

Knowledge

- Learn as much as possible, continually
 - Know your job better than anybody else knows your job
- Knowledge builds credibility, and credibility earns trust
- Embrace the new; understand that change is inevitable for your knowledge to stay relevant

Independence

- Learn to read and interpret statutes for yourself
- Seek input from those you trust, but form your own opinions
- Be consistent & be flexible? Yes

Key Concept: Consistency

Communication • Keep lines of communication open, and make sure officials know that • The best rule of thumb is the "80/20" rule • Know your audience; think about how the message will be received • Listen to your staff

Effective communication techniques Silence Highly effective, let others volunteer information Open ended questions Not one word answers: opens an array of possibilities Understanding Two way communication Both parties can clear up questions and see points of view

Effective communication techniques (continued)

• Empathy

- Essential to be effective
- Emotions are a natural part of <u>everything</u>
- Enthusiasm
 - Treat others like you would like to be treated
 - · Positive, upbeat, and interested
- Writing with first person content
 - Make it personal
 - Create ownership, presence, authenticity

Effective communication techniques (continued) • Keep a sense of humor • Because life is funny • Smile • Opens people up, eases nervousness • It just shuts down the naysayers: kill 'em with kindness • Honesty • Be the honest broker in the courthouse • You are uniquely positioned for it

Courthouse Politics

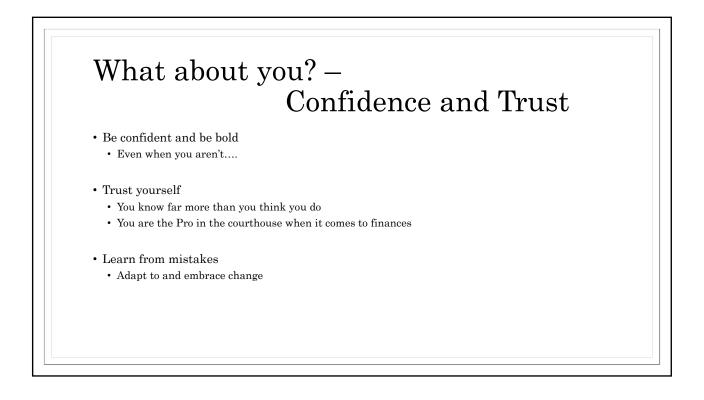
• Authority doesn't equal power; it establishes a system of checks and balances

- Where do you fit?
 - If you must choose sides, do so carefully
 - Remember which hat you are wearing
- Keep party politics private

Courthouse Politics (continued)

- If it's within your ability, help someone who needs it
- Someone has to make a decision; it's going to be you a lot of the time
- Consensus building
- Strategic thinking and planning

What about you? -Don't undermine yourself • You are not perfect, mistakes will be made. So forgive yourself and don't dwell • Avoid martyrdom • Manage stress • Take time out for yourself



The "Art" of being a County Auditor

- Skillful mastery of three main tenets
 Knowledge, Independence, Communication
- Developing interpersonal skills and building relationships
- Critical and strategic thinking, always have a plan, and honestly self evaluate
- Never compromise character

Bonus: By all means, DO these things:

- Keep your district judge(s) informed
- Communicate frequently with other officials
- Know your job better than anyone else
- Use your district and county attorney
- Facilitate information to the media
- Attend all commissioners court meetings
- Use Common Sense

Bonus: But, DON'T:

- Embarrass your district judge(s)
- Argue with any official in a public meeting
- Bad mouth any official, employee, or department at any time or encourage gossip
- Refuse assistance to a reasonable request
- Ignore staff recommendations or ideas
- Compromise your principles or ethics
- Procrastinate

Closing items of interest

• "Someone knew what they were doing" by Tommy Tompkins

- Against all odds: Advice from successful longtime auditors
 - 2016 Institute presentation
 - $\bullet \ Link \ on \ homepage \ \underline{www.texascountyauditors.org}$
- Exceptional professionalism, leadership, self-discipline, ethics, loyalty, friendship, faith, compassion, courage, and service to others
- "In God we trust, all others we audit"