in the hierarchy of Secretary to product/service employee) - examples include solid waste collection crew, road maintenance crew and development review employees.



Staff relationships (helpers to produce the output) - these include Finance Department workers and other clerical support employees.



Typical LA Organizational Structure (showing reporting relationships, not levels within the organization)



Strategies for Organizational Improvement

- Flatten Organizations – reduce layers between the lowest and highest levels of the organization.
- Decentralize Authority – strive to have decisions made at the lowest possible level in the organization ensuring organizational objectives are met.
- Economies of Scale – strive to achieve economies of scale by concentrating expertise in some services and outsourcing others to either private companies or other LAs in your area.

Exercise

Using 'Microsoft Word', 'Excel' or by free hand, draw an Organizational chart of your organization. Identify staff and line functions. Describe the activities of the organization that are decentralized and those centralized. Describe how the organization has changed over the past two years.

2.1 Office Layout

Now that you have mastered the essentials of good external customer service and understand the value of different work group configurations, you are ready to move on to integrate internal and external customer service with a good office layout.

Office layouts that enhance good customer service and provide for efficient workflow are created by design and do not arbitrarily occur. Some basic principles for office layout are listed below. We will discuss some examples of your own LA's layouts with one another to explore how we are enhancing or inhibiting customer service, workflow and efficacy.

Exercise

Principles of Office Layout – Discuss with the whole group each principle and give some examples:

1. Individuals or work groups with frequent public contact should be located near the entrance of the premises.
2. Individuals or work groups, whose tasks require a considerable degree of concentration, should be placed in a low-traffic, quiet area of the office building.
3. Individuals or work groups performing similar or related duties should be located near one another.
4. Space allocation should be based on need, rather than the seniority of the individual, the nature of the work being performed, and the amount of specialized equipment required to do the job.
5. Groups or individuals providing specialized services should be located near the users of this service.
6. Hierarchical and communication relationships between individuals should be considered when planning a layout.
7. Work should come to the employees, not vice versa.
8. Workflow should revolve around major documents.
9. Interrelationships among equipment, information and flow of work should be analyzed.
10. Wherever possible, workflow should move in a straight line. Criss-crossing and backtracking should be avoided.
11. As the first priority, furniture and equipment should meet user needs.
12. Aisles should be sufficiently wide to accommodate rapid or hurried movement of employees.
13. Safety consideration should be given high priority in planning the office layout.
14. Large open areas are more efficient and flexible than smaller enclosed areas.
15. Adequate provisions have to be made for lighting, décor, air circulation or conditioning, humidity and noise control.

Workflow is the process, progress, or flow of work within a system and the rate at which it happens.

Workflow analysis refers to observing how this process takes place. The analysis also involves evaluating the process and improving it for efficiency and effectiveness. One way to analyze the workflow in your own operation is by graphing it using computer programs like 'Microsoft Word' or 'Excel' or even drawing it free hand.

There is no need to graph each step, but graph each person and key pieces of equipment, common office files and other individuals involved. Try to visualize your LA and consider the priorities between the customer coming in for the service,

how to make that process effective for both parties and the efficiency to reduce the number of steps to process the customer's request(s).

Exercise

1. Use graph paper with a scaled drawing of the available office space and scaled cut-outs of furniture and equipment for creating a trial layout of the office. Within the space provided, and without moving doors or windows, place workspaces for 10 desks, 5 file cabinets, 15 chairs, one FAX machine, 3 computers and one private office with 4 chairs and a desk. Draw the walls for the private office where you think they should be.
2. Analyze the results in terms of the 15 principles above.
3. Make several alternative layouts to see which one works the best.
4. Discuss options with affected employees and decision-makers.
5. Choose the best option. This may be one that incorporates a combination of several layouts.

Discussion Topics

Chose one topic (below) and discuss at your table for 15 minutes.

1. How does the layout of an office affect its efficiency and productivity?
2. What do you consider to be the 5 most important factors during the preliminary planning stage of a layout analysis? Be prepared to discuss the factors you identify.
3. Discuss 5 principles of effective office layout and give or cite examples where these principles have been violated.

2.2 Organizational Performance Monitoring

This is where outcomes are monitored to determine how individuals and work units in the organization are performing and to provide a basis for rewards.

Centralized and decentralized organizations monitor performance as part of their continuous improvement processes. Decentralized organizations rely on monitoring to ensure that lower level decisions are consistent with organization-wide goals.

Effective performance evaluation requires the organization to establish clear goals and develop meaningful measures. It is important to monitor all outcomes that are valued, not just the ones that are the target of reform. At a minimum, these include measures of the quantity of output as well as its quality and production cost.

Objective measures are preferred over subjective measures to ensure fairness and to avoid so-called influence costs (costs that are incurred when managers and workers try to influence outcomes, measures or decisions). However, in some situations it may be difficult to avoid using subjective measures.

Performance measures are evaluated against some standard of service. A number of options can be considered in determining what standard to use in a particular situation. Benchmarking (comparing your organization to similar ones elsewhere) is a form of relative performance standard. It works well when the benchmark can be reasonably applied to the organization being evaluated. It is critical to measure and monitor service in exactly the same way as the benchmark organization.

Since information collection and inappropriate performance measures are costly, the design of the system and its measures should be developed carefully to support the organization's strategy and modified as that strategy changes over time.

Incentives and Rewards – A well-designed system is key to a successful Incentives and Rewards Scheme. However, there are different thoughts on which kinds of rewards are most effective: material rewards (for example, incentive pay) or non-material rewards (for example, improvements in working conditions); extrinsic rewards (given by others to the individual) or intrinsic rewards (feelings of accomplishment); or individual or group rewards. The possibilities are seemingly endless. The economics literature tends to emphasize material rewards, which have the advantage of being tangible so that it is clear when a reward has been earned and given.

Some public managers believe that, in particular, monetary rewards are ineffective and potentially counter-productive when basic wages are fair and equitable. Certainly, they are counter-productive if they are not designed properly. Furthermore, there are situations in which none of the feasible incentives are efficient and in these cases, straight salary is preferred.

The evidence suggests that incentive pay is less effective when: the outcomes to be rewarded are uncertain; the influence of workers and managers on these outcomes is difficult to detect; and personnel are risk-averse or unresponsive to rewards. Studies of public employees suggest that they are more risk-averse than other employees and respond well to intrinsic rewards such as recognition. This is fortunate because typically, public organizations are constrained in their use of material rewards such as bonuses.

Discussion

What are your thoughts about incentives? What would work in your organization? Do financial incentives work? Why/Why not?

3. MANAGING PEOPLE AND PROCESSES

Managers, in their relationship with the staff they supervise, are responsible for exemplifying and maintaining the highest ethical standards and integrity in those relationships. They also represent the LA in their dealings with staff and managers in other departments, constituents, with elected officials and inter-jurisdictionally. Managers should always seek to advance the long-term interests of the LA, and to maximize the quality, effectiveness, and productivity of their departments and the employees for whom they are responsible.

Purpose

It is the manager's responsibility to establish a working environment that reflects the dignity and respect due to all employees. The manager should encourage all employees to make intelligent and responsible decisions, to set and maintain priorities, to identify creative alternatives and to take prudent risks. At the same time, standards used in employment and supervision must be applied firmly and equitably.

Managers must demonstrate knowledge and skills in the following areas:

1. Management of Human Resources
 - a. Managers are expected to create a workplace environment that is collaborative and flexible in which employees' ideas are encouraged and heard, and all employees foster high professional standards.
 - b. Managers are expected to communicate expectations clearly, provide periodic feedback on achievements and problem areas, coach and provide training to staff for professional development and improved performance.
 - c. Managers should know their own strengths and weaknesses as supervisors and must take responsibility for improving their skills and performance.
2. Management of Financial, Physical and Technological Resources
 - a. Resources should only be used to meet the LA's objectives. Managers are expected to operate their department within their budget. Elected officials, managers and supervisors should treat all funds and other resources with the care required as though each decision was going to be the lead story in a newspaper.
 - b. Managers are expected to make optimal use of available technology.
 - c. Managers are expected to have a good working knowledge of how their peers operate in other LAs and should seek to identify and learn from organizations that excel in the delivery of comparable services.
 - d. Managers are expected to have a good working knowledge of the needs and expectations of the LA's many constituencies, including the elected officials and ratepayers, whose needs and expectations pertain to their department or office.
 - e. Managers are expected to work to preserve and protect the LA's resources against losses. They should always safeguard the LA's reputation and cultivate goodwill in the larger community.

Discussion

What can your local manager do to improve the working conditions at your LA?

4. WRITING A PROCEDURE OR PROCESS STATEMENT

Summary

This session will be a simple examination of a Procedure or Process Statement. It discusses what a Procedure Statement is comprised of and how to develop procedure documents for a LA.

Key Points

- Procedures are adopted administratively and describe how to complete a certain task.
- Procedure Statements describe the steps required in accomplishing a task. It details 'who' (individuals or groups) does 'what', 'when' and 'why' as the task is processed.
- Procedures are an excellent way for managers to describe expectations and job requirements for employees.
- Preparing a Procedure Statement creates an ideal opportunity to achieve efficiencies by simplifying the task and reducing the number of steps.

Procedure Statements should Include the Answers to Four Main Questions

- Who?** 'Who' or 'which' group is responsible for completing the task?
- What?** 'What' are the specific steps and actions required? These are described as specific and detailed steps to complete the task.
- When?** 'When' will each step be started/completed? (Timeframe)
- Why?** 'Why' is this work being done?

Sample Procedure Statement

[WHO]

The Revenue Clerk for bicycle licenses will

[WHAT]

- Step One** complete the license form in triplicate from information supplied by the applicant **[WHEN]** while the applicant is at the desk.
- Step Two** The Revenue Clerk will direct the applicant to take all three copies of the completed form to the cashier.
- Step Three** The Cashier will collect the fee in accordance with cashiering procedures.
- Step Four** The Cashier will retain one copy of the form and send the applicant back to the appropriate Revenue Clerk with two copies of the stamped form indicating the fee has been paid.
- Step Five** The Revenue Clerk will **[WHY]** give the applicant a bicycle license and note the tag number on both copies of the stamped form.
- Step Six** The Revenue Clerk will retain one copy of the stamped form for the numerical file and return one copy to the applicant as a receipt for payment.

The entire process should take no more than 15 minutes.

How to Develop Procedure Statements

When developing Procedure Statements, it is important for the writer to understand how activities are currently being performed and how they wish to be performed if the purpose is to introduce a new method.

1. The writer should interview each person carrying out the various steps in the process to fully understand what is done and why. If items are files, the writer should determine who uses the files and what for. In many instances, documents are filed and never referred to again.
2. It is helpful for the writer to prepare a flowchart of the current steps and have this reviewed with the people carrying out the work to ensure complete understanding of the process. A simple flowcharting feature of 'Microsoft Word' can be used to prepare this. [See View, Toolbars, drawing. Then select AutoShapes (flowchart)].
3. A draft of the proposed procedure should be prepared and reviewed by those carrying out the work to ensure that the process will work and all elements are included.
4. When the procedure is accurate and complete, depending on the LA, it can either be put into place administratively or announced officially by the Council.

4.1 Simple Flowcharting

Flowcharting is a graphical representation of the sequence of operations, movements, inspections and approvals, delays, decisions and storage activities of a process.

Flowcharting uses symbols that have been in use for a number of years to represent the type of operations and/or processes being performed. The standardized format provides a common method for people to visualize problems together. The use of standardized symbols makes the flowcharts easy to interpret. However, standardized symbols is not as important as the sequence of activities that make up the process.

Uses of Flowcharts

- Documents process and interrelationship of process steps.
- Identifies actual and ideal path flows for any product or process.
- Can identify problems and potential improvements.

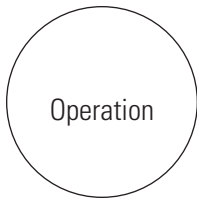
Flowcharts can be completed for entire processes, specific portions of processes, for one person or a group of people. The tool is fairly flexible in its application.

Flowcharting Tips: Note or chart all the 'exceptions', not just the most common ways of carrying out an activity or process.

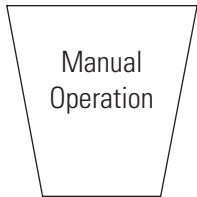
Process Flowcharting - Basic Symbols

For the purpose of this training, only basic symbols used for industrial engineering and process writing are covered in this area.

If using a software package, there are a multitude of templates that can be used to build a flowchart. The quantity of symbols provided depends on the quality of the software package.



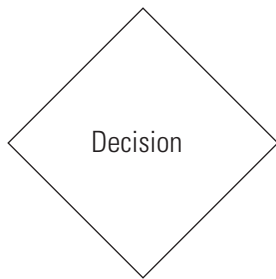
An **operation** occurs when an object (product, document, etc.) is intentionally changed in any of its physical or chemical characteristics, assembled or disassembled from another object, or tagged for another operation, transportation, inspection or storage. Operations also occur when information is transmitted or received, or when planning or calculations take place.



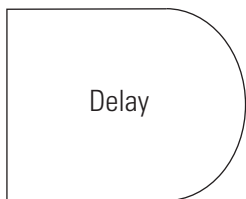
Manual Operation - Is sometimes used to denote operations that are carried out manually.



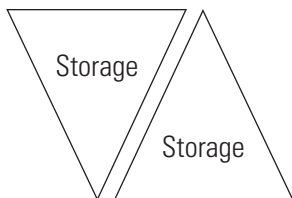
Inspection, Verification or Measurement - An inspection, verification or measurement happens when an object is examined for identification or is verified for quality or quantity in any of its characteristics. The symbol also indicates that a decision must be made.



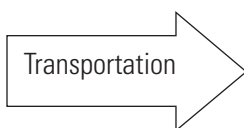
Decision-Making/Approval - The diamond, typically used for document or software processes, also represents a decision or an approval point. Typically, if yes, the task sequence flows to the right, if no, it flows to the left.



Delay - A delay is typically shown as a half circle or a capital D. A delay occurs to an object when conditions, (except intentional changes to the physical or chemical characteristics of the object) do not require immediate performance of the next planned step.



Storage – Storage occurs when an object is kept and protected from unauthorized removal. The symbol on the immediate left typically indicates in-bound goods. When the triangle is inverted, it typically represents storage or filing.



Transportation - Transportation occurs when an object is moved from one place to another. The exception is where such movements are a part of the operation or are caused by the operator at the work station during an operation and/or inspection/verification/approval.

Exercise

Developing a Procedure Statement

Time required: 30 minutes

Purpose: To practice developing a procedure statement that includes all four components: 'who', 'what', 'when' and 'why'.

Process: Designate a procedure writer. Each table should decide on a process to document from their LA. If all of the participants of a particular process are not present, assign 'roles' to people at the table. The Procedure writer will 'interview' each person and document the current process. The group prepares a simple flowchart for the current steps. The group then discuss the steps and determine if there are better ways to accomplish the activity to achieve efficiencies e.g. reduce the number of steps. The new process is documented and a simple flowchart prepared.

Each group will present to the full class both the current and proposed steps and describe the efficiencies achieved.

5. PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Key Opportunities for Good Personnel Management

- Aligning organization and human resources.
- Ensuring that the public is served.
- Creating a trained workforce.
- Creating an ethical and transparent culture.

5.1 Performance Management

Know what you want to achieve and define what the results are to be.

The first rule of performance management is communication. The expectations of performance, progress and results must be communicated to the appropriate individuals.

The second rule of performance management is to monitor. You must know how you are doing compared to your objectives.

The fundamental criteria that every performance system should strive to meet:

1. The values and beliefs important to the organization must be fully integrated into the performance management system.
2. The system should include input from all levels of the organization. Visible senior management support from the outset facilitates 'buy-in' and organization wide acceptance of the process. Involving management and employees in the design phase ensures that they understand the process from the ground up and encourages them to participate.
3. Appropriate organizational performance measures must be used. Identifying ten to twenty critical measures gives organizations the information they need to determine how well they are doing in achieving their goals. These measures must be shared with line management and synchronized with other reporting processes to keep the entire organization informed of its progress against group and individual goals and objectives.
4. Links between individual jobs and overall goals must be emphasized. Effective systems create a 'line of sight' for employees, helping them see a direct relationship among their skills, their job descriptions, and the goals and objectives of the organization.

Role of the Supervisor

Supervisors have a vital role to play in performance management. They provide the link between agency goals and individual employees. Through their actions and attitudes, they help to create a culture that supports performance management. Supervisors are the front-line implementers of the process for individual performance management. An effective performance management system cannot be realized in an organization without active involvement and support of the organization's supervisors.

Supervisors have the following responsibilities within performance management:

- Effectively use the individual performance management process to:
 - Establish clear expectations for employees.
 - Provide honest and timely feedback – both formal and informal.

- Support employees' growth and development.
- Recognize and reward desired performance.
- Correct undesirable performance.
- Remain focused on helping employees to succeed.
- To provide leadership to employees and to help create a supportive performance management culture.
- To be fair, reasonable, accountable, consistent and timely.
- To communicate honestly and directly.
- To follow the organization's policies, procedures and guidelines for performance management.
- To ask for assistance when required, from their manager, human resources or peers.

5.2 Delegation

Delegation is a skill we have all heard of, but few people understand. It can be used either as an excuse for dumping failure onto the shoulders of subordinates or as a dynamic tool for motivating and training your team to realize their full potential.

Benefits of Delegation

- Improved Efficiency
- Employee Self-Esteem and Empowerment

The sharing of influence and responsibilities, which we have been suggesting is at the heart of staff development and delegation, also involves the redistribution of power within the organization. For some managers, the idea of shifting power downwards and sideways within the organization is problematic. It sounds, among other things, like the manager is losing control. This would be the reality if certain actions were not taken to assure standards are met and those to whom you are delegating are not ready to assume more authority or share responsibilities. Dispersing power to subordinates without systematic methods to replace the discipline, an order that defines most bureaucratic organizations, would be irresponsible. Given this, it is important for managers and their staff to better understand what is meant by power within organizations and what we can do to unleash its energy as an organizational resource.

Before going any further, we should add that the term 'power' has been replaced in management discussions by something called 'empowerment'. Power, in its most traditional organizational context, has been defined as top-down 'command and control'. By contrast, empowerment is providing employees with the right tools and methods (including delegated authority) to help them make more intelligent decisions to improve performance at all levels of the organization.

When you delegate, you empower someone else to act for you. The act of delegation involves conferring some of your functions or powers to another, so he/she can act on your behalf.

You can see from the definition why delegation is so problematical for so many people as it involves giving away some control. Couple that with the fact that many people believe that no one else is going carry out the task, whatever it is, as well as they do, you may have a group that's very resistant to delegation.

Delegation is a critical skill for organizational success. No one can be good at everything, and managing a work unit or large organization involves so many different tasks and skills that some sort of division of labour becomes necessary to accomplish everything.

Delegation Tips

- Wherever possible, when delegating work, **give the person a whole task to do**.
- If you can't give the employee a whole task, make sure they understand the **overall purpose of the project or task**. If possible, connect them to the group that is managing or planning the work. Staff members contribute most effectively when they are aware of the big picture.
- Make sure the staff person **understands exactly what you want them to do**. Ask questions, have the employee give you feedback to make sure your instructions were understood or watch the work being performed. You must identify what resources are available to complete the task.
- If you have a mental picture of what a successful outcome or output will look like, **share your picture with the staff person**. You need to make the person understand what you want and not misguide them into believing that any outcome will do, unless you really feel that way. These are called guidelines.
- Identify the key points of the project or dates **when you want feedback on progress**. You need assurance that the delegated task or project is on track.
- Identify the **measurements or the outcome** you will use to determine that the project was successfully completed. This will make performance monitoring more measurable and less subjective.
- Determine in advance how you will **thank and reward the staff person** for their successful completion of the task or project you delegated.

Successful delegation of authority as a leadership style takes time and energy. However, it has great value in helping employee involvement and empowerment to succeed as a leadership style. It's worth the time and energy to help employees succeed, develop and meet your expectations. You build the employee's self-confidence and people who feel successful usually are successful.

Supervision

One of the ways that a supervisor grows in effectiveness is to regularly delegate duties and to monitor that the duties have been performed. Otherwise, a supervisor will end up performing all of the duties and lose sight of the overall management of tasks that need completion.

What follows is a simple form that can help any supervisor to understand their role and to aid in communicating a particular task to a staff member.

SIX ELEMENTS OF GOOD DELEGATION

1. What is the task or project?

2. Who are the people involved, other than yourself?

3. What are the desired results?

4. What are the guidelines?

5. What resources are available?

6. How will performance be measured? When will progress reports be given?

7. What are the consequences of accomplishing (or not accomplishing) the desired results within the terms of good delegation?

5.3 Employee Evaluations

Evaluating an employee is a key step in performance management and achieving organizational goals.

What motivates employees, money or praise?

Most people want to do a good job, but they need communication and feedback from supervisors. Unfortunately, they rarely get it. They then get discouraged and withdraw.

Any good evaluation is a two-step process that ensures regular two-way communication between the supervisor and the employee:

1. Employee Self-Evaluation.
2. Supervisor's Performance Review.

Nothing should be a surprise for the employee in the performance review. Following are some sample forms that can be completed manually or on the computer.

Sri Lankan Service Forms contain the following headings:

Performance Evaluation Report – Junior Staff

Part I : Self-Assessment

Personnel Details

Duty List

Public Communication

Training

Part II : Assessment by Officer-in-Charge

Performance

Public Communication
General Conductance
Special Characteristics
Evaluation and Monitoring

Part III : Assessment by Evaluator

Assessment
Observation

Performance Evaluation Report – General Clerical Staff

Part I : Self-Assessment

Personnel Details
Duty List
Written Communication – Letters
Written Communication – Record Keeping
Filing
Accounting
Public Communication
Productivity
Training

Part II : Assessment by Officer-in-Charge

Written Communication
Accounting
Duty List
Public Communication
General Conductance
Special Characteristics
Evaluation and Monitoring

Part III : Assessment by Evaluator

Assessment
Observation

In preparation for these official forms, the following forms can help you think through all of the aspects of performance so that you can honestly and completely address the above issues.

EMPLOYEE SELF-EVALUATION FORM

CONFIDENTIAL

Employee's Name: _____

Evaluation Period: _____

Designation: _____

Department: _____

Manager/Supervisor: _____

***Instructions:** This form is to be completed by the employee being evaluated and should be the first step in the process of evaluation. The employee should fill in the areas below and return to the Rater who will consider the employee's comments in developing the evaluation.*

Major goals, accomplishments and challenges during this rating period.

Comments:

(On a computer these boxes will expand as comments are entered.)

Employee's overall self-evaluation of performance.

Comments:

Development plans and areas targeted for improved performance.

Comments:

Recommended major goals and objectives for next year.

Comments:

How can your manager and department assist in the success and enjoyment of your job?

Comments:

Employee's Signature:

Date:

Employee's Name:

Rater's comments on employee input form.

Comments:

Rater's Signature:

Date:

Rater's Name:

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SYSTEM**Supervisor's Review**

CONFIDENTIAL

Employee's Name: _____

Evaluation Period: _____

Rating Levels

Employee performance should be evaluated using the following levels of performance.

C Code	P Performance Level	D Definition
S	Superior	Superior performance, which far exceeds the expected standards.
C	Commendable	Performance exceeding normal expectations of job success.
E	Effective	Performance meets all critical standards of competence.
NI	Needs Improvement	Employee is not meeting all critical standards of performance and improvement is required.
U	Unsatisfactory	Employee is not meeting most of the critical standards of performance and immediate and significant change is mandatory.
NR	Not Rated	This factor cannot be rated.
NA	Not Applicable	This factor is not applicable to this job.

Performance Evaluation Factors:

Knowledge/Technical Skills: Professional/technical competence; awareness of external trends, issues; knowledge of LA policy, procedures, systems; other skills and knowledge.

Rating: _____ Comments:

Output and Productivity: Planning, organizing and time management; efficiency/productivity/cost effectiveness; energy, diligence, work habits; initiative/independence/self direction; response to deadlines, follow through; technology management; performance against goals and objectives; attendance/punctuality.

Rating: _____ Comments:

Judgment and Work Quality: Decision-making, judgment; quality and accuracy; perception of role; creativity, innovation; vision and perspective; professionalism, conduct and integrity; safety.

Rating: _____ Comments:

Working Relationships: Teamwork/cooperation/coordination; flexibility/adaptability; diplomacy, persuasion, tact; interpersonal skills; oral communications; perception and interpersonal sensitivity; client, customer service orientation; dealing with public.

Rating: _____ Comments:

Overall Performance Rating:

Rating: _____ Comments:

The following additional factors should be evaluated for jobs involving significant responsibility for managing people.

Managerial Measures: HR/personnel management; leadership; diversity management; team-building; accessibility, visibility; influencing/negotiating; conflict management; budget development, administration; financial management and cost effectiveness.

Rating: _____ Comments:

Work Unit Performance: Efficiency, functionality; flexible, responsive; customer service orientation; morale; teamwork, internal relations; performance against goals, accountability.

Rating: _____ Comments:

5.4 Recruitment, Interviewing and Reference Checking

Recruiting talented people to an organization is key to building a successful workforce. Although permanent employees are part of the Provincial Government service, LAs do have the responsibility to hire temporary workers. This section will help you understand the basics of recruiting and selecting applicants.

There are four distinct steps that should be followed before the actual recruitment process i.e. job analysis, job description, job specification and pay determination.

1. **Job Analysis** - Job analysis is a systematic study of the tasks comprising a job; the knowledge, skills and abilities required to do the job; time factors; situation factors such as technology use, physical aspects, information flows, interpersonal and group interactions; and historical traditions associated with the job.
2. **Job Description** - A job description summarizes clearly and concisely the essential information gathered in the job analysis.
3. **Job Specification** - A job specification details the qualifications necessary for an incumbent to be able to perform the functions of the job. Included in job specifications would be:
 - Knowledge, skills, abilities and other competencies.
 - Required experience, training, education, licenses and certification.
 - Level of organizational responsibility.
 - Physical and mental demands of the job.

These three processes will help you write an effective job vacancy notice and will help you sort through the many applications and screen out those which lack the minimum requirements for the job.

4. **Pay Determination** - The pay range for a position should be determined after you have specified the job requirements and chosen the appropriate job class or class series. LAs should consider posting positions with a salary comparable to similar jobs at the authority.

Interviewing Tips

- Ask standardized questions.
- Interview questions should cover objective job-related criteria, which should be consistently applied.
- Stick to questions about the essential functions of the job. Only ask those questions that will give you information about whether or not the applicant has the essential knowledge and competencies to perform the job well. Interviewers can and should ask follow-up questions to clarify or expand responses to questions.
- All interviews should be conducted in the same environment.
- All interviewees should be asked the same questions.
- The interviewee should be informed prior to the interview if there is going to be a selection panel or if they will be required to take any tests.

What Questions Should I Not Ask?

This is obviously not an exhaustive list! The following questions are not job-related and are inappropriate for a job interview.

- Do you have a disability?
- Are you pregnant?

- How old are you?
- What is your religion or ethnicity?
- Are you married or do you have children?
- How many days sick leave did you take at your last job?
- Have you ever been arrested?

What Can I Ask?

- Can you perform the essential functions of this job?

Organizational Fit

One of the most important things to consider when hiring applicants is how they fit in with the organization. People that can fit in with an organization's culture have a much better chance of success than others. Ask yourself these questions: Does the person fit the organization's needs? Does the job/organization fit the person's needs? If either of these answers are no, then you are most likely hiring someone who will probably be looking for a different job very soon.

Selection Panels

A selection panel is a group of people who conduct the recruitment process for a job vacancy. The members work together to provide varying perspectives and to eliminate bias, etc. They usually consist of about three to five members, which should remain the same throughout the interview process. You should try to construct a diverse panel based on ethnicity, gender, job level and type, age, etc. The selection panel should have a leader in order to manage the process. All panel members need to commit the necessary time to study applicants' materials and to fully participate in all meetings and interviews. Each individual should be an equal member of the panel.

Reference Checks

Reference checks are important in order to verify information and ensure that you are aware of any serious problems in the candidate's past. There are several different background checks that can be carried out on potential employees.

Criminal Record Check	These are recommended for positions, which involve close, unsupervised contact with the public, such as a Security Guard and for any other type of position that is determined to be 'security sensitive'.
Driving Record Check	These are recommended for applicants who will be using a LA vehicle and should be conducted before the applicant is actually hired. The employer could be held liable for negligent hiring if they knew or should have known about anything contained in the record. Employers should also make sure that the applicant has a valid driver's license.
Past Employer Check	Past employer checks should be carried out on all applicants. In order to obtain the most in-depth and useful information, you should always try to contact the candidate's former supervisors and not just the human resources department. Additionally, you should always have the permission of the applicant before you proceed.
Personal Reference Check	This usually consists of references from friends, relatives or fellow co-workers. This type of reference check should NEVER be used as a substitute for past employer reference checks.

5.5 Work Environment

The work environment is important to both employees as well as employers. It is incumbent on LA management to create working environments that are safe, non-discriminatory, and accepting of diversity and multi-cultural differences. This will reduce, if not eliminate, disengagement by employees.

5.6 Training

An effective training programme can be an important management tool for every organization. Training and educational opportunities enhance career development and are often used to increase productivity, raise job satisfaction, or decrease absenteeism and turnover. With the growing cost of replacing employees, organizations may consider training vital to successful management, not just a benefit.

Training that is offered to employees should be based on an objective and periodic assessment of work-related needs. Training opportunities should not be treated as a reward or perk for the employee. Training is like any other expenditure of the LA and should be viewed in terms of an investment that must create a 'return' to the organization.

Coaching is one form of employee development that can be used to target specific individuals and link their work to organizational goals. This type of development differs from mentoring because it centres on specific tasks and goals instead of focusing on the possibility of developing or exploring an employee's options. It can be implemented on an informal basis, by drawing on the wisdom of current employees or 'coaches' to help lead and direct other employees. Coaching can also take the form of professional or executive level coaches who are hired in order to raise performance expectations by linking individual effectiveness to top-level business strategies and goals. Ideally coaches should have high-level business experience, strong interpersonal skills, integrity, political savvy, flexibility, creativity and organizational insight.

A good time to talk to employees about training needs would be when the annual performance review is carried out. The forms in Section 5.3 provides an annual development plan for each employee. This plan can help steer training to real demands of the job and not just nice things to learn.

5.7 Employee Orientation

Orientation for new employees is probably the most neglected function in government. Countless horror stories exist about how new employees receive a ten-minute talk with the manager, and is directed to his/her office position, with no further guidance or instruction. Not only is this extremely stressful for the employee, but it virtually guarantees a very long period of unproductiveness for the employee.

Keep in mind that orientation is also important for existing employees if a) they have never received proper orientation or b) there have been many changes in the organization, its purpose and function or c) they take a new position within the LA.

Purposes of Orientation

Orientation is required for the following reasons:

1. To Reduce Start-up-Costs

Proper orientation can help the employee get 'up-to-speed' much more quickly, thereby reducing the costs associated with learning the job. This is an excellent opportunity to communicate to new employees what the expectations of the organization are in terms of work ethics, customer service, responsiveness and attendance.

2. To Reduce Anxiety

Any employee, when put into a new, strange situation, will experience anxiety that can impede his or her ability to learn the job. Proper orientation helps to reduce anxiety that results from entering into an unknown situation. It also helps to provide guidelines for behaviour and conduct, so the employee doesn't have to experience the stress of guessing.

3. To Reduce Employee Turnover

Turnover increases as employees feel they are not valued, or are put in positions where they cannot possibly do their jobs. Orientation shows that the organization values the employee and helps provide the tools necessary for succeeding in the job.

4. To Save Time for Supervisor and Co-Workers

Simply put, the better the initial orientation, the less likely supervisors and co-workers will have to spend time teaching the employee.

5. To Develop Realistic Job Expectations, Positive Attitudes and Job Satisfaction

It is important that employees learn early on what is expected of them and others, in addition to learning about the values and attitudes of the organization. While people can learn from experience, they will make many mistakes that are unnecessary and potentially damaging.

Two Kinds of Orientation

There are two related kinds of orientation. The first is called Overview Orientation and deals with the basic information an employee will need to understand the broader system he/she works in. Overview Orientation includes helping employees understand:

- Government in general, the department and/or the branch.
- Important policies and general procedures (non job-specific).
- Information about compensation and benefits.
- Safety and accident prevention issues.
- Employee issues (rights, responsibilities).
- Physical facilities.

Often, Overview Orientation can be conducted by the Personnel Department with a little help from the specific department manager or immediate supervisor, since much of the content is generic in nature.

The second kind of orientation is called Job-Specific Orientation, and is the process that is used to help employees understand:

- Function of the organization and how the employee fits in.
- Job responsibilities, expectations and duties.
- Policies, procedures, rules and regulations.
- Layout of workplace.
- Introduction to co-workers and other people in the broader organization.

Job-specific orientation is best conducted by the immediate supervisor and/or manager, since much of the content will be specific to the individual. Often, the orientation process will be ongoing with supervisors and co-workers supplying coaching.

Some Tips

1. Orientation should begin with the most important information (basic job survival).
2. Orientation should emphasize people as well as procedures. Employees should get a chance to know people and their approaches and styles in both social and work settings.
3. Partner an employee to a more experienced person, but make sure this person wants to help and has the interpersonal skills. This provides ongoing support.
4. Introduce employees to both information and people in a controlled way. A new employee cannot absorb everything at once, so don't waste your time. Spread out introductions.

Conclusion

Orientation (or lack of it) will make a significant difference in how quickly an employee can become more productive and it also has long-term effects on the organization. Note, that any complete programme will include both job-specific and overview material.

5.8 Discipline

Perhaps the most unpleasant task for supervisors and managers is the task of disciplining an employee. While some staff seem to think that managers take some perverse pleasure in the process, the truth is that it is usually dreaded, and often done in an ineffective way.

Some common errors in discipline are listed below. They are described in such a way to help you formulate an approach to discipline, based on sound principles.

Error 1: Discipline As Punishment

Perhaps one of the most prevalent errors is based on the idea that discipline is punishment. The manager that perceives discipline as a punishment process tends to apply negative sanctions, expecting that those sanctions will have some sort of positive effect; for example, to eliminate the unwanted behaviour simply through the 'threat' of additional sanctions. Discipline should be designed to improve performance and not as punishment.

- Unfortunately, the use of negative sanctions on their own bring about unpredictable results. For example, if an employee were chronically late, would you require them to work later in the day to 'make-up' for the lateness, or would you cancel their scheduled training programme?

The proper perspective is to consider discipline as an opportunity for the employee to learn. Discipline in this approach should focus on what the employee must learn in order to bring his/her behaviour in line with the needs and expectations of the organization.

Error 2: Discipline As a Confrontation

A second error is that some managers see discipline as something done 'to' an employee, not something done 'with' an employee. Consider discipline as requiring the staff member and you to work together to solve a problem. The fundamental task, when possible, is to create a situation which encourages the staff member to work with you to identify causes of problematic behaviour, and to take action to correct those problems. Discipline needs to be a 'we' process.

- An example of this approach would be for a supervisor to discuss the problems with the employee and ask the employee for a suggested disciplinary action. If the employee suggests something that is not appropriate or not equal to the offence, then the supervisor and the employee should discuss the differences until a mutually agreeable action is reached. In the end, it is the supervisor who must determine the discipline, so do not fall into the trap of endless discussions.

Error 3: Too Little, Too Late

It's probably safe to say that managers do not go hunting for disciplinary problems. Sometimes though, managers are too slow to respond to an emerging issue or problem. There are a number of reasons for this:

- Tendency to see an emerging problem (i.e. a first instance), as a quirk, a fluke, or accident and something not worth addressing.
- Desire to have harmony.
- Perception that discipline is a cause of disharmony.
- Simple dread in dealing with the problem.

The reason why delay is problematic is that it sends a message that undesirable behaviour will be accepted or even not noticed. Second, delay can have an adverse effect on the manager if the problem increases in frequency and intensity to the point where it cannot be ignored. When a problem is allowed to grow, the manager will often develop an emotional set towards the employee that makes constructive interaction difficult.

It is very important that inappropriate behaviour or actions in the workplace be, at minimum, noted, and the fact communicated with the staff member at the first occurrence. This need not be a lengthy difficult discussion, particularly if the event is relatively minor. The really lengthy, unpleasant discussions tend to occur as a result of not addressing problems early on.

Error 4: A Non-Progressive Approach

Related to the previous point (Error 3) is the issue of progressiveness, or lack of it. Progressive discipline starts with the least possible use of power and disciplinary action, and over time, will involve stronger actions if the situation continues.

Managers who delay disciplinary action tend to wait until action must be taken i.e. when the situation has become so severe that it must be addressed immediately. Often, the manager feels the need to apply harsh sanctions, perhaps because the inappropriate behaviour has become more extreme. Non-progressive measures (harsh initial action), when applied to a long-running, but not-addressed problem, often seem too harsh by the employee and on occasion, by their co-workers. The key here is to start with the least forceful action as early as possible, unless of course the offence is so severe that it requires immediate harsh action.

- Progressive discipline means having a light discipline with the first offence and progressively more serious consequences with each subsequent offence of a similar nature.

Error 5: Missing Root Causes

It is understandable when beleaguered and frustrated managers/supervisors are harsh or 'lay down the law' to a problem employee. In some cases, a problem employee may require this kind of approach, particularly if they have the skills to do what is desired, but have not been applying the skills for one reason or another. But in many situations, exhortation, threats or an offer of positive rewards may have little effect on behaviour, simply because they do not address the root causes of the problem and leave the employee on their own to figure out a solution.

Sometimes an employee is not succeeding because they lack the skills (even if they are not aware of the skill deficit). Sometimes it is because they have underlying personal or psychological problems. Also, an employee may not be succeeding because the system in which he/she works is not set up to engineer success. Without knowing the root causes underlying a performance problem it will be difficult to work with an employee to improve that performance.

Exercise

What is the purpose of discipline? When is it required? Discuss in small groups and report back to the whole group.

6. THE RIGHT WAY TO DEAL WITH THINGS THAT GO WRONG

Who's at fault? When things go wrong, it is important not to find blame, but to correct the situation and take steps to ensure it doesn't happen again.

6.1 Preventing a Problem from Occurring Again

First, you must understand what caused the problem. It is all too easy to blame the mistake on an employee. Most problems are the result of poor management. Several different things can cause these:

1. System Issues

In this case, the problem is that the work system was not designed in a way to preclude the problem from happening. It can be cured by improving the procedures or instituting new incentives into the system.

2. Poor Direction

In this case, management did not give the employee enough information or direction to handle the situation correctly. These problems can be cured by utilizing the good delegation form presented earlier, or taking more time when instructions are given to ensure the employee has the complete picture of what is required and expected.

3. Lack of Training or Knowledge

In this case, management assigned the responsibility to the wrong individual or failed to give the individual adequate training in how to accomplish the task.

4. Wilful Disobedience or Failure to Follow Prescribed Procedures

In this case, the employee is at fault and responsible. Management needs to discuss the issue with the employee to determine the most appropriate steps to take to ensure that such action is not repeated. Progressive discipline is called for, which is aimed not at punishment, but at correcting the underlying wilful disobedience or failure to follow procedures.

5. Falsehoods, Cheating and Stealing

These too are cases where the person committing these acts is at fault and action is required by management to effectively demonstrate the unacceptability of these actions. Again, steps need to be progressive and be orientated to correcting the behaviour, not punishment.

Exercise

Read the following case study and identify the root cause of why things went wrong. Identify actions management should take to prevent the problem from occurring again.

Anywatta Pradeshiya Sabha is a LA in Sri Lanka of approximately 50,000 people. It is an agricultural centre with a relatively stable government. The Chairman has been in office for the past 8 years. He is politically popular because he has worked hard to improve services to citizens.

One of the special projects the Chairman has been interested in over the past few years is the creation of new jobs by recruiting new businesses to locate in the area. A few months ago, he was successful in getting an Indian firm to locate a manufacturing facility in the area. The company began building the new facility along a local roadway.

Unbeknown to the Chairman, the maintenance crew dug a new drainage ditch across the driveway to the property as part of a maintenance project. The new driveway was not noted on their plans that were prepared last year.

As a result, the Indian firm called the Chairman and complained about blocking construction access to the property. They described concern about completing the project because they felt unwelcome in the community.

7. COMMUNICATION

7.1 Use of Policy Within the Organization

Various types of Policy Statements are used within an organization to communicate with employees, citizens and stakeholders about the desires of management for the organization. Policy can take the form of either compulsory or advisory statements. In the former, the requirements of the policy are compulsory and must be followed. In the case of advisory statements, these express goals and expectations and are a way of communicating how employees are expected to behave or act. It is important to clearly identify if a policy is compulsory or advisory as part of its adoption.

Policy Statements

Summary

This section will be a simple examination of a Policy Statement. It discusses what a Policy Statement looks like and describes each part of the statement. Information will be given on the difference between using Policy Statements as internal work procedures and deciding to pass these policies as formal, official by-laws of the LA. The next section will describe how to develop revenue collection Policy Statements for a LA.

Key Points

- Policy Statements can be formal, official by-laws of the LA adopted according to the proper procedures or can be informal working procedures for completing a certain task.
- Policy Statements should consist of four main parts and should answer the four questions – ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘when’ and ‘why’.
- The answer to the ‘what’ question should directly relate to the ‘why’ question.
- Policy Statements should not be long, in-depth paragraphs. They should be simple, easy to understand and describe what the LA will do.

LA Council Policy Statements are important tools in the administration of local government. These statements might be informal, internal direction to staff and used only to carry out work of the LA in the form of guidelines adopted by vote of the Council of the LA. Secretaries and Commissioners have the responsibility to ask the LA Council to adopt Policy Statements. It is very important to have policies in place that describe the approaches and direction that will be used by the LA.

Policy Statements should Include the Answers to Four Main Questions

- Who?** ‘Who’ or ‘which’ group is responsible for completing the task?
- What?** ‘What’ will that person or group do? ‘What’ is done, directly answers the ‘why’ question.
- When?** ‘When’ will the work be started/completed? (Timeframe).
- Why?** ‘Why’ is this work being done? ‘Why’ is an answer to the ‘what’ question.

Taken together, the answers to these four questions will form the Policy Statement being developed. When trying to create a Policy Statement, officials should be sure to include the answers to all four of these questions. Policy Statements should not be abstract or theoretical, but should be specific and exact statements that state what will be done.

Sample Policy Statement

[WHO] The LA will **[WHAT]** produce data on the revenues it collects **[WHEN]** monthly and the Secretary/Commissioner will then analyze the information, including how much revenue each source is providing, **[WHY]** so that information can be provided to Elected Officials, Finance Committee and the public concerning revenues for the year-to-date.

By-Laws

These are more formalized regulations affecting citizens and staff that are adopted by the Council and are called By-Laws. These are a form of Policy Statement but carry the weight of law. These are definitely mandatory Policy Statements. Pages 136 – 141 (English version) of the manual Work Procedures for Local Authorities produced by the Sri Lanka Institute of Local Governance details by-law procedures and how to officially adopt new by-laws. This process is summarized as follows:

1. LA Council approves the by-law by majority vote of the Council, after consultation with the Provincial Commissioner of Local Government (CLG).
2. The LA Chairman/Mayor seeks approval of the Provincial Chief Minister, through the CLG.
3. After approval of the Chief Minister, the LA Chairman/Mayor publishes the by-law in the Government Gazette.
4. After publication, the Provincial Council must approve the by-law.
5. The approval or rejection of the Provincial Council is published in the Government Gazette.
6. If approved, the LA displays copies of the by-law in all three languages at the Council Office with each language copy available for purchase at the same location.

7.2 Procedure Manual

Another good way to communicate with employees about work expectations is to collect all documented work procedures, prepared as described in Section 4 of this module, and place them into a 3-ring binder. It is good practice to maintain a list of the Policy Statements and Procedure Statements, initialled by the employee who reviewed them. The list should note the date of the statement to ensure they have reviewed the most current version. Each employee should have access to the list of current work procedures. Having this binder available is a useful way of keeping current versions for review by all employees.

7.3 Internal Office Communication

One of the most important tasks of management is to keep employees informed about plans, directions and new initiatives. Nobody likes surprises and employees are no exception. Keeping employees informed on a regular basis makes them feel valued and important. Feeling this way, they are more likely to take the initiative to help the organization pursue its goals. This is important for several reasons:

1. Employees are ambassadors for the LA. The more they know, the better they are able to communicate factually to the public.
2. If employees are knowledgeable of issues and direction, they are able to pursue those goals in the manner desired by management.
3. Employees that are informed of direction, new initiatives and issues confronting the LA, are able to engage in their work and can perform better with higher morale.

Methods of Communicating with Groups of Employees

Written Approaches

1. Periodic memos or letters on important topics of interest to employees.
2. Written policies and procedures.
3. Annual Reports on activities of the previous year (called an Administrative Report).
4. Action Plans of desired outcomes for the next year.
5. Annual Budget.

Face-to-Face Methods

Keeping employees informed and involved gives them a wider perspective on issues and they are able to meaningfully comment on circulated drafts of policies, procedures etc. Thus quality information is available to make better decisions. Further, nothing alienates employees more than being kept in the dark about future actions that affect their work. Management should consider it important to keep people informed. Nobody likes surprises or to be left out if they have information to add.

1. Management Staff Meetings – These are meetings of group leaders within the entire LA or leaders of just a single work group. These meetings should be held weekly or bi-weekly to coordinate activities, and to act as a ‘brain-trust’ for issues or problems confronting the organization. Each meeting should last no longer than one to one and a half hours. The group leader should be the meeting facilitator.
2. All-Staff Meetings – These are large meetings of all employees of a LA or sub-organizational unit. These meetings should not occur frequently, unless it is a very small sub-unit, in which case it would act as a Management Staff Meeting described above. All-Staff Meetings should be held once or twice a year in order to accomplish one or more of the following objectives:
 - a. Safety reminders.
 - b. Policy changes or refreshers.
 - c. Team-building and morale-building activities.
 - d. Celebrations of accomplishments.
 - e. Major announcements.

Staff Meeting Agenda (example)

[Date]
[Time]
[Location]

Facilitator: Secretary **Note taker:** Chief Clerk

Timekeeper: Revenue Officer

Attendees: All supervisory staff

Please read: 1st draft of proposed Customer Service Policy

Please bring: Paper and pen

Agenda Items

Topic	Presenter	Time allotted
a) Discussion of follow-up actions from Council meeting.	Secretary	20 minutes
b) Discussion of directives from the Chairman.	Secretary	10 minutes
c) Discussion on proposed Customer Service Policy.	Technical Officer	15 minutes
d) Coordination on community event.	Works Supervisor	10 minutes
e) Sharing major activities in divisions (around the table).	All participants	15 minutes
f)		
g)		
h)		
i)		
j)		

Other Information

Exercise

Your table team is to develop a plan for a new Customer Service Policy for the LA. Your plan should include:

- a) How the policy should be developed and introduced to the organization.
- b) How the office procedures can be modified to implement the new policy (we are talking about process... not the actual changes in procedure).
- c) How you think new employees should be introduced to the organization's expectations.
- d) What steps the LA should take to ensure the new policy and procedures are implemented.
- e) The incentives or disincentives, if any, the LA should provide/impose on employees to effect change.

8. FILE MANAGEMENT

The purpose of good file management is to keep the paper flowing to its final destination. Piles of paper, are lost papers looking for a home!

Creating a filing system that works for your LA is like finding the pot of gold at the end of a rainbow. A good filing system will organize your operations, enhance your professional image and increase productivity. When it comes to files and piles, people have three fears. Do any of these haunt you?

Afraid to make a decision - If you don't know what to call a piece of paper, you'll end up calling it nothing. If it doesn't have a name, it doesn't get a home. Such orphans collect in unnamed stacks, piles, drawers and in boxes.

Afraid to discard anything - You might need it someday. Better to keep it, even if you can't lay your hands on it when you need it.

Afraid you'll never see it again - Filing an item in some systems is like flinging it into a black hole. If that describes your system, stacks and piles are indeed a lot safer.

The point of filing is, easy placement and access to information.

Four Easy Steps to Improve File Management

Step 1: Separate Working from Archival Material – There are two basic types of files, temporary (working) and permanent (archival). Determining when and how often a file will be used should tell you which type it is. Temporary files include the following:

1. Action items - frequently used items requiring regular decisions and action.
2. Project items - plans, notes and documents related to current projects.
3. Reading items - must-read materials from any source.
4. Tickler files - organizing material for future use on a specific day.
5. Chronological file - tracking correspondence sequentially.

Step 2: Label Working Files – Label action, project and reading files by purpose or function, e.g. Grants, Council Reports, Complaint Resolution. Use broad, generic headings that are meaningful to you. If the files are shared, the categories and headings must make sense to everyone involved.

That may mean that all Administration files are labelled on the first line as Administration with a subheading of Contracts. The second line would identify who or which organization the contract is with. That means it would be filed in the master files under ADMINISTRATION. Anyone needing access to ADMINISTRATION files could look through a master index to see what is kept in that file drawer. Sub-headings under ADMINISTRATION could be Contracts, Forms, Policies, etc.

Sample Labels for Administration Files

ADMINISTRATION – Contracts

ABC Garbage Collection

ADMINISTRATION – Contracts

ICMA

ADMINISTRATION – Forms

Complaint Form

ADMINISTRATION – Policies

Records Retention

Tips

1. Don't create thin file headings that are hard to keep track of. Use headings that cover a substantial amount of material (up to 2 inches of paper. Box containers are great for thicker files.).
2. Design your system, complete with headings and sub-headings, before actually creating the files.
3. Use nouns for headings. Adjectives tend to get lost in memory.
4. Create a master index by primary headings so that anyone can locate a file.
5. Make it as easy as possible to add new files to your system. Keep a stock of labels, folders (manila and hanging), tabs and other filing materials close at hand. Be ready to quickly create a home for any lost piece of paper.

Step 3: Choose Locations and Fixtures - Decide who will be using the files, when they will be used and how much room is available for storage. Should the files be in, or close to your desk for frequent retrieval? Should they be centrally located, accessible to several people? Is security a factor? Are some files confidential, such as personnel files that should have limited accessibility?

Choose appropriate fixtures for holding files. 'Hot Files' are receptacles that attach to the wall next to you and hold about 100 sheets of paper. File cabinets can be vertical, lateral or open shelf. Choose wall storage units or rolling file racks. The type of fixture depends on your space and needs. Don't forget that binders work well for storing articles, newspaper clippings, reports, job descriptions, policies and procedures and other reference materials.

Step 4: Arrange the Files - Once you have appropriate fixtures in place, decide how you want to arrange your files. Choices include:

1. Alphabetically - great for client or customer name files.
2. Subject - a good choice if you're using subfolders.
3. Numerically - excellent for dated material, such as purchase orders and bills.
4. Geographical - appropriate if you have satellite operations.
5. Chronological - a good solution for back-up files that need to be set up by month.
6. Tickler files - great for very detailed tasks, such as tracking bills, correspondence and reading material. Set up tickler files by the day, month, and/or year.

Special Filing Categories - Product samples, photos and catalogues are examples of items that don't readily fit into file folders. Organizing fixtures for filing or storing such items include:

1. Boxes that hold both samples and hanging file folders.
2. Cardboard, metal or plastic holders (great for magazines and catalogues) that sit nicely on your bookshelf.
3. Tubes that accommodate large, rolled-up prints or maps.
4. Large envelopes that hold oversized papers in the bottom of a file drawer.

8.1 Records Retention Overview

Every LA must retain certain records in order to carry out business. One feature of a records retention process is a retention schedule, which provides guidelines for how long any document must be retained.

There should be at least one individual in each LA whose primary responsibility is the recording, storing and management of all documents. This person becomes the Records Coordinator.

An implemented records retention programme provides significant benefits in the areas of economy and efficiency:

1. It provides certainty that no record is destroyed prematurely and that valuable and legally required records are retained in compliance with legal retention requirements within standard organizational practices for the retention and destruction of records.
2. It enables authorized employees to destroy, with confidence, records no longer of value.
3. The elimination of obsolete records provides faster and more efficient retrieval of files.
4. It improves productivity through faster access to information.
5. The elimination of obsolete records cuts the cost of filing equipment and office space.
6. The elimination of obsolete records reduces the need and costs of off-site storage.

Definitions

LA Record – Any document, paper, letter, book, map, photograph, sound or video recording, microfilm, magnetic tape, electronic medium or other information recording medium, regardless of physical form or characteristic and regardless of whether public access to it is open or restricted under laws of the province, created or received by a LA or any of its officers or employees pursuant to law, including by-laws, or in the transaction of public business. This does not include convenience copies, blank forms, stocks of publications, or library or museum materials.

Essential (Vital) Record – Any LA record necessary for the resumption or continuation of government operations in an emergency or disaster, to the re-creation of the legal and financial status of the government, or the protection and fulfilment of obligations to the people of the province.

Record Series – A group of records with the same function and the same retention period.

Retention Period – The minimum time that must pass after the creation, recording, or receipt of a record, or the fulfilment of certain actions associated with a record, before it is eligible for destruction.

Records Control Schedule – Document prepared by or under the authority of the Records Management Officer listing the records maintained by a LA or elected office, their retention periods, and other records' disposition information that the records management programme in LA or elective office may require.

Records Retention Schedule – A document adopted by the LA Council in concert with provincial and national laws establishing mandatory retention periods for LA records.

Records Management – Application of techniques to the creation, use, maintenance, retention, preservation and disposal of records for purposes of reducing costs and improving efficiency of recordkeeping.

How the Retention Programme Works

Active records are retained within the department to ensure they are readily accessible. On a biannual basis, all records within a department or division are reviewed to determine which records are no longer active. The inactive records are removed from the active files and organized into the following categories:

1. Inactive original documents, and
2. Inactive historical documents.

Inactive Original Documents – The retention period and destruction date for each inactive document is determined using an adopted Retention Schedule.

1. Locate the Retention Schedule entry for each type or group of documents.
2. Determine the Destruction Date based on the Retention Period and the date the documents were created.
3. Destruction Dates occurring in February through December are to be ‘rounded up’ to the following January. For example, similar documents created in July, August and December of 1995, and January of 1996 that have a two-year retention period would all have a Destruction Date of January 1998.
4. After determining the Retention Period and Destruction Date, combine files with like destruction dates in a standard box allowing a minimum of two inches of space to remain in a full box.
5. All documents in any box to be stored in inactive storage shall have the same destruction date under the current schedule.

After the records have been boxed, prepare a complete index of the contents of each box. Include the following information in the index:

1. File Series (as stated in the Retention Schedule) to which the individual records belong.
2. Description of the individual records within the File Series. This description needs to contain sufficient information so that any person would know what the box contains. Do not use acronyms. Use simple language and provide as much detail as is necessary.
3. The dates of the earliest and latest records in the box.
4. Any other pertinent information that would be beneficial for locating the records.
5. Prepare a label for the box with a brief description of the contents. Put a number on the box.
6. Add the number of the box and the brief description to the index.
7. Make a copy of the index and place it inside the box and deliver the original of the index to the appropriate Records Coordinator.

Have the Records Coordinator (or designee) review the index and label information for accuracy and completeness of the description and destruction date. When this information has been verified, the box will be sent to secure storage. Each Records Coordinator maintains the master index lists for his/her department or division. The Records Coordinator also administers retrieval and replacement of boxes of records from storage.

Inactive Historical Documents – During the biannual review, identify inactive documents that have long-standing value as documents and contain important historical information. Transmit the original historical document to the Records Coordinator for placement in the archive. Place a copy of the document in the file to ensure the completeness of the file.

Auditing for Compliance – At the end of the time set for each department's review of their records, the Records Coordinator will provide the Department Manager with a report on the employees in that department and whether or not they completed the review.

The Department Manager will contact any employee who has not completed the review, encourage those employees to comply with the Policy, and continue to audit any lack of compliance. The Department Manager will take appropriate steps to ensure the compliance of all employees with the Policy.

Retrieval of Records in Storage – When inactive records are required, the Records Coordinator can arrange for the records to be retrieved from storage and delivered to the requesting department. Only the Records Coordinators and Department Managers are authorized to request retrieval of records and they can only make this request for records from their department.

Completion of Retention Period and Destruction of Documents – Annually, the Records Coordinator will provide a list of all records that have been retained for the required period and are due for destruction. The list will be circulated to all Department Heads including the Mayor or Chairman.

After approval of the Request for Destruction by the reviewing bodies, the corresponding boxes will be destroyed. A final report will be generated stating by what legal authority and method they were destroyed.

Microfilm, Electronic Files and Other Non-Paper Media – Review, storage, retrieval and return of records currently retained on micrographic or other non-paper media shall be carried out in the same manner as for records on paper.

Records currently retained on any non-paper media shall be reviewed by the employee responsible for the records of the department and sent to storage consistent with the instructions for paper records.

Records slated for destruction according to the Retention Schedule shall be deleted, erased or obliterated from the medium by proper methods for the particular medium. Documentation for the destruction of records on non-paper media shall be prepared and retained as with paper media records.

After all records contained on microfilm or microfiche have been destroyed, the film or fiche itself shall be destroyed. After all records contained on magnetic tape, disks, diskettes or other magnetic medium have been destroyed, they may be reused or recycled.

Preparation of Records for Microfilming or Transfer to Magnetic Tape – Certain records may be microfilmed or transferred to magnetic tape before the hard copies are destroyed, (according to the proposed destruction date, as per the Retention Schedule). Hard copies of records that are stated to be destroyed at the same time shall be transferred onto the same microfilm reel, microfiche, magnetic tape, or other magnetic media.

The records contained on such film, fiche, tape or other magnetic media shall eventually be destroyed at the appropriate time according to the Schedule in effect on the destruction date.

Exercise

In your table teams, discuss your LA's filing system and how it compares to the suggestions described in this session. Will these suggestions make things better or worse?

9. THE GOLDEN RULES OF MEETING MANAGEMENT

Meetings are unpopular because they take up time, usually that of many people. However, there are good and bad meetings. Meetings can be an excellent use of time when they are well run. Unfortunately, the converse is also true, and it seems that time-wasting, poorly run meetings, are far too common.

This section describes rules of meeting management that can help make meetings more productive and less frustrating. Each of the rules requires commitment from all participants.

1. Run your meetings, as you would have others run the meetings that you attend.

This is the most fundamental golden rule of meeting management. Running an effective meeting, or being a good meeting, is all about being considerate to others. All the other golden rules of meeting management flow from this principle. Select participants with care to ensure that all who need to be involved are, but that people who are not required can be spared the time.

2. Be prepared and ensure participants can be prepared by providing relevant documents in advance.

Distribute the meeting agenda to the participants a day or two before the meeting and make sure everyone has access to any relevant background materials. Participants, of course, have the obligation of reviewing the agenda and background materials and arriving at the meeting prepared. If the meeting organizer has not provided adequate information about the objectives of the meeting, the participants should take the initiative to ask. No one should arrive at a meeting not knowing its purpose and what is supposed to be accomplished.

If there is nothing to put on the agenda, the organizer should consider whether a meeting is really required and cancel if appropriate.

3. Stick to a schedule.

Start the meeting on time and end it on time (or even early). Starting on time requires discipline by the organizer and the participants. Arriving late shows a lack of consideration to all those who were on time. If all participants know that the organizer is going to start the meeting on time, there is a much greater likelihood that everyone else will make the effort to be punctual.

Finishing in a timely manner is also crucial. If everyone agrees that the meeting will last one hour, the meeting should not run any longer than that. Keeping the agenda realistic is important. To accomplish this, it requires keeping to the times allotted for each agenda item. Finally, if only 20 minutes are required to accomplish the meeting objectives, the meeting should end after 20 minutes. It would be a waste of everyone's time to let it go on any longer than that.

The time for which the meeting is scheduled is also important. Scheduling regular meetings for inconvenient times (e.g. after the end of the official work day) can have a very negative impact on morale. Emergencies are a reality for most organizations and may necessitate meetings at odd times, but routine meetings should be scheduled at a time that is reasonably convenient for the participants.

4. Stay on topic.

Most groups have at least one person who tends to go off on a tangent or tell stories or digress during meetings. Whether this is the organizer or one of the participants, all participants have the responsibility of gently guiding the meeting back to the substantive agenda items. This should not be done at the expense of all levity, of course, as

that is an important ingredient for morale. Also, storytelling can be very useful if it is being used deliberately as a coaching or teaching tool. As a rule, someone needs to guide the discussion back to the agenda if the meeting becomes clearly off track. At the conclusion of each agenda item, the facilitator must summarize the action taken or identify the next steps and the responsible party.

5. Don't hold unnecessary meetings.

Carefully assess how often routine meetings really need to be held. For example, if you have daily staff meetings, how productive are they? Can they be held less frequently? Or, perhaps, can they be held standing up someplace and kept to a few minutes. Staff meetings are crucial vehicles for maintaining good communication in the office, but it is important to find the right balance between good communication and productive uses of time.

6. Wrap-up meetings with a clear statement of the next steps and who is to take them.

If any decisions were made at the meeting (even if the decision was to 'study the issue more') the meeting organizer should clearly summarize what needs to be done and who is going to do it. If the organizer fails to do this, one of the participants needs to request clarification of the next steps. This is crucial. If the participants leave the meeting and no one is accountable for taking action on the decisions that were made, then the meeting will have been a waste of everyone's time.

These simple rules can go a long way in making meetings more productive. Implementing them is not always easy, as they require preparation and discipline, but doing so can make a huge difference to the productivity of your organization.

9.1 Roles and Responsibilities

Meeting Leader = Facilitator, Discussion Moderator

Timekeeper = Participants

Scribe/Note-taker = Record

- The main ideas expressed.
- The decisions.
- Follow-up responsibilities and timelines.

9.2 The Meeting Leader's Role

The meeting leader must focus the energy and attention of participants and keep them moving towards the meeting's objectives. Producing a great meeting is like producing a great product. You don't just start building it. You start by designing, planning and thinking about what people, equipment and processes are needed to make it successful.

CONTENT: Focus on Task

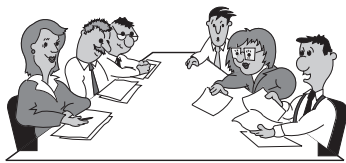
- Set clear objectives.
- Create a solid agenda.
- Do your homework - Is this a hot item? Is there history?
- Determine timeframe.
- Utilize procedures and techniques for recording, analyzing data, generating alternatives, making decisions.
- Determine logistic needs.
- Prepare materials/research.
- Request any post-meeting information.
- Prepare participants.
- Be flexible.
- Celebrate success and have fun!

PROCESS: Focus on People

- Determine who will participate.
- Establish ground rules.
- Create safe environment (emotional/physical).
- Assign roles.
- Manage time.
- Monitor participation.
- Model supportive behaviour.
- Encourage differing/confronting.
- Facilitate conflict resolution.
- Explore reactions and feelings.
- Facilitate feedback among members.
- Develop action plans.
- Summarize and test for understanding.
- Follow-up.

9.3 Meeting Norms/Ground Rules

An effective leader must be attentive to both the content and the process of a meeting in order to analyze each situation, monitor each key area and to determine what is required to move forward.



Norms or ground rules are rules the entire group agrees to abide by when working as a work-group, attending a retreat or meeting. They often include what we will do and how we will interact with one another. Ground rules should be generated by the group, posted for all to see and reviewed periodically.

9.4 A Sample List of Ground Rules

These might include:

1. Come on time and be prepared with assignments and agreements.
2. Listen respectfully and acknowledge other viewpoints as valid.
3. One person speaks at a time.
4. Be brief and say what is essential.
5. Be honest. No disfavour, penalty or reprisal will occur for honesty.

6. Place greater emphasis on the good of the group rather than on personal preference or need. Look at the big picture.
7. Remember that others really do see the world differently from you.
8. Focus on behaviours and problems, not on personalities.
9. Consider conflict as a necessary stage along the path of progress.
10. Look for ways to enlarge the pie instead of worrying about how big your piece is to be.
11. Maintain team/group integrity and confidentiality.
12. Give the meeting leader/facilitator the power to interrupt, maintain order and keep the group focused on the stated goals.
13. Hold the group accountable.

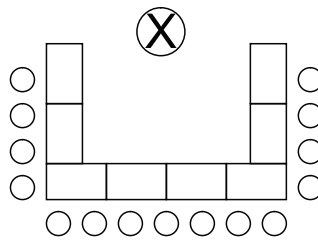
9.5 Meeting Room Arrangements

Theatre Style

- Leader has great power by position.
- Participation and interruption by audience is limited.

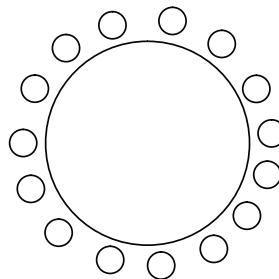
U-Shaped Style

- Equality of membership.
- No doubt who is the leader.
- Good visibility for visual aids.



Circle Style

- Democratic: equality is stressed.
- Great visibility by participants.
- Body language obvious.
- Excellent participation.



Exercise

As a group, create a set of ground rules for a common meeting in your LA **(20 Minutes)**.

10. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Project Management Process

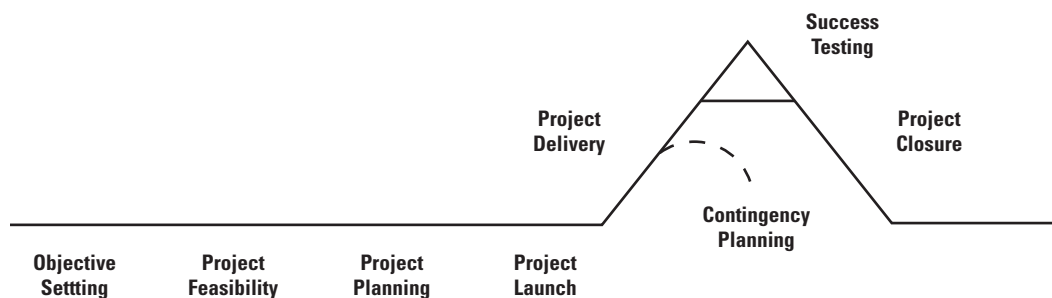
- Project Managers don't plan to fail.... they just fail to plan.
- All Projects Managers must plan the workand then work the plan!

Have a short discussion about what these two adages mean.

10.1 Overview of Projects

Projects have a set of unique risks associated with them. They require a set of skills, activities and outputs for which you and your organization may not have experience. Projects are also exciting and full of energy. The temptation is to bypass the planning stages and plunge straight into the project activities. Typically, these projects result in failure as the outputs do not meet the desired objectives. Success requires the time and effort of upfront planning in order to improve the chances of producing a successful project. By utilizing a simple project framework, organizations can retain control over their projects and ensure they meet their business objectives.

Project Framework



The project framework depicted above uses the analogy of a mountain climb. Mountaineers invest significant time and resources in project planning. This ensures that the team is fully prepared for the actual climb (project) itself.

Contingency planning is in place to support the team if any issues or problems arise. After implementation, there are activities to ensure that the project is successfully closed down and reviewed.

By following a simple project framework, the different stages of a project are effectively managed leading to improved project success rates. The next time you are about to launch a new project remember the importance of planning and preparation.

10.2 Project Phases

Objective Setting and Feasibility Phases

- Requirements analysis.
- Business case.
- Define project objectives.

Project Organizing

- Project charter.
- Project sponsors.

Planning Phase

- Scope definition.
- Building a work breakdown structure.
- Costing and estimating.
- Budgeting and scheduling.
- Risk management.

Launch and Delivery Phases

- Tracking and evaluating progress.
- Reporting.
- Change management.
- Communications, team building and stakeholder management.
- Procurement management and quality management.
- Project management plan.

Close-out and Review Phases

- Lessons learned.
- Deliverable and administrative closure.
- Operations and support.
- Life cycle management.

10.3 Project Plan Outline**1.1. Project Title****1.2. Project Background**

Briefly describe the reasons for establishing the project and how it was initiated, including any relevant background information, such as reference to an approved Project Proposal. This should be less than half a page long.

1.3. Objective(s)

What is the goal of the project, what is it expected to deliver? This should be a high-level description of the objective(s) of the project (about one-line long).

1.4. Target Outcome(s)/Benefits

List the target outcomes/benefits, the measures which will be used to evaluate their success, the dates for achievement and who is accountable.

1.5. Output(s)

List the project outputs (deliverables). These are new or modified products, services, businesses or management practices that need to be implemented/provided to meet each identified outcome.

1.6. Project Activities and Milestones

List the milestones and major activities for the project. Milestones are indicated by start and finish dates. These dates were identified during the initial planning stage used to monitor progress of the project. Activities in the 'Predecessor' column must be completed prior to this activity commencing.

Task	Description	Who	Scheduled Start	Scheduled Finish	Predecessor
1					

1.7. Budget

Summarizes the project's budget and expected expenditure.

1.8. Other Resources

List other resource requirements, for example human resources, accommodation, IT equipment, information requirements.

1.9. Assumptions and Constraints

It is important that assumptions made during the planning process are identified and recorded in the Project Business Plan along with any constraints. This may include deadlines, finance and budget, legislation, resource availability, environmental, technology, security etc.

1.10. Relevant Government Policy, Legislation and Rules

Identify any government policies, legislation or rules and document their impact on the project.

2. Project Charter

2.1. Governance

Determine which parties will form the governance structure for the project, detail their responsibilities and identify who will be fulfilling each role.

As a minimum, you will need in your governance structure:

1. Project Sponsor and
2. Project Manager

In addition, you may have one or more of the following parties in your governance structure:

1. Project Team
2. Reference Groups
3. Working Groups or
4. Quality Consultants

2.2. Reporting Requirements

Project reports for the Project Sponsor should concentrate on the management issues of the project. Describe the reporting frequency, the format and to whom the report goes to.

2.3. Stakeholder Management and Communication

List the key stakeholders who will have an impact on the project or be impacted by the project and describe how they will be engaged. Provide a summary of the overall key communication and management issues for the project, concentrating on what will contribute to the project's success or where a lack of communication can lead to failure.

2.4. Related Projects

Identify any related projects and what their relationship is. The relationship refers to whether:

- The related project is dependent on or interdependent with this project or
- This project is dependent on the other project.

The nature of a dependency can include a shared relationship with data, functionality, staff, technology and/or funding.

2.5. Risk Management Plan

A risk analysis should be undertaken upon commencement of the project and regularly reviewed throughout its life cycle. The results of the initial analysis should be included as an appendix.

Include here a summary of the major risks, mitigation strategies, estimated additional costs to deploy the strategies (these should be included in the budget) and an overall assessment as to the level of risk associated with the project. Also discuss how risks will be managed in relation to risk identification, reviews and reporting.

2.6. Quality Management Plan

Quality Management should contain project-specific information describing the:

- Methodologies and standards
- Monitoring procedures
- Change, issue and problem management
- Review and acceptance procedures, including details on output testing, acceptance and sign off (may be via Steering Committee meetings)
- Documentation and record-keeping and
- The review processes to be used to capture lessons learnt throughout the project

2.7. Project Closure and Outcome Realization

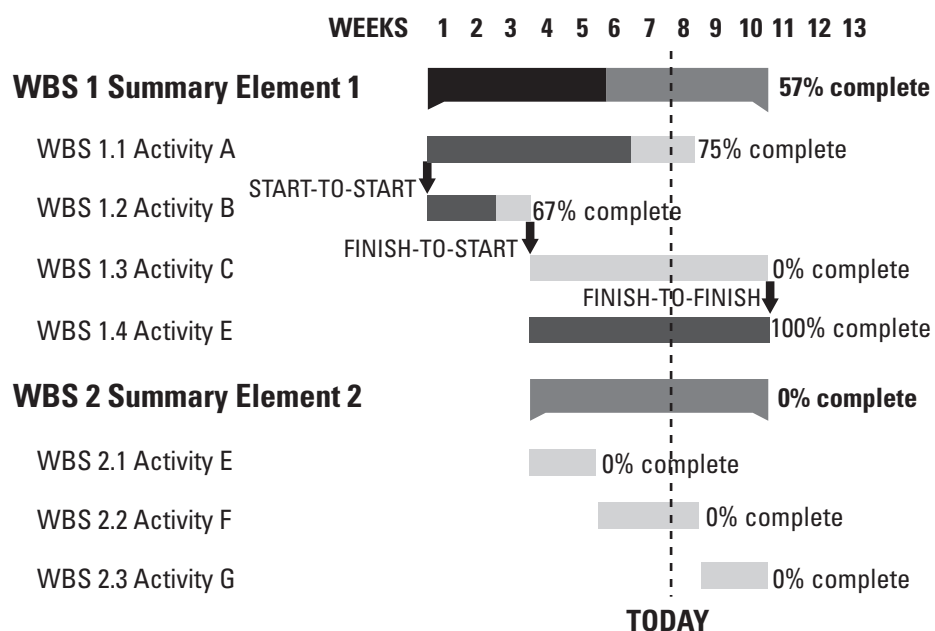
Who are the outputs going to be handed over to, and how? Describe the revised roles and responsibilities for staff positions, if any are required. What are the training requirements and what ongoing arrangements have been made/are required once the project is completed? Will there be any contracts that require ongoing management, if so, who will manage them?

At what point will the project be closed?

3. Appendices

Additional documents or information may be attached to the Project Business Plan as appendices to enhance or meet specific project requirements. For example:

- Detailed Project Budget
- Risk Analysis - provides 'snapshot' details of the current risk assessment and risk management strategies.
- Project Plan
- A 'snapshot' Gantt Chart, or similar, of major project milestones and processes. A Gantt Chart is a popular type of bar chart that illustrates a project schedule. Gantt Charts illustrate the start and finish dates of the terminal elements and summary elements of a project. Gantt Charts can be used to show current schedule status using percent-complete shadings and a vertical 'TODAY' line (also called 'TIME NOW'), as shown here.



10.4 Project Control

When the planning phase is over (and agreed), the 'doing' phase begins. Once it is in motion, a project acquires a direction and momentum that is totally independent of anything you predicted. If you come to terms with that from the start, you can then enjoy the roller coaster that follows. To gain some hope, however, you need to establish at the start (within the plan) the means to monitor and to influence the project's progress.

There are two key elements to the control of a project

- Milestones (clear, unambiguous targets of 'what', by 'when').
- Established means of communication.

The milestones are a mechanism to monitor progress. For your team, they are short-term goals that are far more tangible than the foggy, distant completion of the entire project. The milestones maintain the momentum and encourage effort. They allow the team to judge their own progress and to celebrate achievement throughout the project rather than just at its end.

The simplest way to construct milestones is to take the timing information from the work breakdown structure and sequence diagram. When you have guesstimated how long each sub-task will take and have strung them together, you can identify by when each of these tasks will actually be completed. This is simple and effective but it lacks creativity.

A second method is to construct more significant milestones. These can be found by identifying stages in the development of a project, which are recognizable as steps towards the final product. Sometimes these are simply the higher levels of your structure, for instance, the completion of a market evaluation phase. Sometimes, they cut across many parallel activities, for instance, a prototype of the eventual product or a mock-up of the new brochure format.

If you are running parallel activities, this type of milestone is particularly useful since it provides a means of pulling together the people on disparate activities, and so:

- They all have a shared goal (the common milestone).
- Their responsibility to (and dependence upon) each other is emphasized.
- Each can provide a new (but informed) viewpoint on the others' work.
- The problems to do with combining the different activities are highlighted and discussed early in the implementation phase.
- You have something tangible which senior management can recognize as progress.
- You have something tangible that your team can celebrate and which constitutes a short-term goal in a possibly long-term project.
- It provides an excellent opportunity for quality checking and for review.

You will have to be sensitive to any belief that working towards a specific milestone is hindering rather than helping the work move forward. If this arises, then either you have chosen the wrong milestone, or you have failed to communicate how it fits into the broader structure.

Communication is everything. To monitor progress, to receive early warning of danger, to promote cooperation, to motivate through team involvement, all of these rely upon communication. Regular reports are invaluable if you clearly define what information is required and you teach your team how to provide it in a rapidly accessible form. Often these reports merely say, "progressing according to schedule". These you send back, for while the message is desired, the evidence is missing. You need to insist that your team monitor their own progress with concrete, tangible measurements and if this is done, the figures should be included in the report. However, the real value of this practice comes when progress is not according to schedule, then your communication system is worth all the effort you invested in its planning.

10.5 Project Status

a) Evaluating Cost and Schedule Performance

At each Project Team meeting, both the budget and the schedule must be reviewed to ensure that the project meets projected milestones and stays within budget. During any project, there will be new things that will be learnt. There seems to be an inevitable desire to do more things than were originally planned. This expansion of objectives is referred to as Scope Creep. Scope Creep is the single most important reason for projects to go beyond budget and take longer than planned. Managing Scope Creep is of critical importance. The Project Team and Project Manager should not be empowered to expand the scope of a project. This decision must be referred to the Project Sponsors defined in the Project Charter.

b) Corrective Action

When it becomes clear that milestones or budget allocations will be missed or exceeded, it is important for the Project Manager and the Project Team to develop strategies to restructure the activities to make up the time and the budget overrun. This is essential for delivering the project on time and within budget.

c) Project Reporting Meeting

Regular reporting to the Project Sponsors is critical to the success of any project. Reporting frequency must be defined in the Project Charter and should be no more than weekly and no less than monthly, depending on the nature of the project. It is here that the Project Manager has the opportunity to raise issues of Scope Creep (or opportunities for enhancement), budget needs and schedule issues, as well as problems, issues and strategies for dealing with difficulties. This reporting mechanism is critical to the success of the Project Manager and demands an engaged and committed Project Sponsor.

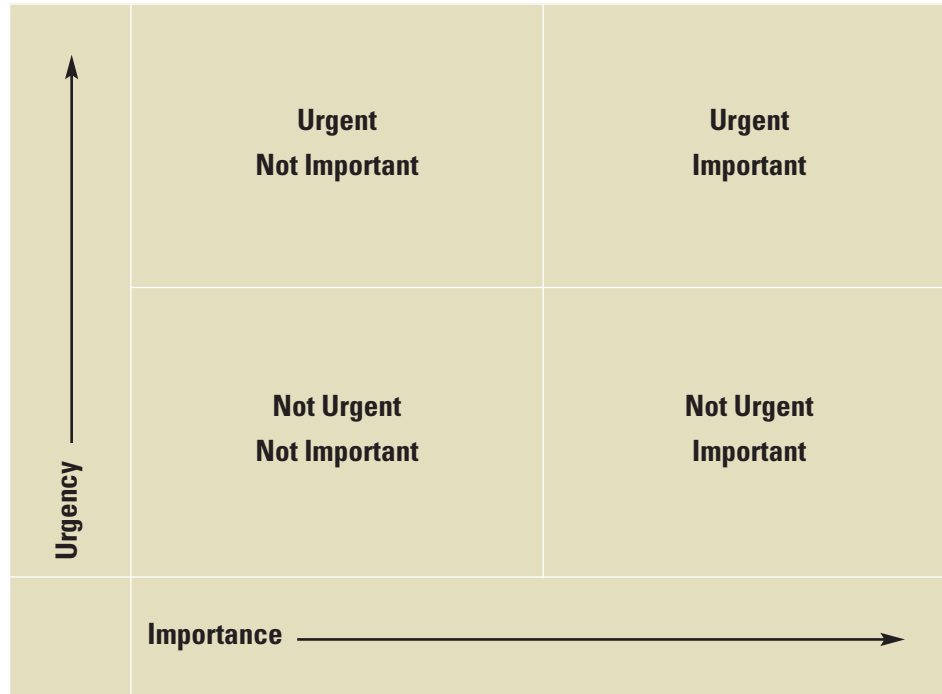
Exercise

By yourself, develop a meeting plan for a weekly meeting of the Project Manager and the Project Sponsor. **(15 minutes)**

11. PRIORITIZATION OF WORK FOR MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS

Line employees usually spend their time on assigned work from their Manager or Supervisor, or work that comes in the door. However, Managers and Supervisors must prioritize work for themselves and their employees. So how should a Manager or Supervisor prioritize what needs to be done?

Work to be done can generally be categorized by the following typology of importance and urgency. Thus things can be one of four types:



Discussion

Where should you be spending most of your time?

12. DECISION PRINCIPLES

An important part of LA work is making decisions for the benefit of all citizens. Often, there are conflicting directions from various rules or decision-makers. Are there guidelines or principles to help workers know what to do?

For most LA staff, the following hierarchy applies, unless you are the Secretary or Commissioner. Starting at the top, if the proposed action is consistent with the identified standard, then move down the list to where the request is coming from. You must have a positive response for all levels above where the request originated.

Discussion: How would this be different for Secretaries and Commissioners?

Follow:

Ethical standards (LA adopted, Professional Association Adopted, or other adopted non-religious standard)

The law

National

Provincial

Local by-law

Local Policy

Administrative Procedures – these are not rules, but general guidelines

Directions of Secretary/Commissioner

Directions of Chairman/Mayor

Directions of CLG/Assistant Commissioner of Local Government (ACLG)

Council individuals

Citizen group requests

Citizen individual requests

13. ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

The best way to think of ethics is as standards of conduct. Ethics can be applied to personal behaviour and to disciplines. Ethics, distinguishes between the right and wrong ways we should behave in our personal and professional lives.

Ethical behaviour and legal behaviour are not the same thing. Ethics is the set of standards by which actions are determined to be right or wrong. At times, legal behaviour conflicts with ethical behaviour. Legal actions are not always ethical ones. Doing the right thing requires more than a legally justified action, it requires a more positive approach that may mean going beyond the law.

Illegal behaviour (such as taking bribes or lying under oath) is almost always unethical. However, what is legal is not always ethical. Obeying the law is merely the first step towards maintaining ethical standards; it is necessary but not sufficient. Even if you go beyond the letter of the law to live by its spirit and intent, you may fall short of ethical behaviour. Ethical standards are based on shared values, character, integrity, honesty and conscience.

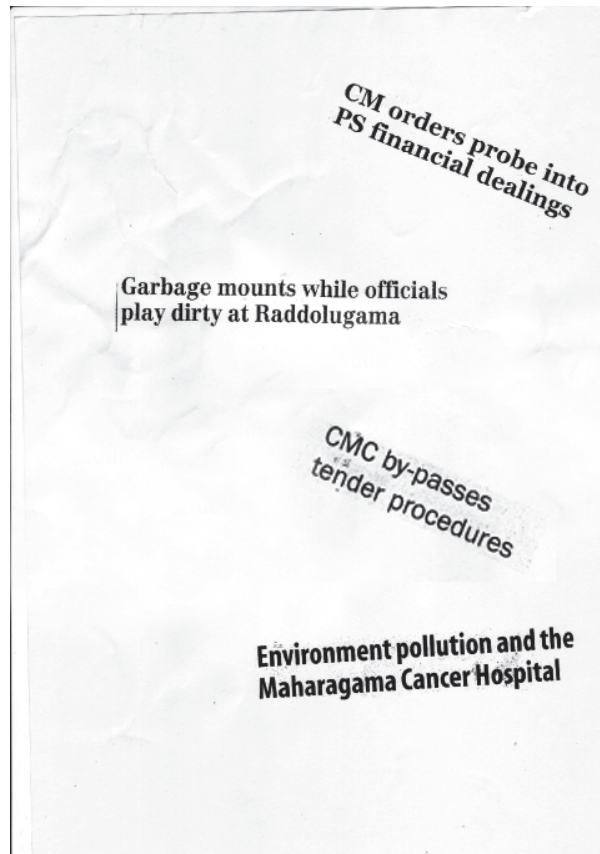
Any time a local government elected official or employee is unsure about the legality of an action, he or she should check with that jurisdiction's attorney or the CLG's Office. However, checking with these people will not always help a person determine whether something is ethical. It is not illegal to withhold information from a supervisor who needs it to make a good programme decision, but it is unethical. Nor is it illegal to run a personal errand on government time, but it is unethical.

Some other examples of behaviour that may not be illegal but are unethical include:

- Leaving work a few minutes early or coming late every day.
- Taking vacation time without reporting it.
- Taking sick leave when you are not sick.
- Seeking reimbursement for expenses from two sources for the same expense.
- Refusing to return phone calls or respond to complaints from citizens.
- Blaming other people, groups, or departments for missed commitments, bad decisions, or poor results.
- Allowing others to fail by withholding information and not pointing out risks.
- Playing budget games, e.g. padding the budget in anticipation of cuts or going on end-of-the-year spending sprees to match estimates to actual figures.
- Lying on your resume or an employment application.
- Avoiding risks.
- Withholding your professional opinion because it is politically risky.

When discussing ethical behaviour, it is important to note that although these behaviours are not illegal, they can impair the credibility of the government and its leaders and impede its ability to get things done. The unethical behaviours listed above can hurt morale, contribute to personal stress and increase turnover. Elected officials and employees at all levels of the organization must recognize and avoid unethical behaviour if the local government is to meet its goals of high-quality service and satisfied citizens.

13.1 Ethics in the News



13.2 Importance of Ethics

These ethics training materials are based on the premise that an organization's leaders set the stage for the overall culture of the organization and the behaviour of those who belong to it. What leaders tolerate, what they do and their expectations of others are indicators of how decisions will be made. If leaders want ethical behaviour, they must lead by example and create a climate where everyone is expected to act and decide in ethical ways.

Local government employees have a special obligation to behave ethically in the workplace. The decisions that they make often have a direct and lasting impact on the lives of citizens, on the businesses that operate within the local government's boundaries, and on those who pass through or visit each day. If you act in a manner that is unethical, you will betray the public trust.

There is an important link between government ethics and democracy. In a democracy, government has an obligation to treat everyone equally and to provide the greatest good to its citizens. Elected and appointed officials, voluntary or paid, must exercise their power and influence, ethically. As the resources (time, money, materials and equipment) that the government uses to meet its mission are public, they must be used as efficiently and effectively as possible. Government staff must fully understand that they are accountable to their citizens. One of the ways that staff members, elected officials and volunteers can ensure that all this occurs is by making ethical decisions all the time. Specifically,

this means treating citizens equally, fairly and honestly; making decisions that are in the best interest of most and using resources wisely.

Democracy and ethics are strongly linked in the real world. Highly ethical behaviour, a critical aspect of a government of laws, helps to ensure democracy. The policies that jurisdictions develop and implement, based on laws and values, define the behaviour and expectations that further strengthen the links between all these components.

It is important to remember that the law and corresponding policies provide a framework within which justice can prevail. Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible. Man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary and requires due diligence and supervision by citizens and the media. The effects of harmful actions by individuals are held in check by a steady rule of law.

Ethics in government is critical to realizing the promise of democracy. The effective operation of democratic government requires that public officials and employees be independent, impartial and responsible to the people; that government decisions and policies be made within the proper structure of government; that public office should not be used for personal gain; and that the public have confidence in the integrity of its government. All these factors are essential components of ethical behaviour and practice.

When ethical wrongdoing and scandals occur in government, they pose a threat to the democratic principles of the rule of law, equality and individual rights. When public employees misuse their position for self-gain, they are ignoring the rule of law. By engaging in self-interest, corrupt government representatives are attempting to place themselves above the law. They thus subvert the democratic concept of rule of law by promoting self-interest rather than the public interest.

A public employee's act of wrongdoing undercuts the principle that in democracy all individuals are equal. The self-interested officials and employees are saying that some are more equal than others. Corruption in government goes against the principle of equal access to public goods and services, and a corrupt public office becomes accessible only to the privileged. When left undetected, fraud, bribery, kickbacks and other abuses in government take power from the people and give it to a few in positions of control, which distorts the concept of the equality of all participants.

Our laws implement the basis of democracy. Thus, our laws support not only democracy but also ethical behaviour. Laws cannot address every ethical issue; they act as a framework and provide some parameters. Jurisdictions develop policies to implement our laws. These policies also govern our actions and behaviour, helping to ensure ethical decisions.

There are very real consequences to unethical behaviour. Staff members and supervisors often approach ethics from a theoretical perspective i.e. something that involves the law or that others have to worry about. The impact of unethical behaviour is long-lasting and can include:

- Distrust among staff and/or citizens.
- Cynicism about government.
- Low morale.
- Inefficiency.
- Waste of government resources (staff time, equipment, material or money).
- Unfairness in personnel decisions.
- Inequitable service delivery.
- The best decisions left unmade.

13.3 Why People Sometimes Make Unethical Decisions

Wanting to be ethical and consistently being ethical are two different things. Clearly, conflicting loyalties, fear of failure or of being fired, and systems that force employees to compromise ethical principles, all threaten the establishment and maintenance of an ethical workplace.

Typical reasons people make unethical decisions:

- **Close Call:** The decision involves the careful balancing of different interests. Sometimes it is just not clear which of the two actions is correct.
- **New Problem:** The decision involves a problem not yet addressed by the organization, department, group policy or procedure.
- **Conflicting Policies:** The decision or situation involves two or more policies, obligations or responsibilities that are in conflict. Any decision violates some standard or expectation.
- **Multiple Consultations:** To make the decision, one must consult with too many people. The decision can't be made efficiently.
- **High Personal Cost:** What is expected is clear, but the decision-maker bears too much of the cost in terms of lost time and efficiency or personal sacrifice.
- **Outdated Policy or Procedure:** The existing policy or procedure covering the situation seems to be in conflict with what is ethically right; to follow the policy you must be unfair to or violate the rights of someone.

It is important to recognize that an ethical dilemma can create conflicts among competing loyalties to your province, community, constituency groups, government organization, peers, supervisors, family and self. The challenge is to develop a process to determine which loyalty or loyalties prevail when resolving ethical issues. In prioritizing loyalties, the Josephson Institute (an organization that addresses ethical issues) emphasizes the primacy of serving the public interest, the reputation of the government, and the integrity and efficiency of the department, even at the cost of injuring a supervisor, peer or friend. To avoid inappropriate expectations, the need to place ethical standards above individual loyalty should be made clear to members of the organization.

13.4 Warning Signs of Unethical Behaviour

If you hear yourself saying any of the following, it may be a sign of possible unethical behaviour:

- "No one will ever know ..."
- "I can still be objective ..."
- "I deserve it ...". or "They owe it to me ..."
- "Let's keep this to ourselves ..."
- "Oh, don't be such a prude ..."
- "They'll never miss it ..."
- "They had it coming ...". or "I'm just fighting fire with fire ..."
- "Don't tell me. I don't want to know ..."
- "It's okay if I don't gain personally ..."
- "Technically, it's legal ..."
- "Everybody does it ..."

- “Yes, but ...”
- “This won’t affect my work ...”

13.5 Creating an Ethical Culture Checklist for Leaders

1. Walk the talk.

- Make a personal commitment to promoting ethics in the organization.
- Set an example.
- Set the tone for ethical decision-making. Talk to your staff about ethical dilemmas you face and how you make decisions.
- Do what you say: avoid the 'do as I say, not as I do' mentality. Live up to your promises.
- Remember you are always on duty. Decisions you make in your personal time matter.
- When making a decision about what action to take, consider how a potential action might look to others. Do not do anything that might have the appearance of impropriety, even if it is not unethical.
- Never ignore something that you see as wrong.
- Avoid creating ethical dilemmas for others.
- Articulate your values and the values that underlie your decisions.

2. Hire the values.

- Look for candidates with integrity, regardless of the position you are hiring them for.
- Include questions that relate to ethics and assess the way candidates make decisions in interviews and tests.
- Conduct thorough background checks; look for evidence of ethical lapses.

3. Integrate values into operations.

- If your organization does not have a code of ethics, develop one. Involve people throughout the organization in deciding what should be included.
- If your organization does have a code of ethics, consider whether it needs to be updated.
- Conduct ethics audits. Survey the culture of the organization to obtain objective feedback on how employees feel about various aspects of the organization, including issues that are related to ethics.
- Align policies and practices with values.

13.6 Discussion Questions

Are these ethical actions? Discuss and give reasons.

- An elected official walks from office to office circulating a petition for re-election.
- An employee accepts tickets to a concert from a vendor.
- In response to a call from the Mayor’s Office, the Secretary directs the Development Officer to speed up a building permit approval.
- The son of the Works Superintendent is given a summer job collecting trash for the LA.
- The Revenue Officer accepts a restaurant’s offer to dine free of charge.

- An elected official asks employees for campaign donations while they are at work.
- A supervisor exaggerates a problem-employee's misconduct during a disciplinary procedure to get rid of the employee.
- At the request of an elected official, the Secretary accepts an employment application after the closing deadline.
- A maintenance worker takes home a government-owned tractor and trailer for the weekend to clean up debris following a bad storm.
- Employees work evenings and weekends for elected officials and senior staff.

14. COUNCIL RELATIONS

Five Simple Rules for Staff to Work with Councils

1. Be politically neutral. You must be viewed as working for and supporting all Elected Officials for the benefit of all citizens.
2. Provide information to the Elected Officials by giving them all the same information. When a single Elected Official asks for information, provide the answer to ALL members of the Council.
3. Nobody likes surprises, especially Elected Officials. This includes both good and bad news. Brief Elected Officials privately or ahead of public announcements.
4. Don't gossip with Elected Officials or talk poorly of others. Always maintain high ethical standards in your dealings with them.
5. Insist that Elected Officials get credit for their leadership and never take the limelight from them.

