Advancing Your Career to Supervise and Manage Fleet Operations: What You Need to Know

A practical roundtable discussion with a seasoned group of Fleet professionals

MEMA NorCal Webinar



Moderated by: Keith C. Leech Sr | Director of Fleet Relations | NorCal Clean Cities and Communities

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1

FIRST STEPS

Interview for the Job You Want

- Define the goal — promotion, leadership path, education and certifications
- Research the agency, organization, fleet and current challenges
- Prepare examples that demonstrate leadership — even without the title
- Bring the right presence: preparation, demeanor, attitude and curiosity
- Be ready for “What questions do you have for us?”

ROUNDTABLE PROMPT

“

What separates someone who is technically strong from someone who sounds ready to lead?

Preparation • presence • perspective

2

THE LANGUAGE OF THE ORGANIZATION

Learning to Speak Management

- Learn the shorthand: budgets, HR, procurement, labor, risk and administration
- Understand organizational structure — who does what, and who has authority
- Learn public-sector workflows and how funding actually moves work forward
- Translate technical fleet issues into language decision-makers can use
- Practice the humility to say: “I don’t know — but I’ll find out.”

ROUNDTABLE PROMPT

“

What was your first “everyone else seems to know what this means” management moment?

Terminology • process • humility

3

ADJUSTING YOUR PERSPECTIVE

From Doing the Work to Making the Decision

- Anchor decisions to Mission • Vision • Values
- Shift from “What does fleet need?” to “What does the organization need?”
- Separate mission-critical needs from desirable improvements
- Balance cost, risk, safety, reliability and service impact
- Know your role, your authority — and when a decision needs to move upward

ROUNDTABLE PROMPT

“When the technically best answer is not financially or organizationally realistic, how do you decide?

Big picture • tradeoffs • accountability

4

MANAGING PEOPLE

Getting Results Through Others

- Delegate without micromanaging — leadership is no longer doing everything yourself
- Build credibility through consistency, listening and leading by example
- Create culture by holding yourself and others to a clear standard
- Coach behavior against expectations and organizational impact — not personalities
- Navigate evaluations, difficult conversations and union environments professionally

ROUNDTABLE PROMPT

“

How do you coach a 25-year employee when you may have 20 years less experience — without making tenure the issue?

Credibility • coaching • culture

Managing Up, Down and Across

- Know your audience — technician, peer, director, executive or elected official
- Give leadership what they need to make a decision — not everything you know
- When problems arise: What happened? Impact? Action taken? Recommendation? Decision needed?
- Distinguish what is urgent from what is actually important
- Build systems and habits that protect time for strategic work

ROUNDTABLE PROMPT

How do you communicate a problem upward without simply handing your boss another problem?

Clarity • judgment • prioritization

Keep Building After You Get the Job

- Find mentors who offer perspective — inside and outside your organization
- Build a peer network you can learn from and contribute to
- Use professional associations: MEMA • NAFA • PFSA • APWA
- Consider credentials and continuing education: CPFP • CAFM
- As you grow, shift from seeking guidance to also developing others

> **If someone wants to become a fleet manager in the next five years, what should they start doing tomorrow?**

Mentorship • network • continuous growth

Questions & Discussion

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