

THE JOB TO BE DONE

The City of Aurora is Illinois' second largest city with a population of over 162,000 served by 1,200 employees and ranked in Money Magazine 2006 as one of the 'Best Places to Live' in the US. Under the leadership of newly appointed Mayor Thomas Weisner, the leaders of the City of Aurora, sought to improve the quality of life for all of its citizens. After joining Dr. Stephen R. Covey at the Youth Summit at Aurora University, Mayor Weisner partnered with FranklinCovey to ascertain the execution gaps within city government. After administering an assessment called the xQ, they found that city employees were committed to improving city services but lacked clarity around what success was. In short, they did not share a clear set of priorities and goals.

SOLUTION

As the mayor and department heads began clarifying their strategic goals, there was a broadly held belief among the workers that goals "just get handed down from above." This proved to be a substantial barrier that had to be addressed with real action and not platitudes. The city leaders involved all 1,200 city employees in crafting their top three goals:

Goal #1: Continue to reduce shootings by 20%.

Goal #2: Reduce by 20% the resolution time for citizen requests from all City Divisions.

Goal #3: Revitalize the Fox River Corridor by approving a minimum of 650 new residential units assembling one acre of open space.

Reducing gun shootings was seen as a lofty goal considering the substantial decrease in shootings the prior year, largely due to partnering with federal agencies. Achieving another 20% reduction would require new and different behaviors from all city departments, not just the police department. This required a shift in attitude from "it's not my job" to creatively figuring out how each department could reduce shootings in their respective responsibilities.

For example, as patrol officers increased warrant attempts and traffic stops in key areas where the majority of shootings occurred, the Department of Public Property developed a goal to replace street lights in those "high-impact" areas within 25 hours, rather than the average time of 90 hours. With diligent focus, they beat their goal by replacing the lights within 6.6 hours. City departments developed gang awareness training and new processes for providing gang intelligence to the police department when servicing customers in their various departments.

With the deep involvement of city employees, the city began cascading goals to the departments in consultative work sessions facilitated by FranklinCovey. City leaders and their teams used The 4 Disciplines of Execution Process to drive new behaviors and results, create focus on their three Wildly Important Goals and critical measures, track results through scoreboards and drive accountability.

RESULTS

After only eight months:

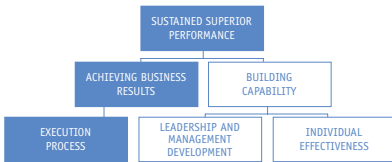
Goal #1: The shooting reductions are down over 21% (YOY) against a goal of 20%.

Goal #2: Some divisions are seeing as high as a 50% improvement towards reducing their resolution time against a goal of 20%.

Goal #3: More than 850 condominiums have been approved against a goal of 650 and the city is within 1% of reaching their goal of assembling one acre of open space for the Fox River Corridor.

With all 1,200 City employees given the opportunity to both participate in the initial survey and in the follow-on work sessions, the City has established both clarity and commitment toward key priorities and established relevant goals throughout City government.

After hearing about the city goals, a citizen from Aurora wrote into the local newspaper, stating, "I think this initiative is an extremely important program for our great city. The thought behind it and its goals are as compelling and proactive as can be. This type of program is paramount in getting all of the city's employees and residents rowing in the same direction. It can also be a model for other communities."



The ability to execute on top organizational objectives is one of the necessary traits to achieve sustained superior performance.

Execution is only possible when everyone knows the top goals and possesses a relentless drive to achieve them.

