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What does it take to be an effective and successful public servant? Norma M. Riccucci analyzes the behaviors, experiences, accomplishments, and political environments of six high-level career servants in the federal government who have made positive contributions to our society in a host of policy domains. Her study not only identifies ingredients of effective performance, but it also calls attention to the "unsung heroes" in government service who seldom receive praise for their efforts and contributions to the public good.

Ever since the emergence of the politics-administration dichotomy, public administrationists and political scientists have grappled with the question of whether career servants participate, or ought to participate, in high-level decision and policy making in government. Although it is, by now, widely established that "execucrats," that is career executives/bureaucrats, are indeed enmeshed in the public policy-making process, very little work has examined what it takes for them to be effective policy makers. (The term execucrat is introduced and used here instead of bureaucrats, which has become extremely pejorative and, hence, counterproductive.)

This article examines the ingredients of effective execucratic performance at the federal level of government. Through case studies, the accomplishments of six execucrats in different policy fields are analyzed to determine the significance of such factors as political and managerial skills for execucratic effectiveness. Based on this analysis, inferences are made about what it takes to be a successful execucrat.

Spelling Execucratic Success

This study closely parallels the insightful and seminal research efforts of Laurence Lynn (1984; 1987), who examined whether President Reagan was effective in using his power of appointment to promote his values and ideologies. In his study, Lynn looked at the accomplishments of five Reagan appointees and, specifically, their ability to change agency behavior. While the present study is interested in the effectiveness of execucrats in shaping and influencing public policy, the shared quest for ingredients of effective bureaucratic performance allows one to draw upon Lynn's framework of study.


**Study Design**

In selecting execrurats for this study, several criteria were relied upon. First, federal execrurats were chosen to participate because the policy focus at this level is broader and has wider applicability. In addition, there was an interest in locating execrurats who were presumed to be successful or have made an important contribution to society. Also, because the study has a current rather than historical focus, the accomplishment for which the execrurats are responsible had to have taken place in roughly the last ten years. Finally, it was also important to select execrurats from across agencies rather than from a single agency.

Given these criteria, a sample of execrurats was selected from several sources, including the list of recipients of the U.S. Presidential Rank Awards, which are made annually by the president to "exceptional" senior career executives. In addition, approximately 600 members of the Council for Excellence in Government (CEG), a nonprofit organization committed to promoting excellence in the federal service, were surveyed and asked to nominate noteworthy execrurats. Mark Abramson, former President of (CEG) and currently president of Leadership Inc., was instrumental in this endeavor. About 30 viable names emerged from this undertaking, and after interviewing each of them, six execrurats were selected for in-depth profiles.

The study is limited to only six execrurats because, in the book version of this study, *Unsung Heroes* (Georgetown University Press), there was a desire to provide as much detail as possible on the stories of each execrurat—what they accomplished and how—and the various factors that contributed to their success. The rich profiles provide a better, more comprehensive picture of what it takes to be a successful execrurat.

Through interviews with these and other execrurats, as well as senators, congresspersons, rank-and-file employees, interest group representatives and other relevant players, and use of any media coverage that may have accompanied the event, the accomplishments of execrurats in their respective fields are analyzed to ascertain the relative significance of the seven factors discussed below on their effectiveness. Inferences are then made about ingredients for effective execrurat performance.

There is a growing reliance on the use of case studies or profiles to study the performance of execrurats as well as political appointees. Doig and Hargrove (1987), for example, in *Leadership and Innovation*, provide sketches of mostly political appointees who have had some major impact on the economy or society through their leadership skills. Cooper and Wright's (1992) *Exemplary Public Administrators* offers 11 "character" studies of both political appointees and execrurats, who are portrayed as exemplars of virtue or morality in the public service (also see, Lewis, 1980).

There are a number of benefits to using case studies. For one thing, they are an extremely effective way to link theory with practice (Holzer, 1989). We know execrurats engage in policy making and often they make important contributions through their participation. Case studies provide us with actual or tangible instances of how and why they participate, as well as some of the factors that can explain their success. Although relying on case studies or profiles of only six execrurats hinders our ability to make sweeping generalizations, they are "the preferred strategy" when one: (a) is exploring questions of 'how' or 'why' execrurats have come to be effective or successful, (b) has little control over the events being studied, and (c) is focusing on contemporary phenomena within real-life contexts (Yin, 1984; 13).

If we begin by identifying an outcome or implemented policy that is perceived, at first glance, as being successful, we can then examine the factors that account for the success. Lynn has identified four factors that can influence effective executive performance. Drawing on these, seven factors that can potentially influence execrurat effectiveness are offered: (1) political skills; (2) management and leadership skills; (3) situational factors; (4) experience; (5) technical expertise; (6) strategy; and (7) personality.

Political skills are an essential ingredient to execrurat success. As myriad studies have shown (e.g., Rosenbloom, 1989; Nachmias and Rosenbloom, 1980; Heclo, 1977; Lipsky, 1980; Meier, 1993; Peters, 1989; Rourke, 1976), execrurats do not make policy in a vacuum. Their ability to maneuver in political environments, building support from relevant coalitions such as Congress, the president, political appointees, interest groups, government agencies, the public, and even the media could spell success or failure in their efforts.

In addition, an effective execrurat must have good management and leadership skills, which, as many have pointed out, include the ability to plan, organize, communicate clearly, and set realistic goals (Lynn, 1984, 1987; Stewart and Garson, 1983; Cayer, 1989; Denhardt, 1993; Perry, 1989; Faerman et al., 1990). Effective leaders must also be fair, understanding, knowledgeable of agency politics and experts in their field. They must also be able to adapt their leadership styles and behaviors to the particular circumstances and situations at hand (Stewart and Garson, 1983).

Situational factors, such as political and structural environments, create challenges and opportunities for execrurats to achieve their goals effectively. For example, the resources available, legal mandates, rules and regulations bearing on execrurats, and the policy domain in which they operate will make it easier or harder for them to effect change.

The effectiveness of execrurats will depend upon their experience in government. As we know, execrurats operate in a politically charged setting, characterized by uncertainty and ambiguity. Experience in this setting is a tremendous asset, and could spell success or failure for execrurats.
The personality of the career official will impinge upon her or his success.

Technical expertise, which stems in part from experience, is also an important ingredient for effective executcratic performance. Max Weber saw this as a critical attribute: "The political master," he writes, "finds himself in a position of the 'dilettante' who stands opposite the 'expert,'...the trained official who stands within the management of administration" (Gerth and Mills, 1946).

The specific strategy employed by executcrats can affect their performance. Strategy refers to exactly what the executcrats did and how—in other words, the goals they set for themselves and the means they employed to accomplish the task. It pertains to the executcrat's plan or mode of action under environmental conditions that are typically marked by turbulence, conflict, and uncertainty.

Finally, the personality of the career official will impinge upon her or his success. Personal attributes and styles would lead us to conclude, for example, that executcrats are cooperative or adversarial, honest or deceitful, fair or unfair, aggressive or passive, reserved or out-going, flexible or rigid, ethical or unethical. Although personal attributes of an executcrat are a critical ingredient for success, they are certainly conditioned by situational factors (Lynn, 1984; Greenstein, 1975; Starling, 1993).

Six Successful Executcrats

The "success stories" of the six executcrats included in this study are summarized in this section.

William Black and the Savings and Loan Debacle

Between 1980 and 1989, the savings and loan (S&L) or thrift industry was pillaged and plundered by fraud, mismanagement, and outright cupidity. The result has been one of the biggest financial crises in the history of this nation, perhaps second only to the Great Depression of the 1930s. It has been estimated that the cost of bailing out failed S&Ls will reach almost $200 billion, and that the American taxpayers will be footing about 80 percent of the bill.

It is difficult to pinpoint the exact beginning of the thrift industry's downfall, but there is some agreement that the spending around the Vietnam War as well as President Johnson's Great Society program spurred inflation, which in turn, spurred massive deregulation of the thrift industry, particularly by President Reagan in the early 1980s. It is perhaps these factors, along with the ensuing greed, corruption, and mismanagement on the part of S&L executives and politicians that ultimately resulted in the collapse of the S&L industry.

One of the persons instrumental in containing and redressing the S&L mess was William Black, who was hired in 1984 as the Litigation Director for the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, the quasi-independent federal agency which, up until 1989, regulated the thrift industry. In fact, it was Black, along with Ed Gray, Reagan's appointee to head the Bank Board in 1983, who was responsible for an important first step in containing the S&L fiasco—reregulating the thrift industry. Black played a critical role because of his expertise in law, accounting, and economics. Specifically, Black was relied upon to write and enforce new rules that would restrict direct investment powers of S&Ls. It was Gray's predecessor, Richard Pratt, who removed in the early 1980s various restrictions over what S&Ls could invest in. Pratt's move enabled S&Ls to invest in risky, fraudulent ventures.

In their efforts to reregulate the thrift industry, Black and Gray faced an incredible amount of resistance, not only from thrift owners but also from the Reagan administration, which was averse to any type of regulatory endeavor. In addition, Charles Keating, Jr., owner of Lincoln S&L in California, cashed in some chips with Congress, and persuaded enough members of the House of Representatives to sign a resolution which asked—but did not mandate—the Bank Board to delay implementation of the new direct investment rule. Gray and Black, however, refused to back off and began enforcing the new rule.

As the Bank Board began closing or taking over failed S&Ls, angry thrift operators turned up the heat on Congress to stop Black and Gray. The House Speaker at the time, Rep. Jim Wright (D-Tex), was particularly sympathetic to these pleas, since Texas S&Ls—where some of the most egregious forms of abuse were being committed—were the target of the Bank Board's crackdown. Wright responded by attempting to block Black's every move. Black, frustrated and left with no other alternative, responded by going to the media and exposing Wright's transgressions to the American people. This turned out to be an effective strategy for Black, because now the ugly secrets about the corruption, fraud, and cover-up of the extent of the S&L crisis were out. An investigation was ultimately led into Wright's improprieties concerning Texas S&Ls. On May 31, 1989, Wright resigned from Congress.

Keating's S&L was next on Black's list. The losses at Lincoln S&L were mounting. But Keating, aware of Black's crackdown on Texas S&Ls and Speaker Wright, did everything he could to keep his failing S&L open. One of Keating's major tactics was to muscle five U.S. senators to intervene on his behalf. The senators, who came to be known as "The Keating Five," had all received generous political contributions from Keating (DeConcini, D-Ariz., $55,000; Riegle, D-Mich., $76,000; McCain, R-Ariz., $112,000; Glenn, D-Ohio, $200,000; and Cranston, D-Calif., $889,000) (Pizzo, Fricker, and Muolo, 1989).

Black's strategy was to blow the whistle on the Keating Five. In fact, Black's courage and willingness to stand up to Keating and the five senators was a watershed in the S&L scandal. A major congressional investigation was launched into the extent of the S&L crisis, including into the role of the Keating Five. Keating was ultimately convicted of criminal racketeering by a
federal court and was sentenced to twelve and a half years in prison, which is running concurrently with a ten-year, state prison sentence that Keating began serving in April 1992. Black's actions also triggered the 1989 reorganization of the federal home loan banking system, which was part of President Bush's bail-out plan.

Black made a lot of enemies as a result of his efforts, but he is also responsible for containing Americans' tab in bailing out the failed S&L industry. His courage, tenacity, and exceptional legal and financial skills contributed to his effectiveness. Ed Gray (1983) summed it up rather well when he said, "Bill Black deserves to be called a patriot in that he is a person who strongly cares about the public's well-being. Real patriotism is when you put the public interest ahead of your own. And this is exactly what Bill did."

Eileen Claussen and the Montreal Protocol

Sun bathing has become quite a popular ritual in many societies. For Americans, it continues to be a favorite pastime. Yet, little did we know that frolicking in the sun would carry such a high price tag. It has been estimated that by the year 2075, there will be over 150 million new cases of skin cancer in the United States, resulting in over 3 million deaths. It is also projected that there will be 18 million additional eye cataract cases in the United States, many resulting in blindness (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1987).

Since the early 1970s, it has become evident that the ozone layer—the protective shield that screens out the sun's deadly ultraviolet rays—is losing its power. One of the biggest threats to the ozone layer are chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), chemicals that, when released into the atmosphere, produce chlorine atoms which destroy ozone.2

In September of 1987 an international agreement was forged in Montreal, Canada, to curb the production of CFCs and other toxic chemicals. The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer was signed by the United States and 22 other nations, industrialized as well as developing (Benedick, 1991; Roan, 1989). One of the persons instrumental in negotiating and implementing this accord and later renegotiating its terms is Eileen Claussen, Director of Atmospheric Programs of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), who has worked her entire career in the federal government.

Working in the international arena to forge agreement among diverse players over CFC reductions has certainly been a challenge to Claussen. Perhaps an even greater challenge was trying to get the Reagan administration to sign off on environmental regulation. In fact, after years of negotiations, and just prior to striking the international accord, the Reagan administration threatened to obstruct the entire agreement. It turned out that the Reagan White House was resistant to the U.S.'s role in regulating CFC production. A few of Reagan's political people devised a plan to nullify effectively the forthcoming international accord.

Interior Secretary Donald Hodel, Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldridge, and White House Science Adviser William Graham advanced a "market-based" approach to curbing ozone depletion. They suggested to Claussen and her staff that people could wear hats and sunglasses and also use suntan lotion to protect themselves from the sun's ultraviolet rays! In an interview with the Wall Street Journal, Hodel went so far to say, "People who don't stand out in the sun—it doesn't affect them" (Taylor, 1987). Hodel, Baldridge, and Graham concluded that these steps, combined with advances in medical treatment, would eliminate the need to regulate CFCs.

Claussen was stunned! Recognizing that this so-called "Rayban Plan" was nothing more than an inane attempt by Reagan officials to eschew government regulation over CFCs, Claussen went on the offensive. An important strategy that she employed was to educate the public and garner its opposition to the administration's plan. The media were viewed as an obvious conduit here, and so the Washington Post was contacted. Over the next several days, political cartoons and editorials lampooning the administration's Rayban Plan appeared in the Post as well as other newspapers. Claussen was also successful in mobilizing support from environmental groups as well as key members of Congress.

Needless to say, the Rayban Plan failed. Ultimately, Claussen, along with her agency head, Lee Thomas, were able to bring the Reagan administration on board for the international accord, which was signed on Sept. 16, 1987.

A few years later, when the international negotiating teams called for greater CFC reduction measures, Claussen was once again rebuffed—this time by President Bush and his advisors. Not only did she have to deal with Bush's foot-dragging about environmental matters, but she also had to contend with the president's Chief of Staff, John Sununu. Mr. Sununu balked at the prospect of providing financial support to help developing countries phase out CFCs. Mr. Sununu, along with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Richard Darman, announced that the United States would not provide funding for international environmental efforts that exceeded pre-existing limits. In effect, the U.S.'s role in this international endeavor would be severely hampered, thereby placing the entire accord in jeopardy.

Claussen would once again have to find a way to prevail over the administration. She found herself in countless meetings with White House officials to persuade them to provide financial backing for this endeavor. Claussen was also successful in encouraging other officials and groups—even industry—to press the Bush administration to provide funding. U.S. Senators, Democrats and Republicans alike, sent separate letters to President Bush, urging him to support the international environmental efforts so that the United States would maintain its leadership position within the world's environmental communi-
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ty Prime Ministers Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain and Brian Mulrooney of Canada also put pressure on the Bush administration. Claussen’s petitioning and lobbying efforts paid off. Sununu ultimately decided that the U.S. government would provide funding to assist developing countries eliminate ozone depleters.

Claussen has proven herself to be a world leader in environmental affairs. Her political, technical, and managerial skills, to name a few, have contributed to her success. As Vice President Gore (1993) observed, “Eileen Claussen provides invaluable experience and understanding of global environmental issues...to our Administration. She is talented, smart, committed, and tireless—a combination that ensures effectiveness and success.”

Ambassador Edward Perkins: Helping to Change South Africa

April 29, 1994, marked a significant milestone for the Republic of South Africa. For the first time in the nation’s history, blacks voted without restrictions in open, universal elections. As the world anticipated, they elected as their new president, Nelson Mandela, the most prominent leader of the anti-apartheid movement, who had served a 27-year prison term for conspiring to overthrow the government of South Africa. It was a remarkable event for South Africa where, for centuries, peoples’ lives had been determined by the color of their skin; where whites have controlled the wealth and political power of the nation, despite the fact that they comprise only 15 percent of the population, and blacks and other nonwhites comprise 85 percent.

It was not until the mid to late 1980s that mounting internal and external pressures on the government gave way to formal, albeit slow, change in South Africa. Although no single person, group, country, or even event could ever be credited for the political, economic, and social changes, each actor has had some part in delivering South Africa to a place where racial oppression and repression of blacks would no longer be tolerated. Obviously, black South Africans have been pivotal in bringing about change to their nation. The persistent and formidable struggle of such prominent leaders as Nelson Mandela, despite his imprisonment, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu have also been critical to reform efforts.

In addition, there were the political dignitaries, entrusted with enforcing their countries’ policies toward South Africa, who played an important role in the struggle to free black South Africa. One such person was Edward J. Perkins, U.S. ambassador to South Africa from 1986 to 1989. Ambassador Perkins—the first African-American ambassador to South Africa—is a career diplomat whose leadership, negotiation, and communication skills helped to promote positive change in South Africa.

It was a particularly challenging job for Perkins, before he even departed for his assignment. Congress, for example, was very concerned that Perkins, as a Reagan appointee, might not enforce the economic sanctions against South Africa, but, instead would adhere to Reagan’s much-criticized “constructive engagement” policy, which called for “friendly,” behind-the-scenes negotiations rather than open criticism and punitive (e.g., economic) sanctions. Ambassador Perkins also faced resistance from African Americans in the United States, who shared the fears of Congress. In addition, black as well as white South Africans were suspicious of Reagan’s motives in appointing an African American to the post. Perhaps Perkins’s chief supporters were high-level political appointees in the State Department, in particular George Shultz, Secretary of State at the time, and Chester Crocker, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. (Indeed, Perkins would later work closely with Shultz and Crocker to help bring about change in South Africa.)

In short, Perkins was under close scrutiny from various camps, but he was unruffled by it. He plowed ahead with several incisive strategies. One was getting to know everybody in South Africa—whites, blacks, and even the leaders of banned black groups—and to develop clear and open lines of communication with them. This was a significant milestone for U.S. foreign policy in that no other U.S. ambassador before him was willing to work with the black community in South Africa. Because of his willingness to reach out and actually listen to them, black South Africans became very receptive to Perkins. Needless to say, this strategy was very unpopular with white South Africans.

In addition, Perkins lent his support to politically charged events in South Africa. One such event was an ecumenical protest by black South African bishops against a newly issued law that barred demonstrations against the government for its practice of mass detentions without a trial. At the time, some 30,000 people—mostly blacks, including an estimated 10,000 children—had been detained without a trial. Perkins was one of only three foreign ambassadors to participate in the protest. This brought worldwide attention to the U.S. ambassador. The New York Times ran an editorial which thanked and praised Perkins for his actions. It stated that “It’s finally possible—how long has it been?—for Americans to take pride in some Reagan administration conduct in South Africa.” It went on to say that Perkins’s participation in the public protest against the new law “offers a new and welcome example for the Reagan administration. There may be hope yet that Pretoria will have to stop looking to Washington for comfort” (New York Times, 1987). The clear implication of the editorial was that the U.S.’s greatest weapon in dismantling apartheid was Ambassador Perkins.

Perkins’s participation in this as well as other demonstrations was galvanizing. In particular, it established his credibility with black South African leaders and the black press. Further, it sent a very clear message to the white-controlled government of South Africa that a window was open for Americans to change.
the oppressive racial system through their ambassador; that Perkins would not, as ambassadors had done before him, "lower his voice" in deference to white leaders, but rather would make it known that change was on the horizon and that he would be an active participant in bringing it about.

Ultimately, it was these and other strategies, along with Perkins's strong leadership and diplomatic skills, that helped chip away at South Africa's racist policies. Many have acknowledged Perkins's exceptional work in South Africa. Secretary Shultz (1993) summed it up in this concise fashion:

Ed was very well qualified for the post, [because] he understood the issues, the problems and the opportunities [in South Africa]. And he understood American foreign policy so he could express that well.... In the end, Ed made a difference in South Africa because he is a first-class professional.

Stephen Marica and the Wedtech Scandal

Most of us probably remember Wedtech, the small manufacturing firm in the South Bronx which bilked the American taxpayers out of millions of dollars through fraud, deceit, bribery, and extortion. It was done through defense contracts, which were secured for Wedtech by corrupt business executives and politicians.

Steve Marica, Assistant Inspector General for the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), was one of the executives whose leadership skills and investigative expertise ultimately led to the indictment and conviction of the numerous business persons and political officials involved in the Wedtech scam. His efforts also brought greater attention to corruption in general in the federal contracting business.

Wedtech’s crimes were many. First, the company’s owners lied on an application for the federal government’s 8(a) “set-aside” program. While John Mariotta, founder, CEO, and Chair of Wedtech, qualified because of his Latino ancestry, he was not the “majority” owner of the business; rather, he and his partner, Fred Neuberger, each owned 50 percent. So, in order to qualify, the co-owners of Wedtech claimed that Mariotta owned two-thirds of the business, while Neuberger only a third.

In addition, Wedtech’s owners forged close dealings with various congresspersons, including Mario Biaggi of the North Bronx and Robert Garcia of the South Bronx, who promised to use, for a certain fee, their influence in Washington on Wedtech’s behalf. Also brought on board was San Francisco attorney, E. Robert Wallach, who happened to be a close friend of Edwin Meese III, then President Reagan’s legal counsel in the White House. For a handsome monthly retainer, Wallach promised to use his influence with Meese to help Wedtech secure contracts under the 8(a) program. Others who used their political clout on behalf of Wedtech included U.S. Senator from New York, Alfonse D’Amato, Lyn Nofziger of Reagan’s White House Office of Public Liaison, and Peter Neglia, the New York regional administrator of the SBA.

Other shady dealings of Wedtech included selling fraudulent stock to the American public, and illegally billing the government for Wedtech’s contract work before it was actually completed. The irony is that, despite its wheeling and dealing, Wedtech was still failing financially precisely because of the large payoffs it was making to its political sponsors.

It was in 1986 that Steve Marica caught on to Wedtech. Marica had read a short Wall Street Journal article reporting that John Mariotta had been fired as CEO and chair of Wedtech’s Board of Directors. Mariotta had become the scapegoat for the company’s financial troubles and, so, he was fired. Marica, knowing that the firm was an 8(a) contractor realized that Wedtech would no longer qualify for the 8(a) program now that Mariotta was not the controlling interest in company. (Marica had no idea that Mariotta’s initial application to the 8(a) program was fraudulent—or, for that matter, that Wedtech was engaged in so many other fraudulent, illegal activities—because SBAs regional administrator, Neglia, had been covering up for Wedtech.)

When Wedtech did not withdraw from the 8(a) program, Marica’s suspicions were raised, and so he launched an investigation into the firm’s activities. No sooner was his investigation underway than Marica discovered that Wedtech was under investigation by a number of other authorities including the DA’s Offices of Manhattan and the Bronx, the FBI, and Rudolph Giuliani, former U.S. Attorney in the Southern District of Manhattan. After learning this, Marica saw a strategic advantage to coordinating his investigation with that of Giuliani’s. Mr. Giuliani, however, saw otherwise. Giuliani and his staff, like many others, believed that the SBA was somehow involved in the Wedtech scandal, since it was receiving such large government contracts under the 8(a) program. In short, Giuliani’s staff felt that high-ranking management officials at Marica’s agency could not be trusted. Marica assured the U.S. Attorney’s office that he and his staff could be trusted. To prove this, Marica agreed to allow only certain members of his staff at the Office of Inspector General (OIG) to have access to Wedtech information. This was a difficult decision for Marica—and an unprecedented one for any manager at the OIG—yet it was a pivotal move because it ultimately demonstrated that his office could successfully participate in major cases as a trusted partner.

Another action that Marica took to improve the SBA’s public image was to develop new training programs for SBA employees. One program was aimed at helping OIG investigators root out fraud and corruption. Marica also began training field managers on the recognition and reporting of internal weaknesses and program vulnerabilities identified by investigations.

In addition, Marica completely revitalized the Investigations Division (ID) of the OIG. He moved the direction of the ID into complex criminal investigations. Heretofore, the ID
Hutchins was successful in dealing with the conflict and avoiding the hurdles set up by political people in the executive branch under Bush and Reagan.

focused primarily on administrative cases, such as abuses to attendance and travel reimbursements.

Marica then took a variety of steps to improve the expertise, image, status and, hence, morale of the OIG’s investigators. For example, Marica completely restructured the requirements and duties of the job. In line with the emphasis on criminal investigations, Marica initiated changes which allowed special agents to execute arrests and to carry firearms under certain conditions.

These and many other efforts helped to create a sense of identity and pride within the OIG and helped change the image of the SBA. In effect, the OIG was better prepared for criminal investigations into firms such as Wedtech. The Wedtech investigation, which eventually became an interjurisdictional effort, was a success, and many have credited Marica’s strong leadership, managerial and investigative skills for the victory.

Dr. Vince Hutchins and Maternal and Child Health

Children are one of this nation’s most valuable resources. They stand for hope, change, and a better tomorrow. Indeed, they are the future of this nation. Yet, for all our talk about how much we love our children, we have done poorly as a nation to invest properly in their health and well-being. Since the mid-1980s, there has been an upward trend in the percentage of babies born prematurely, and the infant mortality rate (death between birth and age 1) is once again on the rise. In fact, the infant mortality rate in the United States is about twice as high as in Japan and Sweden and a third higher than that of countries of comparable economic development (Miller, 1992; Sardell, 1990; Schlesinger and Kronebusch, 1990).

Maternal and child health (MCH) care is an area of public health that seeks to promote the health and well-being of all mothers and children, especially those who are unable to afford medical care and treatment. It is an extremely vital area of our public health system because it touches every American. Dr. Vince Hutchins, Director of the HHS’s MCH Bureau from 1977 until his retirement in 1992, is a public health professional who has devoted his entire life to ensuring that mothers and children receive proper medical care and treatment. Just one of his many successful undertakings has been the establishment of the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition (HMHB), a public-private partnership devoted to promoting the health of mothers and children in this nation.

Reagan’s cutbacks during the 1980s in health and human services, particularly those for mothers and children, created an extremely challenging situation for health care professionals. It was, indeed, a time for creative thinking. In order to avert the financial impact of Reagan’s policies, Dr. Hutchins set about the task of identifying alternative approaches to financing MCH care programs. One of the programs that eventually emerged from Dr. Hutchins’s resourceful and creative strategizing was the HMHB Coalition.

The HMHB Coalition represents the first national public-private effort around MCH care in the United States. Through preventive health education, the coalition’s goal is to reduce infant mortality and low birth weight in the United States. A number of projects, (e.g., around such areas as breastfeeding, adolescent pregnancy, and substance abuse) have been developed to reach mothers—especially those who are disadvantaged—through, for instance, outreach programs and the development of “culturally sensitive” public education materials.

Dr. Hutchins’s primary strategy for establishing the coalition was to mobilize the MCH care constituency. Working with various public, private, and nonprofit groups, as well as members of Congress and a handful of key political appointees, Hutchins pieced together a partnership that would provide services to mothers and children.

The one group that Hutchins could not count on very much in this as well as other endeavors was the political folks. Granted, Hutchins enjoyed a good relationship with those political appointees who demonstrated some commitment to MCH matters (e.g., Madeleine Will of the Education Department’s Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services). But, his relationship with other political appointees under both the Reagan and Bush administrations was marked by stress, mainly because of the regressive attitudes of those administrations toward MCH care issues.

Interestingly, Dr. Hutchins (1992) pointed out that there was a major difference in the relationship between career and political people under Reagan as compared to Bush. He said that “the relationship with political appointees under Bush was much worse than under Reagan. The Bush people were smarter, and so they knew how to stop things when the president wanted them stopped. They knew the system better...and, so they were able to get [Bush’s] dirty work done.”

Notwithstanding, Dr. Hutchins was successful in dealing with the conflict and avoiding the hurdles set up by political people in the executive branch under Bush and Reagan by working closely with members of Congress and MCH constituency groups. He said that overall, the support for his programs “has come more from the [MCH] constituency and the Hill than from the White House or the executive branch, except during the Carter years.”

In addition to his ability to work effectively with Congress and the MCH constituency, a key reason Dr. Hutchins has been successful in influencing MCH care policies is risk taking. Hutchins said that “there is a philosophy that I believe in of not asking for permission to do something, but then being willing to have your hand slapped occasionally...Risk-taking, within certain parameters, of course, is key...Part of the fun of working in government is to see how far you are willing and able to go,
even though we’re rarely rewarded for risk-taking behavior. But you must be willing to put your wrist out and get it slapped. This is crucial if you want to get things to work in the federal government.”

In short, the combination of his risk-taking behavior and his strong leadership and interpersonal skills allowed Dr. Hutchins to achieve major accomplishments around MCH care issues, an important one being the HMHB Coalition. It illustrates Dr. Hutchins’s creativity and talents in maintaining services to mothers and children during a period of dwindling resources. He was a coalition- and consensus-builder and a team leader. He recognized the importance of relying on different players in and out of government and getting them to work together to accomplish the work around MCH care matters.

Dr. Helene Gayle and Worldwide AIDS Prevention

AIDS is an immune deficiency disorder which attacks and renders useless the body’s immune system, thus leaving those affected by it prey to myriad diseases and infections. It is linked to a virus known as human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV. Like many viruses, the origins of HIV are unknown. Moreover, scientists and researchers are still uncertain as to exactly how HIV destroys the human immune system and whether it is alone responsible for AIDS (Shilts, 1988). Because there is still no cure for the disease, AIDS prevention has become a primary focus for public health officials.

One person who has played a critical role in AIDS prevention worldwide is Dr. Helene Gayle, an epidemiologist from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Dr. Gayle can be credited for several accomplishments around AIDS prevention efforts and public policy; two particularly stand out. One is bringing communities and community-based organizations that the U.S. federal government serves vis-à-vis AIDS more into the public policy process. She has been very instrumental in getting disparate groups, including minority, gay, and church communities, involved so that they have a better understanding of what the government does around AIDS. This has also fostered the CDC’s ability to better understand and ultimately serve their needs.

One of the reasons why Dr. Gayle has been so successful at building bridges and fostering communications between the federal government and various communities is her interpersonal relations skills. Rashida Hassan, executive director of a nonprofit organization which provides services to African Americans on sexual health issues explains it in this fashion:

Helene has been very effective in establishing a dialogue with community-based groups in order to keep us involved in the policy process [around AIDS]. And she is so effective because first and foremost, she has a personal commitment to the issue areas which goes beyond her government job…. Also, she was not afraid to make it clear to the federal government that they were not getting just a Dr. Helene Gayle, but they were getting a black female physician who was very dedicated to her work and the black community. We have been pleased to discover that the government has not neutralized her, that she still retains her African heritage and she has not relinquished this identity to the government bureaucracy. This has made a big difference to us and our clients, especially since there are very few women of color in government for us to talk to (Hassan, 1994).

Another important part of building bridges with community-based groups is cultivating good relationships with the other critical players in AIDS policy, particularly political appointees. Dr. James Curran, former associate director of CDC for AIDS, commented that Gayle works effectively with the political folks because she is not politically motivated. She is committed to the public’s health and not any particular philosophy of government. She is just doing her job and doing it very effectively and this is quite laudable (Curran, 1994).

A second area were Dr. Gayle has made a significant contribution to fighting AIDS internationally has been in the development of preventive tools and technologies for women’s use (e.g., viricides and female condoms). When we consider the prevention tools that are currently available, they are all linked to male-controlled behaviors (e.g., the use of condoms). Obviously, as Gayle points out, “we can instruct women to ask their partners to use a condom, but for a variety of reasons this request is not always complied with. Likewise, we could instruct women to stick with one partner, but then if their partner doesn’t abide by this, the woman again has no control over the transmission of HIV. So, developing new technologies more relevant to women is a high priority for us. It gives women some control over preventing the disease.”

Dr. Gayle has demonstrated a strong commitment to working with and helping those afflicted with AIDS. She has proven to be an outstanding coalition builder, communicator, and manager in the field of AIDS policy. Dr. James Curran of the CDC summed up Dr. Gayle’s commitment to the battle against AIDS in this fashion. He said that “the thing that men and women of all races and cultures should know about Helene is that she is an excellent example of a dedicated scientist and public servant. She truly enjoys working for the government and she has made enormous contributions to our efforts to fight AIDS” (Curran, 1994).

Ingredients of Effective Execuracric Performance

Table 1 provides a summary of the execuracrats’ specific accomplishments and the skills and attributes that contributed to their successful performance. As we can see, there are some commonalities between and among the six execuracrats in the various skills and attributes categories. For example, they all demonstrated such management and leadership skills as good planning, organizing, and communication, attributes we would expect any effective manager to possess. On this same dimension, they were all goal-oriented and exhibited good interper-
sonal skills, which, as Stewart and Garson (1983; 63) have said, fit the "ideal profile of an effective leader."

Likewise, there were several personality traits which were common to all six execrurats. For example, each execrurat was very honest, trustworthy, and determined, and each exhibited high moral and ethical standards. As noted earlier, these attributes have been deemed important ingredients for successful execruratic performance.

Not surprisingly, there was some overlap between personality traits and management/leadership skills. That is to say, the execrurats were effective managers and leaders in part because of their personalities. For example, all six of the execrurats were described as being honest and trustworthy and this represents one reason why the execrurats were effective managers and leaders. Similarly, Black, Claussen, and Hutchins were variously described as being risk takers or "gutsy," and this personality trait contributed in part to their managerial effectiveness. This is not to say, of course, that risk taking will always lead to successful managerial performance. Rather, it happened to work for these execrurats in large part because of the particular circumstances and situations they faced.

It would appear that personality traits interact with not just management and leadership skills to explain effective execruratic performance but also with situational factors. A good example can be seen with Dr. Helene Gayle, whose strong identification to her African heritage has proven to be an effective attribute, given the circumstances surrounding her job (i.e., working with various community-based groups that the government serves vis-à-vis AIDS).

The interaction of certain skills and attributes, then, informs us about execruratic success.5 Perhaps the more important point to be made here is that execrurats must truly know and understand the intricacies of the environments they work in and must also have insight into whether their style will fit or clash with their milieu. A number of other attributes of successful execruratic performance are presented in Table 1. For example, the specific strategies that the six execrurats employed also contributed to their success. Claussen's use of the media, Marica's attention to improving the credibility of his agency, and Perkins's decision to go into the black South African townships are examples of particular strategies that these execrurats deliberately employed to attain their goals.

Also making a difference was the execrurats' technical expertise in such areas or fields as medicine (Gayle and Hutchins), public health (Gayle and Hutchins), law (Marica and Black), foreign affairs/international relations (Perkins), environmental science (Claussen), and accounting and economics (Black). So, too, did their experience in government, which not only contributed to their expertise and knowledge of the technical and administrative workings of the federal government but also provided them with a cognitive map of the Washington establishment.

Perhaps the most interesting set of observations emerging from this research revolve, not surprisingly, around political skills. While political skill takes on a host of meanings, they all revolve around the different ways in which execrurats are involved in policy making. For example, some are involved directly via iron triangles or issue networks (Claussen and Hutchins), and others, while working within a highly charged political milieu, affect policy by, for example, interpretation of law (Marica, Black, and Perkins), developing and implementing programs (Gayle, Black, Marica, and Perkins), law enforcement (Marica and Black), and direct advice to the President (Perkins).

Because they are involved in policy making in different ways, they secure their power from different sources or policy players and as a corollary, they must employ or exercise their political skills in different ways. Their success ultimately hinges upon their knowledge of the policy and political workings of their domains. The best illustration of this point revolves around the different types of relationships that the execrurats developed with various policy players, particularly political appointees. For example, as we can see from Table 1, all six execrurats had good relationships with political appointees. In some fashion, they were brought into the execrurats' policy-making circles. However, cultivating good relationships was much more deliberate as well as extensive for some as compared to other execrurats. For instance, Ambassador Edward Perkins had an excellent working relationship with many political appointees in the State Department including the Secretary of State, George Shultz, and the Assistant Secretary of State, Chester Crocker. Support from such persons is critical, because in a policy area such as foreign affairs, where the policies are very sensitive to national security as well as global harmony, congenial, cooperative relationships between execrurats and political appointees are imperative (Warwick, 1975).

On the other hand, the more critical constituents or players in Eileen Claussen's and Dr. Vince Hutchins's policy-making environments were legislators, interest groups, other execrurats, and even the media. This being the case, they had relatively few ties to political appointees, and these ties were not necessarily essential to their successful performance. Dr. Hutchins, for example, had a good working relationship with a few key political appointees in the Reagan and Bush administrations. These were persons who happened to be very committed to promoting MCH care. However, the overall relationship between political appointees and career execrurats, including Hutchins, was very strained, particularly during the Bush administration. Notwithstanding, Hutchins was able to get his job done because, like Claussen, he by-passed or did end runs around the political folks who tried to prevent him from responding to the needs of mothers and children in our society.

In short, the manifestations of effective political skills differ from execrurat to execrurat because they are involved in policy making in different ways and, as such, they must interact with and rely on different policy players in order to effect change to their policy areas. Their success is ultimately contingent upon
their knowledge of the policy and political workings of their domains. As we have seen, these six execracts certainly possess such knowledge. They knew the right people to interact with, were skillful at working with them, and they knew what types of behaviors would or would not work to get the job done in their policy milieu.

**Conclusions**

There are several ingredients to effective execractic performance. A number of factors emerged from this study and certainly additional research would help to inform us better about the complexities of execractic behavior and what it takes to be...
Table 1 continued
The Successful Performance of Six Federal Execracts and the Goals They Accomplished

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Execract, Agency and Accomplishment</th>
<th>Government Experience</th>
<th>Technical Expertise</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Personality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>William Black</td>
<td>College internship with federal government; contract work as lawyer for federal government; relatively new to government employment at time of S&amp;L scandal</td>
<td>Law, economics, &amp; accounting</td>
<td>Regulating S&amp;L industry; heavy reliance on law; directly confronting corrupt politicians &amp; S&amp;L executives; use of media; whistleblowing</td>
<td>Strong sense of ethics, morality &amp; integrity; self-assured; gutsy; aggressive; intense; courageous; determined; strong sense of perseverance; good sense of humor; maverick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eileen Claussen</td>
<td>Entire career in federal government; worked her way up federal government hierarchy</td>
<td>Environmental science</td>
<td>Use of media; coalition building with members of Congress &amp; interest groups (business &amp; public); inclusive of all interests; compromising when necessary; sought incremental change in CFC reduction</td>
<td>Assertive; trustworthy; honest; credible; vociferous; self-assured; determined &amp; firm; dogged; open-minded; self-starter; maverick; good-humored; gutsy; gregarious &amp; lively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Perkins</td>
<td>Entire career in federal government; worked his way up federal government hierarchy</td>
<td>Public administration, public policy &amp; international relations</td>
<td>Keeping Americans informed; listening to all sides; reaching out &amp; establishing dialogue with black South Africans, including banned groups; public support of black South Africans &amp; their efforts to end apartheid (e.g., participation in demonstrations); firm with white government officials; vigorously enforcing economic sanctions in South Africa</td>
<td>Unflappable; self-starter; charismatic; dignified; poised; self-disciplined &amp; self-controlled; determined &amp; resolute; quiet; low-key; resilient; honest; trustworthy; methodical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Marica</td>
<td>Entire career in federal government; worked his way up federal government hierarchy</td>
<td>Law enforcement &amp; criminal investigations</td>
<td>Improving credibility of SBA’s OIG; complete overhaul of OIG; development of training programs for OIG employees; boosting employee morale; personnel “housecleaning”</td>
<td>High morale &amp; ethical character; level headed; straight-forward &amp; honest; strong-willed; firm; determined; self-assured; even tempered; people-oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vince Hutchins</td>
<td>Second half of career in federal government; worked his way up federal government hierarchy; retired from federal service</td>
<td>General medicine, pediatrics, &amp; public health</td>
<td>Develop public-private partnerships; coalition building; maintain open, on-going dialogue with persons &amp; groups in MCH care</td>
<td>Charismatic; humble &amp; unassuming; honest &amp; trustworthy; high sense of integrity &amp; morality; kind, gentle &amp; compassionate; low-key; accommodating &amp; understanding; people-oriented; determined; even-tempered; gutsy; good sense of humor; playfully mischievous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helene Gayle</td>
<td>Relatively new to federal government service; fast-tracking her way up federal government hierarchy</td>
<td>General medicine, pediatrics, &amp; public health</td>
<td>Coalition building; fostering open dialogue with disparate groups &amp; people</td>
<td>Charismatic; understanding &amp; compassionate; open-minded; persistent; determined &amp; firm; good sense of humor; infectious smile; honest &amp; forthcoming; strong sense of cultural identity; people oriented; maverick</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

successful. The execracts do not fit a unique mold, nor is there “one best way” for effecting positive change to any policy area. In any case, this study was never intended to prescribe attributes of successful execractic performance. Instead, it helps us to understand better the intricacies of execractic life and the tools, skills, and strategies execracts employ in their efforts to make our lives a little better.

One can also gather from this study, particularly the larger version of it, that execracts do make positive contributions to our society. Each execract in his or her own way accomplished some major feat which ultimately promoted the public good. Yet, they have received modest praise, if any, for their efforts. Indeed, their names are probably unfamiliar to most. It seems to be the case, as many have said, that execracts are brought
into the public's eye only when someone is to be blamed for something gone wrong (Goodsell, 1985). This study painted a different picture of government workers. It called attention to just a few of the "unsung heroes" who have made important contributions to our society in a host of policy domains. * * *

Notes

This article is based on Riccucci's Unsung Heroes: Federal Executrats Making a Difference, forthcoming from Georgetown University Press.

1. A distinction is sometimes drawn between management and leadership, but for the purposes here, no such distinction is drawn. It should further be noted that effective leaders can exist anywhere in an organization's hierarchy.

2. CFCs have been used for a variety of purposes, including as a foaming agent for styrofoam products, etc., fast food containers at McDonalds and Burger King. CFCs have also been used as the propellant for aerosol sprays. While the EPA was successful in banning virtually all aerosol uses of CFCs in the late 1970s, it has been less than successful in banning non-aerosol uses of CFCs.

3. For example, Perkins vigorously enforced the economic sanctions mandated by the U.S. Congress against South Africa and also made certain that American businesses operating there did not abuse the employment rights of black South Africans.

4. It is important to stress that the skills and attributes cannot be placed on an ordinal scale. That is to say, one skill is not necessarily more important than another, but rather it is the combination of skills and their interaction that contributes to executive success.

5. For a discussion of issue networks, see Levine, Peters, and Thompson (1990) and Heclo (1978).

References


Curran, James, 1994. Personal interview with author (February 8).


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