

Bob Behn's Public Management Report

An occasional (and maybe insightful) examination of the issues, dilemmas, challenges, and opportunities in leadership, governance, management, and performance in public agencies.

One Approach To Performance Leadership **Eleven “Better Practices” That Can Help Ratchet Up Performance**

I. Creating the Performance Framework: *What would it mean to do a good job?*

Practice 1: Articulate the organization's mission.

Proclaim — clearly and frequently — what the organization is trying to accomplish.

Practice 2: Identify the organization's most consequential performance deficit.

Determine what key failure is keeping the organization from achieving its mission.

Practice 3: Establish a specific performance target.

Specify what new level of success the organization needs to achieve next.

Practice 4: Clarify your theoretical linkage between target and mission.

Define (for yourself, at least) your mental model that explains how meeting the target will help to accomplish the mission.

II. Driving Performance Improvement: *How can we mobilize our people?*

Practice 5: Monitor progress frequently, personally, and publicly.

Publish the data so that every team knows that you know (and that everyone else knows) how well every team is doing.

Practice 6: Build operational capacity.

Provide your teams with what they need to achieve their target.

Practice 7: Take advantage of small wins to reward success.

Find lots of reasons to dramatize that you recognize and appreciate what teams have accomplished.

Practice 8: Create “esteem opportunities.”

Ensure that people can earn a sense of accomplishment and thus gain both self esteem and the esteem of their peers.

III. Learning To Enhance Performance: *How must we change to do even better?*

Practice 9: Check for cheating, distortions, and mission accomplishment.

Verify that people are achieving their targets in a way that furthers the mission (not in a way that fails to help or actually undermines this effort).

Practice 10: Analyze a large number and wide variety of indicators.

Examine many forms of data — both quantitative and qualitative — to learn how your organization can improve.

Practice 11: Adjust mission, target, theory, monitoring, capacity, esteem opportunities, rewards, and/or analysis.

Act on this learning, making the modifications necessary to ratchet up performance again.