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## New Year Resolutions in Leadership

Many people work in service organizations because they “want to make a difference.” There are sectors where people make more money, have more resources, and more achieve notoriety. Yet the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of employees, residents and all stakeholders is prime in local government. The real question for each of us is: do we keep this vision as a primary focus when the going gets tough?

Leadership character is built during times of scarcity, times of uncertainty, times of stress and times of transition. Here are a few actual scenarios in government organizations:

- An employee is resistant to change. They have demonstrated they are not responding to coaching or development. This individual is influencing others in a negative way. As a leader, do you make a decision that may be difficult, yet will help the workgroup and the department as a whole? Do you have the tough conversations? Do you treat everyone consistently across your span of control? Or do you build in “work arounds” and put the responsibility on someone else?
- One of your supervisors is very strong technically. If you examine any of their individual outputs, they are exemplary in their attention to detail, quality and thoroughness. From a task perspective, this supervisor is 100% on most everything. However, this same person does not hold employees that report to them accountable. They do not have tough conversations. What is the trickle effect for the whole workgroup, department and organization? People management is just as important as individual performance. What does a leader do to address this?

- Quite a bit has been accomplished under your leadership over the last few months. Examine how you have responded to the following results:
  - A project went very well. There was broad recognition as a result of the impact and positive results. Did you share the rewards by recognizing all the others that were responsible for the outcome since it was very positive?
  - Some things fell through the cracks; after all, there was so much going on and you were loaded down. There were real reasons that you could not make the entire meeting. There were things you were juggling that no one knew about. Did you own the responsibility and admit areas you plan to work on by modeling humility? Or did you tend toward explaining why others or obstacles contributed to the errors?

It is human nature—and so much easier—to see things in others that need to change, and coach from the sidelines. Self-awareness and creating personal responsibility results from authentic leaders who model vulnerability and fallibility while asking for different perspectives on how to improve. The leaders who take on the challenge of “looking in the mirror” will gain true followership of people who respect the character of the humble role model, and others will go the extra mile to give back.