



Biblioteca Virtual

The Second Pillar of Public Management

by JOHN DINGWALL IN COLLABORATION WITH OLE INGSTRUP AND PAUL CROOKALL

The features of high performing public organizations can be grouped as three main pillars: Aim Character, and Execution (or implementation.)

With *Aim*, an organization knows clearly its direction. Its mission is ingrained in its daily actions and its long-term planning. The leaders exemplify the mission, and everyone is held accountable to it. The components of aim are: Mission; Leader-ship; and Accountability.

§ With *Character*, organizations and people have a strong sense of who they are and what is important. They value their people. There is good communication and a desire to learn. There is a high degree of trust, and a sense of integrity, caring, and openness. The components here are: People; Communication; and Trust.

§ High-performing organizations get things done: they are strong on *Execution* (or implementation). Here the key components are Management Tools, Teamwork; and Change Management.

Aim, Character and Execution are mutually supportive. For example, high-performing organizations can execute effectively because they know the mission and have character. In turn, character is reinforced by a focus on a noble mission and successful implementation; aim is an outgrowth of character; and top-flight execution helps to achieve the mission.

This is the second of three articles on the study *The Three Pillars of Public Management* by Ole Ingstrup and Paul Crookall.

KEY POINTS OF CHARACTER

4 PEOPLE

High-performing organizations believe that people are the key to their success: they pay attention to them, and they go to great lengths to let them know that they are indeed the most important resource in reality, and not just in rhetoric.

They stay committed to their people policies, even in the face of strong pressures on time and budgets. They understand that throughout the organization, sound human resource policies are essential, and are not simply the responsibility of the human resource department. They also realize that there will always be room for improvement in dealing with people; this is a domain in which management can never do enough.

Components of a people-oriented approach include: listening and being sensitive to the concerns of staff; developing people; providing meaningful work (linked to a mission); and delegating responsibility and trusting staff to perform competently.

Questions should focus on valuing people

§ Do you feel valued at work? What contributes to that feeling, and what can be done to improve the way that people are valued in the organization?

4 COMMUNICATION

Well-performing organizations use multiple channels of communication - both electronic and face-to-face.

They pay attention to the need to ensure easier physical access, e.g., through kiosks, storefront offices, etc. Communication is becoming more direct, with less buffering: people in agencies and departments are communicating more directly with clients and the public, with less insulation from a layer of professional communicators.

Internal communications are always important, but especially so in times of change: at such times, one can never over-communicate (if you have no news, tell them you have no news). It is important to have plans, guidelines, methods, and mechanisms for internal communications. (Some departments, notably the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, make extensive use of employee news-letters, produced by volunteer employees at minimal cost). For day-to-day operations, it is essential for managers to communicate their expectations and to reach agreement on satisfactory performance; they need to develop precision around goals, accountabilities, and the day-to-day operational hurdles.

For communication with stake-holders and clients, organizations need systematic strategies and plans. A useful first step is to map out the relationships involved in communications. In planning their communications, managers need to use strategic agenda-setting to keep communication focused and purposeful, and to avoid information overload. This involves decisions on how much, in what format, and to how many people.

Leaders and organizations also need to manage their networking relationships well (especially in dealing with horizontal issues). In addition, they must be able to communicate and manage the standing and reputation of an agency, e.g., with respect to central agencies, other government agencies, the public, and clients or customers.

Some key questions include:

\$ Expectations: Are expectations clear on how and when you communicate and on what constitutes quality service? How can you manage those expectations?

\$ Planning: Do you have an internal and external communications plan? What are the strengths and weaknesses of those plans?

4 TRUST

In the research, trust emerged as a critically important factor. The respondents highlighted trust as essential to leadership, noting that if people were not trustworthy, they should not be leaders. Trust is central to good public management and to the effective operation of well-performing government agencies. To thrive, people must be able to trust the organization and their colleagues.

Organizations cannot perform well without trust - and high performance cannot be sustained on intimidation and fear. Good ideas (and suggestions for improvement) need a trusting environment in order to be nurtured. Without trust, problems will not be identified early but only when they are blatantly obvious and hard to fix.

Trust is a leadership function. Leaders need strategies for creating and developing trust. They need to realize that trust has to be earned on an ongoing basis, and that it flows in two directions; management for staff and staff for management.

Ways of building trust include:

\$ Listening to staff, sharing information, and developing staff professionally.

\$ Empowering staff and recognizing accomplishments.

\$ Building teams and delegating.

\$ Creating a culture based on shared values, and acting in accordance with the values and vision.

\$ Building relationships based on honesty, integrity, and genuine concern for others.

\$ Rewarding trustful behaviour and punishing untrustworthy behaviour.

Learning and trust go together. Organizations must create a climate of trust, honesty, openness and calmness for learning to take place. All of the well-performing organizations in this study stressed the importance of being tolerant of mistakes. In contrast, fear and lack of trust are impediments to learning. In a non-trusting organization B fearful organization B the first priority is to protect oneself.

Four types of trust can be distinguished

Professional Trust involves confidence in professional competence. It can be built (and demonstrated) through delegation, clear and open communications, sharing of information, professional development, job rotations, and leadership which helps people develop and is concerned about their welfare.

Personal Trust concerns the degree to which one believes that others are honest and caring at a personal level. Are they ethical? Are they reliable?

Political Trust exists when the elected government has confidence that the agency is performing competently and that its mission is compatible with the overall government agenda. This allows the department to pursue its mission over the long term. Where political trust is lacking, there will be increased external control (e.g. short-term leaders parachuted in because they are trusted by the political decision-makers).

Public Trust concerns the degree to which the public believes in the integrity of the organization and its members. Two key prerequisites are ethical behaviour and satisfactory service. Public trust is essential for revenue agencies, which depend on self-assessment and an honour system.

A good example of these different forms of trust would be community policing: the public must trust the front-line officers; they in turn must trust the public; and managers must trust the front-line officers.

Some key questions:

\$ Who trusts whom: Can you trust others in your organization? Can they trust you?

\$ Trust and fear: Is it better to be trusted than feared? Can you speak the truth to those in power?

\$ Openness: How open is the organization? What can be done to improve openness?

Organizations and leaders with Character pay attention to People, Communication, and Trust in a systematic and comprehensive way and on a consistent basis over time. This is best seen through an example. For Character, it would be difficult to find a better example than Statistics Canada consistently ranked as the number one statistical agency in the world. In a related article, Canadian Government Executive interviews the Chief Statistician, Dr. Ivan Fellegi, on this subject.

Dr. Ole Ingstrup is the former Commissioner of Corrections (serving from 1988 to 1992 and again from 1996 to 2000). He was the Principal of the Canadian Centre for Management Development from 1992 to 1995.

Dr. Paul Crookall is an Ottawa-based consultant.

Dr. John Dingwall is the Executive Editor of Canadian Government Executive magazine.

ABA Colombia
Asociación Colombiana para el Avance de las Ciencias del Comportamiento
informacion@abacolombia.org.co

Este artículo proviene de: www.abacolombia.org.co
Todos los derechos reservados ©2003