

MEMO

To: All employees
From: County Commissioners and Department Directors
Subject: Performance GROWth Strategy
Date: March, 2003

On the following pages is the new Performance GROWth system. It is significantly different than any previous performance system. It is going to require that all employees take greater ownership in their own performance and other individual and group successes. These successes will be focused on ensuring that the County, as it continues to grow, provides the necessary services to the public, and in a manner that meets and exceeds their expectations.

At the heart of the new system are four key tenets:

- Speed of the services offered;
- Quality of the services provided;
- Focused Decision Making at all levels; and
- Disciplined People, Thought and Action

These may not sound new to some of you, however there are several key changes. First, you will notice that the system is focused on current behavior and future behavior. Any behavioral challenges will be dealt with in a much more expedient basis and with greater ownership taken by the individual. Instead of waiting to do a performance review once a year, supervisors and employees will continuously work on improving, meeting and exceeding the needs of the public and communities we serve.

Second, there will be greater input by the individual employee. You, along with your supervisor, will be completing a behavioral agreement (GROWth Strategy) quarterly focused on making you, and the services you provide, better. We realize that this sounds cumbersome, however, the agreement focuses on making your job easier by identifying things (resources) you need to better allow you to serve the public, holding you accountable to meeting the targets set by both you and your supervisor, and allowing both you and your supervisor to receive feedback on a more frequent basis on how you are succeeding in your position.

The goal of the new system is to recognize that we are all here to best serve the communities within Delaware County, to do so in a quality and beneficial manner, to make focused decisions that are in the best interests of the public and to be disciplined in both our thoughts and actions.

As the systems is rolled out and implemented, we are asking for your patience and support. The purpose, as with any new system implemented within the County, is to better serve the public.

Performance GROWth Strategy

The Performance GROWth Strategy provides:

- A model that recommends developmental experiences in which critical success characteristics are strengthened and demonstrated through measurable achievements.
- A tool that measures critical job-related competencies used for development, self assessment, and/or to solicit feedback from others.
- Resources for developing and strengthening individual competencies.
- Succession planning guidelines that facilitate the succession and selection process.

The Need For Development

- In our ever changing and growing environment, employees at all levels of the County face radically different challenges. The County is requiring all employees to take greater control, increase their responsibilities and accountabilities, and to make more focused decisions that affect the communities and customers we serve and the County's internal and external processes. These challenges underscore the need for ever-increasing knowledge and skill enhancements. It is important to remember that development does not come at the expense of doing what is necessary in our everyday positions.

Purpose

- The aim of this process is to expand each employee's proficiency in the identified competencies through a variety of job and career experiences and other developmental activities so that the County can successfully meet/exceed the public's needs and requirements.
- In addition, this process is designed to allow each individual greater control and input into his or her success. However it is important to remember, that each of us has a job to do and this process serves to enable all of us to keep focused on service and become more disciplined in our actions and behavior.

Success Characteristics

- Competencies or Success Characteristics define the essential skills, knowledge and abilities required for the future success of the County's employees. Success Characteristics:
 - Promote success by focusing employees on what is critical in the services we provide
 - Provide goals for career development
 - Create a means of assessing proficiency in job-related areas of the County
- On the following two pages is a list of the key success characteristics or competencies and their definitions. We recognize the unique characteristics and large diversity of positions within the County. However, we are all in our jobs to serve the public regardless of position or level. As such, even though our individual job descriptions may differ, there are several key traits that are common to all positions within the County.
- In addition, it is important to note that there will be greater expectations placed on those

individuals with greater responsibilities.

- The Directors, along with the Commissioners, have identified four strategic areas that will enable all of us to meet and exceed our “customers” needs and requirements as the County continues its rapid growth:
 - Speed of the services offered;
 - Quality of the services provided;
 - Focused Decision Making at all levels; and
 - Disciplined People, Thought and Action

- Furthermore, each employee, along with their supervisor, will identify several major job-related task elements that make up your position. Human Resources is available to facilitate the process of identifying these elements. All employees will be expected to perform their respective jobs in a manner that is aligned with the focus and commitment towards service that Delaware County continues to strive toward.

Characteristics of Success

- **Communication** - Discusses concerns and shares information in an open and productive manner focusing on the solution. Provides timely, accurate, and candid information on critical County issues (planning/progress/results) to colleagues, superiors, team members and subordinates. Provides information, opinions, observations, and conclusions in a clear and concise manner. Listens without judgment and incorporates knowledge gained into action. Seeks first to understand. Accepts feedback and ideas from others and provides feedback neutrally and objectively.
- **Customer/Community/County Orientation** - Dedicated to exceeding the expectation and requirements of internal and external customers. Talks and acts with the County in mind. Takes personal responsibility for correcting service problems. Consistently follows through on commitments. Encourages both positive and constructive feedback from customers.
- **Effective Execution** - Produce quantifiable results with sensitivity to the entire organization. Time and project management and planning is vital. Takes steps to prevent problems, and addresses them as they arise. Takes responsibility for outcome of goals. Treats failures as opportunities.
- **Ethical Practice** - Demonstrates sound personal and business ethics, behaviors and values; builds trust with others through openness and candor; ensures actions are consistent with words and follows through on all commitments. Balances organizational and individual needs and interests avoiding conflicts of interest and personal bias. Recognizes impact of decisions and proactively responds to negative consequence. Shows respect for and interest in others.
- **Initiative** - Self starting, self-driven, entrepreneurial, risk taker and goal oriented. Champions breakthrough programs, ideas, processes and services that position the County to increase both the quality and speed of services offered. Constantly strives to improve processes on an on-going basis. Challenges traditional ideas and approaches to problems. Plans and prioritizes work and services provided to optimize the use of time, employees, and resources (financial and material) to exceed County' needs and organizational goals. Makes deadlines and keeps commitments to others and incorporates continuous improvement concepts into day-to-day work activities.
- **Leadership** - Provides strong direction in achieving short-and long-term objectives. Demonstrates initiative and fortitude to position self and employees to exceed the public's expectations. Takes responsibility for self-direction and/or direction of others. Motivates employees to increase their performance; identify necessary skills/traits for employee success; create a learning environment; counsel employees. Sets an example of personal performance that encourages excellence. Delegates responsibilities to maximize employee potential and provide opportunities for employee growth. Demonstrates unity of person and purpose.
- **Receptive To Change** - Flexible and adaptable to changing priorities, organizational structure, job/position description and location. Accepts ambiguity and remains focused in uncertain

situations. Readily adapts to changes in County strategies and the environment by revising plans/priorities.

- **Self Development** - Genuine intent to foster long-term learning and self development, regardless of job or level. Initiates performance and career discussions with superiors and peers to assess his/her strengths and weaknesses. Remains up-to-date with knowledge relevant to short and long term needs. Continually demonstrates improvement in competencies and skills targeted for development.
- **Systems/Strategic Thinking** - Identifies the relationship between cause and effect by seeing the process and not just the final product. Identifies the actions and outcomes needed from individuals to get final result. Anticipates customer/community needs and the County's role in servicing the public. Evaluates current, future, and potential new ways to service the community based on community's needs. Incorporates new trends and changes within the County into strategy. Pulls together ideas, issues, and observations into a clear picture for others to understand. Allocates human, material, financial, and technological resources to meet/exceed short- and long-term goals.
- **Teamwork** - Active participation, sharing and cooperating in teams. Must keep in mind that the group is more powerful than the individual. Solicits varying points of views, ideas, and opinions from team members to aid in decision making. Values other's input and expertise. Demonstrates cooperation within and beyond own team/department. Participates willingly, supports team decision even when different from one's own.

Performance GROWth Assessment Tool

Directions - Please read before entering your responses.

- This Assessment Tool consists of success areas covering the core values, traits and skills necessary to enable an employee to excel in their job. You, along with your supervisor, will be evaluating yourself. Upon completion of the form, both you and your supervisor will create a Performance GROWth Strategy focused on furthering your development of the areas identified.
- Carefully read the definition for each characteristic. The definition is not all-inclusive; rather it is provided to help you think of different aspects of the competency and your proficiency in them.
- Using the definitions listed below, mark in the corresponding box next to each statement how you act, respond, or think during the course of your work. If you have any questions, please contact your Supervisor or Human Resources. Thank you for your cooperation.

Demonstrated Proficiency Level

<i>Needs Improvement</i>	Taking into consideration the experience and training of the employee, the employee demonstrates a lack of proficiency in the success characteristic to a point that it negatively affects attainment of goals, the work unit, department, division, and/or organization.
<i>Proficient / Meets Expectations</i>	Taking into consideration the experience and training of the employee, the employee demonstrates a proficiency level in the success characteristics that is expected. Employee has normal levels of successes and errors, but typically fulfills the expectations at an expected level.
<i>Exceeds Expectations</i>	Taking into consideration the experience and training of the employee, the employee consistently demonstrates a superior proficiency level in the success characteristics to a point that the employee is the looked upon as the example to follow. The employee may be the subject matter expert and coach for other employees or may demonstrate a rapid learning capability that moves him/her in performing work typically expected of more experienced personnel. Errors are corrected rapidly and used as a learning experience. Employee uses competency to significantly increase both the quality and speed of the services provided, decrease expenses and/or improve processes.

- Upon completion of your individual assessment, you will meet with your supervisor to develop a plan of action, a GROWth Strategy. Each Strategy will have the following sections Goals; Reality; Options; and Wrap-up. Sample steps and questions are provided on the next page to assist you in this process.

Performance GROWth Strategy

Goals

- Agree on topic for discussion
- Agree on specific objective of session
- Set short/long-term aim

Sample Questions:

- What is it you would like to discuss?
- What would you like to achieve?
- What would you like from this session?
- What would need to happen for you to walk away feeling that this time was well spent?
- If I could grant you a wish for this session, what would it be?
- What would you like to be different (outcomes) when you leave this session?
- Are the outcomes realistic?
- Can we do that in the time we have available?
- Will that be of real value to you?

Reality

- Invite self-assessment
- Offer specific examples of feedback
- Avoid or check assumptions
- Discard irrelevant history

Sample Questions:

- What is happening at the moment?
- How do you know that this accurate?
- When does this happen?
- How often does this happen?
- What effect does this have?
- How have you verified, or would you verify that this is so?
- What other factors are relevant?
- What is their perception of the situation?
- What have you tried so far??

Options

- Cover the full range of options
- Invite suggestions from the employee
- Offer suggestions carefully
- Ensure choices are made

Sample Questions:

- What could you do to change the situation?
- What alternatives are there to that approach?
- Tell me what possibilities for action you see.
- What approach/actions have you seen used, or used yourself, in similar situations?
- Who might be able to help?
- Would you like suggestions from me?
- Which options do you like the most?
- What are the benefits and pitfalls of these options?
- Which options are of interest to you?
- Rate from 1-10 your interest level in the practicality of each of these options.
- Would you like to choose an option to act on?

Wrap-up

- Commit to action
- Identify possible obstacles
- Make steps specific and define timing
- Agree on support

Sample Questions:

- What are the next steps?
- Precisely when will you take them?
- What might get in the way?
- Do you need to log the steps in your diary?
- What support do you need?
- How and when will you enlist that support?

Human Resources will assist you and your supervisor in developing these agreements.

Employee: _____

Completed By: _____

Date: _____

Directions - Please read before entering your responses.

Using the definitions listed below, mark in the corresponding box next to each statement how the employee acts, responds, or thinks during the course of work. For answers to questions, please contact your Supervisor or Human Resources.

Demonstrated Proficiency Level

Needs Improvement Taking into consideration the experience and training of the employee, the employee demonstrates a lack of proficiency in the success characteristic to a point that it negatively affects the attainment of goals, the work unit, department, division, and/or organization.

Proficient / Meets Expectations Taking into consideration the experience and training of the employee, the employee demonstrates a proficiency level in the success characteristics that is expected. Employee has normal levels of successes and errors, but typically fulfills the expectations at an expected level.

Exceeds Expectations Taking into consideration the experience and training of the employee, the employee consistently demonstrates a superior proficiency level in the success characteristics to a point that the employee is looked upon as the example to follow. The employee may be the subject matter expert and coach for other employees or may demonstrate a rapid learning capability that moves him/her in performing work typically expected of more experienced personnel. Errors are corrected rapidly and used as a learning experience. Employee uses competency to significantly increase both the quality and speed of the services provided, decrease expenses and/or improve processes.

Success Characteristics	Demonstrated Proficiency Level		
	Needs Improvement	Proficient / Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
	1	2	3
Communication - <i>Must be able to persuade, motivate, build consensus with real-time reaction. Important to have concise, effective communication.</i>			
Customer/Community/County Orientation - <i>Dedicated to exceeding the expectation and requirements of internal and external customers.</i>			
Effective Execution - <i>Produce quantifiable results with sensitivity to the entire organization. Time and project management and planning is vital.</i>			
Ethical Practice - <i>Consistently demonstrates sound personal and business ethics, behaviors and values; builds trust with others through openness and candor; ensures actions are consistent with words and follows through on all commitments.</i>			
Initiative - <i>Self starting, self-driven, entrepreneurial, risk taker and goal oriented.</i>			
Leadership - <i>Provides strong direction in achieving short-and long-term objectives. Demonstrates initiative and fortitude to position self and employees to exceed customer expectations.</i>			
Receptive To Change - <i>Flexible and adaptable to changing priorities, organizational structure, job/position description and location.</i>			
Self Development - <i>Genuine intent to foster long-term learning and self development, regardless of job or level.</i>			
Systems/Strategic Thinking - <i>Identifies the relationship between cause and effect by seeing the process and not just the final product. Identifies the actions and outcomes needed from individuals to get final result.</i>			
Teamwork - <i>Active participation, sharing and cooperating in teams. Must keep in mind that the group is more powerful than the individual.</i>			

Delaware County – Performance GROWth Assessment

Employee: _____ Title: _____

Supervisor: _____ Title: _____

<u>Success Characteristic</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Weighted Rating</u>	<u>Success Characteristic</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Weighted Rating</u>
Communication	_____	X _____	= _____	Leadership	_____	X _____	= _____
Customer/Community/ County Orientation	_____	X _____	= _____	Receptive to Change	_____	X _____	= _____
Effective Execution	_____	X _____	= _____	Self Development Systems/Strategic Thinking	_____	X _____	= _____
Ethical Practice	_____	X _____	= _____	Teamwork	_____	X _____	= _____
Initiative	_____	X _____	= _____				

Total Weighted Ratings _____ ÷ 100 = Average Weighted Rating _____

Performance GROWth Strategy:

Goals

Reality

Options

Wrap-up

Date: _____

Employee Signature: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____