

The PerformanceStat Potential:

A Leadership Strategy For Producing Results

**California
Performance Improvement Council**

Friday, June 27, 2014

Robert D. Behn

John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

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Examples of PerformanceStat

CompStat

New York

Examples of PerformanceStat

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New York, Los Angeles, Boston, Queensland . . .

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FedStat

FDATrack, FEMASat, HUDStat

Select Large-City and U.S. Violent Crimes 1990 to 2000 Rates per 100,000 Population

New York City Plus the Other Six Large (>500,000 Population) Cities With 1990 Violent Crime Rates Greater than New York's

City	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	% ¹
New York	2,384	2,318	2,164	2,090	1,861	1,558	1,344	1,268	1,167	1,063	945	-60%
Los Angeles	2,405	2,526	2,460	2,374	2,059	2,034	1,796	1,597	1,359	1,283	1,360	-43%
Baltimore	2,438	2,544	2,885	2,994	2,834	3,018	2,723	2,420	2,420	*	2,458	1%
Dallas	2,438	2,568	2,072	1,743	1,589	1,532	1,535	1,384	1,465	1,414	1,350	-45%
Washington	2,458	2,452	2,832	2,922	2,663	2,662	2,470	2,024	1,719	1,628	1,507	-39%
Detroit	2,699	2,727	2,533	2,664	2,687	2,408	2,319	2,152	2,443	2,254	2,325	-14%
Chicago	2,842	3,093	2,840	2,717	2,685	2,550	2,351	2,262	2,179	1,733	1,606	-43%
U. S.	730	758	758	747	714	685	637	611	567	523	507	-31%

Violent crimes include murder, rape and sexual assault, robbery, and assault.

* Data were unavailable

Source: FBI, Uniform Crime Reports, prepared by the National Archive of Criminal Justice Data;
<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/dataonline/Search/Crime/Local/RunCrimeTrendsInOneVarLarge.cfm>

How Do I Recognize A PerformanceStat?

A jurisdiction or agency is employing a PerformanceStat *leadership strategy* if, in an effort to achieve specific public *purposes*, its leadership team *persists* in holding an ongoing series of *regular, frequent, integrated meetings* during which the chief executive and/or the principal members of the chief executive's leadership team plus the director (and the top managers) of different subunits use *current data to analyze* specific, previously defined aspects of each unit's recent *performance*; to provide *feedback* on recent progress compared with *targets*; to *follow-up* on previous decisions and commitments to produce *results*; to examine and *learn* from each unit's efforts to improve *performance*; to identify and solve *performance-deficit* problems; and to set and achieve the next *performance targets*.

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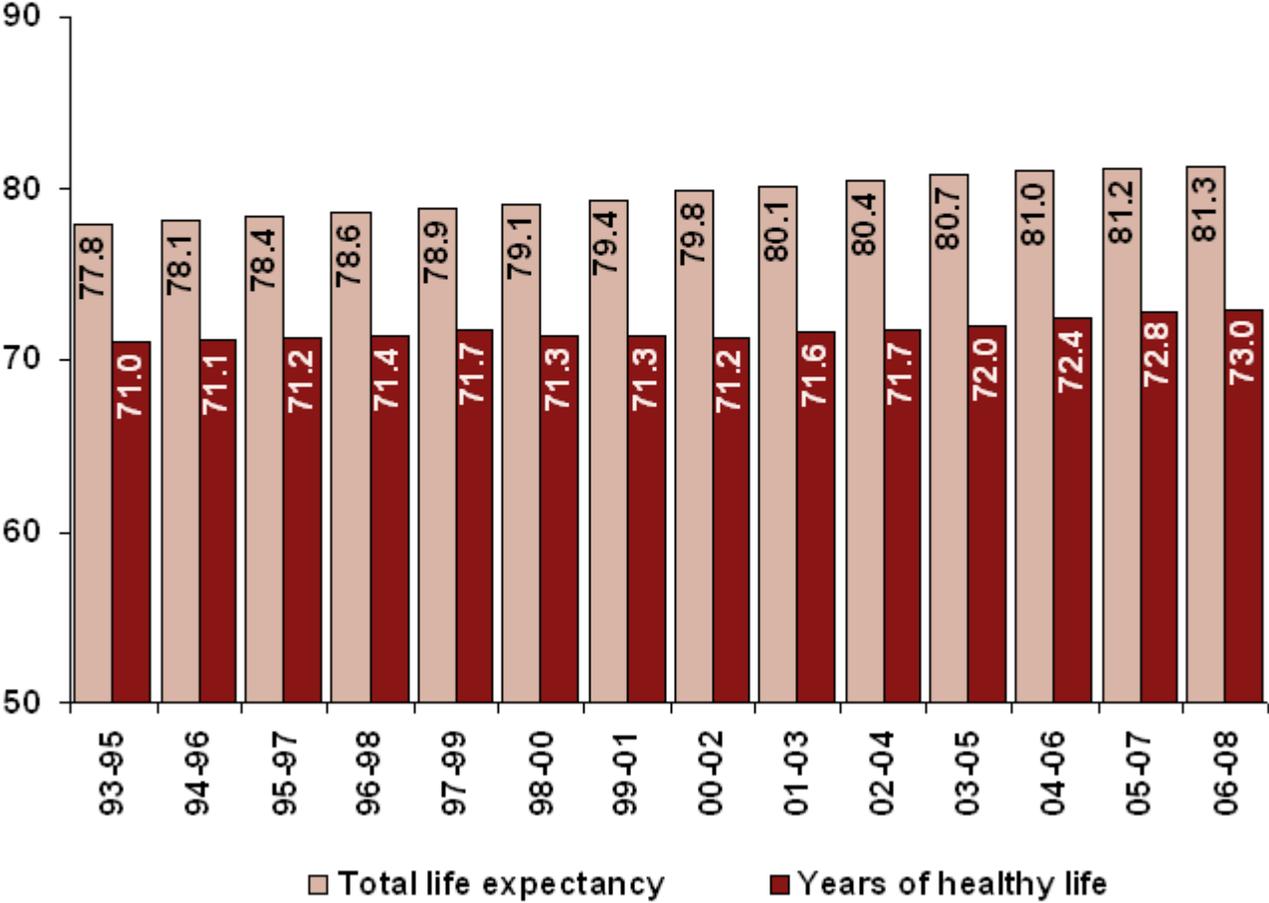
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Total life expectancy and years of healthy life, 3-year rolling averages



Source: Office of Strategic Planning and Performance Management, King County, Washington. KingStat Web Site

PerformanceStat's Five Visible Features

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- (3) The technology used to analyze and project these data.**
- (4) The staff who manage and analyze the data.**
- (5) The meetings themselves.**

**Baltimore Bureau of Water and Wastewater
Performance on Priority Service Requests
August 28, 2004 to September 10, 2004**

Priority Service Request	Target Resolution Time in Days	Number of Requests	Performance		
			Average Days to Complete	Percent Completed by Target	Number Not Completed by Target
Sewer Overflow	1	6	0.2	100.0 %	0
Sewer Water in					8
Rip Rap *	7	75	3.0	94.3 %	4
Storm Inlet Choke	10	239	17.5	15.6 %	202
Discolored Water	7	137	2.2	99.2 %	1
Exterior Water Leak	4	381	0.7	98.6 %	5
Low Water Pressure	14	70	3.8	100.0 %	0
No Water	1	127	0.4	89.6 %	13
Water in Basement	2	93	0.9	91.8 %	8

* “Rip Rap” is the debris left at the end of a construction project.

What Are PerformanceStat's Purposes?

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PerformanceStat helps the executive to achieve this one, big public purpose — to improve performance — by achieving eight other operational purposes.

What Are PerformanceStat's Purposes?

Purpose 1: Focus on the Executive's Priorities

PerformanceStat informs each subunit's director about the strategic focus and operational concerns of the chief executive.

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PerformanceStat informs each subunit's director about the strategic focus and operational concerns of the chief executive.

PerformanceStat seeks to inform each subunit's management *team* about the strategic focus and operational concerns of the chief executive and the chief executive's *staff*.

What Are PerformanceStat's Purposes?

Purpose 2: Provide Operational Updates

PerformanceStat keeps the chief executive up-to-date on what different units within the agency or jurisdiction are doing.

What Are PerformanceStat's Purposes?

Purpose 3: Identify Problems

PerformanceStat focuses the attention of the chief executive and subunit directors on the agency's or jurisdiction's performance problems.

What Are PerformanceStat's Purposes?

Purpose 4: Diagnose Causes

PerformanceStat provides a forum for analyzing the causes of these problems and for engaging everyone in the the task of attacking and solving these problems.

What Are PerformanceStat's Purposes?

Purpose 5: Develop Strategies

PerformanceStat focuses the attention of each subunit's director on the strategies that can solve (or he or she believes can solve) these problems — and, thus, that will help the agency or jurisdiction to improve performance.

What Are PerformanceStat's Purposes?

Purpose 6: Invest Resources

PerformanceStat established a basis for deciding how marginal resources can be best invested to improve important aspects of the agency's or jurisdiction's performance.

What Are PerformanceStat's Purposes?

Purpose 7: Learn

PerformanceStat creates a forum for learning from the successes of positive deviants and for helping other subunits to adapt these lessons to also improve their performance.

What Are PerformanceStat's Purposes?

Purpose 8: Recruit Talent

PerformanceStat attracts talented managers and analysts.

How Unique Is PerformanceStat?

How does PerformanceStat differ from other leadership strategies to produce results in a public agency or jurisdiction?

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How does PerformanceStat differ from other leadership strategies to produce results in a public agency or jurisdiction?

The short answer: PerformanceStat contains the key components of any effective performance strategy. Its uniqueness comes from how it combines these components plus the diligence, constancy, subtlety, creativity, and tenacity with which these components are employed. Still, PerformanceStat has *six* identifiable aspects that do distinguish it.

How Unique Is PerformanceStat?

Difference I: Not budget driven

PerformanceStat is not driven by the annual budget process but by an independent analytic staff who focus not on allocating funds but on producing results.

How Unique Is PerformanceStat?

Difference II: Not purely punitive

PerformanceStat relies on an analytic team that not only evaluates subunit performance but also seeks to *learn* from the successes of positive deviants, to help the subunits *improve* performance, and to *motivate* individuals and teams to do so.

How Unique Is PerformanceStat?

Difference III: Not fleeting

PerformanceStat is not a temporary fad but an enduring leadership strategy for the ongoing management of an agency or jurisdiction that continues over years.

How Unique Is PerformanceStat?

Difference IV: Not randomly episodic

PerformanceStat is part of the regular routine and rhythm of chief executive's leadership team and their management of their subunits.

How Unique Is PerformanceStat?

Difference V: Regular, frequent follow-up

PerformanceStat requires more than meetings and questions, staff and data, a room and technology; it also requires the chief executive's leadership team and the PerformanceStat staff to follow-up on the issues analyzed during each meeting not only at the next meeting but also immediately after each meeting.

How Unique Is PerformanceStat?

Difference V: Regular, frequent follow-up

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How Unique Is PerformanceStat?

Difference VI: Not uni-directional

PerformanceStat creates *mutual responsibility*, with subunit directors responsible to the executive for focusing subunit efforts on improving performance as judged by the executive's key indicators, and with the executive responsible to each subunit for ensuring it has the resources and flexibility necessary to produce the desired results.

The Cause-and-Effect Question

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**What is the theory behind the
PerformanceStat leadership strategy?**

The Cause-and-Effect Question

What is the *implicit* theory behind the PerformanceStat leadership strategy?

The Cause-and-Effect Question

What is the *implicit* theory behind the PerformanceStat leadership strategy?

What might be the *cause-and-effect leadership behaviors* that connect specific aspects of a PerformanceStat strategy to the improvements in performance that the chief executive is seeking to achieve?

The Many Possible Cause-and-Effect Behaviors of PerformanceStat

There are over a dozen different causal behaviors that can link the actions of an organization's chief executive and his or her leadership team to the results they seek to achieve. These leadership behaviors specify what needs to be done and/or motivate subunits, teams, and individuals to take the actions necessary to make progress.

The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat

Behavior 1: Reiterating the purpose can keep everyone focused on the big picture.

The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat

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By repeating and repeating the public purpose that the organization is responsible for achieving, the leadership team can ensure that, in their pursuit of detailed tasks and specific targets, people do not forget their overarching mission.

The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat

Behavior 2: Analyzing data can reveal significant performance deficits.

The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat

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By analyzing very current performance data, the leadership team can discern and highlight the performance deficits that the organization needs to eliminate or mitigate.

The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat

Behavior 3: Creating targets can specify exactly what needs to be accomplished by when.

The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat

Behavior 3: Creating targets can specify exactly what needs to be accomplished by when.

By evolving, in consultation with subunit managers, specific, challenging, consequential performance targets for each subunit to achieve, the leadership team can not only identify the results that needs to be produced but also motivate agencies, individuals, and teams to produce them.

The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat

**Behavior 4: Making operational assignments
can define what performance deficits need
to be fixed next.**

The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat

Behavior 4: Making operational assignments can define what performance deficits need to be fixed next.

By developing an ongoing series of operational tasks that are directly linked to the organization's purpose and its targets, the leadership team can focus the efforts of subunit managers and front-line employees on the next steps for eliminating or mitigating specific performance deficits.

The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat

**Behavior 5: Devoting Time to Performance-
Stat can dramatize the chief executive's
commitment to improving performance.**

The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat

Behavior 5: Devoting Time to Performance-Stat can dramatize the chief executive's commitment to improving performance.

By investing significant resources in an analytic staff and assigning these individuals and other members of his or her leadership team to spend a significant time on PerformanceStat, the chief executive can demonstrate a serious, personal commitment to improving performance.

The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat

Behavior 6: Holding meetings can focus everyone's attention on what is important.

The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat

Behavior 6: Holding meetings can focus everyone's attention on what is important.

By holding an ongoing series of regular, frequent, integrated meetings, the leadership team can keep everyone focused on both their important macro purposes and on the essential actions and activities necessary to achieve these purposes.

The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat

**Behavior 7: Requesting reports on progress
can ensure that targets and assignments are
taken seriously.**

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taken seriously.**

By asking subunits to report regularly in a quasi-public meeting on the status of their assignments, on their progress towards achieving their performance targets, and on their strategies for overcoming their performance deficits, the leadership team can remind everyone that these responsibilities are important.

The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat

Behavior 8: Asking questions of individual subunit managers can promote personal responsibility.

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Behavior 8: Asking questions of individual subunit managers can promote personal responsibility.

By directly questioning subunit managers and their subordinates about their unit's progress, the leadership team can establish in these individuals a sense of personal responsibility for completing their assignments, achieving their targets, and improving performance.

The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat

Behavior 9: Following up frequently on targets and assignments can create the feedback that can suggest adjustments.

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By asking subunits to report regularly in a quasi-public meeting on their progress towards achieving their performance targets, on their strategies for overcoming their performance deficits, and on assignments from previous meetings, the leadership team creates feedback to motivate agencies, individuals and teams to adjust their strategy for achieving their targets and to engage in results-focused behavior.

The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat

Behavior 10: Distributing comparative data widely can help every team appraise, without delusions, its own performance.

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By distributing data that compares the results produced by subunits with identical or similar responsibilities, the leadership team can ensure that each subunit has an honest, realistic appreciation of how its performance compares with that of its peers.

The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat

Behavior 11: Scrutinizing the positive deviants can facilitate everyone's learning.

The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat

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By identifying those subunits that are achieving significant success and by analyzing and explaining the causes of their achievements, the leadership team can help other subunits learn how they too can improve performance.

The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat

**Behavior 12: Rewarding accomplishments
can confirm that success is possible and
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**By publicly and exuberantly recognizing with
intrinsic rewards subunits, their employees, and
their managers for meaningful
accomplishments, the leadership team can
demonstrate that significant successes can be
achieved and are valued.**

The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat
Behavior 13: Reproving the ineffective can get everyone's attention.

The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat
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By regularly questioning subunit managers about their lack of analytical insight, operational effectiveness, or strategic coherence, the leadership team can ensure that everyone in the organization understands that indifference, incompetence, and insubordination are unacceptable.

The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat

Behavior 14: Telling stories can foster a results-oriented culture.

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By frequently telling stories about employees whose exemplary work improved performance (and occasionally about the incompetent or indolent), the leadership team can validate the meaning underlying everyone's work and foster a results-oriented culture.

The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat

**Behavior 15: Abetting everyone's implicit
evaluation of everyone else can breed
individual and team motivation.**

The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat

Behavior 15: Abetting everyone's implicit evaluation of everyone else can breed individual and team motivation.

By creating an environment in which every individual present at the PerformanceStat meetings will implicitly (and perhaps explicitly) evaluate everyone else who is present, the leadership team can motivate agencies, individuals, and teams to achieve their targets and engage in results-focused behavior.

The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat

Behavior 16: Remaining persistent can prove that this isn't going away.

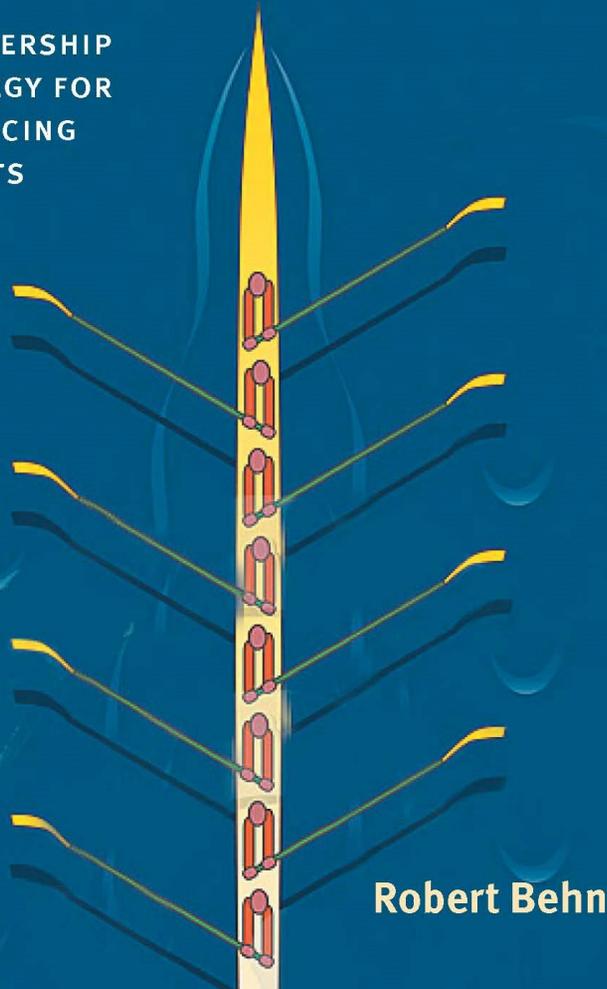
The Multiple Cause-and-Effect Leadership Behaviors of PerformanceStat

Behavior 16: Remaining persistent can prove that this isn't going away.

By making PerformanceStat work a formal part of organizational life and assiduously adhering to the practices that they have established, the leadership team can demonstrate that their performance strategy is neither superfluous nor ephemeral.

The PerformanceStat Potential

A LEADERSHIP
STRATEGY FOR
PRODUCING
RESULTS



Robert Behn

You might also want to check out:

Bob Behn's Performance Leadership Report

An occasional (and maybe insightful) examination of the issues, dilemmas, challenges, and opportunities in leadership, governance, management, and performance in public agencies.

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