



## What Really Is PerformanceStat Anyway?

### 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*.

### The Five Visible Features of PerformanceStat

- (1) The room in which the PerformanceStat meetings are held.
- (2) The data that form the basis of the discussion at the meetings.
- (3) The technology used to analyze and project these data.
- (4) The staff who manage and analyze the data.
- (5) The meetings themselves.

**What Are PerformanceStat's Purposes?** Or *what* is an executive who has created a version of PerformanceStat trying to accomplish — or think that he or she is trying to accomplish?

The short answer: The executive is seeking to improve the performance of every subunit. PerformanceStat helps the executive to achieve this one big public purpose — to improve performance — by achieving eight other operational purposes.

#### **Purpose 1: Focus on Executive's Priorities.**

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

#### **Purpose 2: Provide Operational Updates.**

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

#### **Purpose 3: Identify Problems.**

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

**Purpose 4: Diagnose Causes.**

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

**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 subunit to improve performance.

**Purpose 6: Invest Resources.**

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

**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.

**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?

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.

**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.

**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.

**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 for years.

**Difference IV: Not randomly episodic.** PerformanceStat is part of the regular routine and rhythm of the chief executive's leadership team and their management of their subunits.

**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.

**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 that it has the resources and flexibility necessary to produce the desired results.