

Blindsided—Suddenly and Abruptly!

A city manager's code of survival requires arithmetic skills embellished by political commonsense—namely, how to count to three when your city commission has five members and rumors are circulating that your head is on the chopping block. Learning how to count matters but city managers are not always the best mathematicians. One can be blindsided and unceremoniously dumped. Consider the case of the former city manager of Lake Wales, Florida. Tony had been the city manager for eight years and was proud of the achievements he had brought to the community of 12,000. In his words, "I was blindsided. There was no process, no warning, not one commissioner coming to me with a list of concerns and timetables."

Disturbed and perturbed by this brusque treatment, Tony decided to challenge the commission 3-2 majority and faced the unpleasant prospect of publicly being fired. As he put it, "I was warned early in my city management career that you should not wrestle with a pig—you and the pig end up in the mud, and the pig loves it!" But wrestle he did. His \$110,000 salary was on the line along with his reputation. At the public hearing an overflow crowd of 100 people wore green ribbons in support of Tony and many speakers urged the commissioners to give Tony an opportu-

nity to correct any problems. A standing ovation from those attending the meeting erupted when Tony finished his statement by saying "I love Lake Wales, and I want to continue to serve."

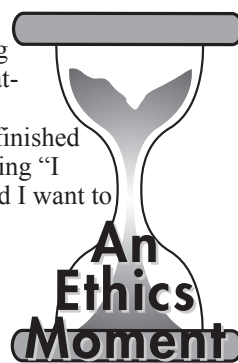
Tony lost the match.

Questions

1. Is fairness or lack thereof an ethical issue?
2. Should Tony have challenged the commission majority in the way that he did?
3. Shouldn't Tony have respected the commission as a democratic body that was fully within its rights to fire him?

Based on a real case: See www.theledger.com/article/20090729/NEWS/907299930 and <http://www.theledger.com/article/20090724/NEWS/907249890> accessed 27 September 2009

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Persistence Important in Government Job Hunting

From RESUME, pg. 13

ecutive jobs, recommends "structuring each success story to identify the problem you addressed, your actions, results and any positive feedback you earned."

Limit each KSA answer to one written page. Don't feel obligated to fill the space provided; if you can make a case for yourself clearly and quickly, do so.

Other documents: Hiring managers recommend attaching additional documents, such as professional or student publications or a strong reference, to your hard-copy applications when possible (and even if not solicited). Some online systems allow you to reference publications or provide Web links to reference publications or provide Web links to support your application.

Don't Give Up

If you're rejected from one or more of your target jobs, remember that persistence is

just as important to federal job searches as private sector hunts. Why? Because each federal job is filled by different hiring managers using different criteria, the person who passes on one of your applications may not see your next one.

What's more, every job search is, to some degree, a numbers game: The more suitable openings you find and target, the better your chances will be of success. Your next application could hit the bull's eye.

Lily Whiteman is the author of the critically acclaimed *How to Land a Top-Paying Federal Job (Amacom)*, the careers columnist of *Federal Times*, and a senior writer at the *United States National Foundation (NSF)*. Her website is IGotTheJob.net. The views expressed here do not necessarily represent the views of NSF.

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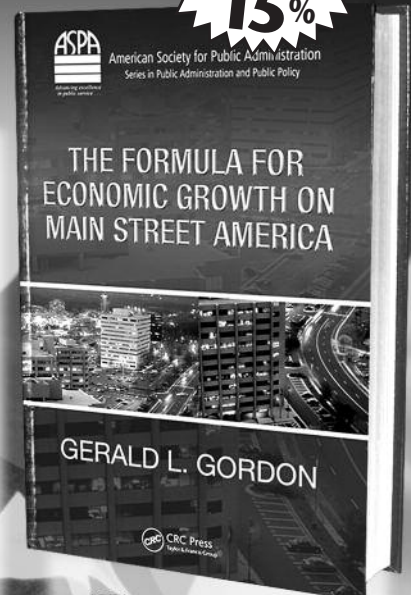
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