

Lessons From the Cal-ICMA “City Manager Challenges and Strategies Report”

Strengthening the Council/Manager
Team

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*“The difference between the game of golf and
government is ...*

In golf, you can’t improve your lie”

• Governor, George Dukemejian

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SIENA,
ITALY



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Bad Government



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Presenters

- Bruce Channing, City Manager, Laguna Hills, ICMA Board Member
- Martin Gonzalez, Executive Director, Institute for Local Government (ILG)
- JoAnne Mounce, Councilmember, Lodi, First Vice President, League of CA Cities
- Scott Nelson, Councilmember, Placentia, Board Member League of CA Cities
- Dan Keen, City Manager Vallejo, President--City Managers Department

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Purpose of Study

- Identify the Key Issues Impacting City/County Manager Success
- Identify Successful Strategies/Best Practices
- Determine How to Add Resources/Improve Accessibility to Resources
- Identify Short and Long Term Implementation Strategies

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Methodology

- Survey Monkey Distributed to All City and County Managers in CA (Approx. 500)
- Series of 8 Focus Groups Throughout the State (75 total participants)

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Major Findings

- Councilmembers Who Interfere Administratively and Micro-Manage
- Impact of Councilmember/Councilmember Conflict on CM and Staff
- City Councils/Councilmembers Who Don't Understand/Value the Council-Manager Form of Government

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Major Findings

- Need for Councils to Set Priorities; Workload Impacts; Dealing With Limited Resources
- Dealing With the Demands of Individual Councilmembers
- Bullying Conduct of Elected Officials

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Major Findings

- Areas of Most Frequent Challenge:
 - Councilmember/Councilmember Conflict
 - Financial Issues
 - Personality Issues/Interpersonal Relationships
 - Defining and Respecting Roles (Council/CM Form of Government)
 - Policy Issues

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Major Findings

- Most Significant Challenges:
 - Dealing With the Consequences of State Actions/Outside Factors
 - Budget/Financial Challenges
 - Relationships With Individual Council/Board Members
 - Conflicts Regarding Planning/Development Issues
 - Relationships With Unions/Employee Groups

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Overarching Themes

- Need to Focus on Best Practices for BOTH Elected Officials and Appointed Managers
- Lack of Structured Mutual Support Within the Profession
- Technical Skills vs. People Skills
- Focus on Policy Issues (While Very Important) Detracting from Professional Skill Development/Professional Support

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Major Findings From Survey and Focus Groups

- Types of Issues That Pose Greatest Challenges:
 - Relationship Issues: 69%
 - Technical Issues: 31%

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Strategies to Address Challenges

- Enhanced Training for Both Managers and Elected Officials
- Development of “Best Practices” and Model Protocols
- Development of Curriculum/Resources re Form of Government and Roles/Responsibilities

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Strategies to Address Challenges

- Better Use of Regional Manager Groups and LCC Divisions to Disseminate Resources/Promote Best Practices
- Promotion of Best Practices re the Selection and Evaluation of City/County Managers

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Strategies to Address Challenges

- Development of Enhanced Peer-to-Peer Support for Managers
- On-line Compilation of Resources
- Development of Community Leadership Academies

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Full Study Available at:

icma.org/challenges+strategies

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Institute for Local Government

- www.ca-ilg.org
- Leadership and Governance
 - Roles, Responsibilities, Relationships
- Ethics and Transparency
- Effective Meetings
- New to Public Service

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August 2016 Western City Magazine by
League President Dennis Michael:

[Navigating the Ups and Downs of the
Council-Manager Relationship:](http://www.westerncity.com/Western-City/August-2016/Navigating-the-Ups-and-Downs-of-the-Council-Manager-Relationship/)

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