JULY 2017 | icma.org/pm

PM PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

INSIDE

2017 ICMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE PRELIMINARY GUIDE

SIMPLY FLIP YOUR MAGAZINE OVER TO READ IT!

CAN MANAGERS BENEFIT FROM VulnerABILITY?

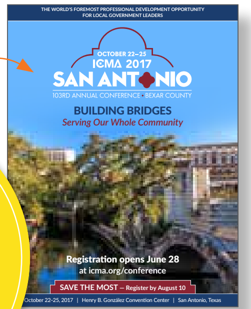
ADVANCING PROFESSIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT WORLDWIDE

ICMA

PM PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

contents

July 2017 | Vol. 99 No. 6



PRELIMINARY GUIDE TO ICMA'S 2017 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

See it here first! Flip over the magazine to see the conference preliminary program

features

departments

icma.org/pm

This issue of *PM* is available online and mobile at icma.org/pm June 27, 2017.

BY MARTHA PEREGO, ICMA-CM

PROFESSIONAL FOULS

As serious as illegal conduct?

"You are putting me in the same category as those criminals? Those embezzlers? Sex offenders? Thieves? Unbelievable!!"

This is a common reaction to hearing the news that you are subject to a public censure for conduct that violated the ICMA Code of Ethics. The conduct didn't violate any law. But the ICMA Committee on Professional Conduct, having reviewed all the facts and the member's response, concluded that, because what you did was such a serious ethical breach of the profession's standards, ICMA needs to issue a public statement.

What professional foul could be so bad that it warrants the same censure as illegal conduct? Is there really such a thing? And why go public? Under what circumstances is such a serious response justified?

This is not an esoteric debate for the ICMA Committee on Professional Conduct; it is front and center in committee deliberations of complaints filed against members.

Political Foul

Consider the case of the city manager who agreed to join the ticket of a candidate seeking the governorship.

The manager didn't resign from his position in order to run. In responding to the ethics complaint, the manager questioned how his conduct could be wrong given that his entire city council not only supported his candidacy but agreed to amend his agreement so that he could work part-time in order to free up time for campaigning, plus he could return to his full-time position if unsuccessful.

Even some colleagues privately supported the effort in the hopes that his financial expertise and knowledge of state and local government would be beneficial to local governments as they sought to bring about change in financial policy at the state level. Given this support, what rationale does ICMA have for objecting?

In making the recommendation for public censure, which was upheld by the ICMA Executive Board, the committee noted that political neutrality is a hallmark of the local government

PM PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

Public Management (PM) aims to inspire innovation, inform decision making, connect leading-edge thinking to everyday challenges, and serve ICMA members and local governments worldwide in the pursuit of excellence in local governance.

2016 ASSOCIATION TRENDS ALL MEDIA BRONZE AWARD WINNER

ICMA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Marc Ott

DIRECTOR OF PUBLISHING
Ann Mahoney

EDITOR
Beth Payne

DESIGN
Thor Design Studio
www.thor-studio.com

Public Management (PM) (USPS: 449-300) is published monthly except February by ICMA (the International City/County Management Association) at 777 North Capitol Street. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002-4201. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices. The opinions expressed in the magazine are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of ICMA.

REPRINTS: Apply to the editor for permission to reprint any part of the magazine.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: U.S. subscription rate, $46 per year; other countries subscription rate, $155 per year. Printed in the United States. Contact: 202/289-4262; subscriptions@icma.org.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Public Management,* ICMA, 777 N. Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20002-4201.

ARTICLE PROPOSALS: Visit icma.org/pm to see "Editorial Guidelines" for contributors.

EDITORIAL INFORMATION
202/962-3619
bpayne@icma.org

ADVERTISING SALES
Ben Harmon
The Townsend Group, Inc.
Tel: 301/215-6710 x106
Fax: 301/215-7704
bharmon@townsend-group.com

PRINTING
Westland Printers
Laurel, Maryland

ICMA
icma.org | icma.org/pm

profession. It's a line in the sand that professionals shall not cross.

The principle dates back to that very first code that said no city manager should play an active role in politics. Times have certainly changed. But the challenges of the current political environment, coupled with the lack of clarity in the public's mind about the role of professional managers, lend more, not less, credence to the principle of political neutrality.

Do you want to be viewed and function as that independent, qualified, and objective source of advice on policy and operational matters? Such a status happens only when professional local government managers stay out of politics.

The last critical detail in this case was the fact that the city manager announced his candidacy days *before* the council took an official vote to grant his leave. This timeline certainly made it look like the votes had been locked in before the public knew about or could consider the merits of the proposal. The behind-the-scenes negotiations that evidently took place in this case violated the profession's commitment to transparency.

Integrity Foul Out

If political neutrality is one key hallmark of the local government profession, the other must certainly be the integrity of one's word. It's disheartening to see the number of instances in recent years when ICMA members agreed to accept a position but then failed to keep their commitments.

They don't show up for work, opting to either remain in their current positions or accept a preferred offer elsewhere. Or they take the position but fail to serve the recommended two-year tenure. And, to be clear, these are not instances of the governing body failing to uphold its end of the bargain.

Some of these cases received more media coverage than others, given the profile of the community. That said, the impact is extraordinary, regardless of size or wealth of the organization or the incident's notoriety. Elected leadership looks inept, the public can be left wondering about the value of recruiting outside the community, and the organization spends critical time in a holding pattern.

WHAT PROFESSIONAL FOUL COULD BE SO BAD THAT IT WARRANTS THE SAME CENSURE AS ILLEGAL CONDUCT? UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES IS SUCH A SERIOUS RESPONSE JUSTIFIED?

One community hiring its first manager was highly disappointed when the individual withdrew without any explanation and then accepted a position at a higher salary in another city. This could have led the community to abandon all plans for bringing professional management to the organization. Under the mayor's leadership, the community stayed the course, restarted the search process, and eventually recruited a manager.

For Violations, There Are Consequences

Every true profession has a set of core, defining, and fundamental principles. They are nonnegotiable. Violate the principles and expect consequences. After all, there is little point in having a code of ethics for the profession if the profession is reluctant about speaking out when the conduct of its members fails to adhere to the highest standards. PM

MARTHA PEREGO, ICMA-CM
Ethics Director, ICMA
Washington, D.C.
mperego@icma.org

WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENT DO YOU FEEL BEST ABOUT AND WHY?

BRAD RATLIFF
City Administrator
Peculiar, Missouri
bratliff@cityofpeculiar.com

When I came to work for Peculiar, great turmoil existed. It was a city growing exponentially in population despite some of its own failings. I am most pleased with the professional culture that now is acknowledged and talked about in our organization.

All approaches of the local government are professional in approach, policy, and transparency to the public. As a result, we built a new highway interchange quicker than anyone thought we could.

Budget awards are being won when there were none before. We have received more than $12 million in grants in a short amount of time, which is huge for a community of Peculiar's size.

We are launching technology advances that also are unseen in a community of 4,800 population.

Peculiar is truly a great turnaround story, and it all started with bringing a professional and open culture to the organization.

DENISE FITZGERALD, ICMA-CM
Township Manager
Scott, Pennsylvania
dfitzgerald@scotttownship.com

I would say my greatest accomplishment was my participation in the ICMA Professional Fellows Exchange Program in 2016. This program allowed individuals from Southeast Asia to visit Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, and in turn, I was able to visit Vietnam.

Their goal while visiting the county was to look at environmental sustainability projects and how they are managed. We showed them a curbside recycling program and also an e-waste program.

One idea I brought back from my trip was how Hanoi's government circulates water in some of its ponds. Residents use exercise equipment set up around the lake that is connected to a circulation system for the pond. It circulates the water so that the lake does not have stagnant water.

One of the grants I am working on is to install a walking trail along the township's park, with exercise stations along the trail. The purpose of the stations and the walking trail is to encourage a sense of community and also encourage being healthy.

SHIRLEY HUGHES, ICMA-CM
City Administrator
Liberty, South Carolina
shughes@libertysc.com

I like working with councils to assist them in making difficult decisions in order to straighten out local government finances and set the stage for solid footing going forward.

As a general rule, the vast majority of councilmembers do not have a finance background and have no knowledge or experience with governmental accounting. Taking the time to educate them is extremely important.

Providing information will help them make prudent decisions and allow them to more properly provide the services that their constituents expect. The more knowledgeable they are, the better the results of their decisions. Everyone benefits.

When councilmembers can understand budgets and the basics of an audit, they are also in a better position to explain to residents the reasoning behind many of their decisions. PM

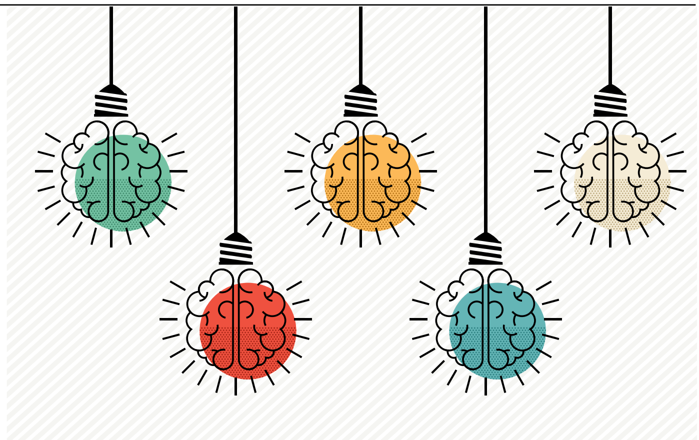
ABUNDANT WAYS TO TELL THE FUTURE

1

Eagle Mountain City, Utah's packet titled *Let's Talk Business* shows how the community is planning future success with economic development aplomb.

icma.org/talk_business

2 EMBRACING BUSINESS INNOVATION



Flagstaff, Arizona, fosters creativity and entrepreneurship through partnerships.

icma.org/flagstaff

3 PLAYGROUND SAFETY CHECKLIST

Here are five things to look out for and avoid when conducting a playground inspection.

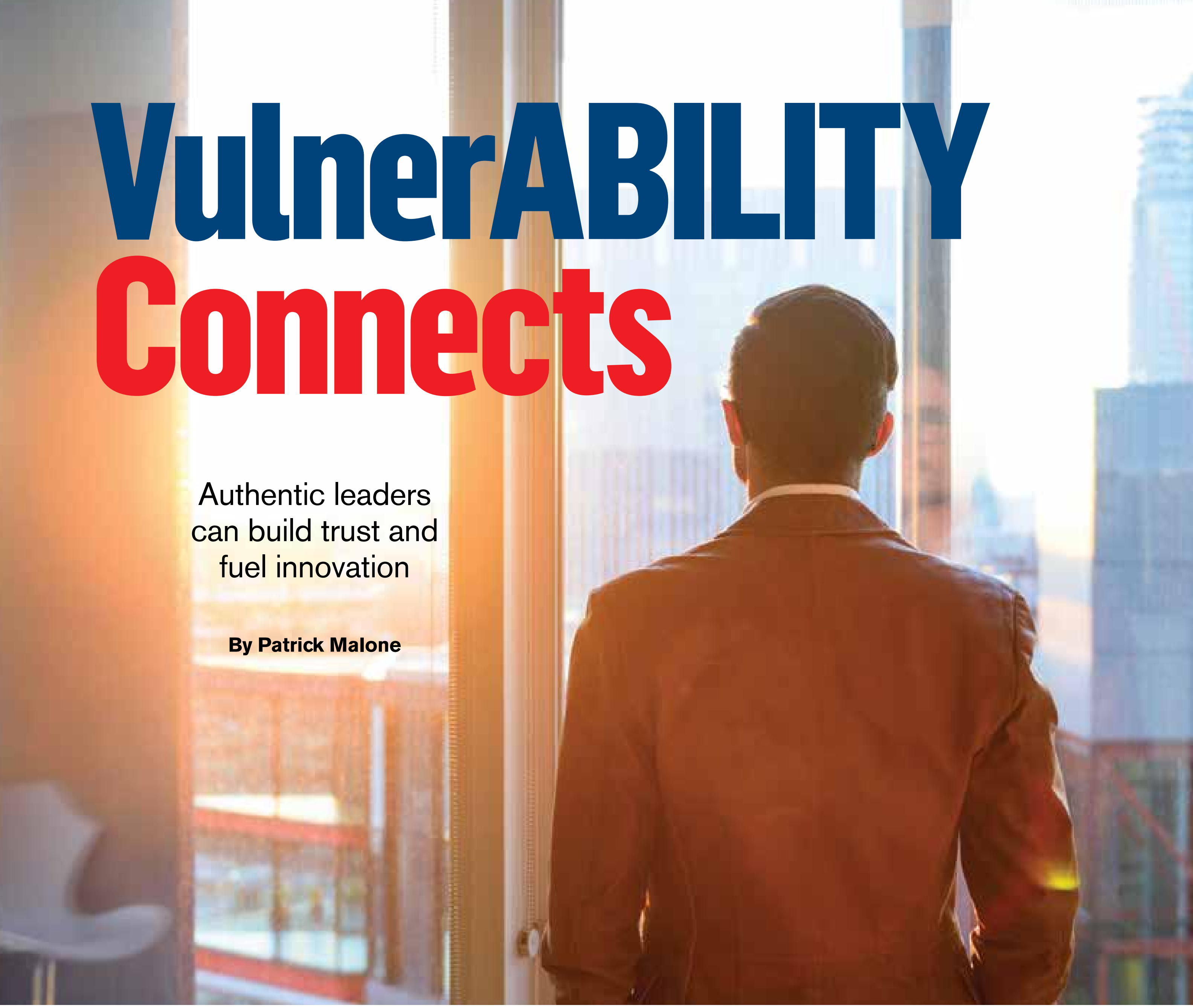
icma.org/playground_safety

STAY COMPETITIVE

ICMA's publication *The Effective Local Government Manager* offers three essential tips to help managers stay competitive in their local government career.

4

icma.org/stay_competitive



VulnerABILITY Connects

Authentic leaders can build trust and fuel innovation

By Patrick Malone

The image of the backslapping, bigger-than-life, supremely confident, authoritative manager has probably done more damage to organizational success than any other single factor. This dated persona of a great leader who knows all of the answers and rules with a forceful personality has fostered micromanagement and a lack of communication and distance between leaders and the people under their supervision.

Under this type of leader, adherence to organizational values is directed, not inspired. Formal interactions cloaked in strict organizational cultural norms are enforced on a regular basis. People work for their paycheck, not for the mission.

Contrast this with the leader who exhibits vulnerability. Vulnerable leaders are seekers. They are tremendous listeners and have a knack of connecting with those they lead in a meaningful and human way.

They build trust and fuel innovation. They welcome questions. As stewards of their organizations, they take ownership not only of the organizational mission, but also of the people who deliver that mission on a daily basis.

Far from being weak, vulnerable leaders exhibit the ultimate strength—the power of being themselves. They find no need to fashion their persona with unnecessary decorum or accoutrements of office.

They are as likely to make important agency decisions as they are to grab a brown-bag lunch with those they lead. They care, and they demonstrate this through an unwavering desire to connect at a human level, a level that transcends artificial protocol.

Barriers to Vulnerability

Neurologically, being vulnerable is not something that we are prewired to do. The human brain is a remarkably efficient and powerful organ.

When a thought occurs, neurons fire between one another. If this thought occurs multiple times or over the period of an entire life, that pathway becomes far more instilled in the brain.

Imagine the ruts on the country road where wheels automatically slip into predetermined pathways. This is precisely what happens with thinking in the brain.

These neural pathways are extremely beneficial during times of emergencies. They help with quick and decisive decision making. And since we default to them automatically, they help us survive in volatile environments.

We can jump out of the way of a moving bus, or we can dodge the books that fall off of the shelf hurdling toward our head. This mechanism is effective for quick impulsive reactions and even for demonstrating the façade of a manager who "knows the answer," but who is less than perfect for fostering vulnerability and connecting with others.

With this complicated neurological circuitry working as our operating system, it's no wonder we circumvent vulnerability. Being vulnerable places us in a position where we set ourselves up for potential hurt or disappointment, and this hurt can go deep.

Consider the feelings of trusting a friend who eventually betrays you. The genesis of these fears can be found in the early relationships we have in life. Those that were reared in loving, stable homes are far more likely to be willing to allow others to come into their life.

Likewise, those who grew up in less than loving environments may avoid exhibiting vulnerability in their personal and professional life in order to protect themselves against pain. If these individuals have a subsequent experience marked by hurt or distrust, they will tend to retract into a psychological cocoon, protecting themselves from future risks.

From a workplace standpoint, it is common for managers to see vulnerability as a weakness. Leaders may suspect that if they show empathy or shed a tear between the hours of 9 to 5, it somehow diminishes their stature and authority.

They may be unwilling to share information for fear of losing a competitive advantage. Managers may be less trusting of others in the workplace, or they may keep a distance so they don't become attached to people.

Here are three hypothetical scenarios that illustrate the value of leaders who demonstrate vulnerability.

Sensitive and Caring

I was always impressed with my city manager's sensitivity. Every week, he would host department meetings, which included some heavy hitters from the city (e.g., police department, parks and recreation, utilities, legal services).

The issues that we discussed were often contentious. Budgets were tight, and there were pressures from the council to reduce staff. It seemed like no matter what we did, residents were always protesting something outside our city hall.

Yet no matter where we were in the discussion, or who was speaking, he would always stop the meeting when the custodian came in to empty the trash and dust the office. He greeted him by name and would sometimes stand up and walk over to him so he could privately inquire about a personal matter.

I once overheard him ask if the custodian's daughter had been accepted to a local community college. I had no idea the city manager knew this guy that well.

Exhibiting vulnerability in front of others is not a weakness; rather, it's a tremendous strength. When a manager has the courage to stop a meeting where there are many important people in the room in order to have a short conversation with someone who they care about, it sends a message at an extremely human level.

This need not occur only in meetings. What about when passing someone in the hallway or noticing them in a crowded room? The dynamic of taking the time to speak to someone and express genuine interest in their lives is indicative of a leader concerned about the well-being of the people in the organization.

Since leaders are often the most watched in the organization, this means people notice what they do and don't do, and say and don't say. Behavior that exhibits an intimate and personal connection with people sets a clear and powerful tone for the organization.

Simple acts of kindness become legendary as the story is retold over and over. This has the benefit not only of underscoring important organizational values, but it also serves as a catalyst for legitimate organizational culture change.

Down-to-Earth

I guess I should have been intimidated by my supervisor in the health department. She had diplomas all over her wall and was clearly an accomplished scientist. I mean, we are talking about an extremely educated person with a tremendous amount of prestige and well respected in her field.

It seems she was always being interviewed by the local paper or television station. And, she had that presence that told anyone in the room that she was important.

But I always sensed she was just one of us. Maybe it was that she had lunch in the cafeteria with the rest of us almost every day, loved to tell corny jokes, or how she greeted people by name.

People who are comfortable being vulnerable are authentic, and their coworkers know it. Research suggests individuals have a subconscious ability to assess authenticity.

Through a complex series of chemical reactions, the neurological engines of our brain actually mirror what others are feeling and doing. This allows us to quickly assess the validity of what we're witnessing, and act accordingly. When people smile at us, for example, we're likely to smile back. When we resonate with someone, we feel a connection.

Conversely, when we sense someone is not authentic, we're generally right. This explains that uncomfortable feeling we have when we are confronted with someone who appears to be too nice or overly familiar.

Resonance has the added benefit of building trust, which is the lubricant of any organization. When it is not present, the organization, like a car engine, will seize and fall apart.

When we trust someone we're more likely to risk asking an off-the-wall question. Staff are willing to take calculated risks to improve organizational performance. Failure is not feared. Instead of penalizing failure, vulnerable leaders use it as an opportunity to encourage growth.

Open and Honest

We knew things were bad. Our county office was on the wrong side of the most recent series of budget cuts by the county board, and our supervisor laid it on the line in our morning meeting.

She was open and honest and encouraged all of us to do what we needed to do to look out for our careers, even if it meant taking another position elsewhere. Three months later, not one person had left, nor expressed a desire to do so.

We trusted and admired our boss, and we would never let her down. Maybe it was because of her willingness to be so open, honest, and caring—even though she had to know we all could have abandoned her.

There's often tremendous pressure on managers to hold to the "company line." While there may be good reasons for this in limited circumstances, more often than not managers will use the organizational line as a crutch for their inability to connect with those whom they lead.

It's far easier for managers to point to a nebulous third party as the cause for organizational problems instead of welcoming the feelings of those impacted. They end up using the acceptable agency language, carefully crafted to say only the right thing.

When leaders are forthright in their communication, they eschew the tendency to overthink how they present bad news. They speak from the heart with candor and a palpable commitment to their values.

People feel informed. The shared information allows for constructive debate and creative solutions. Everyone gets to play, so everyone can take ownership of the path forward. The result is a more loyal and committed workforce.

Vulnerability Tips

Practice makes perfect. Follow these suggestions on your journey to becoming a more vulnerable leader.

Accept it. In a public service marked by volatility, complexity, ambiguity, and uncertainty, claiming not to be exposed is haughty at best. Vulnerability is a given in today's environment.

Embrace the unknown. No manager should be expected to have all of the answers, and vulnerable leaders do not feel they need to. Physicist Albert Einstein once noted that if he had one hour to solve a problem, he would spend 59 minutes asking questions and one minute coming up with solutions. The best solutions come as a result of the best questions.

Practice self-awareness. Recognizing your emotions as they come and go throughout the day is the first step to healthy emotional intelligence. If you're feeling it, chances are others are noting it. Take stock of your feelings and the impact they have on your performance.

Share. This means everything: thoughts, fears, credit for a job well done, and information. The mere act of opening up is the essence of vulnerability and sets the stage for beneficial dialogue with team members.

Be aware of others. While you are on your life journey, remember that others are as well. Be sensitive to their needs and the anxiety they may have as you uncover the new you. Be patient, kind, and forgiving. Help others feel safe in your presence.

Remember the social fabric of the organization matters. Content matters, but context matters more. When managers expect work to be a sterile, by-the-book impersonal environment, the doors are not open to connection at the soul level.

Empathize, don't sympathize. Sympathy is an analytical practice wherein one person judges another and renders an assessment. Empathy requires reaching deep into one's soul to rediscover past feelings of sadness or fear. It is the latter that changes lives.

The Last Word

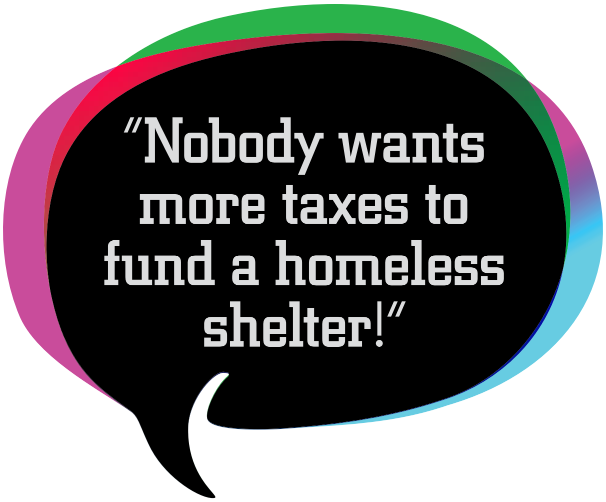
There is no doubt that vulnerability isn't without risk. Vulnerable leaders put their hearts on display for all to see. And while the perfect outcome every time isn't likely, the rewards are well worth it. Those whom you lead will connect with you at the human level, they will share more, they will look after you, and they will care.

There hasn't been a workplace survey in years that has found that workers want their leaders to be more technically skilled with the detailed processes and procedures that drive organizations. Rather, what research consistently shows is that the women and men of our workforce are looking for leaders who care and who are empathetic, connected, and relatable.

Vulnerability is the first step toward making that happen. PM

PATRICK MALONE, Ph.D., is director, Key Executive Leadership Programs, School of Public Affairs, American University, Washington, D.C. (pmalone@american.edu).


What Can You Do With BoardDocs?
BoardDocs' next-generation web applications streamline the processes used to manage board packets, access information and conduct meetings. You'll save money, time and improve your board's effectiveness - on a massive scale. If your decisions affect the lives of others, call us.
We'll help you do what you do best, even better.
It's their future. It's your choice.
BoardDocs.com 800.407.0141
BoardDocs®
Your Paperless Governance Solution
© 2017 Emerald Data Solutions™, Inc. BoardDocs is a registered trademark of Emerald Data Solutions. All rights reserved.



The Voice of th

If you haven't heard self-appointed community spokespeople make these very statements, you've likely heard plenty of other proclamations in public testimony or read countless letters to the editor from residents sure that they speak for everyone.

So much in survey research has changed since we wrote the first version of this story in *PM* 16 years ago; however, the fundamental uses of surveys have blossomed, making this an expansive era in public opinion surveying.

Surveys are at the heart of public policy, private sector innovation, predictions about social behavior, product improvement, and more. Search "public opinion survey" on Google and you get 10.2 million entries. "Citizen surveys for local government" will get you 32.6 million hits (on 2/22/2017).

We shed more ink in 2001, explaining what a citizen survey was and why it was needed, than we need to do today. The fundamental definition is the same: A citizen survey is a questionnaire usually completed by 200 to 1,000 representative residents that captures the community sentiment about the quality of community life, service delivery, public trust, and public engagement.

You'd be hard-pressed to find a local government manager who has not done a survey, heard a colleague talk about one, or who does not understand it to be a best practice in local government management.

Changing Times

As interest in resident opinions explodes, the survey industry is fighting to keep up with changes in technology for collecting those opinions. In 2001, we wrote about "Telephone's Unspeakable Problem."

Who answers the landline anymore when an anonymous call sneaks through call-blocking? (Answer: Almost no one.) Who even has a landline anymore? (Answer: Only about 53 percent of households. See https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhis/earlyrelease/wireless201512.pdf.)

This is why well-conducted telephone surveys are expensive. Today's phone surveys should include cellphone responses from 50 to 75 percent of participants and must avoid connections with children or people who are driving and, according to federal law, calls must also be hand-dialed, not dialed by automated equipment.

Residents' patience for responding to any survey is wearing thin. Response rates have dropped on average from 36 percent by telephone in 1997 to 9 percent today (http://www.people-press.org/2012/05/15/assessing-the-representativeness-of-public-opinion-surveys). In fact, response rates by mail or Web are lower today, too.

The good news is that research has shown that despite a low response rate, surveys are gathering public opinion that pretty well represents the target community (http://www.people-press.org/2012/05/15/assessing-the-representativeness-of-public-opinion-surveys).

Today, the problem has moved to data collection on the Web. Costs to gather opinions from anyone who wants to click a well-publicized link clearly are much lower than traditional "probability sampling," where residents are invited by the equivalent of a lottery to participate.

Opt-in Web surveys let anyone participate without having to sample invitees, but the angry or the Internet-connected may differ from the typical resident. The problem is that there are yet no ways to know how likely opt-in Web survey responses reflect the opinions of the community.

e Public

Why citizen surveys still work

By Thomas Miller and Michelle Kobayashi

This uncertainty afflicts resident engagement platforms, too, where anyone can enter and post a comment or vote. The American Association of Public Opinion Research members are fretting and working overtime to learn more about making the Web a reliable part of survey data collection (https://aspanational.wordpress.com/2014/09/02/the-big-secret).

Generating Responses

As interest grows in what people think but costs rise and responses fall, something's got to change, and changes are in the making. Sampling based on addresses—rather than telephone numbers or Web links—has come into fashion and old-school mailed surveys continue to garner higher response rates than any other means of collecting citizen surveys. Residents asked to participate by mail or to respond on the Web are invited using traditional random sampling techniques so that results are more credibly representative of the community.

Some companies have created their own national Web panels of survey takers who usually are recruited on the Web and paid to participate (e.g., Harris Interactive, Google, SurveyMonkey). These panels typically are balanced to reflect national demography. In midsize communities, however, there still are too few respondents to generate enough participation, and these paid participants are no random sampling.

Surveys can now be completed on handheld devices—texted to respondent smartphones or completed on tablets—though the number of questions tolerated on these small computers remains quite limited.

Social media traffic is now being interpreted by automated text readers that aggregate messages to determine what the public thinks about current events, though some caution that much of what passes, for example on Twitter, is generated by people only 30 percent of the time, with 70 percent created by nonhuman bots.

Other kinds of big data—from transponders affixed to vehicles, cameras aimed at pedestrian high-traffic areas, geographic sensing of cellphone "pings," and Web searches—provide data that can construe human activity and circumstances.

So far, though, these data are not good at measuring resident opinion, and there have been a few big "misses" that have undermined the credibility of some inferences. An example: Google thought (as it turned out, wrongly) that it could predict the loci of flu epidemics faster and more accurately than the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention by using millions of Google searches (https://www.wired.com/2015/10/can-learn- epic-failure-google- flu-trends).

What Makes for a Credible Survey?

When results of a survey are in, the client wants to know: "How confident can I be that the results of the survey sample are close to what all adults in the community think?"

While there is no certainty that the results are close to what you'd get from answers by all residents, effective survey research usually gets it right. Here are some clues that you're getting credible survey research:

The survey report is explicit about the research methods. Questions include: Who sponsored the survey? How was the sample selected? What was the list from which the sample was selected? What percent of the people who asked to participate in fact did participate? Were both households and respondents *in* households selected without bias? Were data weighted and if so, what weighting scheme was used? Were potential sources of error, in addition to sampling error, reported?

A shorthand for understanding if standards of quality are met is encapsulated in the mark of the American Association for Public Opinion Research's (AAPORs) Transparency Initiative (TI). Research has shown that TI members have done better in election polls than have pollsters that were not members (http://www.n-r-c.com/is-transparency-worth-its-reputation).

The report specifies how potential for non-response bias is mitigated. This is where most reputable organizations weight data to reflect better the demographic profile of the community.

Respondents are selected at random and their candor is encouraged. Responses are anonymous and given in self-administered questionnaires (mail or Web) instead of in person or by telephone.

If data are collected via mail, Web, and phone, there is some adjustment to correct for well-established research that shows those who respond by phone give more glowing evaluations than do those who respond in self-administered surveys.

Ensuring Worthwhile Results

These days, most managers are alert to the core content of citizen surveys. Slowly building now is the connection between the data collected and the actions needed to make those data useful.

As data proliferates, its sheer volume intimidates leaders and, frankly, everyone else who wants to make sense of the information. Here are ways to ensure the survey results you have are worth the time and cost to get them, making the data more useful:

Use benchmarks. It is one thing to know that code enforcement is no rose in the garden of resident opinion, but it's another to find out that your code enforcement stinks compared to others. Comparing resident opinions in your community to those in others adds a needed context for interpreting survey results.

And with the right benchmarks, you now can see what communities of your size, in your geographic locale, and with your kind of resident demography are saying that may be the same or different than what you hear at home.

Track results across time. Not only will benchmarks from other communities help to ensure interpretable results, comparing results this year to results from years past will strengthen your understanding about what has been found. If you've taken the right actions with survey results and other sources of information, your community should be improving, residents should be noticing, and metrics should be reflecting the change.

Examine results in different parts of the community and for different kinds of residents. Average survey results are not the same everywhere or for everyone. If older residents and younger residents don't see eye to eye about the importance of public safety, for example, you should know.

Get data from all the key sectors. Surveys of residents should be augmented with surveys of local government employees, nonprofit managers, and the business community. This way you can compare how each group sees the successes and challenges faced, and you can identify their unique needs.

Go beyond passive receipt of results and broaden the call to action. Conduct action-oriented meetings to identify next steps that the data and your knowledge of the community suggest. In workshops, you can engage not only staff and elected officials but community nonprofits, businesses, and residents to identify a small number of survey-inspired outcomes to achieve within a set period of time.

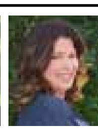
Get acquainted with how others use their survey data. National Research Center offers insights through the Voice of the People's Awards (http://www.n-r-c.com/the-real-winners-of-the-voice-of-the-people-awards) and the Playbook (http://www.n-r-c.com/what-is-the-nrc-playbook-of-strategies) for community case studies.

Think broadly about where survey results can be used. It's not only about communication. Consider where else you can effect community change that you find is needed through your citizen survey. Understand the "Six E's of Action": envision, engage, educate, earmark (see example on page 12), enact, and evaluate (http://www.n-r-c.com/the-es-of-action). PM

ONE OF THE SIX E'S OF ACTION: EARMARK

One way to act on survey findings is to use them for budget allocations. Surveys give insight into new programs that could be supported by residents. In Pocatello, Idaho, for example, some passionate residents made a case to city council that the local animal shelter was not habitable even for the most decrepit mongrel.

Councilmembers put a question on Pocatello's citizen survey and more than 85 percent of respondents indicated support for an improved facility for strays. Within a year, and by more than the 66 percent minimum required by law, residents voted approval for a bond issue of $2.8 million and the facility was built.

THOMAS MILLER, Ph.D., is president, and **MICHELLE KOBAYASHI** is vice president, National Research Center, Inc., Boulder, Colorado (tom@n-r-c.com; michelle@n-r-c.com).


CONVENIENCE AND SAVINGS
SHOULDN'T HAVE TO BE A CHOICE
Today's consumers are unique, but what they want is basically the same. Convenience, simplicity and no surprises, especially when it comes to their health and money.
At Cigna, our customer insights and extensive experience in health management enable us to create personalized benefit solutions that meet the needs of the local governments we serve and their employees, who help them succeed.
To learn more about partnering with Cigna, visit Cigna.com.
Cigna®
Together, all the way.®
All Cigna products and services are provided exclusively by or through operating subsidiaries of Cigna Corporation, including Cigna Health and Life Insurance Company and Connecticut General Life Insurance Company. The Cigna name, logo, and other Cigna marks are owned by Cigna Intellectual Property, Inc.
908956 05/17 © Cigna 2017.

THE RIGHT RETREAT MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE

Addressing core issues is the key to a meaningful experience

By Norman Wright

A retreat can be a powerful tool for local governments. When used properly, a successful staff or team retreat can set an organization on a nearly unstoppable path of success. The experience can invigorate leadership, excite the community, and spark breakthroughs, although as many management professionals, including myself can attest, such experiences appear to be as rare as they are inspiring.

It doesn't have to be this way. Hundreds of local governments might embark on an annual retreat each year and the format and purpose of their event, much like the food, are often the same. This is true despite the fact that leaders recognize that their teams and their challenges are unique.

Success, then, starts with making better choices. If we choose to use the retreat as a means to address a group's biggest, most fundamental problems, the powerful, meaningful experience we've always hoped for can be created.

FIGURE 1. *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team.*

Source: Patrick Lencioni, 2002.

Educator and author Andrew Ballard, who is a chief growth strategist from Mill Creek, Washington, considers planning as the common thread from more than 500 retreats he has conducted. He says, "What makes for a productive retreat is the advance work, preparing and communicating an agenda, and providing insights that inform the planning participants."

Having been a retreat facilitator myself, I believe the right agenda also is the deeper, more difficult challenge and requires the right mindset from leadership.

Another expert, Eric Svaren, who taught courses on managing teams and group decision making at the University of Washington, agrees. Based on his work facilitating hundreds of retreats and also mentoring future facilitators, he knows firsthand the success that comes from this deeper level of preparation.

It was evident in one of his best retreats that was, in his words, "actually a summit." He worked for months with a design team made up of employees from all levels of a local government agency to plan how to engage employees in the project.

It led to a two-day event that he said "involved a wide range of activities and exercises that both dramatically increased trust (which was low) and set a clear direction for improving the culture. Years later, participants report that it was a pivotal event in the evolution of the department."

Design Choices

To have a design team work so closely on the retreat implies that there are design choices to be made. This concept of choices opens the retreat to become something far greater than it typically might be.

Retreats have been associated with the development of a plan for the next year. These planning exercises feature the same basic elements: visioning exercises that lead to a single, broad mission that is broken down into themes, then problems, then objectives, then solutions, and concluding with group voting exercises that lead to general consensus on a set of goals, objectives, and actions for the next year.

Such work is important and yet such work, by itself, seldom sparks the change or the energy an organization seeks. That is because this sort of planning-centric work—setting a vision, identifying problems, creating solutions, and so forth—often comes before other, more fundamental issues within the team have been properly resolved.

An ineffective team cannot be made whole by even the most effective retreat if the retreat does not address the right problems in the right sequence.

In his best seller *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, author Patrick Lencioni proposes a set of core needs that extends the human motivation theory of Maslow's hierarchy from the individual to the organization.

As a hierarchy itself, these dysfunctions and subsequent needs are presented in a pyramid (see Figure 1) to imply what must start first, at the foundation, in order to build layer upon layer to the peak.

The conventional retreat, built on the idea of planning the next year, is almost entirely focused on delivering results, which is at the top of the hierarchy. True to Lencioni's hierarchy, however, is the fact that results cannot be easily accomplished if the remaining, more foundational elements are weak.

The team simply can't support it. Dysfunctional teams, in other words, simply aren't ready for the conventional planning retreat they often find themselves in because their foundation is lacking. They need something different.

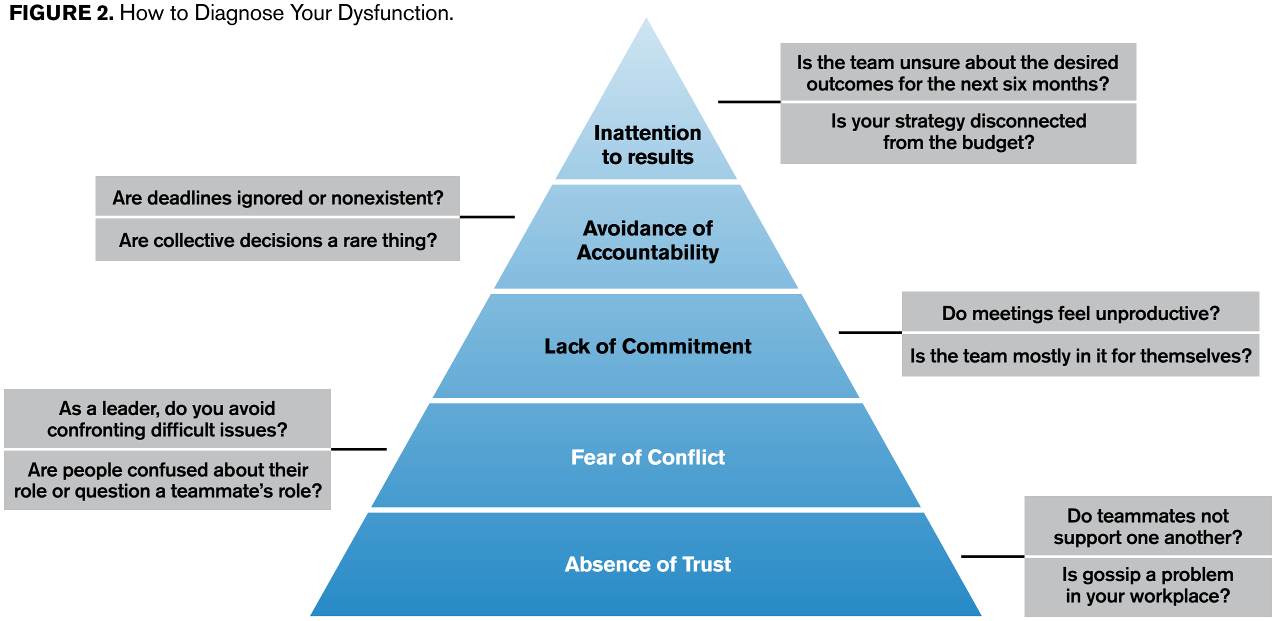
"Trust and respect are usually low in dysfunctional groups," Svaren says. "And when those are absent, it's all people think about." Anyone who has been part of a dysfunctional group knows this to be true. It's practically impossible to commit to a bold vision when you aren't

TAKEAWAYS

› Most retreats fail to create the change that is wanted because too much is attempted or certain needs or issues are taken on in the wrong sequence.

› As a leader, determine the team's core issues first; then find the tool that will help you address them within the retreat.

FIGURE 2. How to Diagnose Your Dysfunction.



Source: Patrick Lencioni, 2002.

sure if fellow teammates really support your role in the effort.

Similarly, if the team's leadership fails to hold people accountable, one would feel no enthusiasm to meet a new benchmark since there is no consequence of failure or incentive for success. Again, deeper issues of trust or doubt or conflict prevent any of the more normal retreat conversations regarding a new vision or future results from becoming meaningful.

Determining Your Group's Needs

Dysfunction on the level of Lencioni's pyramid is not easy to hide. Each of us can diagnose these issues rather easily with a few honest questions and some eyes-wide-open observation (see Figure 2).

Prior to designing a retreat, managers can think through these 10 questions to determine the group's needs. Consider the "everything in place" value of organizational development and make sure all ingredients are properly arranged before starting the work of making something great. If anything is missing, then the problem is apparent.

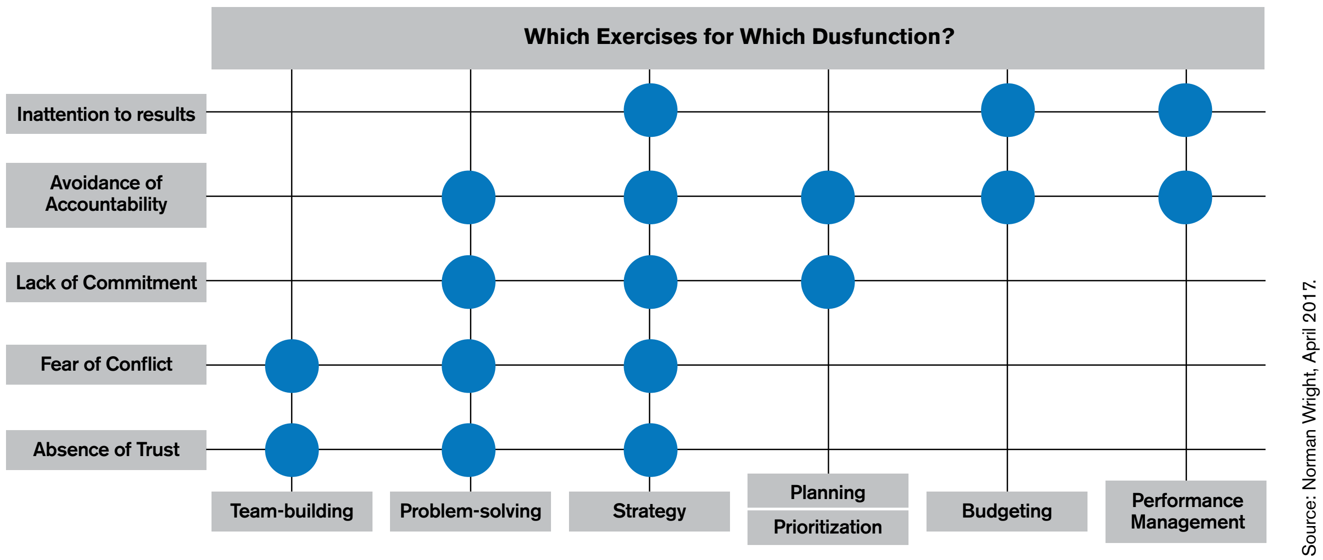
- Is gossip a problem in your workplace?
- Do team members not support one another?
- Are people confused about their role or question a teammate's role?
- As a leader, do you avoid confronting difficult issues?
- Is the team mostly in it for themselves?
- Do meetings feel unproductive?
- Are collective decisions a rare thing?
- Are deadlines ignored or nonexistent?
- Is your strategy disconnected from the budget?
- Is the team unsure about the desired outcomes for the next six months?

Each question is a test. If you cannot confidently say no to all 10 questions, then it is evident that the team isn't truly ready for a strategic planning retreat that is deeply focused on results. Instead, each question that generates a "yes" highlights a far more important, foundational issue that needs to be addressed first.

Once the issues are understood and a facilitator is in place, the rest is simply

IF YOU WANT SOMETHING MEMORABLE, SOMETHING THAT CHANGES THE COURSE OF A GROUP AND REMOVES OBSTACLES, BE HONEST ABOUT WHAT YOUR TEAM IS GRAPPLING WITH AND BE SURE YOU WORK ON THE RIGHT THING.

FIGURE 3. The Choice Matrix for Starting the Design Process.



a matter of design. All great design comes from the proper understanding of the problem.

If the issue is a lack of trust in the group, the retreat must feature an earnest conversation on that matter supplemented with exercises that help each participant approach such a difficult issue in a more comfortable mode.

Leaders can be disappointed when they find their team isn't fully engaged in high-level tactical discussions that are associated with planning retreats. The lack of engagement in the issues that need to be addressed, however, doesn't mean there is no desire to engage. The lack of group readiness for one topic simply means team members are ready for something else, something equally important.

Which is to say that there is nothing faulty or wrong with a group that isn't ready for setting detailed workplans and benchmarks for the future. Group members simply have to grow into it, and this is what a retreat should be about: growth, progress, and a look to the future.

Some Basic Solutions

To further the idea of great design leading to great retreats, consider one final resource: a choice matrix. While Lencioni's pyramid points to a basic diagnosis of what dysfunction your team faces, the matrix in Figure 3 prescribes some basic solutions.

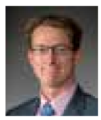
It expands the notion of a retreat to include several different types of activities, from the basic foundational elements of trust to the advanced focus on performance management.

Each exercise category has its own tasks, actions, and design decisions. Each requires the right sort of facilitator to guide the process. This can point in the right direction, but it is by no means an attempt to give a paint-by-numbers approach to designing a retreat.

Lencioni's pyramid combined with the matrix provides a leader with a basic sense of problems and solutions, but it can't be the sole method for designing the retreat itself. That will take more work.

Before investing time and effort in the next event, consider the team's readiness. Specifically: What sort of retreat are team members ready to have? Consider, too, the outcome you most desire to achieve. If you want something memorable, something that changes the course of a group and removes obstacles, be honest about what your team is grappling with and be sure you work on the right thing.

As author Stephen Covey famously said, "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing." For the vast majority of work groups, the retreat isn't the time to discover what the main thing is, per se. It is the tool to address it. When done correctly, it can work wonders. **PM**



NORMAN WRIGHT is director, community and economic development, Adams County, Colorado (norman.wright@outlook.com). The author retains copyright to this article. He extends special thanks to Eric Svaren for his guidance in its preparation.

Works Referenced

Lencioni, Patrick. *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002.

Ballard, Andrew. Personal interview, March 10, 2017.

Svaren, Eric. Personal interview, February 22, 2017.

DOING DATA RIGHT

LESSONS FROM THREE CITIES

By Heain Lee and Sam Lieberman

Local governments with effective professional management still want to improve continuously, and using data to reach that goal is an essential practice. But it's daunting to start a data analytics program, and mistakes can doom it to irrelevance. We visited three cities with programs at different stages of development—Kansas City, Missouri; Cincinnati, Ohio; and San Jose, California—to unlock their secrets for data-based decision making.

While every locality is different, and ideas that work in one place might not apply to another, we came away with leading practices and strategies these cities learned early on that can help others ramp up their data efforts.

Setting Up Shop

Support the data analytics initiative from the top. Placing the data analytics team in the manager's office conveys support and ownership. Relegating it to a distant department may destroy it.

Executives need to stay involved by attending meetings, championing results, and communicating its importance on an ongoing basis so department heads and others understand it is important.

Position the data analytics team as a unit to support operating staff. The office and team should be viewed as a source of help for departments to address their problems in a cooperative way rather than creating more work for front-line staff.

Cincinnati has dedicated space in a city-owned facility that includes analyst workspace, an innovation lab for process improvement events, and a meeting room designed specifically to discuss data analytics and performance measures, modeled after Baltimore's CitiStat.

Make the initiative sustainable. While executive support is essential to launching a data analytics effort, the next step is to enshrine the use of data within the organization so it can withstand turnover at the top. Train staff, build capacity, develop tools for departments, and integrate data into operations so it is a key component and an institutionalized tool.

Capturing and analyzing data to improve operations will become second nature throughout the local government and ensure it endures the eventual departure of its initial champions.

Identify processes in need of innovation and use data analytics to find efficiencies. An emerging trend is to identify citywide business processes that would benefit from innovation or new ways to perform work, and develop a framework for reengineering those processes. This is generally accomplished by mapping the current process and processes and identifying data that helps managers understand their performance.

Departments can use the baseline data to identify issues related to their processes, as well as any issues with how data are collected, to inform a collaborative effort in modifying the process(es). The success of the modified process can then be gauged using the previously identified metrics.

Find some early wins. In San Jose, data professionals who do the work of data analytics for the government collaborated with the planning department to create a dashboard tool. This tool displays performance measurement data in a useful, practical, and visually pleasing way in the beginning stages of the data analytics organization.

A happy partner leads to positive word of mouth, which leads to more departments seeking help, as opposed to being skeptical of what an external office might do with a department's data.

As the work of the analytics team gains traction and identifies more projects with which to help, prioritization starts to occur based on the effort needed to complete a project, likelihood of success, impact on constituents, and how it fits with the city's core mission.

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS CAN AND INCREASINGLY **MUST USE DATA TO IDENTIFY AND SOLVE PROBLEMS,** ADDRESS CONSTITUENT NEEDS, **AND PREDICT SERVICE GAPS.**

Embed a data analyst within departments. Department staff often don't know data well enough to figure out what to collect and how to interpret it. Data analytics team members often don't know a department's operations well enough to understand the performance issues.

A data analyst assigned to a department or a few departments can act as a liaison who can facilitate communication and optimize efforts by understanding sometimes conflicting aims.

Creating Alliances

Tell stories. Those who love data, love numbers; other people, maybe not so much. Make sure there's a story behind what the data are telling. After all, data are the means to an end and the end comes from the analysis of the data and the inferences, hypotheses, and conclusions that result.

Kansas City devotes an entire blog called Chartland to the stories uncovered by its data. One entry digs into dangerous buildings—where they are and what residents want to see happen to them—while others look at wi-fi satisfaction at the airport and a reduction in water main breaks.

Knowing the "why" behind data and how it helps the organization improve makes staff more likely to become involved in capturing, analyzing, and using it. Knowing the intended recipients of the data, whether department staff, managers, policymakers, or the public, is important in determining what data might be useful to collect.

Engage willing departments first. Working with departments and leaders who want help and will take ownership of the project increases the chances that the work product is used and beneficial to the participating department.

Engaging willing departments also allows for a cross section of engaged and relevant staff to participate in working through problem areas and developing the tools to enhance performance.

Department leaders who ask for help are more likely to be pleased with results; their word-of-mouth recommendations will encourage other departments to see a data initiative as a helpful partner in developing useful tools, which will lead to more engagement from willing departments.

Be supportive, not "gotcha" oriented. Some department heads will, perhaps understandably, be concerned about how data analysis could be used against them or create more busy work for employees. By building relationships and highlighting how a department can benefit from working with the data analytics team, department heads will be more willing to collaborate.

In Kansas City, the data analytics team developed metrics for each department's high-level goals and objectives with help from the executive leaders as some departments began to develop their own strategic plans with goals and objectives. The same team worked with each of the departments to make sure the citizen survey questions were relevant to the defined performance measures.

Create platforms for highlighting achievements. Work with managers and elected officials, as appropriate, to ensure that at meetings and staff retreats the data analytics team and relevant departments are given an opportunity to talk about their successes and answer questions.

Build interdisciplinary teams. Doing so requires more effort and takes more time but can result in a better work product. No one person in a local government has all the knowledge needed to solve a problem with data. Indeed, data is just a *tool* that managers can use to address problems.

In San Jose, we sat in on a meeting of an initiative designed to find talented employees more quickly and effectively. By pulling together the right people, those who know about human resources and unions as well as the data experts, the team was able to create a shared vision and understanding of the project that led to an improved process.

Projects can also benefit from a working group that hammers out the details and a strategy group that provides direction and feedback.

Public Outreach

The data analytics teams found that communicating with the public through a variety of methods, including publishing data sets and soliciting feedback on project prioritization, led to greater engagement with residents. Here are four main strategies that were employed most often among the data analytics teams:

FORMING PARTNERSHIPS WITH OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS **HAS ENABLED SOME ANALYTICS TEAMS TO INCREASE CAPACITY AND EXPERTISE** WHILE ALSO FOSTERING A LARGER NETWORK OF PEERS FROM WHICH TO DRAW INSIGHT.

Make data open and push data sets to the public. Use an open data portal to allow for greater data transparency and collaboration with the public in data analysis. Open data portals can also reduce Freedom of Information Act requests.

Increasing engagement by those outside of government to know what their government is doing can help uncover possible solutions. In Cincinnati, a portal called CincyInsights allows residents and employees to see trends in data as disparate as how heroin moves from one neighborhood to the next to where the city's snowplows are during a winter storm.

In starting an open data portal, concentrate first on the datasets that the public is most interested in—budget or crime data, for instance—and expand from there. Casting too wide a net from the start risks overwhelming staff and resources, which leads to frustration and burnout.

Use public input in prioritizing projects. Using 311 data can also be helpful in gauging department performance and service delivery. In both of these cases, it is best to respond first to issues characterized by high dissatisfaction and high importance to the residents.

Drill down to find the real problem. Residents in one city identified road infrastructure as a serious problem. Managers could have assumed that residents meant potholes and crumbling streets, but by conducting focus groups it emerged that sidewalks, curbs, and signage were the more pressing issues.

Develop a vision and communicate it to residents. Each city developed a document that includes the priorities or vision of the management team. The document serves as both an internal and an external way of communicating what the government intends to pursue.

This document can take the form of a strategic plan, a set of priorities, or a smart city vision and can serve as a road map for progress. Data help measure that progress.

Identifying Partners

Forming partnerships with outside organizations has enabled some analytics teams to increase capacity and expertise while also fostering a larger network of peers from which to draw insight. Here are three helpful suggestions on identifying and collaborating with potential partners:

Foundations bring in experts to provide insight and capacity. National foundations have established organizations to provide insight and assistance to jurisdictions implementing performance measurement, open data, and process improvement functions. *What Works Cities* (https://whatworkscities.bloomberg.org), for example, is all about major collaboration.

Two cities that we visited are members of *What Works Cities*, which has provided access to resources, support, and data in jurisdictions through the availability of certain subject matter technical experts, especially in open data governance and predictive data analytics. That in turn has helped advertise the value of these tools.

Universities. Many universities have courses in data analytics and performance measurement. They are a great source of fellows or interns who can help provide capacity and new ideas for local government efforts.

Networking and peer-to-peer exchanges. Organizations like *What Works Cities* and the Alliance for Innovation (http://transformgov.org/en/home) promote networking opportunities and peer-to-peer exchanges, as do Engaging Local Government Leaders (http://elgl.org), to increase the sharing of knowledge and leading practices.

Challenges

The participating data analytics teams agreed on two main challenges to success: lack of access to data and difficulty in using it. Here's how to avoid them:

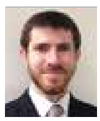
Own the data. Local governments that do not own or have easy access to the data they generate can encounter significant difficulties in broadening the scope of analysis. Writing contracts with vendors so the jurisdiction retains ownership over and access to the data provides the greatest control over how data are used.

Make sure data are easy to collect and use. Not having a central information technology architecture for data collection means that local governments have to spend considerable resources asking for, cleaning, and standardizing data from departments, which hinders the ability to use data as a service.

As information technology decisions are being made, it makes sense to involve someone from the data analytics team to advocate for systems that make it easy to collect and use relevant data.

Despite these challenges, local governments can and increasingly must use data to identify and solve problems, address constituent needs, and predict service gaps. The exact details will vary from one jurisdiction to another and will evolve as local government leaders learn from the process.

The leading practices learned in the field are relevant and helpful to nearly any jurisdiction embarking on a data analytics program and will provide a road map for leaders wishing to improve their operations through the careful use of data. PM

HEAIN LEE and **SAM LIEBERMAN** are analysts, Management Partners, Cincinnati, Ohio (hlee@managementpartners.com; slieberman@managementpartners.com).

BY RHONDA TOOLE

A HEALTHIER BOTTOM LINE

Create a workplace environment where health and wellness can flourish

Employers are in a unique position to create a culture of well-being for their employees through the use of communication tools, peer support, product innovation, and incentives. It is important for leaders to consider employee health and wellness as a key component of their business. When it comes to health care, government leaders face a number of challenges.

In order to effectively engage employees in a healthy culture, local government leaders must lead the way. Elements to create a healthy work environment that can help reduce costs include tailored wellness programs, long-term strategy, incentives, and programs that are easily accessible.

How do leaders navigate these challenges? By making health a priority and creating an environment where healthy living and wellness can flourish. When health and wellness is made a priority, managers and elected officials are better equipped to address the chronic health problems a local community faces.

At Cigna, we believe improving health is crucial to managing health care costs. On the employer side, we're seeing a continued focus on health and wellness improvement programs.

Creating a culture of well-being should be top of mind for your local government workforce. Here are three tips to help start the process:

Consider health and wellness an investment. When budgets are tight, your first inclination may be to cut back on programs or resources. In order to successfully cultivate a culture of well-being, you need to look at health and wellness as a long-term investment—both in terms of people and community.

By setting aside funds dedicated to health and wellness programs, you're working toward better health for an entire community. Building a culture of well-being is a long-term investment in success. Wellness programs not only can help improve the health of employees and help lower costs for local governments, they can also help you attract and retain talent.

Show your support and lead by example. A wellness strategy isn't something that should be implemented outside of normal business hours—it must be integrated within your local government's culture. Senior leadership, including upper-level management staff, needs to support a wellness program for it to be successful because if managers accept it, then acceptance will trickle down to all employees.

Some organizations showcase their commitment to employee health and wellness by stocking vending machines with healthy alternatives, providing health screenings, or establishing group fitness programs.

It's important that employees feel empowered to take an active role in their health and well-being. There are many ways to communicate your support; for example, regular e-mail updates can be sent on setting health goals or preparing a monthly newsletter highlighting upcoming wellness activities.

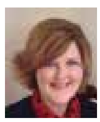
You can also encourage employees to see a health coach or participate in a group exercise class during the workday.

Offer employees customized wellness programs. All local governments have different health needs. There's no one wellness program that works for everyone, which is why it's important to customize a wellness strategy to meet the needs of employees.

A customized strategy can help reduce absenteeism, increase employee satisfaction, and boost workplace productivity, ultimately helping to decrease health care spending. Consider using technology to help your employees track their health and fitness goals and offer them incentives or "wellness dollars" for reaching their goals. Also, consider on-site health services.

Cigna Onsite Health® (https://www.cigna.com/onsite-services) provides access to on-site health and wellness for the public sector. Through well-known wellness program providers, it can help clients bring biometric screenings and flu clinics to their worksite. It also offers on-site wellness coaching right where employees work.

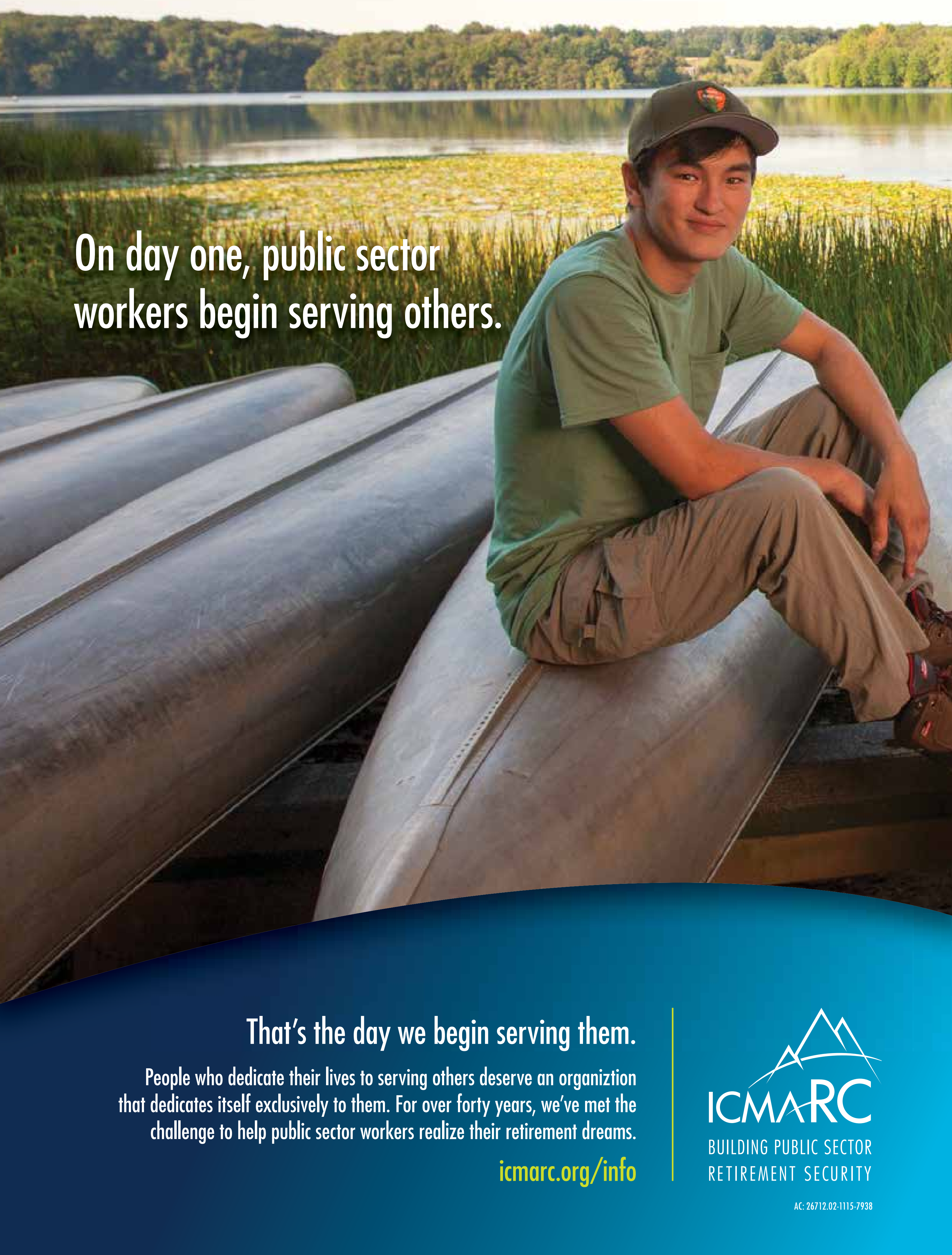
As a wellness strategy is created, keep the goals in mind and make sure the program that is implemented meets those goals. Don't forget to evaluate the program on a regular basis and track key successes. Be sure to share those successes with the rest of your team. PM



RHONDA TOOLE
Vice President
Cigna
Consumer Health Engagement
Charleston, South Carolina
https://www.cigna.com/onsite-services

Cigna Is an ICMA Strategic Partner

To learn more about Cigna, including links to follow us on Facebook or Twitter, visit www.cigna.com. Cigna products and services are offered by Cigna Health and Life Insurance Company, Cigna Onsite Health, LLC, or their affiliates. This information is not intended for residents of New Mexico.


On day one, public sector workers begin serving others.
That’s the day we begin serving them.
People who dedicate their lives to serving others deserve an organiztion that dedicates itself exclusively to them. For over forty years, we’ve met the challenge to help public sector workers realize their retirement dreams.
icmarc.org/info
ICMARC
BUILDING PUBLIC SECTOR RETIREMENT SECURITY
AC: 26712.02-1115-7938

BY S. CHRIS EDMONDS

INSPIRE ALIGNED BEHAVIOR

An organizational constitution boosts engagement and results

Project teams are often the catalyst for change in organizations. They design new systems and new approaches that will require people across their organization to operate differently, to use different systems or tools, and to embrace the new tools nimbly, effectively, and—hopefully—without drama.

You probably have experienced how much easier it is to *design* a new system than to get people to *embrace* it. People resist change. They're used to doing it "the old way" and "their way." Even when they're educated about the benefits of the new system and trained to use it, gaining traction with the new approach takes time, energy, reinforcement, and praising of progress, ad nauseam.

Project managers have always faced such challenges as changes in scope, unclear goals, unrealistic deadlines, "real work" demands, a project manager's absence of direct authority over team members, personality conflicts, and so forth.

New trends for project teams include agile project management (beyond software development) and the increasing use of nontraditional collaboration tools like Slack, Yammer, and Jive, which shift daily communications and documentation away from e-mail and project management platforms (http://bit.ly/2k3Osuv and http://bit.ly/2mT91xr).

These new trends place greater demands on project managers to not only be comfortable with those approaches and tools, but also to help teach team members how to effectively use them.

Also gaining traction is the requirement for project managers to attend to the people management, "soft skills" side of team leadership. Creating a purposeful, positive, and productive work culture boosts project team member engagement and results, as well as

increases service to internal and external customers.

Overreliance on Announcements

In the face of these myriad team challenges, project managers (and many organizational leaders, for that matter) can often resort to "managing by announcements" or MbA.

This approach is a virus-like plague that causes leaders to *announce* a new policy or new approach, and then expect that everyone will immediately embrace the new policy because the leader "told them to."

Telling people what to do doesn't always inspire people to do what you want or need them to do. Telling them is a great start. Getting people to embrace the new approach, policy, or tool requires that leaders spend time and energy to ensure people modify their behavior, adapt their approaches, and demonstrate the new requirements.

With the MbA approach, project managers announce changes to team members frequently, including goal changes, scope creep, shorter deadlines, and more. In the absence of consistent reinforcement and accountability, those project managers experience widely varying implementation of those changes.

Some team members jump on board, while others ignore the new demands. Many complain. Some quit coming to team meetings. Aligned teamwork is not what occurs.

Your project team charter might contribute to the "managing by announcements" plague in your team. If your charter includes team operating principles—typically broad expectations for meeting attendance, participation, alignment to the charter, and more—that are not demonstrated by team members daily, that charter has been announced but isn't embraced.

A Better Way

There is a better way. Project managers can take charge of their team culture, creating a purposeful, positive, and productive work environment, by crafting an organizational constitution.

An organizational constitution builds on your project team charter. It includes team strategies and goals, which specify performance expectations and deadlines. It includes a servant purpose, which describes your team's "reason for being" besides creating a product. A servant purpose outlines who the team's primary customers are and how those customers will benefit from the team's efforts.

Most importantly, an organizational constitution includes your team's values and behaviors, which translate vague operating principles into observable, tangible, measurable form. The number of strategies and goals can depend on the organization; however, I coach leaders to have three to four values and two to three behaviors for each value. Rather than an "announced" operating principle that says "team members hold each other accountable for goals and deadlines," one example is a team value of integrity that specifies exactly how team members are to behave daily.

One organization defined integrity value as "acting with virtue, sincerity, and truthfulness." Its three integrity behaviors are:

- I align my actions with our values.
- I am honest and do what I say I will do.
- I take responsibility for my actions and I learn from my mistakes.

With these behaviors formalized, it's much easier for leaders to live these values and behaviors, coach them, and hold team members accountable to them.

Don't manage by announcements. It's not an effective way to inspire aligned behavior or build trusting and respectful relationships in a project team.

Craft an organizational constitution. Live it. Coach it. Align all plans, decisions, and actions to it. You'll boost engagement, service, and results. PM

S. CHRIS EDMONDS is founder and chief executive officer, The Purposeful Culture Group (http://drivingresultsthroughculture.com), Denver, Colorado, and author of *The Culture Engine* (chris@chris-edmonds.com).

BY JOHN ZAKIAN

MORE TO KNOW ON DISASTER PLANNING

While the "Strategic Disaster Planning" article (April 2017 *PM*) certainly has value, there are two critical omissions.

First, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is first response, but its programs, services, and funding are limited by law to homeowners and renters. What is not noted in the article is that for businesses, it is the Small Business Administration (SBA) and not FEMA that they need to contact.

Help for Business Owners

Usually, the assistance centers that FEMA sets up in the wake of disasters contain SBA representatives. Too often, businesses do not know that FEMA does not assist businesses and quickly become discouraged from seeking assistance.

It is true that FEMA Iowa and Pennsylvania programs are grants while SBA disaster assistance is offered through loans for both working capital and repair/rebuild, but such loans are at interest rates below conventional rates.

In establishing plans and in responding to disasters, it is important for local, county, regional, and state officials to reach out to both FEMA and SBA.

Federal Policy Guidance

Second, there is no reference or discussion about the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF; https://www.fema.gov/national-disaster-recovery-framework). NDRF is now the federal government sacred book covering pre- and post- disaster response. It sets forth the roles and responsibilities of a multitude of federal departments and agencies in preparing and responding to disasters.

NDRF also sets forth best practices, protocols, and guidelines for response to disasters and the expected interaction among federal agencies, state government, and affected local communities. I advise anyone in local, regional, and state government to have copies of NDRF and be familiar with its contents.

I was deployed in May 2011 as a member of the FEMA's long-term community recovery team serving as coordination group supervisor for all federal agencies' response to the Alabama tornadoes disaster in April 2011.

It was during this deployment that President Obama signed off on NDRF to be the policy guidance for all federal agencies involved in disaster planning and response. PM

JOHN ZAKIAN is national disaster resilience program manager, Minot, North Dakota (jzakian@aol.com).

BY JAMES THURMOND

MY TAKE ON GRADUATE STUDIES

A good article for stimulating thinking on the status of today's MPA (master of public administration) programs was published in the March 2017 *PM* ("The Graduate Studies Quandary" by Scott Lazenby). I have not been active on ICMA's Advisory Board

(continued on page 27)

BY ROD GOULD, ICMA-CM

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT FOR POLICE DEPARTMENTS

How to build and regain trust

Police departments face this growing crisis in communities: A lack of public trust and legitimacy. Besides recommitting to the tenets of community policing, the police must undertake continuous and well-thought-out public engagement efforts to bolster confidence and two-way communication.

This requires specialized civic engagement, and what works for local organizations in general may not be effective for police departments, where circumstances can often be extremely different.

Why Now?

Despite steep decreases in crime in communities throughout the country over the past 15 to 20 years, public confidence in police is dropping. It is particularly low among the poor, people of color, and youth.[1]

Use-of-force incidents caught on video have inflamed communities that perceive overly aggressive or racist police tactics. Police departments routinely provide crime statistics, but information about complaints regarding misuse of force, bias, and misconduct remain sparse.

The public, too, often forms its impressions of its police based on news stories, videos, social media, and anecdotal experience with officers.[2] Civic engagement requires incorporating a diverse cross section of residents into recruitment, selection, promotion, discipline, developing policies, guiding implementation, and evaluating results.[3]

It means getting on agendas of groups already meeting in the community and going "into the lion's den" on occasion. It requires creating an environment that welcomes dissent and difficult conversations.

Public engagement goals for both police departments and residents can include:

- Better understanding of the intricacies of communities—not just those people one interacts with on a daily basis.
- Clarifying perceptions vs. reality.
- Understanding the expectations and concerns of the entire community when it comes to law enforcement.
- Identifying critical community resources and those in need.
- Building legitimacy and trust with vulnerable populations.
- Developing rapport with and support from the community.
- Opening lines of communication and hearing criticism directly.
- Developing a referral network of stakeholders.[4]

Prior to engaging with the community, a police department would be wise to get its own house in order. Some of the relevant questions that managers need to ask about a department include:

- Is there a culture of trust *within* the department?
- Have officers and their unions been engaged?
- Are procedures in place for timely, transparent, honest, and accurate internal and external communication?
- Is data made easily accessible to everyone, even when it doesn't paint a flattering picture on public complaints and what came of them?
- Is the complaint process open and accessible?[5]
- Does the department reach out to local business owners who know their customers?
- Are officers encouraged to mentor youth and to volunteer in the community?
- Do officers partner with the faith community and train for cultural competency?
- Are regular meetings held in different neighborhoods and locations that are chosen because they are centrally located, near transportation, neutral, and comfortable in nonstressful times?[6]

In Difficult Times

Sometimes difficult conversations will be encountered, particularly where trust is low or where a police action has harmed community relations. After a contentious incident takes place, hold town hall meetings to allow community members to vent and ask questions.

Also allow the police to provide information on adjustments to policy, practices, and training in light of the incident.[7]

In these cases, take extra care to plan community meetings wisely:

- Be clear about the issues and objectives.
- Adopt a mindset of inquiry, manage emotions, and be comfortable with silence.
- Be tough on the issues and easy on the people.
- Use a neutral facilitator trusted by both sides.[8]
- Leave the meetings with a list of action items for everyone, including police, community leaders, and political leaders.
- Work for mutual respect and develop "anchor" relationships that provide

lasting and influential relationships with community leaders.[9]

- Foster shared responsibility, avoid blame, and admit mistakes.
- If the meeting is to solve a specific problem, develop an agenda with the community leaders and share it with the attendees for feedback.
- Debrief after the meeting to discuss what has been learned.[10]

The Center for Public Safety Management (CPSM) and the Davenport Institute for Public Engagement and Civic Leadership, Pepperdine University, are partnering to research this critical facet of public engagement. If you are interested in improving police and community relations, contact Leonard Matarese (lmatarese@cpsm.us) or Ashley Trim (ashley.trim@pepperdine.edu). PM

ENDNOTES AND RESOURCES:

1 The Final Report of *The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing*, May 2015, pg. 9. *Time*, August 24, 2015, "What It's Like to be a Cop in America," Karl Vick.

2 RAND, "Performance Metrics to Improve Police-Community Relations," Jessica Saunders, February 2015.

3 International Association of Chiefs of Police, "National Summit on Community Police Relations: Creating a Culture of Cohesion/Collaboration," January 2015.

4 COPS Office, DOJ, and VERA Institute, Police Perspectives: Building Trust in a Diverse Nation – No. 1, "How to Increase Cultural Understanding," Caitlin Gokey and Susan Shah, 2016.

5 International Association of Chiefs of Police, National Policy Summit on Community-Police Relations, January 2015.

6 Police Executive Research Forum, "Advice from Police Chiefs and Community Leaders on Building Trust – Ask for Help, Work Together, and Show Respect," March 2106 and National Coalition Building Institute's Cops and Community Training Program, www.ncbi-cops.org.

7 COPS Office, DOJ and VERA Institute, Police Perspectives: Building Trust in a Diverse Nation – No. 1, "How to Increase Cultural Understanding," Caitlin Gokey and Susan Shah, 2016.

8 National Crime Prevention Council, "Improving Police-Community Relations through Community Policing," 2007–2008.

9 COPS Office, Department of Justice, Community-Police Relations, Rank and File, "Leaders in Building Trust and Community Policing," James E. Copple, 2016.

10 International Association of Chiefs of Police, "National Summit on Community Police Relations: Creating a Culture of Cohesion/Collaboration," January 2015.

ROD GOULD, ICMA-CM, a retired city manager, is director of training, Center for Public Safety Management, Greenbrae, California (rodgould.com and rodgould17@gmail.com).

your replies | (continued from page 25)

on Graduate Education, so I have missed the discussions. I would like to share a few comments and observations, though, about MPA programs.

I agree that there should be solid linkage between the MPA academic community and the practical community. I believe that this linkage currently exists with many MPA programs, because practitioners are an important component of the MPA education process.

I also agree that there should be stronger linkages between state professional associations than currently exist. Such linkages should be institutionalized through standing professional association committees dedicated to having working relationships between academia and practitioners.

I once served on an ad hoc higher education committee for a state professional association, and I felt that much was accomplished during its existence. Once its purpose was completed, however, the committee went away, and I felt that the linkage between MPA programs and the state association suffered.

Cognitive Skills Are Key

While there should be more to a MPA degree than teaching a student "how to think," I strongly believe that the most important skills and capabilities that we can teach future public managers are cognitive—how to think about solving problems, analyzing evidence and data, deciding a course of action, and more.

In addition, we must then teach students how to apply their new cognitive skills to real-world problems through case studies, internships, current event discussions, class speakers, and capstone projects.

I am not sure that any MPA program could adequately address the six mission-specific elective competencies from the ICMA and NASPAA (Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration) working group. Just the one competency of "managing local government core services and functions" raises all types of questions.

What are core services? Water production and distribution, wastewater collection and treatment, police and fire, parks, streets, drainage, code enforcement, zoning, economic development? In my graduate school experiences in the early 1970s, I learned little about these "core services," but I did learn about them quickly on the job. I just do not see how a standard 36- to 40-hour MPA curriculum could cover all the core services.

Evidence Available?

Is there evidence or data that demonstrate the under-performance of MPA programs today or that MPA degrees aren't useful today?

While I do not have a MPA but received a MPAff degree in 1973, my anecdotal perspective based on 30 years of local government experiences and 10 years of teaching MPA courses is that today's MPA curriculum is a better blend of academics and practice than it was 40 or 50 years ago.

Consequently, I believe that graduates today tend to be better prepared than I was in 1973. PM

JAMES THURMOND, Ph.D., ICMA Life Member, is director, MPA Program, University of Houston, Houston, Texas (jhthurmo@Central.UH.EDU).

BY MIKE CONDUFF, ICMA-CM

GROWING GOVERNANCE CAPACITY

Expanding sphere of influence can help communities

I recently facilitated an interesting conversation for a community I've worked with for some time during its annual communication and issues retreat. Like many best-practice and high-performing teams, this group of elected and appointed officials meets regularly to examine and fine-tune the members' behaviors and hone their skills.

This particular community rotates the mayor annually, and the elected officials and staff feel strongly that they want to capture their individual talents while growing the governance capacity of the team.

They also work hard to build a strong pool of succession candidates for their own commission and for boards they appoint. Some of this is formal—leadership academies and training sessions—and some of it is informal, including personal mentoring and outreach.

Broader Outreach

Interestingly, this year the conversation went beyond internal capacity building and succession planning. In fact, waxing almost philosophical, group members spent a fair amount of time thinking about their broader governance intersections in the community.

Probably typical, this city council and city management team either has direct appointments to, sits on, or influences numerous other boards, commissions, taxing authorities, and agencies, including the chamber of commerce, economic development corporation, convention and visitors bureau, community college board, county commission, school board, as well as civic clubs, and more.

The dialogue began with what seemed a simple question: Are we doing all we can to instill good governance in all of our areas of influence?

The mayor put it this way: "We see every week in our meetings and in our staff accomplishments how effective governing well makes us. We get a lot done efficiently with few upsets.

"Why would we not want to take our expertise to the streets and help these other groups—several of which we fund or have influence over—experience the same success? In many respects, we owe it to the community to inculcate this in the governance culture here!"

The ensuing discourse examined the pros and cons of "sticking our noses" into other's business, and how that might be appreciated, tolerated, refused, or even scorned.

On the plus side, the team knew its reputation was solid, and that its demonstrated success and expertise would be of real value. On the downside, some felt that even with the best of intentions, reaching out might be misinterpreted as team members trying to "take over" or control others' behavior.

One member said, "We know that some of these partners are struggling and by not reaching out, we are in essence abandoning them to repeat past mistakes." Another chimed in, "A few years ago, we were where they are now. We have found a replicable way to get better; we cannot in good conscience withhold our expertise from them."

A Worthwhile Investment

Ultimately, the group agreed that this would be a worthwhile investment of time, energy, and even money for the upcoming year and added it to their outcomes plan. Group members developed a small handful of results indicators and even agreed on some basic cultural behaviors, along with some limits for themselves in their capacity-building roles.

The limits were: Don't imply blame. Don't appear in any way to be threatening. Don't take credit for results. Don't allow initial hesitancies to derail the long-term effort. Be sure to support the city manager or mayor if targeted accusations of interference arise. Take the long view.

Obviously, this is a group that has achieved a fair level of mastery in its own governance sphere, and it may well be beyond where your council or commission is. Even so, some of this conversation has implications for all local government managers:

- Good governance is a learnable and transferable skill.
- Many small steps taken over time can result in big shifts in governance behaviors.
- Focusing on the broader community governance environment and culture is important.
- Governance capacity building and elected succession planning pay dividends for the internal organization.

If your elected team is doing a nice job of leading, then perhaps it is time to help them expand their own sphere of influence. Developing a common governance language throughout the jurisdiction or community can lead to extraordinary accomplishments.

I really liked what the mayor said: "In many respects, we owe it to the community!" PM

MIKE CONDUFF, ICMA-CM
President and CEO
The Elim Group
Denton, Texas
mike.conduff@theelimgroup.com

marketplace | professional services

TO ADVERTISE, CONTACT Ben Harmon, The Townsend Group, Inc., 301/215-6710, ext 106 or bharmon@townsend-group.com

916.630.4900

Ralph Andersen & Associates

There's an Entire Team Behind Every Assignment

- Executive Recruitment
- Management Consulting
- Public Safety

www.RalphAndersen.com

SB Friedman
Development Advisors

Our mission is to guide and enable our clients to create high-quality places through real estate economics, development finance and urban planning

- Public-Private Partnerships
- Public-Private Development Finance
- Real Estate Economics
- Impact Analysis
- Community & Economic Development
- Urban Economic & Policy Studies

221 North LaSalle Street | Suite 820 | Chicago IL 60601
312.424.4250 | www.sbfriedman.com

VISION | ECONOMICS | STRATEGY | FINANCE | IMPLEMENTATION

Maximize the value of every dollar.

PUBLIC SAFETY:
efficiency studies
consolidation studies
master planning
executive recruitment

HUMAN RESOURCES:
compensation analysis
performance assessments
policies & procedures
HR outsourcing services

McGrath
CONSULTING GROUP, INC.

(815) 728-9111
www.mcgrathconsulting.com

Get the most from your municipal services.

The Mercer Group, Inc.
Consultants To Management

- *Organization and Management Studies*
- *Executive Search*
- *Utility Studies*
- *Compensation and Classification Studies*
- *Privatization*
- *Strategic Planning*

5579B Chamblee Dunwoody Road #511
Atlanta, Georgia 30338
770.551.0403 • Fax 770.339.9749
E-mail: mercer@mindspring.com

1000 Cordova Place #726
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505
505.466.9500 • Fax 505.466.1274
E-mail: jmercer@mercergroupinc.com

Pinpointing Workable Solutions from 18 Offices Nationwide

Strengthening ORGANIZATIONS

Leadership Expertise. Exceptional Service.

- Facilitation & Strategic Planning
- Community Engagement
- Training
- Executive Coaching
- Executive Search
- Organizational Assessment and Optimization
- Financial Planning
- Organizational Development Performance Management

The Novak Consulting Group

info@thenovakconsultinggroup.com 513-221-0500

REACH YOUR MARKET

For advertising information, contact The Townsend Group, Inc., 301/215-6710, ext 106 or bharmon@townsend-group.com

THE MANAGEABLE LIST

July 5 is Chocolate Day. Festivals with a chocolate theme are celebrated in communities all over the world, sponsored both by local governments and by nonprofit organizations. Here is a short list of just 16 communities where festivals are held. Listed in random order, these were collected from online research (April 2017):

Burlington, Wisconsin

The first Hot ChocolateFest was held in February 2017, and included a hot chocolate contest among other activities. The city also has a chocolate museum, and Nestle®USA is located in Burlington (http://www.burlington-wi.gov; http://chocolateexperiencemuseum.com).

Fairfax, Virginia

Chocolate Lovers Festival. The first festival was held in February 1993 and continues an annual tradition with "love of chocolate" as a unifying theme (http://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/special-events/chocolate-lovers-festival).

Rainbow City, Alabama

Alabama Chocolate Festival. Daylong event celebrated its 12th year in April 2017 (http://alabama.travel/upcoming-events/alabama-chocolate-festival-2).

Paradise, California

Chocolate Fest. Held each May since 2006. Benefits nonprofit organizations providing educational, enrichment, recreational, and leadership opportunities to city youth (chocolatefest.us).

Traverse City, Michigan

Chocolate Festival. A fundraiser for the Northwest Food Coalition, this 8th annual event was celebrated in April 2017 (https://www.facebook.com/tcchocolatefestival).

Suisun City, California

Art, Wine, & Chocolate Festival. The festival is presented by business members of the Suisun City Historic Waterfront Business Improvement District (http://www.visitsuisuncity.com/event/art-wine-chocolate-festival).

Morehead City, North Carolina

Carolina Chocolate Festival. Conducted for 12 years, proceeds from the event are donated to local charities and used for school scholarships (http://carolinachocolatefestival.com).

Oakdale, California

Chocolate Festival. Has been held in May since 1993. (http://www.eventcrazy.com/Oakdale-CA/events/details/9136-Oakdale-Chocolate-Festival).

Montrose, Pennsylvania

Annual Chocolate and Wine Festival. This year marked the 10th anniversary of the event (http://www.chocolatewinefestival.com).

Yukon, Oklahoma

Chocolate Festival – Affair Extraordinaire. Proceeds from this sixth annual event held in February 2017 benefit local park renovations and the public library (https://www.facebook.com/events/1726978334205483).

Le Mars and Sioux City, Iowa

Wine and Chocolate Festival. Event has been held since 1994. Proceeds from this year's two-day event support programs and services provided by the Alzheimer's Association (http://www.alz.org/greateriowa/in_my_community_63690.asp).

Mobile, Alabama

Mobile Chocolate Festival. 9th annual festival was held in March and proceeds from the event benefited victims of domestic violence (http://www.mobilechocolatefestival.com).

Glendale, Arizona

Glendale Chocolate Affaire. The three-day annual event, held for its 22nd year in 2017, took place in February (http://phoenix.about.com/od/attractionsandevents/a/GlendaleChocAff.htm; https://www.glendaleaz.com/events/chocolateaffaire.cfm).

Grenada

Fourth Annual Grenada Chocolate Fest. In May 2017, this island country located in the Caribbean Sea celebrated the island's organic and ethically produced cocoa and chocolate (http://www.grenadachocolatefest.com).

Dallas, Texas

Dallas Chocolate Festival. The 2017 event in September will be held downtown, at the Dallas' Arts District (http://dallaschocolate.org; https://www.facebook.com/DallasChocolate).

Washington, D.C.

D.C. Chocolate Festival. Tickets to this one-day event provide access to chocolate makers and includes classes and lectures (https://www.dcchocolatefestival.com).

(All festival links will be live on *PM*'s website effective June 27, 2017.)