

Today's Workplace: Factors Influencing Personnel and Beyond

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SERDI Leadership Development Program

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PlanRVA



Background - Martha



- Executive Director of PlanRVA with a staff of ~25 professionals
- Started at PlanRVA in December of 2015, previously Executive Director at Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission
- Fifth full-time executive director of PlanRVA since 1968
- 19 years in local/regional government in VA
- VA is an at-will employment state

Background – Anthony

- Executive Director of the Western Piedmont Council of Governments with a staff of 68 professionals
- Started at WPCOG in December of 2012, became executive director on January 1, 2015
- Third full-time executive director of WPCOG since its creation in 1968
- County Planning Director and Town Manager prior to WPCOG
- 25 years in local/regional government in North Carolina
- NC is an at-will employment state and collective bargaining is not allowed for public employees



Challenges and Opportunities

Transitioning from peer to supervisor

- The importance of discovery
- Do the same rules apply to everyone?
- Getting to know the full team and issues
- Priorities and needs change with new information

Maintain or reset the culture?

- Establishing a leadership approach
- Managing change and flow of communication
- Assessing the organizational structure and flow of decision making
- Pre-established priorities from the board or member localities



Challenges and Opportunities

Meeting Needs of Changing Staff

- Generational differences
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Limited resources, market competition
- Ability to act quickly
- Pros/cons of turnover

Compensation, Benefits and Talent Attraction/Retention

- Compensation is more than a paycheck
- Flexibility, culture & community
- Training and Professional Development
- Community Impact



Flexibility and self-determination

- “Choose your own adventure” in work plan development

Professional and personal development

- Training, community involvement, leadership opportunities

Intentional and Inclusive Recruitment

- Recruitment for KSAs and attitude
- Equitable practices in position design, advertisement and onboarding

Access to community leaders, events and attractions

- The “value add” in proximity to community leadership
- Bridging the gap to how decision making happens

Community engagement and impact

- Community organizations, leadership and volunteerism

Ideas to Explore



Non-traditional benefits and calculating total compensation

Reporting the total annual investment in employees



Platforms to support feedback, celebrations and engagement

BambooHR, Thnks



The importance of “face time”, access to decision-making, and development opportunities

Setting leadership tables, ERGs and advisory groups

Split level meetings, 1:1s and office presence

Bringing an extra chair to the table

Expectations & Organizational Values

- Your organizational performance will be only as good as what you expect
- Create an atmosphere of being a high performance/high expectation organization
- Put your values in writing
- Consider using your management team or key staff to identify those values
- Build it into your evaluation process
- Discuss it regularly (staff meetings, etc.)

Staff Accountability Issues

- Expectations and organizational values
- Confronting staff with performance or behavioral issues
- Fairness and Consistency
- Follow-up

Confronting Staff With Performance Issues

- You won't always be liked by every staff person – get over it
- You are paid to make the difficult decisions
- Not taking action or making a decision is making a decision
- Not addressing poor performance or bad behavior communicates that you approve of that performance or behavior
- Don't wait to address an issue and don't wait until you “blow up”
- Handle it with a calm demeanor – don't be a jerk
- Don't let them know you are uncomfortable in addressing the issue
- Be prepared for their reactions – every staff person will react differently

Fairness and Consistency

- You are denying an employee an opportunity to grow or improve by not addressing issues
- Don't do stupid things like losing your temper, illegally discriminating, saying unprofessional things, using profanity or demeaning language
- Employees talk – but you can't
- Expect employees to compare circumstances and expect them to not know the whole story
- Employees will know when you don't address an issue and they will see your inconsistencies

Follow Up and Follow Through

- Be clear about your expectations
- Don't micromanage but empower
- We require a formal evaluation once per year and a mid-year review
- Ongoing feedback is better
- If the employee doesn't make progress with appropriate coaching, be prepared to part ways
- A poor performing employee who has been properly coached, is terminating themselves
- Remember that your ultimate loyalty is to serve the interest of the organization

WPCOG Core Values

- Integrity
- Teamwork
- Work Excellence
- Sound Stewardship of COG Resources
- Excellent Customer Service
- Maintain an Attitude of Learning

SECTION I. EVALUATION OF CORE VALUES

0 = Fails to Meet Expectations 1 = Needs Improvement 2 = Meets Expectations 3 = Exceeds Expectations

Work Standards That Apply to All Employees	Rating
<p>Integrity – Is the employee trustworthy, honest and demonstrates good professional ethics? How well does the employee think through work situations and make appropriate decisions in carrying out work? Does the employee work to serve the best interest of the COG, our region and our communities? Does the employee adhere to established work hours, safety practices and standard mode of dress, submitting timesheets, use of WPCOG forms, maintains status and updates In/Out board, meets the employee expectations of work as outlined in the employee handbook? Comments: Sherry looks out for the best interests of the WPCOG and coworkers. She serves critical interests for the role of the WPCOG in the region for our local governments.</p>	3
<p>Teamwork – Does the employee get along well with other coworkers and operate as a team player? Does the employee avoid dumping work on others? Does the employee offer to assist other coworkers? Does the employee demonstrate a positive attitude and effective interaction with others? Does the employee carry their share of the workload? Comments: Sherry is a classic example of a team player. She has a great “can do” attitude and takes on any challenges. Her department is a tight knit group.</p>	3
<p>Work Excellence – Does the employee produce quality work? Does the employee communicate well verbally and in writing? Does the employee effectively communicate with coworkers and customers? Is the employee able to work reasonably independently and consistent with the employee’s level of training and experience? Does the employee require more than customary supervision? Comments: Sherry and her department excel in their projects and efforts. In 2017, her department secured \$9.6 million in grants with project values exceeding \$100 million, nearly 500 jobs created and 197 housing units assisted.</p>	3
<p>Sound Stewardship of COG Resources – Does the employee make the most effective use of the COG’s financial and equipment resources such as tools, vehicles, supplies and contract management? (Examples include: an employee’s care in the operation and maintenance of equipment assigned to the employee; diligence in management of contracts assigned to the</p>	3



WPCOG Evaluations

- Every evaluation includes three sections for which every employee is measured and scored
 - Evaluation of Core Values
 - Evaluation of Essential Duties
 - Evaluation of Departmental or Program Goals

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Average Score from Section III	2.86
Total Score for Departmental & Program Goals ÷ by number of goals evaluated (e.g. 14 ÷ 7 = 2)	

Evaluation Score	Total Points
Average Score from Section I – Core Values	2.875
Average Score from Section II – Essential Duties	2.61
Average Score for Section III – Departmental & Program Goals	2.86
Average Score from Section I + Average Score from Section II + Average Score from Section III ÷ 3	2.78

Overall Performance Rating = Exceeds Expectations



Staff Accountability : Summary

- Work to increase expectations
- Don't accept poor performance but provide hope
- Follow your procedures unless it is a severe circumstance or a conduct issue
- Be consistent and fair

Questions and Feedback

- Questions?
- Feedback or guidance?