

## Getting Things Done In Government

Newton's laws of motion describe the relationship between the forces acting on a body and the motion of that body. Newton's first law is that a body at rest tends to stay at rest. During my four years in state government, I learned a lot about how things happened and, often, failed to happen. I later attended a week-long class at the conservative Leadership Institute in Arlington, Virginia, where I obtained a listing of the 45 "Laws of the Public Policy Process" formulated by its President, Morton C. Blackwell. From his 45, here are the 10 "Laws" that based on my government experience best describe how to get things moving in government. Keep in mind there is a difference between a bureaucrat and a public servant. Public servants are the 90% that have a great work ethic, raise families and are good people. Bureaucrats are the other 10% that make everyone else look bad.

### 1. Never give a bureaucrat a chance to say no.

*It was the number one lesson I learned during my four years in state government? If you gave them a chance, they would almost always take it because it was the easy way out.*

### 2. You can't beat a plan with no plan.

*You've probably heard the old saying that those who fail to plan, plan to fail. Well that is true no where more than in government. Developing a plan to overcome resistance and then executing the plan with alacrity is amazingly effective to defeating a bureaucrat.*

### 3. In moments of crises, the initiative passes to those who are best prepared.

*In trying to get something done in government, you have to be somewhat of a chess player. Being ready for the moves of your opponent allows you to react immediately. At my long-time employer Humana, we called this "having a tight turning circle".*

### 4. Don't make the perfect the enemy of the good.

*I have seen factions, who ought to be natural allies on an issue, fail to agree on everything and as a result fail to accomplish anything.*

### 5. You can't make friends of your enemies by making enemies of your friends.

*It is amazing to see the number of people in politics and government that will abandon their friends in hopes of currying favor with the press or an opponent – only to lose their friends and their integrity.*

**6. Don't rely on being given anything you don't ask for.**

*Things don't just happen. Knowing what is most important to you and possessing the willingness to abandon all else, will increase your effectiveness.*

**7. In politics, nothing moves until it's pushed.**

*Asking is just the beginning. When dealing with bureaucracy, one must expect a fight and be prepared at all times for the fight.*

**8. Don't get mad except on purpose.**

*During my four years in state government, I found that controlled anger can sometimes break through the resistance of even the most recalcitrant civil servant. It creates the possibility that you just might take the problem up their chain of command...**they hate that.***

**9. While ideas and effort are important, only achievement has value.**

*Another way of saying this is "it is not how hard you try, but what you have to show for your effort that matters". During his 1992 run for the Presidency, H. Ross Perot said it this way: "Talk is cheap, but action is dear".*

**10. Pray as if it all depended on God; work as if it all depended on you.**

*Prayer and hard work pays off. In fact, if you aren't prepared to work harder than the other guy – don't even start.*

If one follows these ten rules of the public policy process, you can overcome this corollary to Newton's first law of motion: **You can ensure that a bureaucrat at rest will not stay at rest.**

**If I am elected to by your 19<sup>th</sup> District Metro Councilman, I pledge that these ten "laws" will guide my actions as I represent your interests on the Council.**