



Government Finance Officers Association

What it Means to be a Leader

What Leaders Do

- Articulate vision
- Formulate strategy
- Drive implementation
- Expect results

Leaders and Managers

Leader

Big-picture person, the human side of a successful organization. Sets the tone, shapes the environment, establishes goals and motivates people. Leaders often can imagine an alternative future for their organization and work to make it a reality.

Manager

Makes sure the processes of the enterprise function well. He or she takes the tools at hand and uses them to accomplish results and enforce accountability for the team. Managers tend to like their visions written down and posted on a wall so they can check off accomplishments and measure their progress.

The best leader has well-developed management skills; the best manager has well-developed leadership skills

If You're a Born Manager

- Leave the to-do list for a moment and think instead about the image you're projecting to the people you work with
 - ☐ Employees will take their cues from their leader's behavior
 - ☐ An accessible, approachable leader will encourage employees to do their best, while an aloof leader who seems to sit around issuing edicts can drag down an entire enterprise
- Set aside regular time to think about the big picture for your organization
 - ☐ Where do you want it to be six months from now? Five years?
 - ☐ Figure out what's holding it back and brainstorm strategies to move it toward your vision

If You're a Born Leader

- As you're generating great ideas, follow them with the business processes needed to enact them
 - ☐ Who will take responsibility for carrying out your innovation?
 - ☐ Include them in the planning and see how they can improve your idea or offer constructive criticism of it
- Go back and do a post-mortem on an initiative that didn't work
 - ☐ Did the idea behind it miss the mark, or was there a lack of execution?
 - ☐ Use the example to create a plan to execute future initiatives, or you'll risk being seen as someone who can't turn an idea into reality

Obstacles to Leading

- The democratic process
- Lack of resources
- Organization culture
 - Form follows function, culture is shaped by behavior
 - Trust must be earned
- Competing needs

Enacting Reform

- Gathering support for change
- Empowering people to identify and implement changes
- Creating incentives
- Evaluating results
- Rewarding success

Effective Leaders

- Know where they want to go
- Listen more than they talk
- Have unimpeachable integrity
- Are decisive
- Are fair
- Are persistent, unstoppable
- Celebrate success *and* failure
- Are resilient, unflappable
- Are accessible, open, authentic, vulnerable



Flavors of Finance Directors

- Are you seen as a problem solver or a regulator? Guide or gate-keeper?
- Do you focus on priorities or constraints?
- Do you promote innovation or reward conformity?
- Are you a trusted advisor or a relentless faultfinder?
- Do you coach or criticize?
- Do people disappear when you walk into their work area?

How Not to Lead

- Avoid risk at all costs
- Ignore problems and hope they'll go away
- Only grease the squeaky wheel
- Keep information to yourself
- Spring surprises on your peers and staff
- Keep a short-term focus
- Undermine the manager and board
- Be “realistic”

Leading the Quest for Resiliency

Resilient governments...

“...accept uncertainty and embrace change

“...build systems that can withstand shocks and stresses

“...think broadly about what influences their financial health

“...evolve to adapt to new conditions and foster collaboration between finance officials and non-finance officials”

Flexible Systems

- Performance management
- Long-term financial planning
 - Five-year forecasts/models
 - Capital Improvement Programs
- Priority-based budgeting
- Strategic sourcing
- Recruitment, retention, and development
- Liability and risk assessment
 - Health, pension and OPEB
 - Infrastructure

Reinforcing Resiliency

- Enhancing financial literacy
- Linking long-term goals to daily work
 - ☐ Strategic planning
 - ☐ Action plans/business plans
 - ☐ Performance reporting
- Process improvement strategies
 - ☐ Lean process management
 - ☐ Innovation funds
- Rewarding efficiency

Foundations

- Principles and strategies for financial strength and stability
- Building relationships between the finance office and others in the organization
- Developing leaders in the organization