

Municipal Administration Leadership Workshop – Mountain Refresher Course

Kananaskis Village – May 15-18, 2018

The Society of Local Government Managers will be hosting the Municipal Administration Leadership Workshop from May 15-18, 2018 along with the LGL Forum entitled “Civic Excellence: Maximizing Performance” May 14-16, 2018.

An informative, educational opportunity awaits you in a beautiful mountain setting. In addition to the Senior Executive Fellows Program, the Society has planned an exceptional two and a half day educational program directed at meeting the needs of municipal administrators, assistants, departmental managers, and government employees looking for a professional educational experience that provides practical skills for dealing with contemporary issues.

You will find senior and junior level CAOs from urban and rural, large and small jurisdictions who value the opportunity to learn from each other as well as from experts in the field.

Reach your Peak – Plan on attending the Municipal Administration Leadership Workshop in beautiful Kananaskis Country. For more information check out www.clgm.net

Awards & Bursaries

The Society of Local Government Managers has developed and participates in a number of bursaries, scholarships and awards to encourage and assist local government practitioners and members with their continuing professional development. The following provides summary information on these awards.

The Larry Majeski Bursary sponsored by the SLGM was developed to provide recipients \$1,200.00 to offset the registration and accommodation fees for the Mountain Refresher Municipal Administration Leadership Workshop in Kananaskis.

Bursary Criteria and application forms can be found at www.clgm.net

SLGM Bursary provides designated members with the opportunity to access to two five hundred dollar bursaries or a one thousand dollar bursary for continuing education.

Bursary Criteria and application forms may be obtained by contacting the Society's Offices. March 31st is the deadline for applications.

The SLGM Award of Excellence cosponsored with Brownlee LLP, was developed to publicly recognize those individuals who demonstrate service excellence in local government.

The Award also recognizes the achievements, contributions, and continued pursuit of training of those individuals involved in the administration of local government.

Regular, associate and student members of the Society of Local Government Managers may apply until March 15th for the Award.

SLGM Intern Bursary provides Interns the opportunity to access \$500 to attend the annual Mountain Refresher Course in Kananaskis. Applications must be received by April 30th

For more information, contact Linda Davies, CLGM

R.W. Hay Award cosponsored by the SLGM and the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties

For more information, please contact Cindy Carstairs at cindy@aamdc.ca

Dedicated CAO and Dedicated Team Awards co-sponsored by the SLGM and the Alberta Urban Municipalities

For more information and an application form, please go to www.clgm.net.

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Ethics

Take the Essential Ethics Examination

It's difficult to think of a subject touchier than that of what actions are "right" and what are "wrong", especially when we're discussing a real life situation. Ethics places not only our actions and behaviour under the microscope, but it also scrutinizes our integrity and worth as a person. Since ethics is so personal, it is socially unacceptable to name names when discussing specific situations. Imagine how you would respond if I used an example in this article using your name, or the name of your manager?

Despite this reluctance to speak frankly about ethical issues, one need only read the headlines and newspaper editorials to know there is a great and growing need for more emphasis on ethical behaviour. Nothing can destroy a career faster, especially if you have any amount of fiduciary responsibility, than the exposure of unethical behaviour.

Ethics is so personal

The legal system believes sane people have an innate ability to determine "right" from "wrong", so much so that it includes the ability to tell right from wrong as one of the definitions of sanity. In a real sense, for someone to question your ethics is the same as questioning your sanity.

If you're unsure whether or not an action is ethical, there's a simple acid test for you. Ask yourself the question, "Would I have any objection to having my actions detailed on the front page of a national newspaper?" If you can honestly answer "no" then the chances are good that you're acting ethically.

This even works when it is our intent to act unethically. The image of that glaring headline, and the obvious consequences of such visibility, should be enough to force us to reconsider our actions... not because they're wrong, but because of the potential negative consequences.

This acid test speaks to the heart of ethical behaviour; it recognizes that an action is deemed to be ethical or not according to public opinion. (That sentence is a loaded one, and worthy of at least one semester of heated philosophical debate, but for the purposes of this discussion, 'It's good enough'). In some cultures there is nothing wrong with the concept of *Bakeesh* (a 'tip' to a public official): it is merely the accepted way of doing business.

This behaviour is not as acceptable in North America, but *Bakeesh* isn't totally foreign to our culture. When I was working my way through university it was made abundantly clear to me that the inspector was 'entitled' to go to the head of the line when the coffee truck arrived.

They also received large quantities of booze as Christmas gifts, as did every other inspector necessary

The question arises, when does the phrase "rank hath its privileges" become a euphemism for "bribe"? For the answer, go back to that question, would government inspectors be comfortable having the details of all their gifts publicized?

To bring this closer to home, I think we'd all agree that when a manager responsible for dealing with vendors receives preferential treatment or gifts, it might affect their purchasing decisions. Therefore, it might be better if they did not accept gifts or special treatment. When it comes to vendor purchasing relationships, managers, like Caesar's wife, must be above reproach.

That last point is an important one. Not only is it necessary to act ethically, it is also necessary to protect ourselves from any suspicion of impropriety. An accusation of wrongdoing always trumps a denial. This is why the newspaper headline test is important. It guarantees in advance that when our actions do become public, and they will if there's any sort of story worth reporting, then our actions will be judged as ethical. □

Part-time learning is popular

There are still those who take part-time studies in pursuit of a fatter paycheck, but today a majority of Canadians taking extra training just want to learn more, according to a Statistic Canada survey.

Irrespective of the reasons or motivation working Canadians have to study part-time, experts say, the bottom line is, they are acquiring new skills and knowledge that improves, their prospects and opportunities.

This establishes a new trend that, education is a continuous process and no longer ends with just the completion of formal schooling and acquiring degrees.

Given this trend, employees should take the initiative to find out what sort of training their employers offer in-house and what sort of financial support they might provide for courses taken outside of work. The study also mentioned that those who take advantage of training opportunities get noticed.

Employers are always looking for people who are committed to their personal development as well as their career management. Simply put, these people are valuable assets to an organization. □

Local Government Leadership Forum entitled "Civic Excellence: Maximizing Performance" May 14-16, 2018 hosted by the SLGM in beautiful Kananaskis Country. For More Information Check it out at www.clgm.net

Leadership, Confidence, Control and Humour

The confidence shown by effective leaders is not just a facade, but is based on control of a situation.

By believing in their own abilities and the abilities of others in their organization confidence is not complacency or unrealistic optimism. Effective leaders don't waffle, they don't hide behind committees, consultants or memos to avoid criticism. They act decisively and take responsibility for their actions. In expressing confidence and building it in others, humour becomes invaluable. A witty quip at the right time shows a grasp of the situation as nothing else does.

Effective leaders do not plod along simply trying to maintain the status quo - they seize and create opportunities. Especially in today's world, they see change not as a threat but as the norm. Instead of the philosophy, "If it's not broken - don't fix it," they strive for constant improvement, always looking for ways to make things better.

Leaders are not locked into mental ruts, but can play with possible scenarios as easily as facts. They have imagination, which is an important part of their vision.

Humour is connected with imagination, openness to novelty and mental flexibility. The person with a good sense of humour sees something not just for what it is, but as the intersection of a large number of possibilities. When leaders exercise their sense of humour, they not only cultivate their own mental flexibility, but bring out other people's mental flexibility.

Humour is a kind of play and to cultivate our sense of humour is helpful to cultivate our playfulness generally. When we play we are doing something because we want to, not because we have to, it's no longer a task that must be done. Because a task demands results, it is future-oriented whereas play, by contrast, is oriented to the present. We derive satisfaction from the activity itself as we do it.

Speaking of doing it, whose job was it?

This is a story often told and is in fact the story about four people named everybody, somebody, anybody and nobody. There was an important job to be done and everybody was sure somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but nobody did it.

Somebody got angry about that, because it was everybody's job. Everybody thought that anybody could do it but nobody realized that everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that everybody blamed somebody when nobody did what anybody could have done. ☐

A Quick To Do "or" Not To Do List

1. Remember you will always find time to do the things you really want to do, so always start with the least interesting tasks.
2. Don't forget, everything can't be a number one priority and your to-do-lists can be changed as circumstances warrant. So figure out what really needs to be done.
3. A to do list means it needs to be done, so do it, delegate it or ditch it.
4. Saying **no** upfront is better than a broken promise later, so learn to say no.
5. Plan and keep time for emergencies. If you find you waste time, examine your habits. Time is usually wasted in minutes and like Benjamin Franklin's old adage states, "A penny saved is a penny earned." This can be applied to saving time because time is money.
6. Never leave to tomorrow what must be done today. Because, as you know tomorrow, will be the busiest day of the week. ☐

The Electronic Market Place

The Society provides an overnight advertising service to its members, subscribers and all rural and urban municipalities within Alberta. Advertisements are also posted on the Society's website. This service is available to any company or organization wanting to communicate with municipalities quickly and cost effectively. The Society charges a flat fee for this service. Visit <http://www.clgm.net/classifieds>

Certified Local Government Manager

Society of Local Government Managers of Alberta

Registered under the Professional and Occupational Associations Registration Act the Society is a legislative regulated body that issues the professional designation "Certified Local Government Manager" (CLGM).

For more information go to: www.clgm.net

Visit our website www.clgm.net

Critical Moments

There aren't a whole lot of guarantees in life, but this sure is one of them: At some point in your career, you'll encounter a resident who isn't totally over-the-moon with an event or meeting you've spearheaded. In fact, the bigger your commitment is to create something new and exciting, the more likely you are to turn a few people off. While no one enjoys receiving negative feedback, it's key to take an undesirable critique professionally and graciously, and, most of all, learn from it.

It is cliché to say, but often the biggest lessons have come from times when things did not go as planned. If you can keep your emotions in check, it is amazing what you can do with negative feedback. Here's how to make the most out of a less-than-glowing review.

1. CHECK YOUR EGO

It's not easy to do, but following this advice will put you in a professional frame of mind to deal with unhappy clients. It is very important to take negative feedback seriously, but not personally.

2. GET ANSWERS

Criticism usually communicates disappointment in one of three areas: emotional (an ego has been hurt), logistical (the venue, timing or technology wasn't up to par) or content-based (the speakers, exhibitors or swag was a letdown). Figuring out the problem area creates a curious mindset and takes the focus away from what was done wrong. It will also show the resident that you care about his or her feedback.

3. DEAL WITH IT IN PERSON

A conversation is usually better than an email, so talk about the problem during the event if it comes up. Afterward, do your event recap in person with the resident. Take a deep breath and listen to everything before responding. If it is over written communication, sleep on it before you send a reply.

4. REHEARSE SOME GO-TO LINES

You don't want to be caught off-guard and end up saying something you'll regret. Instead of trying to defend yourself, try I'm sorry you feel that way. Then, try, Help me understand exactly what you're disappointed with. How would you like to have seen it handled? You can end with something like, I appreciate your candid feedback, and it's my goal that the event be the best it can. Your input has identified an important way we can improve."

6. STAY CALM

Perhaps the most crucial thing to remember is not to lose it. Save the crying, venting, name-calling and yelling for when you are behind closed doors. Remember that you're representing your municipality. Ask yourself if your mom would have been proud of how you handled myself. It's a good gut check.

6. DEBRIEF AND MOVE ON

After a shoddy review, ask yourself these questions: Why did you make the decisions you did? Was this a one-off criticism? Would you still make the same call? No matter how skilled or experienced we are, stuff happens. Instead of being defeated, recognize critiques are often the fastest way to improvement. A wise practitioner once said, if you're not offending someone on a regular basis, you're probably not making any fans, either. ☐

Waiver Policy

The Society realizes from time to time members may find themselves between jobs with their professional fees unpaid and as that may prove to be a financial hardship to the member, the Board will invoke its power to waive in part for a period of time the member's fees.

The Society of Local Government Managers recognizes two categories of certified membership: *active* and *retired*.

"Retired certified member" means a member who has ceased employment as the result of an intention to end his or her career and will pay no dues.

Active certified members pay full dues with the following waiver provisions:

- Unemployed for six months or more: *one-quarter of full dues*.
- Family leave, interruption (minimum six months) of career due to parental considerations: *one-quarter of full dues for maximum of five years, consecutively of in total*.
- Long-term illness or disability (medically unable to work): *full dues waived upon receipt of a medical certificate*.
- Engaged in full-time study at a post-secondary institution: *one-quarter of full dues*.

Members meeting these requirements should contact the Registrar requesting an application form from the Society specifying which waiver provision you wish to apply for. The member must complete and return the waiver application promptly to the Registrar at the Society's Office. Payment of reduced dues, if applicable, must accompany all applications.

Contact:

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The Last Word

Congratulations: Janine Saastad CLGM, Jennifer Cannon CLGM, Ryan Anders CLGM, Arlen Miller CLGM. Associate Members: Brain Allen & Michele Hay: Student Members J. Darling, T Jenkins & J. Anderson. Congrats to Peter Tarnawsky the 2017 R.W. Hay Award recipient.

Reminders: 2017 Professional Education Affidavits are due July 15, 2018.

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