

Feature Story



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Leadership Competencies and Needs of County Extension Directors in Florida

Situation

At the county level, each office has a County Extension Director (CED). According to recent University of Florida CED position announcements (IFAS Human Resources), the responsibilities of the county Extension director have included overall leadership and management for the office administrative affairs, both for the county and University of Florida; leadership for county Extension faculty in the development and implementation of educational programs; responsibility for development and implementation of educational programs in their respective fields; preparation of reports to the county commission, or in larger counties, a county manager or division director; and development and maintenance of the county budget for the Cooperative Extension

office (IFAS-Human Resources). In addition, the CED has been a vital link between field staff and upper levels of administration (Radhakrishna, Yoder, and Baggot, 1994). Therefore, the leadership role of CEDs has become an increasingly complex responsibility.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify the leadership competencies needed by Florida County Extension Directors.

The following objectives were developed to guide this study.

1. To identify the leadership competencies needed by Florida CEDs as determined by county administrators.
2. To determine the level of importance of CED leadership competencies as perceived by CEDs and county administrators, CED self-perceptions of leadership competency importance, knowledge and proficiency, and county administrators' perceptions of leadership competency importance, knowledge and proficiency levels needed by CEDs.
3. To determine the relative need for additional training for each CED leadership competency as perceived by CEDs and county administrators.

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Methods

This research included focus groups, interviews, and the survey instrument. Extension District Directors and County Extension Directors (CEDs) participated in 2 focus groups to develop the leadership competencies they felt were needed by CEDs. Four interviews were conducted with County Administrators from both rural and urban counties. The same interview guide and questions were used to gather data from focus groups and interviews. Both focus groups and interviews were transcribed and content analysis was used to develop the leadership competency list.

A questionnaire was sent to all Florida County Extension Directors and Florida County Administrators in January 2014. The survey instrument was used to explain and predict the perceived level of importance, level of knowledge, and level of ability of the forty leadership competencies. Independent variables determined included gender, ethnicity, age, education, years in position, years of previous leadership experience, type of county, percentage of administrative assignment, primary program area, years in Extension before becoming a CED, number of faculty supervising, number of full-time employees, and number of program assistants.

A likert-type (1-5) scaled was used, and a weighted discrepancy score was calculated for each of the forty competencies. Data was analyzed using SPSS 2.0 for Windows.

Findings

The following leadership competencies were identified based on focus groups and interviews. (*Forty identified competencies listed here. See author Cynthia Sanders for details*)

Level of Importance for CEDs:

1. Fair, honest, and trustworthy
2. Leadership by example
3. Having a positive attitude

Level of Knowledge for CEDs:

1. Dependability
2. Fair, honest, and trustworthy
3. Professionalism

Level of Ability for CEDs:

1. Fair, honest, and trustworthy
2. Dependability
3. Leadership by Example

Level of Importance for County Administrators:

1. Having a positive attitude
2. Fair, honest, and trustworthy
3. Communication in oral, written form

Level of Knowledge for County Administrators:

1. Listening
2. Relationship Building
3. Professionalism

Level of Ability for County Administrators:

1. Working w/key leaders & clientele
2. Decision making
3. Dependability

Based on the needs assessment model for all forty competencies, the CEDs felt a need for training in conflict resolution, time management, and saying no when warranted. The county administrators felt a need for future training for CEDs in having a positive attitude, communication both oral and written, and time management.

Recommendations

- Leadership professional development programs for CEDs should be developed.
- Review existing in-service trainings and provide support for CEDs.
- The % time actually expended and the % time formally assigned to CED role needs to be evaluated.
- Evaluate hiring of CEDs without Extension or leadership experience.
- Professional leadership training should be provided to CEDs in the following areas: conflict resolution, having a positive attitude, time management, listening, saying no when warranted, and creating a supportive work environment.

References

- University of Florida/IFAS Human Resources. (2013). Retrieved June 26, 2013, from <http://ded.ifas.ufl.edu>.
- Radhakrishna, R., Yoder, E., Baggett, C. (1994). Leadership Effectiveness of County Extension Directors. *Journal of Extension*, 32(2). Available at: <http://www.joe.org/joe/1994august/rb2.php>

From the District Director



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Boring, Cramped and Ineffective: Death by PowerPoint?

We are teachers and we deliver a lot of power point presentations in all programmatic areas. When used properly, these presentations can be effective and engaging teaching tools. As an added bonus, these presentations can be listed in the creative works section of the Promotion and Permanent Status packet.

When used improperly (as comically presented by Don McMillan in “Life after death by PowerPoint” in just 9:28 minutes http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpVE_i_6OOospMhcbRDrKbw), power point presentations can become an educational disaster. While you watch the video (and take a good laugh at yourself!), note and reflect on the important concepts Don highlights: the relative importance of the presenter to that of the slide show itself; the amount of text presented in each slide; the use of fonts and font effects – and the subliminal messages these choices send to the audience; the need for compromise between animation and distraction; and presentation of useless or confusing data. Have you attended presentations that look like what Don is illustrating? Hmmmm..... I wonder how many of these “funny things” do you do – and how many do I do myself? Is it time to evaluate how each of us uses and abuses power

point – and in doing such, confuses our audiences?

Somewhere in our minds, we have a basic presentation check list (Table 1). We all have learned the do’s and do not’s at some point (Table 2). Time for a refresher? How can we improve our face to face delivery method? Self-checking is always an option. How about a peer review of teaching by getting (or giving) a fair, honest, professional opinion of one-another’s teaching strengths and shortcomings? If you think this is a good idea (or a very bad one for that matter), feel free to share your thoughts.

Table 1. Presentation checklist for the novice and the experienced speaker.

My presentation’s...	What to check
Significance	Why does it matter?
	How do I grab their attention?
	What do I want them to do?
Structure	Convincing
	Memorable
	Scalable
Simplicity	Limit to 1 point per slide
	Use images whenever possible
	Use few matching colors
	Limit the number of fonts
Rehearsal	Be loud and clear!
	Engage the audience and seek feedback
	Check the room and equipment

Adapted from Alexei Kaptarev (<http://www.slideshare.net/thecroaker/death-by-powerpoint>)

Table 2. A quick do’s and do not’s list of multi-media presentation.

Do (as often as possible)	Don’t (at least, try)
Employ pleasant color schemes	Show multiple pictures on the same slide
Use large fonts	Stay still: if you sleep, they sleep!
When using bullets, use phrases that start with a verb.	Sound boring. If you would rather be elsewhere, so does your audience!
You are the show; not the screen. Use an engaging tone of voice, move around the room.	Use paragraphs and small fonts
Ask provoking questions.	If you feel the need to say “I know you can’t read this, but....” then don’t show this slide.
Rehearse and be prepared	Use distracting special effects.
Connect with the audience	Cram too may material or concepts

Death by power point is a danger. Yet, a greater danger exists to us teachers and behavior changers: the danger of using a single teaching strategy and approach with clients who have different thinking and learning styles. It should not be this way. As we seek a behavior change in our target audiences, we need to think – or re-think—the role of power point presentations (by the way, the correct term is multi-media presentations). We have other teaching tools at our disposal: printed publications, newsletters, videos, hands-on activities, games, one-on-one visits, panels, blogs, chatrooms, and social media – just to name a few. The savvy educator knows how to select the teaching method that best fits the type

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Boring, Cramped and Ineffective: Death by PowerPoint?...continued from previous page

of knowledge and/or concepts he/she wishes to teach. Efficient teaching and behavior change need to be based on a yearly plan of interaction with our clients; a plan that includes a combination of teaching methods – not just one.

Program evaluation is a key component of assessing the outcome and impacts of our programs. This was a major theme at the recent EPAF meeting and we are making progress on program evaluation. One point remains unclear at times:

what is a program? What, or when, do I have to “evaluate”? The temptation (and common practice) is to administer pre-training/post training tests to measure knowledge gain after every face-to-face meeting. Hmmmm.... I now wonder: what is the quality of the evaluation data collected after a “killing” power point presentation? Is it helpful? Is it even relevant? What knowledge gain is reasonable to expect after a single face-to-face meeting? Maybe knowledge gain and behavior change occur slowly and

throughout the year – not just after a single teaching event. Yes, it is time to have a comprehensive program evaluation plan.

Quotes:

“Bullet points means firing guns at annoying presenters” ~ Don McMillan

“People read faster than you speak. This means you are useless” ~ Alexei Kapterev

District Life

4-H University 2014: Duval 4-H'ers Excelled

By **Andy Toelle** and **Stacie Amolsch**
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4-H University (4HU) is a week-long educational/leadership event that takes place on the University of Florida campus. 4-H'ers from around the state come together in Gainesville to participate in the Florida 4-H State Council, educational tracks, community service projects, and competitive events.

The 2014 4HU was especially exciting for 4-H'ers from Duval County. Two were elected to state office: Scot



Scot Read, left, accepts the presidential gavel from past president Andrew Horvath. Photo by Natasha Parks

Read as President and Alana Stagner as Secretary. Both will spend the next year leading Florida 4-H as youth and adults team up to organize, implement, and evaluate educational programs for youth. Courtney Toelle won 1st place in the Clothing and Textiles demonstration category. Courtney discussed the challenges and successes of constructing a costume she created based on a video game character. She patterned, sewed, and crafted this costume, and modeled it for 4-H Fashion Revue. Eliza Lee gave a strong performance of the pop hit



Courtney Toelle (left) poses, in costume, with her 1st place award. Eliza Lee (right) performs “Royals”. Photos by Natasha Parks

“Royals”, singing and playing the ukulele in the extremely competitive ‘Share the Fun’ event. The horticulture judging team competed in the State Horticulture ID contest and did a fine job.

National award trips were also awarded at 4HU. 4-H'ers competed for an award trip to National Congress and/or a working leadership trip to National Conference. 4-H'ers must complete a grueling application process and make it through an elimination screening before they proceed to the interview round. Interviews are conducted at 4HU and a composite score is then compiled from the two components for a final overall school. Four Duval 4-H'ers applied, and three of them were interviewed. In the end, two Duval County youth won trips to both National 4-H Congress and to National 4-H Conference.

Finally, graduating seniors were able to say their final goodbyes to 4-H family and friends. Three Duval youth placed their thoughts on a video inspiring others to strive to do their best and to take a risk. It will be worth it. All of this has been preserved to be relived on the state 4-H website.

Success Stories

Citrus Extension Assists Residents Navigating Affordable Care Act

By **Jessica Altum**
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With the passing of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) came much confusion and frustration concerning health insurance. To help Citrus County residents better understand ACA's health insurance coverage, tax premium subsidies, penalties and exemptions, the FCS agent became a Certified Application Counselor.

Citrus County Extension hosted two events entitled Understanding the Healthcare Marketplace, designed to help consumers better understand the new healthcare law and guide consumers through the application for health coverage from the marketplace. The first



event was an open house for all county residents, with assistance from FYCS in Gainesville. SHINE, Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders, partnered with Extension to assist consumers who were eligible for Medicare. A second event was held for the spouses and family members of county employees to learn about their coverage options. In addition, one-on-one meetings were offered to consumers who were unable to attend either event. Health insurance helps consumers gain access to health

care, preventing problems or finding problems early. Access to health insurance can also help prevent personal bankruptcy. Many residents gained a better understand of available options, and enrolled for coverage.

One participant, a single young male with no coverage needed an affordable plan. He had applied for coverage through the marketplace but did not know how to apply for the subsidies. His original premium was \$260 per month. After speaking with Extension faculty, his premium was lowered to \$61 per month. He also obtained dental coverage for an additional \$11 per month. Several other participants who had no health insurance for an extended period of time were also able to enroll in marketplace health insurance plans with reasonable monthly premiums.
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Featured County Extension Office

Baker County

By **Larry Figart**
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Baker County is located in Northeast Florida on the Georgia/Florida line just west of Jacksonville. Baker County was founded in 1861 and is named for James McNair Baker, a judge and Confederate Senator.

While most of Baker County's 27,000 residents live in rural areas, many live in the cities and towns of Macclenny (county seat), Glen St. Mary, Sanderson, Taylor, Olustee, Baxter, Cuyler, Margaretta, and Manning. Forestry and outdoor recreation have long been major

industries in Baker County. Osceola National Forest and John Bethea State Forest are located in the western part of the county and Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge is in the northern part of the county. Olustee was the site of Florida's largest Civil War battle. A re-enactment of the battle every Presidents Day weekend draws thousands of re-enactors from across the U.S.

Baker County Extension has three Extension agents on staff. Mike Davis is the County Extension Director and Agriculture Agent. Alicia Lamborn is the

Horticulture Agent. Shaina Bennett is the 4-H Youth Development Agent. Baker County Extension Agents serve their clientele by performing over 4,100 field and office consultations and hosting over 3,100 participants in group learning events every year. For more information about Baker County Extension go to <http://baker.ifas.ufl.edu>.



Information Technologies



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Password Security – What You Should Be Doing

There have been many recent news stories about hackers obtaining usernames, passwords and even financial information. As a part of the UF/IFAS System, Extension Agents are required to follow certain policies when it comes to computers, mobile devices, storage devices and passwords. We are required to change our Gatorlink password at least every year, if not more frequently. But these are not the only passwords that we use. Keep in mind a quote from Clifford Stoll, who pursued hackers back in the 1980s: “Treat your password like your toothbrush. Don’t let anybody else use it, and get a new one every six months”. The following tips will help to keep your account information; email, financial or otherwise, more secure.

- Passwords should be at least eight (8) characters in length. Increases in character length of the password will dramatically increase its complexity and decrease its vulnerability.

- Passwords should contain at least one character for each of the following groups:
 - Lower case letters
 - Upper case letters
 - Numerals
 - Special characters
- Use a password manager. These are programs and applications that allow you to store passwords in a file for retrieval. The stored passwords are secured by a master password.
- Avoid weak passwords that contain the following:
 - A portion of your username or the entire username
 - Names of family members, friends or pets
 - Birth dates (yourself or family members)
 - Phone number
 - License plate number
 - Address
 - * Much of this information can be gleaned from online sites and social media so it is easy to obtain.
 - Do not use sequences of numbers or letters (A,B,C or 1,2,3)
 - Do not use real words from any language
 - Do not replace common letters with numbers such as ‘zero’ for the letter ‘o’ or the number ‘1’ for the letters ‘l’ or lower case ‘L’

- Additional password tips include:
 - Change your password every six months
 - Do not write down your password(s)
 - Do not share your password(s) with others
 - Do not use the same password for two different sites
 - Don’t enter your password when someone can look over your shoulder to see the keys
 - Never send passwords to any account through email
 - As tempting as it is, do not use the ‘remember password’ option in browsers, mobile or otherwise

All of this sounds complex, and it is meant to be. Complex passwords can be the bane of a hacker’s existence. For additional information on UF/IFAS security policies you can visit the UF IT site at <http://www.it.ufl.edu> or contact the District Information Technology Expert, Mr. Ben Beach.

Quotes:

“Some people can hack it, others can’t.”
~ Author Unknown

“Which password is the worst one? The one you can’t remember.”
~ Author Unknown

What’s Working?

by **Amy Morie**
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Who: Jackie Schrader, 4-H/Family and Consumer Science Agent

What: YUM “+” curriculum (Youth Understanding MyPlate)

Where: Ridgeview High School, Middleburg, FL

When: Fridays during schools year; first Fridays are train the trainer

What makes this program delivery unique?

I work with The Early Childhood Development Program for dual-enrolled

high school students in an on-site day-care setting. Monthly meetings are used as train-the-trainer sessions. We review topics such as proper hand-washing, the food groups and preparing healthy snacks. The students implement the lessons with extra activities each Friday

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On-line Professional **Self-Development**



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“Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are?”

http://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are?language=en

Many of us realize that our minds can change our bodies; we make the decision to exercise, eat right, manage stress or not. What if our bodies can change our minds? I have read that forcing a smile can actually improve your mood and ease stress.

Amy Cuddy’s TED talk on body language and power posing describes how we hold ourselves may actually impact the outcomes of situations and our overall success. The information shared will provide you with insight to your personal body language and tools to feeling empowered which you can use and share. The talk is about 20 minutes long and will give you new insight to nonverbal communication.

Teaching Tips



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Video Training Modules for Agents and Clients

Agents, Master Gardeners and clients may want to make use of this series of video modules posted on the UF/IFAS Small Farms website. They are available on the Virtual Field Day site at <http://vfd.ifas.ufl.edu>

For every topic listed below there is at least one video module with links to a treasure trove of supporting EDIS publications. The cache of material can be used as a training guide for agents or as a teaching tool that can be streamed as a portion of a class.

The body of work would make a great template for how to organize and market your own web based teaching modules. Or, if you have a video clip of a topic that should be included in the series, contact

Bob Hochmuth to see if it can be posted on the site. Go to the Virtual Field Day website <http://vfd.ifas.ufl.edu> to access these topics:

Alternative Enterprises

Blueberries, Chestnuts, Muscadine Grapes, Peaches, Persimmons, Goats & Sheep, Woody and Other Unusual Plants for Florist Trade.

Greenhouse Pest Exclusion

Greenhouse Insect Intro, Sanitation, Air Lock Entrance, Resistant Cultivars, Insect Screening, Reflective Metalized Mulch, Pest Scouting.

Hydroponic Greenhouse Production

(Many subtopics available) Soilless Systems & Containers, Soilless Media Choices, Starting the Crop, Nutrient Solution Delivery, Pest Management, Greenhouse Disease Concerns, Harvest and Marketing

Organic Vegetable Production

(Many subtopics available) Fertility & Media Sources for Organic Vegetables, Pest Management, Marketing and Economics

Pasture Weeds

Using SolviNix™ for Tropical Soda Apple Control, Tropical Soda Apple Beetle, Climbing Fern, Smutgrass, Stargrass, Weed Identification.

Pastured Poultry

Introduction, Starting the Birds, Broilers, Layers.

Poinsettias

Poinsettia Field Day, New Poinsettia Variety Trials, Poinsettia Sale.

Stone Fruit

Introduction, Dormant Season Insects, Insect Traps, Insects at Harvest, Stonefruit Harvest, Stonefruit Pruning, Stonefruit Disease.

Turf Grass

Athletic Fields, Fertilization Nutrient Leaching, Nematodes, Smart Water Application Technology, Turfgrass Cultivars, Turf and the Environment: Can They Co-Exist?, Water Use and Conservation in Florida Turfgrass, other topics.

What's Working?...continued from page 6

with preschoolers, 3-5 years of age. We are adding lessons and activities to the YUM curriculum to expand it for the entire school year.

Who: Amy Morie, Clay County, Environmental Horticulture Agent

What: Master Gardener Evening and Weekend Training/Public Education

Where: Clay County Extension

When: Thursdays evenings & Saturdays

What makes this program delivery unique?

Public demand for educational opportunities often exceeds the number of hours an agent can fulfill during the work week. With many Clay County Master Gardeners available for volunteering during the week and less for evening

and weekend events, meeting these 'after hours' needs may be helped by recruiting and training working volunteers looking for volunteers opportunities in their off time. Currently in the second year of a 3 year pilot, this program serves the dual roles of volunteer training and public education while creating a volunteer team capable of extending opportunities to times of peak demand. If successful, this program can serve as a model for counties with similar needs and populations.

Who: Nichelle Demorest, Columbia County, Environmental Horticulture

What: "What's Bugging Your Plants?" Homeowner Education

Where: Columbia County Extension

What makes this program delivery unique?

The goal was to teach participants about the many advantages of scouting; environmental, time savings, monetary and plant health. A multimedia presentation was used to show various insect pests on common host plants and typical signs of feeding damage.

During the second part of the workshop, a demonstration was given on how to use a hand lens to observe identifying characteristics of specific insects. Participants were each given a lens to look at the two dozen freshly collected insect samples and to practice their new observation skills.

Each participant took home a color brochure picturing 'good bugs', common insect pests, and other IPM practices they will use to help control common pests.

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