

Upcoming 2008 Events

- Performance Institute
Performance Budgeting for Government
Arlington VA
August 4-8
- CAM-I Third Quarter Meeting
Portland OR
September 7-10
- Third Annual CMA/CAM-I Summit
Process, Performance, and Cost Management
October 22-23
Toronto Canada

People in the News

- Keith Hallin recently appointed Director-Cost Knowledge and Targeting, Global Procurement
Whirlpool Corporation

How Kings Seek Counsel

Like the CEO and Senior Managers in commercial organizations, Kings are faced with important issues and problems requiring expertise, knowledge, and the experience of advisors.

In a private meeting some 10 years ago, Jim Schmook a colleague and friend conducted a briefing titled Guidelines for Kings Seeking Counsel, *Techniques for Becoming an Effective Counsel-Taker*.

While developed from the perspective of the counsel-taker (King), there were several key messages of value to those of us in the performance management community.

Key Message #1

Before selecting advisors or even engaging a particular problem, the decision maker must commit to the issue and find a key question or principle from which to improve grasp. With grasp and understanding comes commitment and deciding whether to engage the issue or not.

We can help by building a picture of the problem, avoiding biased or premature definition, and by creating and providing process and plans to address the issue.

Key Message #2

Trust and competence are two of the main criteria for selecting advisors. There are experts that may not be trustworthy. Trusted confidants may be out of their league and not up to the task.

As counsel givers we must be honest, fair, and trustworthy. But it's more than trust. We must have adequate technical competence to deal with the problem or issue at hand. We have a responsibility to be up to the task and not out of our league.

Key Message #3

Kings are responsible for managing the advisors and creating an environment in which advisors work for them, rather than exert pressure on them. Kings must position themselves as an active participant, getting

candor, not veiled advice.

We are better advisors when we don't have a personal agenda (trust again), meet deadlines, provide proposals with options, benefits, and risks, and don't assume silence means consent.

Key Message #4

Knowing when to accept or reject advice. Common mistakes include overriding the decision makers grasp in favor of an advisor's counsel, acting on advice when the "inner voice" is unsettled, and failure to seek second opinions when doubtful.

As council givers, we make the same mistakes when we provide advice with the tag line "just trust me" or fail to suggest getting second opinions from others when the stakes are high or doubt remains.

*Strive to be a trusted
advisor...*

John A. Miller

ARKŌNAS