



*SUCCESS*

## How to be a magnificent public servant: Strategies that get results

Being a magnificent public servant is a marvelous mission! This "hands-on, how-to" article will provide five career strategies for today's township officials.

**1) Be radically transparent.** Nothing is more empowering or liberating than being honest, forthright and authentic. Be a public official who lives these words: "I do what I say, and I say when I don't!" There can be no substitute for managing change with unchanging values and playing the role of respectful rebel when you need to. As a local government clerk once observed, "I know that I am an integral, trusted component in my community, and no amount of money can ever replace that feeling."

**2) Realize that people always want more and less government at the same time.** This leaves you with only one option: produce superb government and tout your accomplishments. As a county commissioner once noted, "Good government simultaneously serves as a freeway and a stoplight. It is akin to computer software. Without good computer software, the rest of the computer does not function. We are the software that makes our area of jurisdiction terrific! We are not egomaniacs who brag about our accomplishments, but we strategically let our constituents know about them."

**3) The process (of public service) is the product.** Public servants are counted upon to make sound decisions. A magnificent public servant knows that people support what they help create. Provide a forum to offer the public a voice. As an insightful supervisor in a state agency said, "I spend 70 percent of my time listening and 30 percent talking. This ratio seems about right. My people want to feel significant, involved and engaged. This approach has always paid high dividends for me."

**4) Constantly strive to improve.** A seasoned and wise federal government supervisor shared this: "I have a farming background, and I enjoyed improving the process of baling hay. Some days were more challenging than others. Sometimes we were very effective and on other days, the hay was wet and we were slower. But I never tired of making the hay baler function as well as possible. I feel the same about doing my job each day." So it is with you ... improve the process daily.

**5) You've made a decision to serve others as a fine public servant.** Remember that success fades, but significance never dies. Your work is significant and will last long after you are gone. Enthusiastically exude pride and never see your job as a series of tasks. See it as a responsibility.

In summary, let me simply say ... thank you for what you do each day. Continue to enjoy doing the people's work and being a magnificent public servant!

Mark Towers, Founder,  
Speak Out Seminars, LLC,  
Southlake, Texas

Contact Towers at (817) 421-4744 or  
[mark@speakoutseminars.com](mailto:mark@speakoutseminars.com).



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4568 Red Arrow Highway, Stevensville, MI 49127

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