



There are three dimensions of public administration that have to be defined and managed in every municipal government: (1) structure, (2) culture, and (3) skills. The first ninety days of a public executive's tenure in a new organization are essential because his or her initial interactions set the tone and the trajectory for the organization's future development in all three areas.

It is possible to "change things up" later, but the first 90-days on the job offer a rare opportunity to assess an organization and to (gently) introduce new analytical and service delivery tools. Subject to input and advice from the Town Council and department heads, I propose the following ninety-day work plan. I recognize that the schedule presented here is aggressive, but I'm confident that it's also realistic. I expect to be very busy in the first three months on the job and I wouldn't have it any other way.

### **First Month**

Should I be given the opportunity to join the Town of South Kingstown in the role of Town Manager, my objective during the first 30 days will be to learn everything I can about the town government, its employees, its customers and its values. I propose to do this by conducting a Top-to-Bottom (T2B) review of the organization.

The T2B will entail talking to people from every level of the organization and every functional area. Ideally, it will also include talking to customers and suppliers, or at least looking at prior customer and supplier feedback. The T2B will have two primary objectives: (1) identify what people think are the town government's strengths and weaknesses and (2) identify data and data gaps for future analyses or collection.

As critical part of this process I would hope to be able to schedule a goal-setting workshop with the Town Council. At a minimum, I will need to schedule one-on-one meetings with individual members of the Town Council to get your suggestion on who I should engage while evaluating current programs and opportunities for future activities.

### ***First Month Work Product/Metrics***

- (1) The absolute first order of business — Day 1, hour 1 — will be to talk to Stephen Alfred, Colleen Camp and Aimee Reiner. I want to know exactly what they think has worked well and what they think could or should be changed . . . and what should not be changed.
- (2) By the end of the first day on the job, I will make sure that all public safety department heads and all members of the Town Council have my cell phone number and email address. I will also be sure that I have programmed the phone numbers of all public safety department heads' and Town Council members into my phone.
- (3) By my third day on the job, I will host an all-hands meeting with town employees to introduce myself and take questions (streamed over the web and recorded for those who can't attend in person).
- (4) By the end of the first week, I will make sure that all department heads and I have shared and stored critical contact numbers and email addresses. We will produce a pocket contact

card with the phone numbers of all department heads to be distributed to town personnel and members of the Town Council.

- (5) By the end of the first week, I will have reviewed all pending budget submissions presented to the Town Manager's office by the various departments. I will have met with the head of the finance department, Mr. Alfred and Aimee Reiner to discuss the development of the **FY 2018-2019 Town Manager's Budget Proposal**. I would also hope to have the opportunity to talk members of the Town Council about their revenue and expenditure priorities.
- (6) By the end of the first *three weeks*, I will have read every policy, procedure and operations report the town has published in the last fifteen years (I've already started).
- (7) By the end of the first 30 days on the job, I will have met every town employee and I will know the names of every department head and every deputy department head.
- (8) By the end of the first 30 days, **I will have visited each department at least once.**
- (9) By the end of the first 30 days, I will be able to identify by name and face, the people who work in each department.
- (10) By the end of the first 30 days, I will have established an **efficient schedule for an all-hands department heads' meeting** that promotes effective communication without wasting time.
- (11) I will have reviewed metadata about every database owned or used by the town and I will have identified (with appropriate team members) questions that the data are used to answer or could be used to answer.
- (12) By the end of the first 30 days I will know what data are currently available to describe each department's operations and working with department heads, will have identified data gaps — information that we don't have that we would like to have.
- (13) I will have identified (in collaboration with team members) questions about the customer experience and operations that we cannot answer using existing data.
- (14) I will have developed a **First Impressions Report** (or presentation) for the Town Council, which will include recommendations for any "quick-fixes" that may become apparent and a recommendation for a **Six Sigma (DMAIC)** project or theme. (For example, making a concerted to improve some minor aspect of each department's web page.)

## **Second Month**

During the second 30 days on the job, I will focus on: (1) inventorying internal and external relationships that impact the town government (a social network analysis) and (2) beginning to introduce the **Six Sigma/DMAIC**-process thinking into routine operations. **Six Sigma** is a business process improvement methodology that uses operational data to inform decisions about the quality of services being provided to customers or citizens.

While both **social network analyses** and **Six Sigma** require a degree of discipline, neither will be approached in a formalistic way. My goal in the second month, will be to start developing the foundation for a data-driven organization that values its partners and customers. I will model and promote respectful communication and mutual learning that will facilitate effective collaboration in the future. By the end of my second month on the job, every town employee will know that I am **open-minded, accessible and supportive**. Every Town Council member

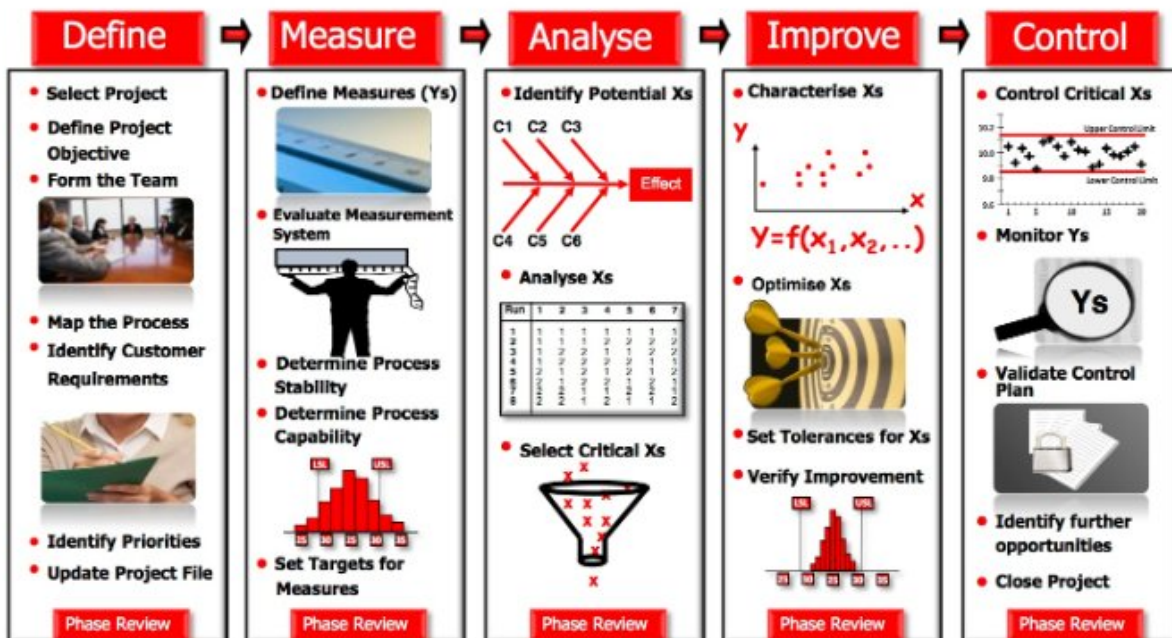
and member of the public that has reached out to me will know that I am **responsive and accommodating**.

Working with the department heads and the Director of Administrative Services, we will develop a **Voice of the Customer** profile for each each department’s constituents — including direct customers, indirectly customers and potential customers. We will gather data from customer groups such as small business owners, builders, senior center users, and the users of recreational facilities.

I will also meet with URI administrators, the Executive Director of the Southern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce, federal elected officials, local delegates to the state legislature, key state regulators, and CEOs of surrounding towns. Through these conversations, We will identify benchmark organizations and best practices. We will also flag opportunities for internal and external collaboration.

With input from the Town Council and department heads, I will lead a small **Six Sigma** project that follows the Define/Measure/Analyse/Improve/Control (DMAIC) process (see Figure 1). This project won’t be a heavy-lift; rather it will be designed to familiarize team members with the the **Six Sigma/DMAIC** process and will demonstrate how the team can work together to solve a problem without disrupting operations.

Figure 1. The DMAIC (Six Sigma) Continuous Process Improvement Model



## **Second Month Work Product/Metrics**

- (1) I will provide the Town Council with a **Customers' Voices Report** (or presentation) which will describe the feedback received from the users of the town's government services. The report will document what the town's direct and indirect customers value. It will also describe what they like about the town's service delivery model and any recommendations they may offer regarding possible improvements to services. This report is will become part of an annual reporting system (Whether it should rolled into an existing report or published as a stand-alone report is a decision that will be made with input from the Town Council and department heads).
- (2) I will provide the Town Council with a **Networks and Social Capital Report** (or presentation) that will describe the town's relationship with key groups inside and outside of the town's geographic boundaries. The report will be designed as a broad inventory of the social networks that the South Kingstown municipal government participates in or is connected to. The report may include recommendations about which social linkages could be strengthened. The purpose of the report will be to put a pin on the intergovernmental and inter-institutional "map" and then to describe where the town is relative to others with similar interests, concerns or objectives. It will also summarize intergovernmental, industry or market conditions that could impact the town in the foreseeable future. I'm sure that South Kingstown leaders already have much of this information, but reorganizing it and presenting it through the lens of a network analysis will allow the information to be used as inputs into a strategic relationship management plan that can inform activities designed to maintain or improve relationships — particularly with outside stakeholders.
- (3) At the end of the second month, the department heads and I will have completed one (small) **Six Sigma/DMAIC** project, having **D**efined a problem, **M**easured the problem using existing or easily gathered data, **A**nalyzed the data, instituted an **I**mprovement strategy and established a means of **C**ontrolling the improvement over time. Every member of the leadership team will be familiar with the method we used to conduct the project and will know — in broad terms — how to replicate our small, successful, project.
- (4) I will report to the Town Council on our first **Six Sigma** project, describe lessons learned, and suggest how we can adopt and adapt the methodology to fit local conditions.

## **Third Month**

During the third month, I expect to be fully integrated into the municipal government. I will have established residency in South Kingstown. Working with Town Council and department heads, I will begin to set long-term objectives related to the opportunities identified through the T2B and continuing conversations.

Working with the Town Council and key team members, I will develop (or maintain) a schedule of activities that will drive continuous improvement in town government's performance metrics. I will begin a routine process of facilitating **Improvement Conversations** designed to help us understand what's going on behind the data. It's not enough to know that a metric is moving in the right or wrong direction; it's necessary to know why and what can be done about it. These

**Improvement Conversations** won't be about assigning blame; they will be about figuring out how to fix the problem, assigning someone to lead the improvement effort and making sure the effort is resourced to succeed.

Initially, I will serve as a member of every process improvement team. I will work to set and maintain the right tone and attitude to ensure that we remain focused on finding solutions. Throughout this process, I will work to maintain the integrity of the **Six Sigma/DMAIC** process, relying on valid data and analytical techniques.

### **Third Month Work Product/Metrics**

- (1) I will provide key personnel with training and training materials on the **Six Sigma/DMAIC** process.
- (2) At the end of the first three month that I've been on the job, all key personnel will be able perform basic **Six Sigma/DMAIC** analyses. We will build this skill set over the next year.
- (3) I will have built and will be responsible for maintaining an **Improvement Projects Tracking System** (a dashboard) that will describe the schedule and progress to date on research and analysis projects designed to drive improvements in business processes and customer satisfaction. The system will provide information on where in the **Six Sigma/DMAIC** process each project is, and for completed projects, what the actual result was.
- (4) Subject to approval by the Town Council and buy-in from department heads and employee unions, I would hope to institute a program to establish **Individual Development Plans** as a non-binding, non-punitive, supplement to the performance appraisal process for all employees.
- (5) At the end of my third month on the job, I will present the Town Council with a proposed performance measurement plan by which my work for the next year can be evaluated. I would expect this proposed plan to be discussed in open or executive session as the Council deems appropriate. Once the performance measurement plan has been modified and accepted by the members of Town Council, I would use it as the basis for setting my priorities over the next year.
- (6) Depending on when I begin work, the end of my first three months will also be marked by the Town Charter's March 1 due date for the **Town Manager's proposed budget**. I anticipate that the budget that I will propose will reflect the guidance provided by Mr. Alfred, the Director of Finance, and the members of the Town Council. It is highly unlikely that the budget should or could be substantially different than that which has been contemplated by town officials to this date. Proposals for major budget and programmatic changes should be supported by analyses that typically take longer than three months to complete and therefore are not likely to be instituted (unless already underway) as part of the manager's 2018 budget proposal. Tradeoffs between stability and innovation need to be made carefully.