



# 113<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

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## Tips from Senior CFOs

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Los Angeles, California

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David Schmiedicke  
Finance Director  
City of Madison, WI



# Non-Traditional Career Path


- Liberal arts major – logic, research, communication, presentation skills.
- Tested for a budget analyst job -- did better than those with Master's in Public Administration.
- Worked way up through budget/policy/finance track.
- “We didn’t expect much from you given your limited experience as a manager, but you did extremely well.”

# Last 25 Years


- Budget and Policy Team Leader
- State Building Program Administrator
- State Budget Director / Deputy – 10 years, three governors, two recessions. “You do the work any way, so we might as well make you the Budget Director.”
- Finance Director – City of Madison – Had to navigate all the limitations on local government I had helped devise as State Budget Director!



# Tips for Chief Financial Officers



“Everything can be fixed” –  
President and CEO of major shoe  
company (also my brother-in-law).



“I’m fiscally conservative and middle-of-the-road on everything else” – answer to Governor’s question – “What [political party] are you?”




Tolerance for ambiguity.

Listen to priorities of chief executive and staff.

Speak truth to power.


Candor.






Hire good staff (or work with those you inherit) and accept where they take you.


Easy to hire the “low-stress” candidate, but get better results with the ideas person that has the drive.



Support and trust your staff – a work in progress. Very much came of age in the “sink or swim” mentality; today’s workforce expects more support, training, professional development, etc.



Accept who you are – we are not all the same in approach, but it's the results that matter.



Jenni L. Logan  
Treasurer/CFO  
Lakota Local School District, OH

# Career Path






# Tips for Chief Financial Officers



“Don’t bite the hand that feeds you”

Ralph “Sonny” Brewster – County Commissioner  
1988



It's hard to follow a legend,  
especially if that legend is your Mother





Take advantage of being  
under-estimated



Stay as long as you feel you are  
making a difference

# Other Tips

- Be self-aware
  - Surround yourself with great people who compliment areas which are not your strengths
- Develop thick skin – don't take it personal
- Set boundaries – say no
- Tolerance
- Network, relationship building