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Introduction

This paper will discuss the skills and abilities needed to successfully lead people, set organizational goals, and measure performance within a public works agency. It will compare and contrast the disciplines of leadership and management, discuss the use and value of setting organizational goals, as well as show how to monitor these goals to measure success. Further, the needed skills and aptitudes to meet current and future expectations will also be outlined.

Differences and Similarities

Often the disciplines of leadership and management are commonly used to describe successful directors, managers or supervisors within the field of public works. Yet these terms are often defined differently. Such as, some take the stance that they are extreme opposites; even arguing that to be successful one has to be exclusively either a leader or manager. While others see these skill sets as synonyms using them interchangeably. Still others position themselves somewhere in the middle with the belief that success comes through the fundamental application of both disciplines dependent upon the need and circumstance.

Although, there are several leadership theories, most center around the narrative that leadership is the "influencing, motivating, and enabling [of] others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of [which]

they are members" (McShane and Glinow, 2010). The effective use of leadership principles by an agency's director, managers and supervisors, will motivate employees through the communication of current and future goals and the vision cast by the leader. The proactive application of these principles will allow an organization to adapt to ever changing internal and external influences. Internal influences could be budget constraints or generational diversity. External influences could present themselves through an increase in environmental regulations or an increase in expectations for customers. Peter Northouse, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Communication in the School of Communication at Western Michigan University, is quoted as saying: "Good leadership skills seek to shape ideas, motivate people and help provide options for the future" (Northouse, 2013).

The effective application of the foundational management skills of planning, organizing, scheduling and controlling by a manager can assist in an organization and manager's success. The use of these skills allows one to set and communicate priorities, provide direction in the execution of assignments, and measure the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization. The effective application of these foundational skills by leaders will assist an organization through providing clear direction and communicating expectations.

Both disciplines require people to work together and use their influence towards

the accomplishment of goals and meeting expectations. As public works agencies continue to adapt to limited resources and adhere to every increasing accountability, each discipline will be needed for the achievement of success.

Setting Organizational Goals

Planning, organizing, and prioritizing work (APWA, 2008) includes developing specific goals and strategies for accomplishing the organization's mission. Each element plays a vital role in the success of the leader and organization.

The planning effort involves determining major activities and functions, defining methods and determining needed resources, as well as calculating the level of effort that will be needed to accomplish each activity and function. Ultimately, the planning effort determines the amount of work to be performed with given resources and established levels of effort. This establishes a baseline to compare against when setting goals.

The second element, organizing, further divides the work into time based units, such as monthly or quarterly periods. This allows the work to be identified by activity and resource requirements (labor, equipment, and materials) for each time period. The advantage to this element is that it allows managers and supervisors to continually monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization, allowing for quick "course correction" if problems are discovered.

The element of scheduling requires the directing and prioritizing of work efforts, as well as the scheduling efforts on a short term basis, normally bi-weekly. This also includes the potential coordination of efforts with others and obtaining consensus with employees to work as

Monitoring and controlling resources is a part of the technical skills and requires the reviewing of all utilized resources for amounts such as labor, equipment, materials, accomplishment and cost in dollars and comparing to the desired results. This information

while influencing them to accept established procedures through open communications and transparency. In addition, through the application of key elements of management, processes can be established to plan effort and budgets, organize resources