

BY PATRICK IBARRA

## TALENT DEVELOPMENT

### Improving personal and workplace performance

**Y**ou've read the statistics. Each day, 10,000 people turn 65 years of age. According to the Pew Research Center, for the first time, millennials now outnumber baby boomers in the workplace 76 million to 75 million, and they will make up 75 percent of the workforce by 2025.

Based on a 2015 study by the Society for Human Resource Management, the top future human capital challenge is developing the next generation of organizational leaders. Needless to say, the business-as-usual approach to building the public sector workforce is no longer relevant.

Turbulence surrounds both today's workforce and workplace, especially in local government. In particular, the aging workforce is creating unprecedented impacts on how leaders attract top candidates, develop their "bench," and retain the organization's tacit knowledge before it departs, accompanied by the career management and development methods being used by individuals climbing the ladder of success. Note: Career ladders are so twentieth century; the new concept is a career lattice.

### Setting Forth Goals

Welcome to the inaugural article for the new, quarterly Career Track department in *PM*. Merriam-Webster's *Collegiate Dictionary* defines career as "a field for or pursuit of consecutive progressive achievement especially in public, professional, or business life." It defines track as "the course along which something moves or progresses."

The department's purpose, using these definitions, is to provide tips, tools, and techniques to individuals on navigating their careers successfully. It will also provide information to leaders and managers on how to more effec-

tively attract, keep, and grow the talent of their local government staff—building the bench, as it were.

This article focuses on efforts relating to career development. First, here are my recommendations to individuals seeking to advance their careers:

**Assemble a career board of directors.** Assemble a group of your most trusted advisers to be members of your career board of directors. The people you choose should help you raise your level of self-awareness so their candor and possibly bluntness should be appreciated.

Navigating one's career can be a series of non-linear steps, but the key is that an upward trajectory is always achieved. A personal board of directors can be of great benefit to those young and even not-so-young professionals.

**Strengthen your personal brand.** Specifically, your brand is your reputation. A personal brand must highlight your distinctive strengths, yet must not be too self-promotional, which is an all-too-common error.

Your brand must make you a team player who unquestionably adds value to your current employer while concurrently allowing your evolution effortlessly into the next one. The focus should be on developing yourself, not promoting yourself.

So be watchful in strengthening your personal brand, while participating in focused development and learning activities that are designed to enhance your skills and capabilities.

To managers and leaders of organizations, here are a few tips:

**Assess your hiring practices.** According to the Center for State and Local Government Excellence, the Inter-

national Public Management Association for Human Resources, and the National Association of State Personnel Executives, for the second consecutive year, state and local governments are reporting an increase in hiring.

A resulting question is: How suitable are your local government processes to attract and recruit talent for your organization? An applicant-tracking system is the minimum threshold to compete for talent, as is using Facebook to post job openings. If you're not actively using social media to increase awareness of your organization as an employer of choice, you're missing out on top recruits.

**Explore new leadership development strategies.** It's an oversimplification to believe that current approaches for developing leaders will work for millennials because they won't.

Countless organizations are trying to improve their leadership pipelines, but for a number of reasons are coming up short; namely because organizations are having problems finding individuals with leadership skills. Why? Millennials' development experience has sharpened their ability to form and maintain a peer network, but not necessarily the skills to be a boss.

### Toward Improved Performance

As an author and a management adviser, I am determined to help quell the turbulence of disruptive change and convert the headwinds of change into a tailwind, enabling individuals to accelerate their career progress and organizational leaders to build an even stronger workforce, all resulting in improved performance.

Don't hesitate to e-mail your questions concerning career development and talent management to me at [patrick@gettingbetterallthetime.com](mailto:patrick@gettingbetterallthetime.com). **PM**



**PATRICK IBARRA**

Former City Manager  
Partner  
The Mejorando Group  
Glendale, Arizona  
[patrick@gettingbetterallthetime.com](mailto:patrick@gettingbetterallthetime.com)