

JK716
.J66

K73121

Copyright © 1980 by the American Planning Association,
1313 E. 60th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60637

All rights reserved.

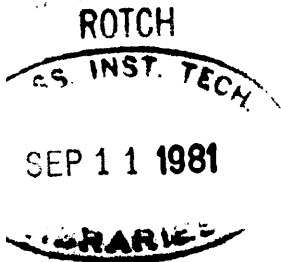
ISBN 0-918286-20-4

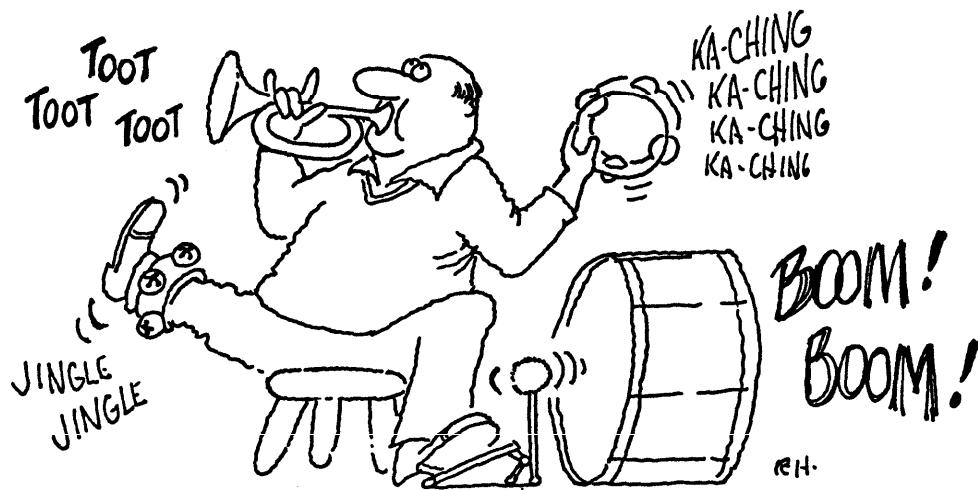
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 80-67754

Printed in the United States of America

Table of Contents

Preface	vii
1. Changing Public Service to Meet Changing Public Values	1
2. Getting Started on the Right Foot	7
3. Basic Working Skills	27
4. Essential Management Skills	49
5. Knowing What You Are Doing, Why, and for Whom	69
6. Making and Implementing a Career Plan	77
7. Growing with the Flow	105
Bibliography	115





Chapter Three Basic Working Skills

*Tis God gives skill
But not without men's hands;
He would not make
Antonio Stradivari's violins
without Antonio.*

—Stradivarius

SKILLS EMPLOYERS ARE LOOKING FOR

Each worker, to be worth hiring and promoting, must have something to offer. This is your bank of skills. You are hired for your skills and potential, not because of your degree or experience, although both of these help establish your credentials or at least open the door to an interview. What's really impressive is what you can do and what other people say you can do. (The best jobs, and especially those requiring increasing responsibility, are very much in the hands of a few people who check you out with a few other people by telephone.) The more skills the better. The five categories of skills include job- and professional-related skills, social-personal skills, communication skills, work programming and management skills, and stylistic skills. Not everyone can or needs to possess all of them, however. But each person does need to assess his or her skills and decide which ones are missing, how and where to use those they have, and which new ones to master.

Table 3.1 shows the results of a survey taken by the Illinois chapter of the American Institute of Planners on the hiring practices of 144 employers of planners.

An important thing to remember is that employers have two basic objectives. They want competent employees. And they want loyal and

Table 3.1. Most Often Cited Level of Influence for Each Criterion by Planning Position

Hiring criteria	Degree of influence at each level			
	Director	Senior	Middle	Entry
Undergraduate major	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Strong
Master's degree	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Slight
Doctorate	No	No	No	No
Graduate—AIP school	No	No	No	No
AIP member—full	No	No	No	No
AIP member—associate	No	No	No	No
School grades	No	Moderate	Moderate	Strong
References of friend	Slight	Slight	Slight	Slight
References in general	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
Appearance	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
School's reputation	Slight	Slight	Slight	Slight
Course of study	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Strong
Writing ability	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
Speaking ability	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate
Experience	Strong	Strong	Strong	Slight
Outside activities	No	Slight	Slight	Slight
Publications	Slight	Slight	Slight	No
Graphics ability	Slight	Slight	Slight	Slight
Familiar with federal programs	Strong	Moderate	Slight	Slight

(How to read the table: The largest number of respondents indicated, for instance, that a familiarity with federal programs had a strong influence on their decision to hire a director or chief planner.)

Source: Leo Sterk and Carl V. Patton, "Hiring the Complete Planner," *Planning and Public Policy*, Vol. 5, No. 4, November 1979. Bureau of Urban and Regional Planning Research, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

rocking, radical chic, disagreeable behavior and chance taking. So, in addition to the following roster on marketable skills, you also need to think about your personal attributes, your sociopolitical, and your stylistic skills.

A word of advice, too, on the value of patience. If your boss is reluctant to give you the responsibility you think you should have, or won't let you go out into the community to talk to the public, it's probably because you haven't been on the job long enough to be fully "tested." Superiors want to be sure, without any doubt, that you come across as mature and competent. If your boss seems cautious, it is well to let a little time pass for him or her to be sure about your competence and style. For it is for style, as well as for your skills, you were hired in the first place.

Following are the five categories of skills you will want to study. Elsewhere in this book is a self-evaluation form that permits you to record your roster of skills and to identify those you might like to acquire (see

Job- and Profession-Related Skills

There are three subcategories of skills worth mastering. This is especially good advice if you aspire to be a top-level manager or administrator.

GENERALIST SKILLS. These skills include the background needed to know why you are doing what you are doing and for whom. To some extent, generalist skills are learned on the job. But the most effective generalists have academic or professional degrees, are liberally educated, and are familiar with the literature and central ideas associated with the work they are doing.

The crucial generalist skills include: (a) research skills, including literature searches, general surveys, and listening for and recording information; (b) identifying problems, issues, and goals; (c) considering alternative courses of action; (d) determining what needs to be done, why, and for whom; and (e) developing priorities.

SPECIALIST SKILLS. These are the skills needed to perform the tasks assigned and/or to match the job description of a particular position. Each government function requires its own specialists. While agency managers may not be specialists in anything, they cannot manage without a roster of trained persons who are experienced in the specialty areas. Examples of specialists are social workers in a public housing and community development agency; chemists in an air pollution control district; and highway engineers in a state transportation department. In each case, the specialist is especially trained to carry out a well-defined technical task or service. Their effectiveness depends primarily upon their prior professional training and education and only in part on their on-the-job experience.

NEW TECHNOLOGY SKILLS. Skills are needed to keep up with new methods or processes and to utilize new equipment. In our fast-moving and fast-changing society, new ways are constantly discovered to do things, new processes and methods to learn, and especially new equipment to utilize and master. Computer applications especially come to mind as does the environmental impact assessment process.

Social-Personal Skills

To work effectively among others no matter what the setting, one ought

(c) foster interpersonal relations, and (d) handle client services effectively and be responsive to client needs.

Communication Skills

On the job, you need to be generally aware of many skills and should be able to perform one or more of the following: (a) write memos and reports in jargon-free, clear English; (b) draft, draw, and communicate graphically and with film; (c) speak before the public; (d) facilitate dialogue in meetings; (e) give and follow directions; (f) run a meeting; and (g) work with the public.

Work Programming and Management Skills

If you are in a supervisory or management post, you need to be able to understand and address the following: (a) work programming, coordination and scheduling, getting things done; (b) time management; (c) organizational planning and development (office management); and (d) job or project monitoring. You will also need to show skills in (a) effective leadership and supervision; (b) employee development and the orienting of new people to the job and the agency; (c) employee utilization and job satisfaction; (d) delegation of authority and responsibility; and (e) team building. Other areas of importance are (a) budgeting and fiscal management; (b) conflict resolution through negotiating, brokering, and mediating; (c) communicating with others; giving directions effectively; and (d) inspiring loyalty.

Stylistic Skills

At the heart of the question of effectiveness are the stylistic skills of attitude, aptitude, a positive approach to problem-solving and to work, good work habits, good judgment, the ability to command respect for your own participation and contributions, and the capacity to monitor and assess your own performance. No matter how skilled as a generalist, no matter

ate differences; sell new ideas; facilitate the support of decisionmakers; or please your client if you are surly, lazy, insensitive to the needs of others, arrogant or patronizing, a poor listener, or a neurotic and obsessive talker. Your style as an employee is crucial not only as it influences whether your job is done well but as it affects your own capacity to grow and develop professionally. In short, your personal style needs watching just as much as your writing and your research skills. If your style gets in the way of your personal objectives or those of your client, you may be faced with a decision about what to do to change.

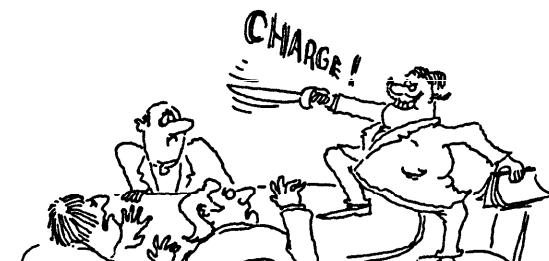
ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR SURVIVAL ON THE JOB

The most essential work skills of the job are communication skills, research skills, and work programming and management skills.

Communication Skills

First and foremost is the *word*. Whether in memos, reports, technical studies, oral presentations, the important thing is that whatever message is attempted, it must be understood. Voltaire said: "We have a natural right to make use of our pens, as of our tongue, at our peril, risk and hazard."

GIVING AND FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS. Since you may not be addressing the multitudes in your first few months on the job, the most



important communication skill you will need first is the ability to communicate with other individuals and especially co-workers. At this point of the game, you will probably need to use your ears twice as much as your mouth. Can you really take directions? Do you listen all the way through? Do you ask questions about any details you don't understand or do you just grab the gist of what is said to you? If you find that the people you work with and for are frequently misunderstanding you and vice versa, then you need to work harder to make sure understanding is taking place.

Check on whether you both understand the content of the directions before leaving the subject. For example, when your supervisor gives you a task, summarize his or her request in your own words. Sometimes you have to try an interpretation which goes beyond what was said, because many people make no allowance for the gap between their experience (standard operating procedure) and yours (what's going on here?).

A sample conversation might be:

Boss. I want you to review that report on Frobisher's Lousewart for me.

New Staff Person. I guess you want me to analyze it in memo form for you.

Boss. Yah, sure, that's the way we do it here.

New Staff Person. In that case, I suppose you want it for your section's report to the Advisory Board. How soon do you need it before the meeting?

Boss. People in my section always get their stuff to me at least four working days before a meeting.

New Staff Person. O.K., I think I'm clear on what you want, but to make sure is there anything else you think I ought to know about this task?

Boss. Oh yea, make sure that the typist circulates copies of your memo to all the other section chiefs.

Virtually everyone who is new on a job has been confronted with a similar situation where it would take a mind reader to do the task right, given the incompleteness of the original instructions.

COMMUNICATING UPWARD. Even more difficult is giving directions when you are trying to communicate something you know so well to a person who knows little or nothing about the subject. When you are speaking to a superior, such as a chief administrator or a politician, you often run into James' *Law of Ignorance* which states: "The time taken for a clever man to influence a stupid man is inversely proportional to

patience, and tact. Valuable experience can be gained if you attended a large university with a hierarchy of deans. Even trying to get a small change in the status quo through channels can be a valuable training experience.²

Imagine, for example, trying to obtain permission to have a used sofa purchased and placed in the student lounge. You'll find that the matter will circulate through in-baskets rather slowly, and a great deal of attention and debate will ensue over insurance impacts, whether university policy requires bidding or purchase of the sofa from the state prison system, whether floor cleaning costs will mount significantly if a precedent like a sofa purchase is approved and so on. But ultimately a decision will filter down, because this is the kind of nitty-gritty detail deans and administrators can really sink their teeth into.

Then imagine trying to get credit for job experience as a substitute for a required course. When you suggest tampering with the curriculum, what will probably happen will be the formation of a study committee whose recommendations will be reviewed by subcommittees from the curriculum committee whose findings will be in turn surveyed by the school structure committee who will then probably report that a coordinating committee of faculty, students, and administrators should be formed to coordinate and study the different sets of committee reports. As a person who made the original suggestion, you'll inevitably be placed on several of the newly formed committees, which will give you tuition-free workshops useful in reducing your time spent influencing stupid people in the future.

WORKING WITH THE PUBLIC. One situation rarely learned in schools is dealing with the public. Very often your first job will be one where you have to explain the rules of the game to someone who wants to do something that government regulates. For many ordinary citizens, this is their big face-to-face confrontation with government. You may make a lasting impression on some innocent taxpayer, which will add to the widely held feeling that government people are unresponsive and hard to deal with without an attorney to smooth the way.

Take, for example, the encounter between Flotilla Marsh, recently widowed homeowner, and Pincus Flornoy, the Variance, Exception and Special Permit Analyst II.

Flotilla. (huffing and puffing after a long search for the right bureau).

Flotilla: Where is this where I get a variance permit?

Flotilla. I'm all alone since Hanibal, my husband died, and I'd like to convert my front bedroom and porch into a plant emporium and juice bar.

Pincus. Do you know your zoning?

Flotilla. What's that got to do with what I want to do?

Pincus. Well, we don't just hand out variances to anyone who asks. It depends on a lot of variables, including your existing zoning designation.

Flotilla. (visibly shaken). Well, could you look it up, please? I live at 314 Stone Street.

Pincus. Of course not, you'll need your assessor's parcel number and proof of ownership, such as a current tax bill. Then I can locate your place in our map books. The assessor is in our downtown annex; so you'd better hurry if you want to get there before they close.

Flotilla. I've already come clear across town on the bus to see you. Couldn't you help me while I'm here? Could you, for instance, call the assessor for me?

Pincus. I'm sorry, we don't offer that service in this section. We only process applications from bona fide property owners. It's your responsibility to establish that as a prerequisite to making application under the requisite sections of the zoning ordinance.

(*Flotilla* grips her shopping bag and leaves muttering imprecations about snotty bureaucrats.)

Technically, *Pincus* was playing by the rules. But in terms of human relations, his treatment of *Flotilla* Marsh was a disaster. Here are three of his mistakes.

1. *He was uncooperative* and gave poor directions. His job is to give people who come in all the available information. It would not have been out of line from the standpoint of decency to have checked out the zoning himself after phoning in for the parcel number, or to have let Mrs. Marsh use his phone to do it, rather than giving her a runaround. We have all been mishandled by people in government whose approach to the public has been to make things as difficult as possible. The right thing to do is to make things as simple as possible for the public, even if you're not the least bit responsible for the system you have to work with. Consider people you deal with as clients and the profits as the psychic rewards that you'll get from helping someone cope with the complexity you understand better than they do. Fewer people will hate government, in general, and what you do for them, in particular.

without respect. Public employees must often be educators, so communication can ultimately take place. *Pincus* was willing to educate *Flotilla* about the rules and barriers she'd have to overcome to get started with him, but she couldn't learn anything about what she really wanted to do without being brushed off. Many new employees consider this sort of thing an "objective attitude," when actually it's the essence of stonewalling unresponsiveness.

3. *He maintained his social distance* by speaking stilted jargon, instead of plain English. If one weren't put off by his uncooperative attitude, certainly resentment would build after having jargon, such as variables, existing zoning designation, bona fide, and requisite, thrown at you. If you think it's smart to pepper your conversation with the public with such two-bit words and phrases, you'll probably register just like the smart aleck in the fifth grade, whom everyone wanted to beat up at recess.

PRESENTING YOURSELF IN PUBLIC. Very often staff members have to venture out in public and communicate what their work is all about to people they want to persuade, inform, and positively impress. Very often they will antagonize, confuse, and negatively impress their audience. The seven deadly sins of presentation include the following:

1. The topic is confusing and unclear, often because it's been dragged out of a fat, unreadable report which hasn't been properly summarized or focused.
2. The presentation is so full of technical triple-ply language that only Ph.D.'s in the field can follow it.
3. Unreal topics and unasked questions are addressed. For example, a regional agency often traveled around to local meetings with a 30-minute slide show showing abstract maps which posed the question, "What Regional Form Do We Prefer?"
4. A tech fix is the kind of presentation where a lot of number crunching has gone on. There is all too often a temptation to insinuate a level of precision that isn't really there. This is often the case when projections and mathematical modeling results are presented to lay people by the technicians who are stakeholders in the number-crunching business.³
5. Solutions are often offered that hide important considerations. For example, a capital improvement program might be presented as easily affordable. The unseen assumption is that inflation is nonexistent in future building costs.

scheme for a low income neighborhood will be offered up as if its implementation would mean residents would not have to give up many of their existing homes to get from here to there. Means are dismissed by ends.

7. A problem is minutely described, checked over, and defined, but the presentation lets things hang right there. No point of view on what needs to be done to alleviate this problem is given.

There are a few things to keep in mind when making a presentation:

1. Know what your subject is all about and what you are doing with it.
2. Know what you want to get from your presentation. Identify your audience and what the optimum response would be.
 - Do you simply want to impart information?
 - Do you want to offer advice?
 - Do you want to get approval of some proposal?
3. Does your presentation allow openings for discussion and feedback from listeners? Are you prepared to handle it? Leave more time for discussion than presentation.
4. Is this timing of your presentation correct? Is it coming at the proper stage of the decision process? For example, would you make a presentation showing the need for more funding for transit for the elderly a short time after the city council had finally adopted next year's budget—and still hope for prompt results?
5. Identify the highlights and focus on them in your presentation.
6. Don't distribute printed materials just before you're going to speak. Many of your audience will be reading when they should be listening.
7. Learn how to really listen to what people are saying in terms of their hidden feelings, as well as the surface verbal content. For example, people resisting assisted housing in their neighborhood may be talking about how damaging to property values cheaper assisted housing will be, when they really mean that they're afraid of having people who take welfare in this form as neighbors.
8. Don't be defensive or evasive when hard questions are asked. Even President Carter can say, "I don't know, but if you want me to, I'll find out."

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS. As public confidence in government has dropped, many critics have pointed out that government officials are often their own worst enemies when they try to communicate in writing. Anyone worth keeping on staff past probation should be able to

The biggest problem is that all too many people who have to communicate ideas in writing can't do it clearly. Several types of deficiencies are especially common in the use of English:

Jargon and Pseudo Scientific Prattle. In academic settings, one is rewarded for obscure, murky shop talk. After all, the authorities, whose texts you have to buy, write like that. For example:

Thus, we conclude, as we began, that both of the two common and superficially different modes of defining a region express useful, if not indispensable, truths. The less metaphorical mode is content to delimit a region as that contiguous one having the necessary geographic unities; the people with sufficiently homogeneous desires, attitudes, and wants; the sufficient bases in natural and man-made resources and technology; and the appropriate voluntary institutions and governmental organization to achieve, within the limits and opportunities of the structure of external political power, the utmost efficiency in the fullest attainment of the major human values of the people of the area. To this comprehensive summation the rival or organismic mode of expression, drawing on the analogy of individual living organisms, adds an emphatic insistence that such an equilibrium of optimum efficiency in the satisfaction of human wants is not to be achieved unless people, values, institutions, and resources are structured into functional components, as interrelated and indispensable to each other and to the healthy functioning of the whole, and as pulse-like in the regularity of their interaction, as are the component parts of man and the animals.⁴

If prose such as this were put in a document for public discussion, the only response to be expected would be "What did he say?" or maybe just "What?" Yet, report after report is filled with the kind of pompous complexity that turns readers off.

That the prattle of academia reaches out into public writing is exemplified in this unpublished gem from an overpaid economic consultant in the San Francisco area, who wanted to sound like an irrefutable expert at any cost:

The appropriate concepts of cost and gain depend on the level of optimization and the alternative policies that are admissible. The appropriate level of optimization and the alternatives that should be compared depends on a general acceptance of suitable criterion.

While the sentence length is not up to academic standards, the denseness of language was at the Ph.D. level. Here's how it might be rewritten in clearer language:

Legalese or Complexosis. Language can be so stilted, stuffy, and complex that it fogs instead of clarifies ideas or instructions. A good example of this is Section 6416 of the state of California's Housing Element Guidelines, presumably written for the guidance of local government people:

In accordance with the provisions of Article 4, a housing program consisting of a comprehensive problem solving strategy adopted by the local governing body which both establishes local housing goals, policies and priorities aimed at alleviating unmet needs and remedying the housing problem, and sets forth the course of action which the locality is undertaking and intends to undertake to effectuate these goals, policies and priorities. Making adequate provision for the housing needs of all economic segments in the community to plan affirmatively, through its housing element program for a balanced housing supply suited to the needs of the community as defined in Section 6418 of these regulations.³

There are three basic faults with language infected with complexosis. First, the sentences contain more than one thought each. Second, there are cross references to things like Article 4 and Section 6418 which murk up the meaning of this section. Finally, there are newly minted word combinations strung together to produce important sounding meaninglessness, for example, a comprehensive problem solving strategy. How does a locality meet this requirement? Many government documents are written in a sort of legalese—the language of law, which retired Yale University professor Fred Rodell described as “almost deliberately designed to confuse and muddle the ideas it purports to convey.” In a 1939 book titled *Woe Unto You, Lawyers!* he wrote:

No segment of the English Language in use today is so muddy, so confusing, so hard to pin down to its supposed meaning as the language of the law. It ranges only from the ambiguous to the completely uncomprehensible. . . . Yet why should people not be privileged to understand completely and precisely any written laws that directly concern them, any business documents they have to sign, any code of rules and restrictions which apply them and which they perpetually live?⁶

Bureaucratic Flapdoodle. A 12th-century French bishop wrote to his priests: “Be neither ornate nor flowery in your speech. . . or the educated will think you a boor and you will fail to impress the peasants.”

The general idea is to try to write like you speak and therefore avoid pomposity. John O'Havre reports that President Franklin D. Roosevelt

on what federal workers were supposed to do in case of an air raid:

Such preparations as shall be made as will completely obscure all Federal buildings and non-Federal buildings occupied by the Federal government during an air raid for any period of time from visibility by reason of internal or external illumination. Such obscuration may be obtained either by blackout construction or by termination of the illumination.

FDR simplified this monstrosity as follows:

Tell them that in buildings where they have to keep the work going to put something over the windows; and in buildings where they can let the work stop for a while, turn out the lights.⁷

Not only memos are afflicted with filigree language. Annual reports often sound as pompous as the funeral oration for a Roman emperor. Here's one from a New England town planning department:

This agency's activities during the preceding year were primarily oriented to continuing their primary functions of informing local groups and individuals to acquaint them of their needs, problems, and alternate problem solutions, in order that they can effect decisions in planning and implementing a total program that will best meet the needs of the people now and in the future.

An uncurling of this peace of pomposity might read:

We spent most of our time last year working with local people, going over their problems and trying to help them figure out solutions. In this way, we hoped to help them set up and carry out a program that will solve today's problems and also satisfy tomorrow's needs.

Buzz Words and Abstract Writing. It's important to use concrete words with specific meanings. Buzz words are words that may have many meanings but mean nothing specific. They can make a communication just blunder about without any real meaning. Party platforms, patriotic speeches, and real estate sales brochures are common examples of this kind of mindless burbling. However, technocrats often use this technique to fuzz up whatever original meaning there might have been in an attempt to inform the laity. For example, an environmental impact report tried to explain economic impacts as follows:

The economic effects, although extremely important, are often so subtle and so confounded with other environmental effects, we neither realize nor appreciate the true economic effects and the resulting advantages of properly recognizing their linkage with environmental conditions.

Figure 3.1. 100 Tired Terms

1. Centroid	35. Revitalize	68. Evidential
2. Feedback	36. Growth poles	69. Empirical or Stochastic
3. Ecological	37. Trade-offs	70. Manpower
4. Morphological	38. Systems approach	71. Framework
5. Activity mode	39. Econometrics	72. Determinism
6. Intrinsic	40. Development theory	73. Incrementalized
7. Image	41. Prototypical	74. Finalized
8. Disjointed	42. Movement system	75. Procurement
9. Linkage	43. Social overhead	76. Interpretative
10. Polarity	44. Distributive system	77. Sensitivity-analysis
11. Trade off	45. Cityscape	78. Dialogue
12. Linear	46. Urban character	79. Citizen inputs
13. Input-output	47. Human scale	80. Guidelines
14. Dichotomy	48. Master planned	81. Infrastructure
15. Subcenter	49. Planned community	82. Thrust
16. Continuum	50. Level of effort	83. Reoriented
17. Action program	51. Urban path	84. Certification
18. Economic base	52. Landmark	85. Prescribed
19. Mobility	53. Human needs	86. Rationale
20. Urban structure	54. Value system	87. Harmonized
21. Systemic	55. Small town character	88. Substantive
22. Synthesis	56. Inequability	89. Viable
23. Normative	57. Interface	90. Documentation
24. Hierarchical	58. Restructuring	91. Spectrum
25. Tertiary	59. Nondirective	92. Budgetary
26. Habitat	60. Individualized	93. Parameters
27. Environs	61. Resource-intensive	94. Prioritize
28. Expertise	62. Sector	95. Agendized
29. Maximization	63. Multi-disciplinary	96. Evaluative process
30. Optimization	64. Self-contained	97. imageability
31. Comprehensibility	65. Conceptualized	98. Multimodal
32. Conurbation	66. Disadvantaged	99. Publicly determined
33. CBD (Central business district)	67. Orchestrated	100. Limited success
34. Urban pattern		

words are so commonly and badly used in certain fields that they often become part of a semantic charade. Figure 3.1 contains a list of words urbanists and other technocrats have given so many meanings that they've lost most of their clarity. They need to be retired for a while until they regain some meaning.

Overcoming Illiteracy. Given the growing deterioration of basic writing skills among college students, it's not surprising that much of

to rewrite the staff reports of subordinates. He complained that many of his staff, who were college graduates, expected the secretaries, who were high school graduates, to "fix up their mistakes" in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and in many cases be their personal editors! Sometimes semi-illiterates rise to the top, and there's no one over them to set things right. Here's an example from a county planning director's paper on rural development and how it might have been rewritten by someone with basic English skills (unfortunately, he wrote just as he spoke).

At the outset of any discussion relative to concluding peripheral city or town land use, one must acknowledge the controversy that is generally generated by such a discussion, especially when City (all cities) and County legislators are involved. The tangents, all mind boggling are numerous and relate to many frames of reference of the past, present and future wherein quite frequently during any forum the context of any statement may be read a half dozen ways. In generating a functional formula that has some flexible application around the County for *total County application* (a very important thought) County Staff must deal with the following thoughts, acts, or proposals:

(Biggest thought) There are diverse attitudes in all eight cities. In the past (and somewhat in the present) all cities that are experiencing growth have annexed following older development plans for the sole purpose of accommodating development. There has been little concern as to affects on contiguous unincorporated lands, such as speculations, taxation, incompatibility with agriculture, etc. Overnight with new state laws (LAFCo mandates) the County is called upon to reverse past trends on a wholesale basis. In most instances the cities in a plural form say, "we must bite the bullet and resolve the question of peripheral city land use, when really that we is you the county. All cities and the county should solicit the State to pass legislation enabling cities to annex everything within their sphere of influence and zone it for greenbelt with a corresponding order to the assessor to reduce taxation.

And as it might have been rewritten:

Land use on the city borders is controversial, especially when city councilmembers and county supervisors are involved. In attempting to devise a solution that would be applicable everywhere in the county, county staff must contend with the following conditions:

- a. The cities do not all think the same about this subject.
- b. Cities that are expanding have annexed and accommodated development with little provision for the effects on the surrounding unincorporated areas.
- c. Now new state laws, such as the Local Agency Formation Commission Act mandates, require the county to reverse these effects. However, in

such lands. Therefore, all jurisdictions should try to get state legislation passed enabling cities to annex all lands within their spheres of influence, hold it as greenbelt, and correspondingly order the assessor to reduce the assessments on such lands.

Research Skills for Public Policy

Anyone working at a professional or technical level must have the ability to generalize from available data and observation and at the outset know what data is needed and what is not. You should fully understand the nature of the problem you're trying to analyze and solve and have the ability to attack it in an intellectually creative fashion. The following ideas on how to do this would probably not be observed or taught at most universities.

PLAN YOUR RESEARCH. Research at work does not consist of just compiling a lot of ready-made facts, with analysis coming at a later and separate stage. Facts do not mean anything until their meaning and significance for a definite purpose are understood. They only acquire meaning as part of the answer to specific questions. Unless one has clearly framed these questions before one starts to compile data, the data will probably be a lot of useless information. For example, in one newly incorporated city, the planning commission decided that they could do a general plan with citizen volunteers. So they set about to count everything in the city: fire plugs, telephone booths, and miles of pavement. When they had completed the inventory taking, they called in a consultant and said: "We've got all the data, how many days will it take for you to work it up into a plan for the city that meets state requirements?" "The same amount of time as if you hadn't done it because most of this data is useless for what a plan would address. You've gone in for a blind collection of facts without even a classification system. For example, you have all the miles of roads in the city measured, but you haven't classified or mapped them by number of lanes, whether they are local, gas tax eligible, or state highways, or whether they're even public or private. I'd have to start all over again, if I were to work here," he replied.

DON'T SET ARTIFICIAL LIMITS ON SCOPE. When studying a

One West Coast city, for example, had its blinders on so tight that its plan called for high-density residential development on its half of an island, under the approach zone of the adjoining international airport's runways. The plan made no mention of the island's having an airport, and when the city approved the type of development shown on the plan, the airport sued. The judge declared the plan a nullity after noting that it made the city more of an island than it really was.

RESEARCH SHOULD AFFECT HUMAN ACTIVITY. Research should be aimed at human affairs and activities, and the results should be expressed as such rather than abstractions such as visitor days, trip ends, marginal costs, rock formations, and density ranges.

RESEARCH SHOULD BE FUTURE ORIENTED. The research is only valuable in so far as it sheds light on what should be done in the future. (The future starts with the moment after this one.) Too much research has been an exquisite investigation and extrapolation of the past and does not shed much light on where do we go from here.

FACTS NEED TO HAVE A BACKGROUND. It's useless to know the average income per capita in an area without knowing whether it's rising, falling, evenly distributed, or skewed, and how it compares with other places.

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS PURE ANALYSIS. For many technicians, there is a tendency to feel that evidence which cannot be expressed as numbers resulting from rigorous methodology is of small



value. They tend to overemphasize quantitative answers in situations where quantitative judgments are essential. The researcher must be able to deal with questions of "why?" as well as "what?" and "how much?" Too much use of methodology unaccompanied by clear explanation usually has the effect of rendering the work useless to policymakers. C. Northcote Parkinson describes this technique of delay as follows:

The techniques of delay have been strengthened in the modern world by the current emphasis on research. In matters scientific, the first rule, as we know, is to discover the facts. The same rule, as applied to human problems, means that a crime wave is not a matter of principle but of measurement. If Negroes riot in Los Angeles our first reaction is to count the Negroes, our second to decide whether they are as black as they are painted. That fact-finding is thus a substitute for decision is very generally known. What we fail to recognise is that fact-finding is also a substitute for thought.⁸

PUTTING YOURSELF IN CHARGE

Before you advance to any real management responsibilities, you should know whether you can make yourself into an effective and efficient section of one. There are some basic skills which you should master. The first is being able to do a fixed amount of work in a fixed amount of time and for a specific amount of money. To be effective, you must be doing the right things with your time. If you can do them without waste and on time, you're economic.

Be realistic, and don't bite off more than you can chew. Break up the big jobs with little chores that you can do in 15 minutes or less, so you'll feel you're producing something every day. Know what kind of work you like to do and the kind you would put off if you could. Be sure the desirable and easy work doesn't eat up the time for the less desirable chores. This requires the kind of discipline few of us applied in school (or even heard about before).

Time Management or Getting Organized

Many people will have all the skills mentioned earlier and still not be

being overwhelmed by the tasks at hand, that a request to take on a new assignment sends them into a catatonic state. Their work is characterized by two basic deficiencies. Either they don't get it done on time or they don't turn in finished work. If both deficiencies are present, this person is usually entering the terminal phase of his or her sojourn with any employer.

Effective use of your time is necessary to be productive and to meet deadlines. Time is one of the basic things you sell to any employer, and *you* need to take the primary responsibility for seeing that value is received for what you sell. This means *putting yourself in charge of yourself*. Only you can make yourself effective. In terms of time management, it means selecting the best task to do from all the possibilities available and then doing it straight away.

If making such a choice is difficult, make a list each day (or week) of the tasks you have to do (see Table 3.2). Assign priorities to each one, such as 1, 2, or 3 (you can also use A, B, C and so on). Break down the big tasks into steps that move toward completion. Stop and determine when your prime time for work occurs. Are you full of energy at 8 a.m., slack off in the p.m., or are you a slow starter who peaks about one hour after lunch? Once you know your bio-rhythm for work, do your top priority work in the prime time. This is not only the time when you're most alert, but when you should have the least interruptions. Most phone calls and people desiring to see you can wait, and many should.

Don't worry about completing your list. Accomplish all the 1s that you can. Be realistic about your working conditions and allow for interruptions and distractions. If there are too many, have a conference with your boss about getting some insulation from these work stoppers. It may mean moving your desk, getting permission to work at the public library or in the conference room, or even a flextime arrangement where you do some work outside the standard 8 to 5 shift.

Do the 2s and 3s in nonprime time. Some people bring such things along to do at boring meetings, while on hold on the telephone, or when they are on low energy such as after a big lunch. Don't use your prime time for churning out trivia, reading the newspaper, or answering inconsequential phone calls.

Try selecting at least one item from your number 3 priority list for oblivion each day or at least once per week. For example, you could skip doing a personnel evaluation for an employee who's left the state, going to a farewell coffee, filling out inane questionnaires from students who

Table 3.2. A Sample Task Chart for a Blue Monday

Type of Task	Time	Code*	Examples of tasks
Call	8:00-9:00 A.M.	A (Important to Councilman Jones)	Citizens complaining about dog droppings on jogging trails
Follow up	8-9:30 A.M.	A - D	Memo to office of Councilman Jones re: calls and action taken on dog control on jogging trails.
Read and Review	9:30-10:00 A.M.	B - D	Read and comment on proposed new leash ordinance
Finish	10:30-12:00 A.M.	A - D	Report on bike trail standards in new subdivisions.
Lunch	12:00-1:00 A.M.	A - P	Happily because all D tasks were finished in A.M.—prime time.
Write	1:00-2:00 P.M.	B - P	Letters to other jurisdictions' planners re: bike trail planning
Read and Review	2:00-3:00 P.M.	C - P	Professional articles on bicycling as an alternative to autos. Prepare summary for Friday staff meeting.
Do	3:00-5:00 P.M.	B - P	Attend regional meeting for trail and path planners.

*A = highest priority, B = medium, C = lowest, P = preferred work, D = disliked.

NOTE: Prime time for handling difficult people or doing scut work is A.M. for this person. P.M.'s are when his biorhythms are down and he handles lighter chores. Peter Drucker warned, however, "Most of your time is not your own. Most work plans fail because we think we have all of the workday. Most of this time is [theirs.]" (From "Using time efficiently takes planning," *Indianapolis Star*, April 30, 1978.) Therefore, allow for interruptions by the public, co-workers, fire drills, and other distractions. Try, however, to get important high priority work done when such schedule impediments are least frequent. On really important work have the receptionist take callback messages or work some place sheltered such as a nearby library, or vacant office without a phone. (Undoubtedly the public's access to you by phone is a sacred right. But you have a sacred right to "not be in" for that two-hour period when you need to be productive and your biorhythms are right.)

Finally, you must begin to say no to procrastination by cleaning up your twos and threes first—daydreaming, reading, socializing, allowing constant interrupters to interrupt or, worst of all, saving the top priority tasks for a heroic last minute surge of effort in the same fashion you used to churn out term papers. Remember that in the real world *crash pro-*

Another hangover many people bring from school is the inability to do finished work. Inexperienced people may do important work just well enough to earn a passing grade by old school standards, but in most jobs, the system will grade your work on a pass or fail basis. Finished work means that it has no gaps, no details to be worked out by others later, no big "ifs" to perplex the user of the work. Finally, it should not be sent in in half-baked form, but should be coherent and hang together so that the client for the work (boss, elected officials, citizens) can sign, approve, or adopt the work without long explanations from you. Don't get in the habit of "getting sent back to the drafting board" for work that won't work. Don't bury your clients in voluminous reports, unprepared oral presentations, and innumerable unevaluated options. Use this simple test to test your work. If you were the boss, would you be willing to let this work go out with your name and professional reputation riding on it. If you have reasonable doubts, take it back and polish it a little more.

Remember, too, that progress reports (oral or with short notes or memos) as you go along allow conceptual matters to be addressed and issues resolved early in the process. When you're down to the wire on a deadline is not the time for you or anyone else to discover you still don't know who the client is, or what the main thrust of your work is, or to discover you and your boss are at fundamental odds about your approach to a job. Bosses don't like surprises so keep them informed regularly.

NOTES

1. Dennis James, *Bluff Your Way in Management* (London: Wolfe Publishing Ltd., 1969), pp. 17-18.
2. Alfred Kahn said, "Deans are to a faculty as hydrants are to dogs." (From a news story in the *Portland Oregonian*, February 28, 1978.) However, to an imaginative student, deans can be a great teaching resource for a later career in a large hierarchical organization.
3. Very often such technocrats will continue to offer tentative decisions that are always precise, but wrong. More variables must be con-

4. The Directive Committee on Regional Planning, *The Case for Regional Planning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947), pp. 35-36.
5. California Department of Housing and Community Development, *Housing Element Manual* (Sacramento: March 1978), p. 53.
6. Stuart Auerbach, "War on Legalese Gaining Adherents," *Los Angeles Times*, January 29, 1978, p. 2.
7. John O'Hayre, *Gobbledygook Has Got to Go* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966), p. 39.
8. C. Northcote Parkinson, *The Law of Delay: Interviews and Outerviews* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1970), pp. 121-122. Copyright 1970 by C. Northcote Parkinson.