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Municipal Elections: How Can DGs Guide Their Teams Through the Changes?

It's almost November, which means that municipal elections are fast approaching. This may lead to some significant changes within the municipal government as municipalities adjust to a new council.

The change in governance can directly impact your objectives, your workflows, and your current projects. It's enough to destabilize your team!

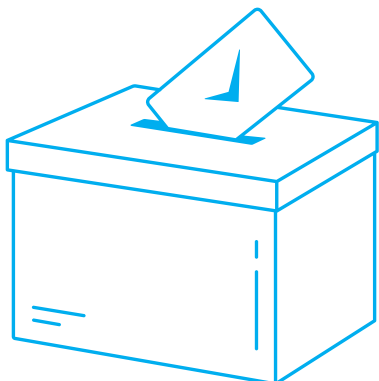
Steering through turbulence

While everyone has a role to play in making sure the municipality runs smoothly, elected officials face greater pressure during election season as they try to implement their priorities and achieve their objectives both before and after election day. This leads them to try to influence the administrative process, which means that directors general need to be extra careful and impartial. It's an uncomfortable situation that often makes officers nervous, as they feel like they're standing on a "trap door."

However, it's important to remember that even if the municipal council changes, elected officials cannot fire officers without just cause, and incompatible visions do not qualify.

Make sure your team is committed before the elections

This election period, we recommend that DGs set up regular team meetings to go over progress on current projects, share important information, and answer questions. By taking a proactive approach—communicating consistently, listening actively, and providing appropriate guidance—you can manage concerns about change and help the team remain cohesive.



Making change by taking action

The first few days after the council changes will mostly be about helping everyone settle in. This will call for open-mindedness and flexibility on both sides as you find yourselves "forced" to work together. From this point forward, you should make sure you are prepared to answer the council's questions. A lack of proactivity can create space for all sorts of speculation, misunderstandings, and misinterpretations.

For this reason, it's important to quickly take stock of the new guidelines and priorities. You need to take action, which means getting out of the "resistance" phase quickly in order to make suggestions and guide the new municipal council. Solid preparation, a good understanding of internal affairs, and an openness to new ideas will all help show that you are a credible and competent DG. It will make you a part of the change, which will reassure your team.

Become an agent of positive change

Strong leadership is essential to keeping morale up during a period of change. Treat the change as an opportunity rather than a threat, and encourage your teams to do the same.

Communicate the municipal council's decisions transparently, clearly explaining the reasoning and effects of each new guideline. It's critical to avoid disparaging the new council and to shield your teams from potential internal struggles. Your employees are counting on you to be a facilitator and positive figure during the transition.

In short, good change management is essential when a new municipal council comes in. It is essential that the newly elected officials and the administration work together to ensure a smooth transition, maintain a climate of trust, and keep teams motivated.