

# Bob Behn's Performance Leadership Report

An occasional (and maybe even insightful) examination of the issues, dilemmas, challenges, and opportunities for improving performance and producing real results in public agencies.



## Designing PerformanceStat

What Are the Key Strategic Choices That a Jurisdiction or Agency Must Make When Adapting the CompStat/CitiStat Class of Performance Strategies? \*

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*.

### (1) Specifying the Purpose

What kind of performance improvements will our PerformanceStat leadership strategy be designed to achieve?

Mission: What is the overarching purpose of our jurisdiction or agency?

Performance Deficit: What specific aspects of our performance do we need to fix next?

### (2) Establishing Responsibilities

What organizational subunits, led by what individuals, will have responsibility for achieving what kind of performance improvements?

Top Management: For what, exactly, are the jurisdiction's or agency's managers responsible?

Subunit Managers: For what, exactly, is each subunit's manager responsible?

Line Managers and Front-Line Employees: For what, exactly, are line managers and front-line employees responsible?

Collaborators: For what, exactly, are collaborators responsible?

### (3) Thinking Through the Adaptations

What kind of modifications of the key components of the different PerformanceStat strategies that we have observed or read about should we make to ensure that our approach fits our circumstances, organization and environment, and achieves our purposes?

Core Components: What are the key features of these PerformanceStats that we believe directly affect the behavior of their organizations and thus their performance?

Theory: How, exactly, do we think these features have created better results?

### (4) Understanding the Cause-and-Effect Link

Why do we think that our PerformanceStat strategy will produce better results?

Core Components: What are the features of our PerformanceStat that will directly affect the behavior of our staff and organizations and thus our performance?

Theory: How, exactly, do we think these features will create better results?

\* Robert D. Behn, "Designing PerformanceStat: Or What Are the Key Strategic Choices that a Jurisdiction or Agency Must Make When Adapting the CompStat/CitiStat Class of Performance Strategies?" *Public Performance and Management Review*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (December 2008), pp. 203-232.

**(5) Collecting the Data**

What kind of data do we need to compile to determine our current level of performance, reveal key performance deficits, and nominate opportunities for the next improvements?

Existing Data: What kind of data about performance do we already collect?

New Data: What kind of additional performance data do we need to collect?

Collection: What approach should we employ to collect these data?

**(6) Analyzing the Data**

How can we use the data to diagnose our current performance deficits, identify the deficits on which to focus next, and suggest strategies to be pursued?

Disaggregating the Data: Along what dimensions — geography, time, organizational subunits, managers — should we break down the data?

Positive Deviants: How can we identify our positive deviants so that we can learn from them?

**(7) Assembling the Infrastructure**

What facilities and technology do we need to support this strategy for improving performance?

Analytical Tools: What kind of software will we employ?

Analysts: What kind of people with what kind of skills?

Room: Will it feature a podium, facing tables, or one (“round”) table?

Data Display: How can we ensure that everyone in the room will be able to see the data?

**(8) Conducting the Meetings**

What kind of regular, frequent, and integrated PerformanceStat meetings should we conduct both to ensure that they reveal opportunities to enhance performance and to drive such improvements?

Schedule: When (and how frequently) should we hold our meetings?

Participants: Who will be in the room? Who will not?

Authority: Who will be authorized by whom to conduct these meetings?

Preparation: How will different people get ready for each meeting?

Motivation: How will we ensure that the meetings are neither brutal (relying on purely punitive incentives) nor bland (creating absolutely none).

**(9) Building the Operational Capacity**

What kind of additional resources — flexibility, knowledge, training, staff, money — do our subunits need to produce the performance improvements that we are seeking?

Managers: What knowledge and skills do our sub-unit directors and line managers need?

Line Staff: What knowledge and skills do our front-line employees need?

Collaborators: What knowledge and skills do our collaborators need?

**(10) Carrying Out the Follow-Up**

How do we organize the follow-up to the meetings’ discussions to ensure that the strategies to be pursued — the problems identified, lessons learned, solutions proposed, decisions taken, targets established, and commitments made — are, indeed, acted on?

Memos: What kind of document should we send to whom after each meeting?

Task Lists: How do we specify who should do what by when?

Perseverance: How and when do we continually remind people of their responsibilities?

**(11) Communicating the Strategy to Everyone**

How do we communicate the substance of each meeting — the problems, lessons, solutions, decisions, targets, and commitments — throughout the organization to ensure that everyone understands the both macro strategy and his or her micro responsibilities?

Leadership: How can the leadership team of the jurisdiction or agency convince everyone that PerformanceStat is serious, essential, and permanent?

SubUnitStats: What subunit managers should conduct their own SubUnitStats?

Collaborators: How can we convince our collaborators to conduct their own PerformanceStats?

**(12) Collaborating for Performance**

How (eventually) can we modify our PerformanceStat leadership strategy to create cross-agency (or even cross-jurisdiction) collaborations to produce better results?

Collaborators: Whose help do we need to improve performance?

Recruitment: How can we convince these potential collaborators to join us?