Erik Nikolaus Martin
Senior Policy Advisor, Day One Project
Dec 28, 2020
How the Federal Government is just like a Startup
This is your mission statement:

- Form a more perfect union
- Establish justice
- Insure domestic tranquility
- Provide for the common defense
- Promote the general welfare
- Secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves
- And our posterity
This is your org chart:

Note:

- You have ~4.2 million employees (~2/3 civilian, ~1/3 military).
- You get to appoint 0.1% of them.
- The rest can’t be fired.
This is your board:

Note:

• 435 House members
• 100 Senators
• They represent 323 million shareholders.
• Roughly half of them want to fire you at all times.
This is your spending budget:

Note:

• >60% of your $4 trillion budget is “mandatory” (you don’t control it)

• The rest is “discretionary” (you don’t control it, either; Congress does)
These are your KPIs:

Note:

- Your control over these numbers is mostly an illusion.
You can do whatever you want as long as it’s not explicitly illegal.

You can’t do anything unless it’s explicitly legal.
This is your HQ:
The Executive Office of the President (EOP)

POTUS

Chief of Staff

Council of Economic Advisers
Council on Environmental Quality
National Security Council
Office of Administration
Office of Management and Budget
Office of National Drug Control Policy
Office of Science and Technology Policy
Office of the United States Trade Representative
Office of the Vice President

White House Office

Domestic Policy Council
National Economic Council
Office of the First Lady
White House Counsel

Cabinet Affairs
Communications
Press Secretary
Research
Speechwriting
Digital Strategy
Legislative Affairs
Presidential Personnel
Public Engagement
Intergovernmental Affairs
Scheduling and Advance
Staff Secretary
Presidential Correspondence
Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP)

U.S. Federal Government:
- Budget: ~$4.45 trillion
- Staff: ~4.2 million people (~2.7 million civilians)

Executive Office of the President:
- Budget: ~$375 million
- Staff: ~2,000 people

Office of Science and Technology Policy:
- Budget: ~$6 million
- Staff: ~40-150 people
What tools did we have?

- Preparation of President’s Budget
- Work with Congress on Legislation
- Executive Action
- President’s Ability to Convene
- Recruiting Great People
“movement in a direction for a reason”

How to create change in policy

“People develop an implicit or explicit sense for what in their environment is fixed, and what they view as potentially changeable. Many elements of the status quo are the result of human action or inaction, and therefore, are potentially changeable, as opposed to the laws of physics.”

— Tom Kalil
Policy Toolkit: Make Movement Happen
Content credit: Cristin Dorgelo

- Legislation—agency authorities
- Executive action—Executive Orders, Presidential Memorandums, Presidential Policy Directives, OMB guidance
- Regulation, rulemaking, standards, codes
- Treaties
- Creation, elimination, or restructuring of organizations
- Adding a specific idea or action to another policy vehicle (“hitching a car to a moving train”)
- Reversals
Policy Toolkit: Incentivize Movement

- Appropriations and budget proposals
- Research, development, demonstration, and deployment investments
- Requests for proposals, solicitations, discretionary funds, contracting tools
- Competitive, block, or formula grants
- Entitlement programs
- Tax rates, simplification, incentives
- Market shaping, incentive prizes, milestone payments, Advance Market Commitments, and other pay-for-performance mechanisms
- Procurement and acquisition; government as customer
- Deregulation, regulatory reform, “sandboxes,” experimental sites/authority
- Penalties or increased enforcement
- Talent pipeline, “tours of duty,” Federal personnel processes and authorities (including job descriptions, roles, hiring processes)
- Cross-agency goals and performance-management processes
- Benchmarks
Policy Toolkit: **Call for Movement**

- Requests for information and other public-input mechanisms
- Dear Colleague Letters
- Reports, strategies, agendas, action plans, “90-day reviews”
- Coalition building
- Convening
- Calls to action and spotlight on cross-sector commitments
- National goal setting, including Grand Challenges and “moonshots”
- Speeches, bully pulpit
Policy Toolkit: **Support and Coordinate Movement**

- Leveraging the Cabinet
- Principals/deputies processes and other interagency collaboration and coordination
- Interagency and external committees (advisory committees, councils, task forces, commissions), and their charters and work products
- Bilateral and multilateral international collaboration and dialogues
- Evidence base, learning agendas, behavioral insights
- “Government as Platform for Innovation”—opening up Federal resources for citizen-driven innovation and entrepreneurship (data, facilities, tools, algorithms, IP, personnel, etc.)
- Communities of practice, communities of interest
Lessons Learned

TEAM KALLIL

- Schedule is your friend
- Steer, not row
- Have an opinion
- Think of the end at the beginning
- If you had 15 min to pitch today, what's on your list, and are you working on it?
- Entrepreneur = someone not limited by the resources directly under control
- If you want people to do something, make it easy
- Strong relationships are built on trust, mutual understanding and reciprocity
- People never follow up
- Find your does
- Talk to who owns the pipes
- Better to light a single candle than one out in the darkness
- You can get more done if you don't care who gets the credit
- Don't be a bottleneck
- Water on stone
- Just add talent

HOURS YOU CONTRIBUTE

CELEBRATION CATEGORIZATION
- Good at Raising $1
- Not big on Thank You's
- Network
- Good Facilitator
- Bad wind of change

COOL PER EVERY VISIBILITY

WH TRIBES WORKS & HACKS
- Write it down, make it happen

CLEANER THAN THE TRUTH

BRING ME A ROCK, NOT THAT ROCK!
POLICY ENTREPRENEURSHIP AT THE WHITE HOUSE
GETTING THINGS DONE IN LARGE ORGANIZATIONS

THOMAS KALIL

Policy entrepreneurs “are individuals who through their creativity, strategy, networking, and persuasive argumentation are able to bring new policy ideas into the open and promote policy change.”

—Michael Mintrom