

THE ADMINISTRATOR

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INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

If you are interested in getting involved with the N.C. City & County Management Association (NCCCMA), now is your chance. There are number of committees within the membership of the NCCCMA. If you are interested in volunteering for one of the following committees, visit www.ncmanagers.org or email Rob Shepherd, NCCCMA secretariat, at rshepherd@ncml.org.

Here is a look at each of the committees:

Civic Education Project Committee

Work in partnership with the Civic Education Consortium at the UNC-CH School of Government to execute the annual agreement between the Association and Consortium. Develop recommendations to sustain the long-term funding needed for the Civic Education Project for the future. Advise the Consortium and Executive Committee as needed on matters related to the Civic Education Project.

Membership Support Committee

Work with and assist Association members that are in transition or need of professional assistance using the bimonthly MIT report provided by the NC League of Municipalities. Assign individual committee members to members-in-transition to assist during their transition. Solicit nominations and select the Assistant Manager of the Year award to be presented at the Summer Conference.

Sustaining Membership/ICMA Relations Committee

Develop and implement strategies to increase/sustain the membership of the Association and ICMA. Strategies should be consistent with sustaining the association as the current "baby-boomer" generation members retire and embraces the next generation of managers.

Seminar Program Committee

Plan and execute the Association's winter and summer seminar in coordination with liaisons from the School of

Government (winter) and the North Carolina League of Municipalities (summer).

Professional Development Committee

Advise the Executive Committee on matters to improve professional development opportunities for the membership. The committee solicits and selects recipients for grants to attend the Public Executive Leadership Academy at the UNC-CH School of Government and the Senior Executive Institute at the University of Virginia.

Retirement Committee

Advise the NC League of Municipalities and the NC Association of County Commissioners on policy positions and possible enhancements to the NC Local Government Employees Retirement System benefits. Cultivate younger members of the association to become advocates for the retirement system as a tool to attract and retain qualified staff.

DURHAM HONORED FOR INNOVATION

The City of Durham was honored by the Alliance for Innovation recently with an Outstanding Achievement in Innovation Award for *A Heartbeat Away*.

All of the award winners will be recognized at the [2013 TLG Conference](#) in Atlanta, GA April 10 – 12. To view the presentation schedule or learn more about TLG, visit [the](#)

[conference website](#).

Congratulations to Durham and the other 2013 winners for their outstanding achievements.

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The Administrator is a monthly newsletter of the North Carolina City and County Management Association, a professional association for city and county managers and assistant managers from counties and municipalities throughout the state of North Carolina.

For comments or suggestions, please contact Matt Lail, editor, at 919-819-3979, or email at collards12@yahoo.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

N.C. City & County Management Association Summer Seminar

Craven Convention Center,
New Bern

June 20-22, 2013

99th ICMA Annual Conference

Boston

September 22-25, 2013

2014 N.C. City & County Management Association Winter Seminar

Sheraton Research Triangle Park
February 5-7, 2014

CAREER COMPASS NO. 29 – FORGET WORK-LIFE BALANCE! RE-ENERGIZE AT WORK AND AT HOME

By Dr. Frank Benest

Career Compass is a monthly column from ICMA focused on career issues for local government professional staff. Dr. Frank Benest is ICMA's senior advisor for Next Generation Initiatives and resides in Palo Alto, California. If you have a career question you would like addressed in a future Career Compass, email careers@icma.org or contact Frank directly at frank@frankbenest.com.

Edited for space.

Question:

I am a Division Manager in a County Environmental Services Department. I love my work but I'm working too hard. I'm often fatigued (as are many on my team). I feel overwhelmed with urgent demands. I am distracted and have little time to think, plan or "connect the dots." I have tried to better prioritize and then delegate some of the less important work but I still feel that work is all-consuming.

Worst of all, I do not have much time for my wife and young children. I often stay late at work and when I do get home I'm responding to emails. I am exhausted at work and at home. How do I achieve work-life balance? Help!

Frank's Response:

Those of us devoted to public service and local government work often struggle with this

challenge of work-life balance. Being consumed by work is an epidemic in our culture. Notice that in most cultures people would talk about life-work balance but not in America. We focus on balancing life with work.

"Got Purpose"

The good news is that we are very lucky—we find great meaning in our public service. Many people do not have purposeful work. In contrast, our local government work is imbued with meaning and purpose. We want to make a difference; build community; and save the planet. As Daniel Pink has said in his book *Drive*, meaning is the great motivator. In fact, most local government managers often say that the psychic benefits of our work outweigh the psychic costs.

Negative Impacts of Work on Our Personal Lives

While recognizing the positive results generated by our service, our work can negatively impact our personal lives. When I recently led a workshop on this topic of "Work-Life Balance," participants identified the following negative impacts on their personal lives:

- Anxiety and distress
- An unhealthy life
- Less time for family; missed family events
- "I just have a little time for family and friends, nothing else."

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ETHICS: IT'S ETHICS AWARENESS MONTH

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As ICMA members we take pride in our professional commitment to ethical conduct and public service values. But are we equally proud of the ethical climate in the places we lead and manage? With March designated as National Ethics Awareness Month, now is the time to craft a thoughtful strategy for strengthening the ethical culture of the organization you lead. Consider this eight-point strategy to get there:

1. The Standard Is Set at the Top.

You can't lead from the rear on this issue. In the mundane everyday activities and the challenging moments, you set the ethical tone. Want to inspire staff to the highest standard of conduct? Then model the conduct you want to see in others. And when mistakes happen, demonstrate true accountability by taking personal responsibility and correcting the deficiencies.

2. Define Your Core Values and the Behaviors That Support Those Values.

ICMA members can look to the ICMA Code of Ethics for values-based guidance on the

right course of action. Staff members who belong to other professional associations with a code of ethics get similar support. But what about everyone else? They are left without any guidance if their place of employment fails to define its core values and the behaviors that support those values.

Work to develop organizational values that reduce ambiguity and provide individuals with some essential guidance on what's expected and what's right. As you develop these values, use a process that engages the entire staff to achieve greater commitment to the values. If your organization already has a code of ethics, is it still viable and does it influence conduct? Is there still clarity and agreement on the core values that drive critical decisions? Remember that organizations or teams with shared values produce the best results.

3. Assess the Organization's Culture.

Wouldn't some baseline information about attitudes and behaviors in the organization be helpful in crafting your strategy? Does your culture expect staff to report questionable ethical behavior of others? Are staff members clear about where to go for advice? Would a staff member say that you are receptive to hearing bad news or do you "shoot the messenger"? Use your annual staff survey to gather feedback.

4. Select the Right People.

Recruit the most talented, ethical employees and link good conduct with incentive structures. Warren Buffett once

noted, "In looking for people to hire, look for three qualities: integrity, intelligence, and energy. And if they don't have the first, the other two will kill you." Celebrate exemplary conduct, whether it's the ordinary everyday ethical conduct or the single courageous act.

5. Challenge Bad Behavior.

It's an old but true adage that what we allow, we approve. Don't walk by something that is wrong.

6. Commit to Ethics Training.

Regular training builds awareness of common ethical issues, provides tools and strategies for effective problem solving, and, yes, can even inspire people to do the right thing when they are faced with a difficult ethical dilemma. Remember that it is a myth that good people always make wise choices.

7. Create a Safe and Responsive Environment.

Make sure that staff members have informal and formal opportunities to raise any ethical concerns about conduct or decisions. Create a safe and responsive environment outside the chain of command for those seeking advice or reporting an issue. Do this correctly and you may actually decrease the need for someone to blow the whistle by giving leadership advance warning and the opportunity to address ethically troubling activities.

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8. Promote Your Values.

Publicly communicate the values that guide you and the organization in your exchanges with the public, media, business, and other stakeholders. It is not about making a cavalier statement that your organization is better than others. It is demonstrating that you do have

standards and are willing to be held accountable to them.

The reality is that no organization, regardless of its commitment to values, training, and good conduct, is totally immune from ethical problems. But taking these eight steps to strengthen the organizational culture reduces the odds that

unethical conduct will take place or go unnoticed. When and where will you begin?

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CAREER COMPASS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

- "No time for me"
- "What personal life?"

Premises

To work on this issue of re-energizing and renewing ourselves, we should start with certain premises.

First, we often get "lopsided," especially at mid-life, with too much emphasis on work and career. It is too easy to ignore other important aspects of our lives.

Second, re-engaging in family, creative or leisure pursuits can enhance energy and productivity at work. In other words, there is a strong business case for having a robust non-work life.

Third, there is no magic bullet. Everyone needs to mix and match strategies that work for them.

Fourth, we can learn from each other as we all try to recalibrate.

Finally, reflection is a first step in the journey to renew ourselves.

"Forget Balance"

As Jon Gordon stated in his April 2012 *PM* article "Appreciate the Moment," work-life balance is difficult if not impossible to achieve. There will be days when work demands all your energies and other times when family requires more of your attention. Therefore, it is better to focus on energy and being in the moment at home as well as work.

Frank's Top Strategies

Again, there is no one ideal strategy. People need to combine different approaches to see what works for them. Here are my top ten strategies to consider and try out:

1. **Reflect on what is missing (or not working) and share your thoughts with others**
2. **Reconnect with creative, leisure or spiritual pursuit**
3. **Shake things up!**
4. **Promote playfulness at work**

5. Use rituals and sanctuaries

6. Create a digital-free zone

7. Find a "passion project"

8. Take care of oneself

9. Manage expectations

10. Help other employees grow and develop

If you find yourself depleted, you need to do something about it. So here is a challenge. Starting tomorrow, what is one thing you can try out to enhance the fullness of your life?