Driving Government Performance
Moderated By:

Timothy B. Clark
Editor at Large
Government Executive
Speaker:

Robert D. Behn
John F. Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University
One Approach To Performance Leadership

Twelve “Better Practices” That Can Help “Ratchet Up” Performance

Tuesday, February 9, 2010

Robert D. Behn
John F. Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University

Bob Behn’s Performance Leadership Report
http://www.hks.harvard.edu/TheBehnReport
One Approach To Performance Leadership

Twelve “Better Practices” That Can Help “Ratchet Up” Performance

Tuesday, February 9, 2010

Robert D. Behn
John F. Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University

Bob Behn’s Performance Leadership Report
http://www.hks.harvard.edu/TheBehnReport
One Approach To Performance Leadership

Twelve “Better Practices” That Can Help “Ratchet Up” Performance

Tuesday, February 9, 2010

Robert D. Behn
John F. Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University

Bob Behn’s Performance Leadership Report
http://www.hks.harvard.edu/TheBehnReport
One Approach To Performance Leadership

Twelve “Better Practices” That Can Help “Ratchet Up” Performance

Tuesday, February 9, 2010

Robert D. Behn
John F. Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University

Bob Behn’s Performance Leadership Report
http://www.hks.harvard.edu/TheBehnReport
One Approach To Performance Leadership

Twelve “Better Practices” That Can Help “Ratchet Up” Performance

Tuesday, February 9, 2010

Robert D. Behn
John F. Kennedy School of Government
Harvard University

Bob Behn’s Performance Leadership Report
http://www.hks.harvard.edu/TheBehnReport
One Approach To Performance Leadership

Twelve “Better Practices” That Can Help “Ratchet Up” Performance

The ratchet can only turn counter-clockwise.

The pawl prevents the ratchet from rotating back.
One Approach To Performance Leadership
One Approach To Performance Leadership

(1) Creating the Performance Framework
One Approach To Performance Leadership

(1) Creating the Performance Framework

*What would it mean to do a good job?*
One Approach To Performance Leadership

(1) Creating the Performance Framework
   What would it mean to do a good job?

(2) Driving Performance Improvement
One Approach To Performance Leadership

(1) Creating the Performance Framework
   What would it mean to do a good job?

(2) Driving Performance Improvement
   How can we mobilize our people?
One Approach To Performance Leadership

(1) Creating the Performance Framework
   What would it mean to do a good job?

(2) Driving Performance Improvement
   How can we mobilize our people?

(3) Enhancing Future Performance
One Approach To Performance Leadership

(1) Creating the Performance Framework
   *What would it mean to do a good job?*

(2) Driving Performance Improvement
   *How can we mobilize our people?*

(3) Enhancing Future Performance
   *How must we change to do even better?*
I. Creating the Performance Framework

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

*What would it mean to do a good job?*

(1) Articulate the organization’s mission.
I. Creating the Performance Framework

*What would it mean to do a good job?*

(1) Articulate the organization’s mission.

Proclaim — clearly and frequently — what the organization is trying to accomplish.
I. Creating the Performance Framework

What would it mean to do a good job?

(1) Articulate the organization’s mission.
   Proclaim — clearly and frequently — what the organization is trying to accomplish.

(2) Identify one of the organization’s most consequential performance deficits.
I. Creating the Performance Framework

*What would it mean to do a good job?*

1. Articulate the organization’s mission.
   Proclaim — clearly and frequently — what the organization is trying to accomplish.

2. Identify one of the organization’s most consequential performance deficits.
   Focus on a key failure that is keeping the organization from achieving its mission.
I. Creating the Performance Framework

What would it mean to do a good job?

(1) Articulate the organization’s mission.
   Proclaim — clearly and frequently — what the organization is trying to accomplish.

(2) Identify one of the organization’s most consequential performance deficits.
   Focus on a key failure that is keeping the organization from achieving its mission.

(3) Establish a specific performance target.
I. Creating the Performance Framework

*What would it mean to do a good job?*

1. **Articulate the organization’s mission.**
   Proclaim — clearly and frequently — what the organization is trying to accomplish.

2. **Identify one of the organization’s most consequential performance deficits.**
   Focus on a key failure that is keeping the organization from achieving its mission.

3. **Establish a specific performance target.**
   Specify what new level of success the organization needs to achieve next.
I. Creating the Performance Framework

What would it mean to do a good job?

(1) Articulate the organization’s mission.
   Proclaim — clearly and frequently — what the organization is trying to accomplish.

(2) Identify one of the organization’s most consequential performance deficits.
   Focus on a key failure that is keeping the organization from achieving its mission.

(3) Establish a specific performance target.
   Specify what new level of success the organization needs to achieve next.

   Today: NASA’s mission: “to pioneer the future in space exploration, scientific discovery and aeronautics research.”
I. Creating the Performance Framework

*What would it mean to do a good job?*

(1) **Articulate the organization’s mission.**
    Proclaim — clearly and frequently — what the organization is trying to accomplish.

(2) **Identify one of the organization’s most consequential performance deficits.**
    Focus on a key failure that is keeping the organization from achieving its mission.

(3) **Establish a specific performance target.**
    Specify what new level of success the organization needs to achieve next.

Today: NASA’s **mission**: “to pioneer the future in space exploration, scientific discovery and aeronautics research.”

1962: NASA’s **performance target**: “This nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth.”
I. Creating the Performance Framework

What would it mean to do a good job?

(1) Articulate the organization’s mission.
   Proclaim — clearly and frequently — what the organization is trying to accomplish.

(2) Identify one of the organization’s most consequential performance deficits.
   Focus on a key failure that is keeping the organization from achieving its mission.

(3) Establish a specific performance target.
   Specify what new level of success the organization needs to achieve next.
I. Creating the Performance Framework

*What would it mean to do a good job?*

1. **Articulate the organization’s mission.**
   - Proclaim — clearly and frequently — what the organization is trying to accomplish.

2. **Identify one of the organization’s most consequential performance deficits.**
   - Focus on a key failure that is keeping the organization from achieving its mission.

3. **Establish a specific performance target.**
   - Specify what new level of success the organization needs to achieve next.

4. **Clarify your theoretical linkage between target and mission.**
I. Creating the Performance Framework

What would it mean to do a good job?

(1) Articulate the organization’s mission. Proclaim — clearly and frequently — what the organization is trying to accomplish.

(2) Identify one of the organization’s most consequential performance deficits. Focus on a key failure that is keeping the organization from achieving its mission.

(3) Establish a specific performance target. Specify what new level of success the organization needs to achieve next.

(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?*
II. Driving Performance Improvement

*How can we mobilize our people?*

(5) Monitor progress frequently, personally, and publicly.
II. Driving Performance Improvement

*How can we mobilize our people?*

(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.
II. Driving Performance Improvement

*How can we mobilize our people?*

(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.
II. Driving Performance Improvement

*How can we mobilize our people?*

(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.
II. Driving Performance Improvement

*How can we mobilize our people?*

(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.

(6) Build operational capacity.
II. Driving Performance Improvement

*How can we mobilize our people?*

(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.

(6) **Build operational capacity.**
    Provide your teams with what they need to achieve their targets.
II. Driving Performance Improvement

*How can we mobilize our people?*

(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.

(6) Build operational capacity. Provide your teams with what they need to achieve their targets.

(7) Take advantage of small wins to reward success.
II. Driving Performance Improvement

*How can we mobilize our people?*

(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.

(6) Build operational capacity. Provide your teams with what they need to achieve their targets.

(7) Take advantage of small wins to reward success. Dramatize that you recognize and appreciate what teams have accomplished.
II. Driving Performance Improvement

*How can we mobilize our people?*

(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.

(6) **Build operational capacity.**

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

(7) **Take advantage of small wins to reward success.**

   Dramatize that you recognize and appreciate what teams have accomplished.

II. Driving Performance Improvement

How can we mobilize our people?

(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.

(6) Build operational capacity.
   Provide your teams with what they need to achieve their targets.

(7) Take advantage of small wins to reward success.
   Dramatize that you recognize and appreciate what teams have accomplished.
II. Driving Performance Improvement

*How can we mobilize our people?*

(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.

(6) Build operational capacity. Provide your teams with what they need to achieve their targets.

(7) Take advantage of small wins to reward success. Dramatize that you recognize and appreciate what teams have accomplished.

(8) Create “esteem opportunities.”
II. Driving Performance Improvement

How can we mobilize our people?

(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.

(6) Build operational capacity. Provide your teams with what they need to achieve their targets.

(7) Take advantage of small wins to reward success. Dramatize that you recognize and appreciate what teams have accomplished.

(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.
II. Driving Performance Improvement

*How can we mobilize our people?*

(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.

(6) Build operational capacity.
    Provide your teams with what they need to achieve their targets.

(7) Take advantage of small wins to reward success.
    Dramatize that you recognize and appreciate what teams have
    accomplished.

(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.

    Robert D. Behn, “On the value of creating Esteem
    1, no. 9 (May 2004)
III. Enhancing Future Performance

How must we change to do even better?
III. Enhancing Future Performance

How must we change to do even better?

(9) Check for cheating, distortions, and mission accomplishment.
III. Enhancing Future Performance

How must we change to do even better?

(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).
III. Enhancing Future Performance

*How must we change to do even better?*

(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).

(10) Analyze a large number and wide variety of indicators.
III. Enhancing Future Performance

*How must we change to do even better?*

(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).

(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 do improve.
III. Enhancing Future Performance

*How must we change to do even better?*

(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).

(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 do improve.

(11) Adjust mission, target, theory, monitoring, capacity, esteem opportunities, rewards, and analysis.
III. Enhancing Future Performance

*How must we change to do even better?*

(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).

(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 do improve.

(11) Adjust mission, target, theory, monitoring, capacity, esteem opportunities, rewards, and analysis.

Act on this learning, making the modifications necessary to ratchet up performance again.
III. Enhancing Future Performance

*How must we change to do even better?*

(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).

(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 do improve.

(11) Adjust mission, target, theory, monitoring, capacity, esteem opportunities, rewards, and analysis.
   Act on this learning, making the modifications necessary to ratchet up performance again.

(12) Create an accounting of your organization’s performance.
III. Enhancing Future Performance

*How must we change to do even better?*

(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).

(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 do improve.

(11) Adjust mission, target, theory, monitoring, capacity, esteem opportunities, rewards, and analysis.
    Act on this learning, making the modifications necessary to ratchet up performance again.

(12) Create an accounting of your organization’s performance.
    Build a reputation for competence and accomplishment, and obtain, perhaps, additional flexibility or resources.
One Approach To Performance Leadership
One Approach To Performance Leadership

Comments?
One Approach To Performance Leadership

Comments?

Questions?
One Approach To Performance Leadership

Comments?

Questions?

Suggestions?
One Approach To Performance Leadership

Comments?
Questions?
Suggestions?
Vicious Personal Attacks?
One Approach To Performance Leadership

Comments?

Questions?

Suggestions?

Vicious Personal Attacks?

For more, check out Bob Behn’s Performance Leadership Report:

http://www.hks.harvard.edu/TheBehnReport

Access and Subscriptions Are Free
Bob Behn’s Performance Leadership Report

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

Published monthly at:
http://www.hks.harvard.edu/TheBehnReport

Access and subscriptions are (amazingly) free.
Questions