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## More City Hall turnover likely as Bing seeks team that fits

By [Nancy Kaffer](#)

Detroit Police Chief Warren Evans' resignation was just the latest in a string of firings from Detroit Mayor Dave Bing's executive team.

They include Chief Administrative Officer Charlie Beckham; Sue Carnell, group executive in charge of operations; and Darchelle Strickland-Love, assigned to special projects.

Since taking office in May 2009, Bing's executive team has been a work in progress. Entering office, Bing tweaked the office structure, then changed the organizational chart again before Christmas.

Evans is the most recent official to resign at the mayor's request.

His departure was announced last Wednesday and linked to a number of factors:

- The presence of a reality television show film crew during a raid this summer that resulted in the death of a child at a police officer's hands.
- Evans' romantic relationship with a female lieutenant.
- And news of a demo tape cut by the chief in an apparent attempt to promote a proposed reality show about his work in Detroit.

For Bing, such personnel changes offer him a chance to reaffirm his role as a change agent, management consultants say.

"Part of what it reflects is that he wasn't completely prepared when he got into office with a plan of what he really wanted to see as the city administration," said consultant Kenneth Dalto, of Farmington Hills-based **Kenneth J. Dalto and Associates**.

"And two, I don't think he — nor could anyone — have understood the depth of the problem financially or the deterioration of the management structure."

There generally are a handful of reasons for top-level turnover, said Dave Haviland of Ann Arbor-based management consultancy **Phimation**.

"If you have a lot of turnover, it is not immediately clear on the surface what the cause of that is," Haviland said, speaking generally of business practices.

"It could be that there's not a clear strategy in place, so people are not sure what they're really signing up for, or people could be reading into things the way they want to read into them. ... It could also be an indicator of a mismatch in leadership style. Many things have to get right when you're hiring somebody, especially if you have to hire people quickly, and a lot of times you can't uncover all the different dimensions."

Dalto said he'd expect to see changes continue.

"Bing is walking a fine line between running with the resources he's got and wanting to change the city's management to a business-style management," he said.

"He would like to run the city more like a business, but it's not a business. It's almost like a fine line where it's got to be a hybrid. It's still a city, but he has to support as many business and management principles as he can."

Jim McTevia of Bingham Farms-based **McTevia and Associates** agreed that more changes are likely to come.

"Dave Bing ran a company successfully, faced a lot of problems and solved them," he said. "He's coming into the city and doesn't know the first thing. The problems are all told to him, and he doesn't have personal knowledge of how deep they are. So the first thing he does, if he's smart, is don't rock the boat, don't make immediate changes in key positions until you have the details."

Evans' departure, McTevia said, is a twist on that scenario.

"My opinion is, as the facts begin to unfold, you make changes, but you don't make them before the facts unfold," he said.

"How this relates to Warren Evans is a little different, because that was a change the mayor made (when he fired former Police Chief James Barren and hired Evans). I would suppose he made that change after gathering facts. I would suspect the chief of police acted in a manner the mayor felt was not in the best interests of the city, and that's enough. He's the mayor, the buck stops there."

Dalto said that an executive should always replace an employee whose core values don't fit.

"Both Bing's personal and business style is low-key — create the infrastructure, nobody's a star, create a team and we don't do things that compromise the city," he said.

Evans, Dalto suggested, had a more freewheeling style than the restrained Bing was comfortable with.

Too much turnover, Haviland said, can in some instances erode confidence in a leader.

"Either when the leader loses confidence of a critical mass of the leadership team or stops making progress on the strategy he's executing," he said.

From a public relations perspective, said Mark Winter, founder and principal of Bingham Farms-based **Identity Marketing & Public Relations**, it's a great opportunity.

"Mayor Bing is the owner and ambassador of the Detroit brand, and I think he's taking it very seriously," Winter said.

"He has said very publicly and very seriously that he expects great people doing great things, and the only way the city will be regarded as the great city it is is if everybody's holding to same values," Winter said.

"It's an opportunity for Bing, not playing to any particular person, to stand up and say, 'As Detroiters we should expect more from our leaders, we should expect more from ourselves.' "