HOW TO RUN A GOVERNMENT SO THAT CITIZENS BENEFIT AND TAXPAYERS DON’T GO CRAZY BY MICHAEL BARBER

Stanford University
9 April 2015

@michaelbarber9
#howtorunagovernment
Introduction
“... The book has a moral purpose. More people are likely to lead more fulfilled lives if they live in countries with effective, accountable government.”

How to Run a Government p. xxiv
“Whether your political preference is for a minimalist state or a much larger one, you have an interest in government being effective at what it does.”

*How to Run a Government* p. xxiii
“The quality of the people is clearly much better. But the results are worse.”

Tip O’Neill
“We tried to do better … but everything turned out as usual.”

Viktor Chernomyrdin
Priorities
“Socialism is the language of priorities.”

Aneurin Bevan
A map of delivery

- Controversy without impact
- Transformation
- Status quo
- Improved outcomes

Boldness of reform vs. Quality of execution

Successful delivery
Organization
“There was a political confidence, even swagger about us; but it was born of our popularity with the country, not our fitness to change it.”

Tony Blair
- Report to prime minister and manage relations with leadership
- Manage relationships with departments at the leadership level

- Gather, analyze and provide data for entire delivery unit on all priorities
- 5 data analysts

- Assist in managing leadership-level relationships
- Lead problem solving for assigned priorities
- Provide internal challenge to delivery teams
- Lead teams that work directly with owners of delivery activities in department to provide problem solving support and training to civil servants
- ~5 people per team
How not to think about implementation
How to think about implementation

1. **Decide goals and policy**
2. **Begin implementation and learn**
3. **Refine policy and innovate if necessary**
4. **Continue implementation and learn more**
5. **Refine policy and innovate if necessary**
6. **Keep learning and drive for results**
7. **Decide goals and policy**
Strategy
“Communication could easily break down . . . in sprawling, complicated encounters wreathed in smoke.”

John Sugden, *Nelson: The Sword of Albion*
Five paradigms of system reform

- Trust and altruism
- Hierarchy and targets
- Choice and competition
- Devolution and transparency
- Privatisation

Community engagement and mobilization

Capability, Capacity and Culture
Performance Management
Strategic Direction
Planning
“In preparing for battle, I have always found that plans are useless but planning is indispensable.”

Dwight D. Eisenhower
“It becomes our duty to see things as they really are, divested of all disguise.”

William Hooper 1776
### Exams – detailed traffic lights (2/2)

**March 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>23</strong> Identify areas of improvement in conduct and develop action plan for improvement</td>
<td>PEC</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>Co-developing plan with PEC on further improving exam conduct for next year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>24</strong> Evaluate exam results using new item analysis software and identify areas of improvement in test construction, items, and in student learning outcomes</td>
<td>PEC</td>
<td>30-Sep-15</td>
<td>Analysis to be carried out after completion of data entry</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>25</strong> Prepare report for DSD and PCTB based on analysis of PEC results</td>
<td>PEC</td>
<td>30-Sep-15</td>
<td>To be prepared after analysis of PEC results</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>26</strong> Initiate item development for PEC 2016 exams based on codified process for developing and field testing items.</td>
<td>PEC</td>
<td>15-May-15</td>
<td>Work plan made for item development for 2016 exams</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>27</strong> Align strategy for improving Grade 9/10 exams in line with improvements to PEC exam with HED and exam boards</td>
<td>SMU</td>
<td>31-Jan-15</td>
<td>Pending based on Secretary Higher Education decision</td>
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</table>
Delivery chains

1
Person responsible for delivering the results (Me)

1
Director of the National Literacy Strategy

15
Regional Directors

150
Local authorities, each with someone playing my role at local level

400
Literacy consultants

19,000
Head Teachers, each with a literacy co-ordinator (so another 19,000)

190,000
Teachers teaching literacy hours

3.5 million
Children, lapping it all up
Trajectories

NOW

TARGET

Performance

Time
3. AVAILABILITY AND FUNCTIONING OF FACILITIES

22 districts are on or above trajectory

Dec 2012 – facilities vs. trajectories

<table>
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<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Delta</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>71.0</td>
<td>5.7</td>
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<td>91.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<td>96.6</td>
<td>93.1</td>
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<td>71.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<td>1.6</td>
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<td>Attock</td>
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<tr>
<td>Khushab</td>
<td>89.1</td>
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<td>-0.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amber Red</td>
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<tr>
<td>T.T. Singh</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>98.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Layyah</td>
<td>87.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rahimyar Khan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bahawalnagar</td>
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<td>Gujranwala</td>
<td>88.5</td>
<td>92.3</td>
<td>-3.8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: PMIU
Routines
“People underestimate the importance of diligence as a virtue.”

Atul Gawande
Coolidge and the deficit

“The budget-cutting meetings took place once a week … at 9.30am on Fridays before the session with the full cabinet at eleven.”

Amity Shlaes p.254
“In all 126 spies have fallen into our hands. Of these eighteen gave themselves up voluntarily; twenty-four have been found amenable and are now being used as double-cross agents.”

MI5 monthly note 1943
Eleven characteristics of a good stocktake

- A well-planned agenda with major focus on just one or two items.
- Enough time but not too much, and a clear endpoint.
- The right people in the room, not too many hangers-on and no one who drones on and on.
- Well-chaired, with a clear opening and a strong, action-oriented summing up.
- Good, sharp briefing materials in advance.
- A shared acceptance of any data to be used (so time isn’t wasted arguing about the validity of the data).
- A brief opening presentation. (No more than five minutes. Really.) This is in case someone, perhaps a prime minister, hasn’t read the briefing.
- A collaborative atmosphere that allows – encourages even – divergent views.
- Live theatre, not over-planned ceremony.
- Genuine deliberation.
- Start and finish on time – or even early.
Problem-solving
“No experience of the failure of his policy could shake his belief in its essential excellence.”

Barbara Tuchman on Philip II, King of Spain
The implementation dip
Kto vinovat?

Sto deliat?
How big a crisis is it?

- Clarity of solution: Clear, Unclear
- Problem size: Small, Large

There are four levels:
- Level 1
- Level 2
- Level 3
- Level 4
# Dealing with a crisis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Problem</th>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Symptoms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy design failure</td>
<td>Overenthusiastic small group</td>
<td>• Reaction to media storm&lt;br&gt;• Friendly critics are losing faith&lt;br&gt;• Poor data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You never come out of the implementation dip</td>
<td>• People start telling you that it's not a good idea after all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pol icy implementation failure</td>
<td>Review leadership, system and delivery chain</td>
<td>• A priority review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistical</td>
<td>Bottlenecks&lt;br&gt;• Pile-ups</td>
<td>• Lean process re-engineering&lt;br&gt;• Delivery chain analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureaucratic conflict</td>
<td>Briefings and counter-briefings&lt;br&gt;Confusion at the front line</td>
<td>• Put someone of authority in charge&lt;br&gt;• Remove bureaucratic game players&lt;br&gt;• Remember the mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership failure</td>
<td>Criticism of leadership from enthusiasts&lt;br&gt;Defensiveness from the leadership</td>
<td>• Change of leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An ‘epidemic’</td>
<td>Rapid increase in a problem&lt;br&gt;It's a fashion</td>
<td>• Treat it as an epidemic, not a remorseless rise&lt;br&gt;• Address symptoms and cure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A resistance problem</td>
<td>One or more stakeholders dig in&lt;br&gt;in defence of the status quo</td>
<td>• Stick with the mission/moral high ground&lt;br&gt;• Build public support&lt;br&gt;• Avoid implementation errors&lt;br&gt;• Make concessions on symbols, not substance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Act of God</td>
<td>Obvious – weather, earthquake, etc.</td>
<td>• Take charge&lt;br&gt;• Go to the problem&lt;br&gt;• Over-react rather than under-react&lt;br&gt;• Sympathize</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Do</th>
<th>Don't</th>
<th>Message</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy design failure</td>
<td>Cut your losses&lt;br&gt;Radically redesign if required</td>
<td>Persist in spite of the evidence&lt;br&gt;Take it personally</td>
<td>• We need a rethink&lt;br&gt;• We're learning the lessons and applying them&lt;br&gt;• Yes, there are problems, but we're onto them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy implementation failure</td>
<td>Review leadership, system and delivery chain</td>
<td>Give the benefit of the doubt&lt;br&gt;Abandon the policy</td>
<td>• We're learning the lessons and applying them&lt;br&gt;• Yes, there are problems, but we're onto them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistical</td>
<td>Lean process re-engineering&lt;br&gt;Delivery chain analysis</td>
<td>Abandon the policy&lt;br&gt;Buy off interest groups who are screaming</td>
<td>• Demand is higher than we expected, which is good news&lt;br&gt;• We're ironing out the problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureaucratic conflict</td>
<td>Put someone of authority in charge&lt;br&gt;Remove bureaucratic game players&lt;br&gt;Remember the mission</td>
<td>Assume it will just get better&lt;br&gt;Simply take sides</td>
<td>• The mission is clear; it's taking time for bureaucracy to catch up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership failure</td>
<td>Change of leadership</td>
<td>Complain about the leadership without acting</td>
<td>• The issue needs a fresh pair of eyes&lt;br&gt;Implementation is a new phase and requires new leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An ‘epidemic’</td>
<td>Treat it as an epidemic, not a remorseless rise&lt;br&gt;Address symptoms and cure</td>
<td>Watch it get out of control</td>
<td>• We are taking charge, and the public can help by x, y and z&lt;br&gt;• This is the right thing to do and we will not be deterred&lt;br&gt;• We never said this was going to be easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A resistance problem</td>
<td>Stick with the mission/moral high ground&lt;br&gt;Build public support&lt;br&gt;Avoid implementation errors&lt;br&gt;Make concessions on symbols, not substance</td>
<td>Compromise at the first whiff of grapeshot&lt;br&gt;Believe the amount of noise represents the quality of the argument</td>
<td>• Our first responsibility is to those affected&lt;br&gt;• We can address the immediate challenges&lt;br&gt;• We will come to the lessons we can learn later</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Irreversibility
Establishing a legacy

“My predecessor was an idiot and my successor is a traitor.”

Saying quoted by Julio Frenk, former Minister of Health, Mexico.
“I’m reminded of that Belgian car that broke the world land speed record in 1899 . . . the name of the car was La Jamais Contente.”

Dalton McGuinty
Premier of Ontario 2003-2013
Ever-widening circles of leadership

Guiding coalition

System leaders

Unit leaders

Workforce

Consumer/citizens
“So they go on in a strange paradox, decided only to be undecided, resolved to be irresolute, adamant for drift … so we go on preparing more months and years – precious perhaps vital to the greatness of Britain – for the locusts to eat.”

Winston Churchill
Conclusion
Government by spasm
- Everything matters
- Vague aspiration
- Crisis management
- Guesswork
- Post-hoc evaluation
- Massaged impressions
- Remote and slow
- Present-focused
- Hyperactivity
- Soundbites
- Announcements

Government by routine
- Clear priorities
- Specification of success
- Routine oversight
- Data-informed
- Realtime data
- An honest conversation
- In touch and rapid
- Future-focused
- Persistent drive
- Dialogue
- Change on the ground
“The danger . . . lies not in the least in the concentration of power in competent and accountable hands. It lies in having the power insufficiently concentrated so that no one can be held accountable for its use.”

Theodore Roosevelt 1909
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