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### Towards High Performance

You may have heard the terms 'high performance,' 'High Performing Organization,' or 'HPO' a lot recently around the water-cooler or in staff meetings. What's it all about and what does it mean?

In short, those terms are simply a way of discussing what it takes for an organization to survive and even thrive during turbulent economic times. For the past few decades, researchers have conducted research and reported on what are the characteristics of 'high performing organizations'—those that outperform their counterparts and succeed in good times and bad. Those characteristics are:

#### **Focused and aligned leaders**

- Trusted leaders focused around pursuit of a shared vision
- Employees empowered at all levels to achieve the vision, own their decisions and stand by them
- Decisions made through consensus whenever possible, taking advantage of a diversity of ideas

#### **A skilled, motivated & diverse workforce**

- Composed of people ready & eager to execute the strategies, goals, and values of the organization
- Open, honest, collaborative, and respectful communications

#### **Integrated Human Resources systems & management**

- A system that aligns people to the goals & values of the organization
- Recruiting, rewarding and retaining top talent

#### **Continuous improvement through continuous learning**

- Integrated enterprise-wide to improve work processes, technology, and skills to consistently meet citizens expectations
- Learning and practicing skills and techniques that promote constructive disagreements and resolve problems and conflicts collaboratively

#### **Enabling technologies**

- Effective use of technology to enable people and teams to seamlessly collaborate, execute critical work processes, and communicate information while sharing knowledge with all stakeholders.

High performing organizations recognize that attaining the goal is a continuous journey towards constant improvement that requires flexibility, adaptability, focus, communication, team work and collaboration. All efforts directed towards high performance rely on people working together effectively supported by systems that are aligned with the mission, vision, and values of the organization.

You can help create an environment that fosters high performance by following six 'Basic Principles':

1. Focus on the situation, issue, or behavior, not on the person
2. Maintain the self-confidence and self-esteem of others
3. Maintain constructive relationships
4. Take initiative to make things better
5. Lead by example
6. Think beyond the moment

*\*from "The Principles & Qualities of Genuine Leadership" – Achieve Global*

These practices will not only ensure a high performing organization through collaboration, they can help lead to greater efficiency, a more positive work environment, and higher morale.