

Challenges and Opportunities

# The Next Generation of CAO's

# The Municipal Workforce is Changing....

- The “Baby Boomer” generation is getting older and are likely to retire in the next 3-5 years;
- The public sector is facing growing competition for employees with the private sector;
- There are challenges in retaining younger workers “Generation Y”

# ....and it has implications on Municipal Government Workforces

- Loss of “senior” leadership positions to retirement;
- Loss of “senior” positions throughout the ranks;
- Risk of loss of corporate knowledge and experience;
- **Managerial and leadership roles being filled by younger, potentially less experienced staff....hence, the next generation of CAO**

# What am I going to talk about??

- Wasn't sure exactly what I had to contribute to this panel at first.
- Thought it best to bring it back to the basics...
  - WHO I am,
  - HOW I found my way to being a CAO,
  - WHAT my leadership style is,
  - Where I still need some support!
  - WHY I feel I've been able to be successful so far as a CAO

# Who am I??

- 34 years old;
- Married, 3 children aged 6-9;
- Husband works full time;
- Kids are involved in many extra-curricular activities;
- I commute 75 km to work
- Many outside interests
- First CAO role, although experience in a leadership role in Economic Development



## How did I stumble across this job??

- Education – it didn't start out with a love for municipal government!
- **An amazing mentor** and the ability to be exposed to various aspects of a municipal operation, including Council.



# What is my leadership style?

- Fairly informal;
- Like to engage in team building and prefer consensus approach to decision making when possible;
- I do not micro manage;
- Well connected in a network at the staff level, with limited political connections;
- Policy and procedurally driven – like things well documented and easy to follow.

# How am I different?

- It's worth looking at my style and who I am and comparing that to my predecessor....
- Disclaimer – expect some stereotyping ;)



# What did the CAO before me look like?

- 65 years old;
- CAO role was his second retirement position, after retiring as a Provincial Deputy Minister;
- Years of leadership experience;
- Grown children, married, very work focused.

## What did the CAO before me look like?

- Very formal in his managerial style;
- Very informal and lax in his administrative style;
- Not much of a team builder – more a leader from the top;
- Extremely well connected politically – tended to operate on political connections;
- Documented policies and procedures not as high on the priority list.



# Random observations worth noting

- Former CAO had much more “technical” experience;
- Department Heads had to adjust to a dramatic change in leadership style;
- I’m physically at the office less (often early but need to leave at 4:30 to handle kid stuff);
- The differences between myself and my predecessor are night and day – may be stereotypical but good example of “older”/“newer” styles.

# There are risks with hiring me ;)

- There is a risk of having insufficient time to get settled into the CAO role before the loss of key senior management positions...everyone in the organization can't be green!
- There is a risk of not having someone at the helm with years of municipal experience (ability to speak off the cuff).

# Yes, help is appreciated!

- Strong mentorship early in career;
- **Proactive** support from seasoned CAO's once in role;
- Support from within – Council and Senior Management Team;
- CAO-specific training

# Despite myself there are successes!!

- Strong team building;
- Enhanced communication – open dialogue;
- Silos are coming down;
- Work/life balance is healthy;
- “Next generation” of Department Heads seem to almost demand this style and long standing Department Heads seem to appreciate it;
- More documentation and formalized processes.
  
- Quote on my strengths from my Director of Public Works:
  - Actively participate, but at an arms length
  - Promote the extra curricular, which is great

**Questions?**