

# CEO REPORT

A weekly report  
from the office  
of the CEO

May 23, 1994



In a meeting last Tuesday, the CEO Advisory Group expressed to me many of the concerns you have about internal communication in the agency.

Three weeks earlier, group members divided themselves into four task forces: one dealing with the merger, chaired by Assistant Treasurer Mike Smith; another with downsizing/layoffs, headed by Division 8 Maintenance Manager John Roberts; a third, headed by Planning/Programming's Bill Lewis, tackled morale problems; and, finally, one devoted to external relations/image, chaired by RCC's Roger White.

Each of the task forces identified issues and developed an action plan. I was impressed with the thoroughness of their work. As you might well imagine, the discussion that followed was so lengthy we had time for just two presentations. We'll be scheduling another meeting soon to hear the others.

#### Merger Group Issues Report

In its report, the Merger sub-group included the following suggestions:

- Issue a new MTA employee badge as a symbol of the new team;
- Increase accessibility of the CEO by having him visit other departments and operating divisions;
- Develop a "who to call" list if an employee's PC, telephone, typewriter, or chair breaks;
- Develop a phone directory by department function; and,
- Consolidate all departmental newsletters into one overall monthly publication.

Other recommendations included:

- Consolidate the merged departments into common facilities;
- Create a new human resources manual with policies and procedures;
- Create a procedure to re-evaluate job classification decisions;
- Direct human resources to conduct all selection processes in a fair, open, and competitive manner; and
- Establish a feeling that everyone is on the same team and working toward the same goals and objectives.

The above five items are all well underway. I think I've spoken to each of the above issues in other *CEO Reports*.

#### Downsizing Group Presents Suggestions

The Downsizing Task Force suggested that we re-evaluate the effectiveness of performance appraisals and more effectively and quickly communicate executive management decisions to employees.

#### Employees Want More Information

It was my day to listen, to weigh what was on the group members' minds. But I noticed that throughout our discussion, there was a perception that employees were not getting all the information, that merger-related updates, such as when we'll have a new pay structure or performance evaluation system, or philosophy, were not

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being addressed by executive staff, or were not being communicated to staff.

I've devoted much energy to opening communication within the agency — sharing my vision for the agency with employees at our "brown bag" lunches, in the weekly *CEO Report*, and with managers at unit retreats. We've set up communication programs that co-exist with many of our projects — an employee hotline for our benefits program and another for our telecommuting program. We've provided detailed information on our proposed benefits package by way of the BIT newsletter.

There is nothing more upsetting to me than messages that never get down the chain of command. I've always believed that an organization runs best when the levels of authority and accountability are pushed down, when managers at the lower levels are given responsibility. It makes them feel better; productivity usually soars, and it frees up the time for executive staff to concentrate on the business of running a transportation system. You may not agree with what's coming down the pike, but I'm counting on you managers to pass along the message!

#### **Have You Designed a Department Plan?**

I asked CEO Advisory Group members how many of their departments had designed a plan with a mission statement and goals. Very few raised their hands. We did that on the executive level several months ago, and managers were asked to do the same for their departments. Doing so is essential for our Total Quality Management program (TQM). Take the opportunity this week to ask your manager to share with the department his/her plan, or what the process will be for developing a plan.

#### **Classification/Compensation Update**

Speaking of empowering managers, I'm looking to them to communicate the new classification/compensation system to their employees.

As you know, this agency retained the consulting firm of William M. Mercer, Inc., to design a new system of job classifications and salary ranges. As their work nears completion, they are putting together a communication plan that will educate employees on the new system. Last week, Mercer staff began discussing with executive officers about how to best communicate to employees about the system.

The Board will see the proposed new classification/compensation system in July. If the Board adopts it in July, the system could be in place by August.

Prior to adoption and within the next two weeks, the Mercer project team will be conducting employee information sessions. The sessions will include two meetings for RCC, Administration and Planning and Programming, and four sessions with Operations. Employee participants will be selected at random by Mercer. Their comments and concerns will be summarized for presentation to executive officers. Look for an upcoming memo detailing times and places for the meetings.

There also will be four sessions on Thursday, May 26, for department managers and supervisors. Manager and employee feedback gathered at the above sessions will determine how the program is communicated to employees.

Brent Cardwell is MTA's administrative services project manager charged with the classification/compensation communications plan. If you have comments, call him at 4-6194.

#### **Budget to Go to Board**

In other matters, our proposed budget will go to the Board this week. It will include proposed fare and service levels for this next fiscal year. Budget workshops will be scheduled. We hope the Board will adopt the budget at its June 29 meeting.

I wish that I could look into the future and see what next year will bring in terms of additional layoffs. But I can't. I don't know if we'll come out of the recession, and I don't know what other financial pressures we will be facing. We'll know more after the budget is adopted. Thank you for your patience.

- Franklin White

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*I welcome your comments and questions in response to **CEO Report**, which is designed to provide employees with direct communication with my office. Please contact either of my Special Assistants, Michael Gonzalez at 244-7476, or Phyllis Tucker at 244-6191. Also, employees can fax comments to 244-6014.*

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#### **A publication of the MTA CEO's Office**

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