

# ***Development Suggestions for External Awareness***

## **Suggested Readings**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author/Publisher</b>
The First 90 Days in Government	Peter Daly, Michael Watkins, and Cate Reavis

## **Activities**

### **→Acquiring Organizational Knowledge**

#### **Scan the environment.**

As a leader, you should be constantly scanning the environment both within and outside your organization.

#### **Keep updated on key policies and economic, political and social trends that impact your organization.**

Ensure that you keep current on everything there is to know about your organization by reading annual reports, relevant publications, such as newsletters and available documents that outline strategic plans, organizational goals, and philosophies. Stay abreast of political and social trends by reading daily newspapers and weekly information magazines.

#### **Ensure you are familiar with what other organizations (particularly, partner organizations) are planning and doing that could affect your organization.**

Read their newsletters, visit their websites and follow major developments through the news media. Subscribe to and read journals in your area of expertise that you are not directly responsible for.

#### **Be familiar with the viewpoints of commentators on public policy in the news media, periodicals, and professional journals.** Stay abreast of policies in the public sector by reading newsletters on Congress and attending organizational meetings that update congressional developments.

**Establish a network of individuals** who are in the know about current issues within the organization to keep you informed about how and when to launch your initiatives.

**Maintain relationships** with individuals in regulatory or policy-making offices so that you have access to updated information when policies, laws, or regulations change.

## →Developing External Awareness

### **Discuss the news with your employees.**

Periodically spend time during a staff meeting discussing headlines and their implications for the work of your unit. What recent news items should your staff be aware of because of the potential relevance of the news on the agency in the near future? For example, news about increasing political unrest or uncertain economy in a foreign city may have implications for U.S. travelers abroad and trade policy, and thus for the agency.

### **Educate your staff members on the broader business environment.**

Expose them to the latest thinking about future trends in the agency and in other agencies. Circulate relevant published materials and invite outside experts to speak about future trends. Survey your employees to identify the topics of greatest interest to them. Ask them to research and then present information about those topics to their peers or employees.

**Regularly read** trade journals, departmental and industry publications, newsletters, electronic bulletin boards and web sites, etc., from your organization, other government organizations and partner organizations from the private and non-profit sectors.

**Ask members of your staff to volunteer** to track and share written information on external trends in specific areas. This will provide an in-house expert for key areas of knowledge affecting your work, and will provide information that can be disseminated within the work unit.

**Set aside time to attend guest lectures or brown bag** lunches in your organization that are designed to inform employees of trends and developments in the field of training and in the public sector environment.

**Join and participate in associations and professional organizations.**

**Actively participate in Interagency work groups and attend interagency and/or Departmental meetings on a regular basis.**