

Developing a Management Roadmap for the Next Administration

By Daniel Chenok

Earlier this year, the IBM Center for The Business of Government commenced a year-long initiative with the Partnership for Public Service to frame key management issues and opportunities for the next presidency.

This process—which involves current and former senior government officials from administrations of both parties, as well as leading experts from academia and the business and nonprofit communities—is one part of a multi-pronged *Ready to Govern* (#Ready2Govern) initiative, in which the Partnership seeks to improve the transfer of power and knowledge between administrations. The effort includes an education component for transition teams around four sets of activities:

- improving the transition process,
- congressional support for efficient appointments in a new administration,
- preparing appointees to succeed in their new roles, and
- the creation of a “Management Roadmap,” a set of findings and recommendations to help the next president develop an agenda for driving sustained improvement in government’s capacity and effectiveness.

The IBM Center is pleased to collaborate with the Partnership to help the next administration get off to a strong start, and build sustained management excellence thereafter. We are grateful for the many distinguished thought leaders who are contributing their time and insights to this initiative, which consists of four roundtable discussions. Each roundtable addresses a critical impetus for immediate and sustained management strategies that support the achievement of the president’s mission and policy goals. The IBM Center’s website has information about the roadmap.

During the last several presidential elections, the Center has brought together innovative thinkers and an esteemed group



of authors to help draw out and identify important areas that the incoming administration should take seriously. In addition, the Center’s updated overview of how a new leader in Washington can succeed, “Getting It Done,” is now a staple in the Partnership’s onboarding education for many new political appointees.

Management Roadmap

The Management Roadmap initiative builds on our efforts to recommend a set of competencies that can enable government to achieve key mission and policy goals in and across agencies. It builds on three key success factors:

- **Early planning is critical.** Planning ahead by bringing on a management team prepared from day one can make an

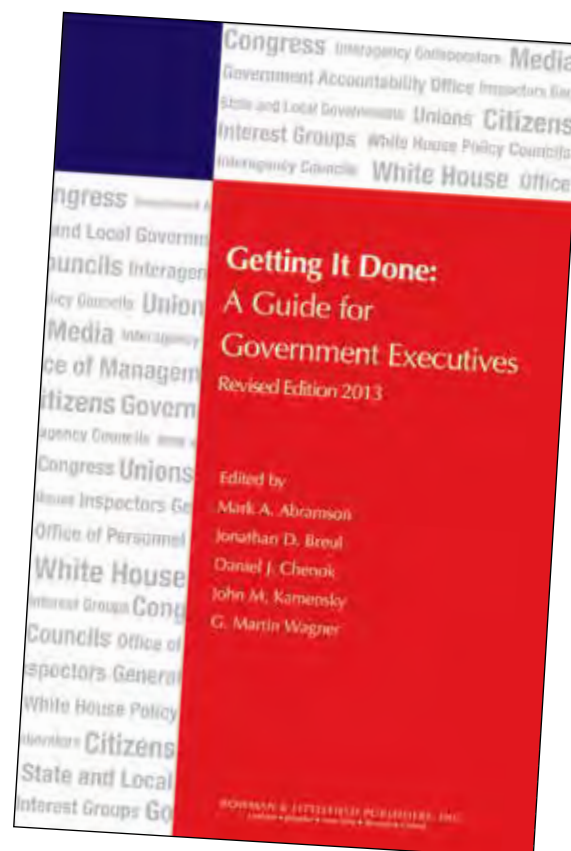


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enormous difference in helping the administration maintain its momentum. Too often, new leaders have entered the transition process without having carefully considered the elements of governing, and numerous administrations have taken months to place skilled management leaders into key position. There is a key difference between campaigning and governing, as the rhythm and priorities of a campaign are not often closely aligned with actions needed to lead and manage a broad and complex set of agencies and programs. Early planning can ensure a successful handoff from the current administration to the new team. This also provides the new team with valuable insights and benefits to build on their success.

- **Management is crucial to the success of an administration.** Good management can establish and contribute to an administration's success in achieving policy and political priorities, while reducing risks. From day one through the end of a presidential term, an administration will enable stronger performance by establishing management frameworks and governance structures that foster efficient and informed decision making. Without such structures, the immense breadth and depth of government activities becomes especially hard to oversee, and small problems can turn into large failures before leaders have a chance to react. Leveraging and linking efforts of cross-agency networks that support agency and interagency objectives, such as the President's Management Council, and functional organizations like the Councils for Chief Information Officers, Chief Financial Officers, and Chief Acquisition Officers, can pay enormous dividends in the implementation of good management practices.
- **Management drives effective delivery of mission outcomes and programs.** The new administration enters office with a set of priorities that the president has articulated throughout the campaign and transition period, which evolve over the course of a term in office. Leaders

who understand and can leverage effective management tools and practices are better prepared to execute on these priorities and see measurable and positive program results; in contrast, when management becomes an afterthought or a compliance exercise, poor performance and ineffective delivery often occur. The current administration's cross-agency priority goals, as well as the prior administration's performance agenda, demonstrate the importance of linking sound management with substantive outcomes. Building on such approaches in the first days and months in office can accelerate achievement of mission and policy goals.



Viewpoints

The roadmap topics distill the essence of lessons learned from the past and identify current and new management initiatives that will be needed to address key challenges facing the country. The focus areas of these roundtable discussions include:

- **Developing and managing executive talent in government.** Focusing on strengthening federal senior leadership, including political appointees and career executives, and enhancing their collaboration.
- **Enhancing an enterprise approach to government in order to more effectively achieve mission outcomes.** Strengthening governance, improving collaboration, and using enterprise frameworks to build capacity to achieve cross-agency goals, improve operations, and lower costs.
- **Harnessing innovation to improve outcomes and productivity.** Creating and sustaining disciplined and replicable models of innovation to drive better customer service and improve outcomes.
- **Strengthening decision-making processes.** Creating the capacity to enhance analytics decision making through strategic planning and by integrating existing program evaluation, risk management, analytics, and benchmarking capabilities.

In each of these four areas, a distinguishing characteristic of the Management Roadmap will be to identify *how* to achieve measurable success across key priorities, not just *what* can be done to address those areas. The roundtable participants focus their discussions on current and past actions that can be carried forward in each area, gaps that exist in building management capacity to address that area, new opportunities that an incoming administration can leverage, and paths



to implementation that bring together existing and innovative ideas; the last of these items, paths to implementation, is so important to practical success that we and the Partnership will devote a special session to it.

As the roundtables occur, we will share the initial results of the discussions through our website, followed by in-depth summary reports with the Partnership that are authored by leading experts on the topic area. We are also coordinating with other groups engaged in transition planning and with the public, to build support and momentum for strong management as a principal enabler of success for the transition to the new administration. We look forward to the results of this process as a key input for that administration as it gets ready to govern. ■