

PROVIDING CUTTING-EDGE  
KNOWLEDGE TO  
GOVERNMENT LEADERS

# The Business of Government

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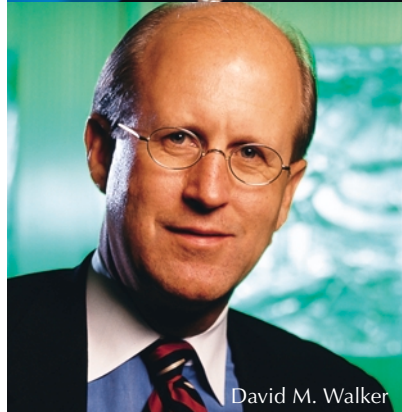
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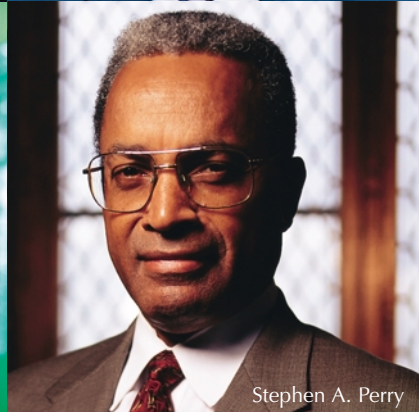
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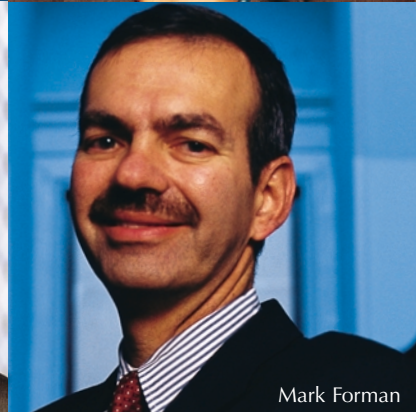
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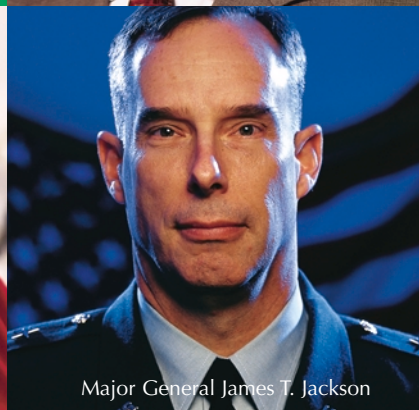
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By Paul Lawrence



There are many ways to learn about leadership and to enhance one's leadership skills. My preferred method is to talk to leaders about leadership. By listening closely, I have learned much from their descriptions of their own experiences leading organizations.

Since we created the Endowment in 1998, I've had the unique opportunity to meet top leaders from across government and listen to them discuss leadership. In our Perspectives on Management seminar series, I've listened to leaders discuss the challenge of leading. Our discussions with three outstanding leaders—Francis Collins, Mitch Daniels, and Charles Rossotti—are presented in this issue. I've also had the opportunity to interview over 100 outstanding leaders on our weekly radio show, *The Business of Government Hour*. From those radio interviews, leadership lessons from Lieutenant General Michael Hayden and Brigadier General Edward M. Harrington stand out in my mind. I always learn something new about leadership from each of our seminars and from each of our radio shows. Since this issue of *The Business of Government* is devoted, in part, to the subject of leadership, I'd like to share with you several of the leadership lessons I have learned over the last four years.

**Lesson 1: Leaders develop a shared vision.** From Francis Collins, director of the National Human Genome Research Institute at the National Institutes of Health, I learned the importance of a shared vision. When asked how he was able to hold together a consortium of organizations from around the world to map the human genome, Dr. Collins talked about the positive impact of a shared vision. According to Dr. Collins, the project came together and stayed together because of a shared vision—the belief by the group that they were doing something of historical importance by mapping the human genome to improve the world's ability to combat disease and illness. Whenever problems arose—which they frequently did, Collins pointed out—this shared vision always brought them back together and kept them moving toward accomplishing their mission. Thus, a key job of a leader is to articulate a shared vision and to constantly communicate that vision throughout the organization.

**Lesson 2: Leaders reach out and touch all the bases.** From Charles Rossotti, commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service, I learned the importance of constantly reaching out and communicating to your organization's stakeholders. We all have stakeholders, though they may differ depending on the sector in which you work. Commissioner Rossotti taught me that a leader must constantly work to make sure that the organization and its stakeholders are in alignment. While this outreach is a time-consuming task, it probably saves time in the long run because,

as Commissioner Rossotti pointed out, "... it takes a lot more time if you don't tend to it, because then what you have is the unplanned time that you didn't count on [spending]."

**Lesson 3: Leaders assign responsibility and hold individuals accountable.** From Mitch Daniels, director of the Office of Management and Budget, I learned the importance of assigning responsibility and holding individuals accountable. In describing what he learned from implementing the President's Management Agenda (PMA), Director Daniels described how the President routinely sits down with Cabinet members and discusses their department's scorecard with them. The President, recounted Daniels, clearly makes Cabinet officials accountable for the success of the PMA in their department. When Cabinet Secretaries are made clearly accountable, they then go back to their department and make sure that they have made specific individuals within their own department accountable for making the PMA a success.

**Lesson 4: Leaders work to enable their organization.** From Lieutenant General Michael Hayden, director of the National Security Agency, I learned that leaders should be "enablers" within their organization. Hayden described how he worked to remove impediments from others in the organization so that they could succeed in their activities. He told us it was his job to make sure that all those in his organization had a clear idea of where he wanted the organization to go. "Then," said Hayden, "get out of the way and let them do their part of the work."

**Lesson 5: Leaders must set an example.** From Brigadier General Edward M. Harrington, director of the Defense Contract Management Agency, I learned more about the importance of a leader setting an example. Harrington described the values that he feels are necessary for all leaders: leadership, loyalty, duty, honor, integrity, selfless service, personal courage. The leader, stated Harrington, needs to set an example in each of those traits and, more importantly, strive for the traits to be demonstrated collectively by the entire organization. "I have an obligation to set the example for the agency as a whole, and I look to people in the agency to demonstrate that individually and collectively," said Harrington.

This is obviously not a comprehensive list of all the possible lessons about leadership that one can learn from talking to leaders. However, they are five lessons that made a big impression on me and that I have tried to implement within my own organization. There are clearly additional lessons to be learned. One just has to find opportunities to listen to leaders and learn from their experience.

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