



19 May 2017

Future Leaders Forum 2017 Delegates

Dear Local Government Officer

Looking back on my local government career, there are a number of things I learnt along the way about my personal approach. Many times, I learnt them the hard way. I wish someone had been able to give me advice to save me making those mistakes. So you don't have to go through the same experiences, I have taken the time to write the top five things I wished someone had told me when I was starting out. I hope that this assists you in your career and life.

Have courage: To succeed in local government, and anywhere, you have to be prepared to be courageous, to step outside your comfort zone. Take the opportunities which are presented and then back yourself. That is where the learning will happen and it is how you will have the opportunity to stand out from your peers.

Satisfaction comes from Work and Life: You have to manage your work and your life. A well-balanced individual will perform better and be more productive. Work is not about the hours you put in but what you achieve. So instead of focusing on being first in and last to leave, spend time thinking about how to be most productive – use your time better than everyone around you. Busy-ness is the excuse of the disorganised and unfocussed. Plan and commit to your outside work life the same way you commit to your work day – you have to put the same effort into your family as you do your career.

Self-Awareness is Key: Self-awareness is something we do not realise we lack until it becomes a significant and glaring issue. Be prepared to ask people how they view you, actively seek feedback from colleagues, subordinates and superiors and listen to what they say. Find courses or other opportunities to develop your own awareness. To succeed in any leadership or management role, you need to be aware of your impact on others and understand your own preferences and default positions in order to be able to lead and manage others.

Take the Wheel: You are in the driver's seat of your career and your life, if something is happening that you don't like, take steps to change it. No one will promote or employ you if you are complaining about the things you cannot change, or do not care to, change. Step up and take action (do it sensitively and in a considered and reasonable way) but if it does not work you have three choices: put up and shut up, change the situation or remove yourself from the situation.

Educate Yourself: Study and get your qualifications early but also commit to continuous learning – if you sit in your role in council and do not make efforts to continuously learn, you will miss opportunities. Instead, get out, network, talk to others, attend training or do a diploma or degree. Never stop learning!

I wish you all the best in your career.

Your wiser, more-experienced self