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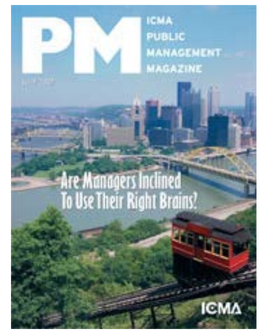

Revenge of the Right Brain

Scientists have long known that a neurological Mason-Dixon line cleaves our brains into two regions—the left and right hemispheres. But in the past 10 years, thanks in part to advances in functional magnetic resonance imaging, researchers have begun to identify more precisely how the two sides divide responsibilities.

The left hemisphere handles sequence, literalness, and analysis. The right hemisphere, meanwhile, takes care of context, emotional expression, and synthesis. Of course, the human brain, with its 100 billion cells forging 1 quadrillion connections, is breathtakingly complex. The two hemispheres work in concert, and we enlist both sides for nearly everything we do. But the structure of our brains can help explain the contours of our times.

Daniel H. Pink, Washington, D.C.

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COVER STORY

Revenge of the Right Brain

by Daniel H. Pink

When I was a kid growing up in a middle-class family, in the middle of America, in the middle of the 1970s, parents dished out a familiar plate of advice to their children: Get good grades, go to college, and pursue a profession that offers a decent standard of living and perhaps a dollop of prestige. If you were good at math and science, become a doctor. If you were better at English and history, become a lawyer. If blood grossed you out and your verbal skills needed work, become an accountant. Later, as computers appeared on desktops and CEOs on magazine covers, the youngsters who were really good at math and science chose high tech, while others flocked to business school, thinking that success was spelled MBA.

Tax attorneys. Radiologists. Financial analysts. Software engineers. Management guru Peter Drucker gave this cadre of professionals an enduring if somewhat wonky name: knowledge workers. These are, he wrote, "people who get paid for putting to work what one learns in school rather than for their physical strength or manual skill." What distinguished members of this group and enabled them to reap society's greatest rewards was their "ability to acquire and to apply theoretical and analytic knowledge." And any of us could join their ranks. All we had to do was study hard and play by the rules of the meritocratic regime. That was the path to professional success and personal fulfillment.

But a funny thing happened while we were pressing our noses to the grindstone. The world changed. The future no longer belongs to people who can reason with computer-like logic, speed, and precision. It belongs to a different kind of person with a different kind of mind. Today, amid the uncertainties of an economy that has gone from boom to bust to blah, there's a metaphor that explains what's going on. And it's right inside our heads.

Scientists have long known that a neurological Mason-Dixon line cleaves our brains into two regions—the left and right hemispheres. But in the past 10 years, thanks in part to advances in functional magnetic resonance imaging, researchers have begun to identify more precisely how the two sides divide responsibilities.

The left hemisphere handles sequence, literalness, and analysis. The right hemisphere, meanwhile, takes care of context, emotional expression, and synthesis. Of course, the human brain, with its 100 billion cells forging 1 quadrillion connections, is breathtakingly complex. The two hemispheres work in concert, and we enlist both sides for nearly everything we do. But the structure of our brains can help explain the contours of our times.

Until recently, the abilities that led to success in school, work, and business were characteristic of the left hemisphere. They were the sorts of linear, logical, analytical talents measured by SATs and deployed by CPAs. Today, those capabilities are still necessary. But they're no longer sufficient. In a world upended by outsourcing, deluged with data, and choked with choices, the abilities that matter most are now closer in spirit to the specialties of the right hemisphere—artistry, empathy, seeing the big picture, and pursuing the transcendent.

Beneath the nervous clatter of our half-completed decade stirs a slow but seismic shift. The information age we all prepared for is ending. Rising in its place is what I call the conceptual age, an era in which mastery of abilities that we've often overlooked and undervalued marks the fault line between who gets ahead and who falls behind.

To some of you, this shift from an economy built on the logical, sequential abilities of the information age to an economy built on the inventive, empathic abilities of the conceptual age sounds delightful. "You had me at hello!" I can hear the painters and nurses exulting. But to others, this sounds like a crock. "Prove it!" I hear the programmers and lawyers demanding.

OK. To convince you, I'll explain the reasons for this shift, using the mechanistic language of cause and effect. The effect: the scales tilting in favor of right brain-style thinking. The causes: Asia, automation, and abundance.

ASIA

Few issues today spark more controversy than outsourcing. Those squadrons of white-collar workers in India, the Philippines, and China are scaring the bejesus out of software jockeys across North America and Europe. According to Forrester Research, one in nine jobs in the U.S. information technology industry will move overseas by 2010. And it's not just tech work. Visit India's office parks and you'll see chartered accountants preparing American tax returns, lawyers researching American lawsuits, and radiologists reading CAT scans for U.S. hospitals.

The reality behind the alarm is this: Outsourcing to Asia is overhyped in the short term but underhyped in the long term. We're not all going to lose our jobs tomorrow. (The total number of jobs lost to offshoring so far represents less than 1 percent of the U.S. labor force.) But as the cost of communicating with the other side of the globe falls essentially to zero, as India becomes (by 2010) the country with the most English speakers in the world, and as developing nations continue to mint millions of extremely capable knowledge workers, the professional lives of people in the West will change dramatically. If number crunching, chart reading, and code writing can be done for a lot less overseas and delivered to clients instantly via fiber-optic cable, that's where the work will go.

But these gusts of comparative advantage are blowing away only certain kinds of white-collar jobs—those that can be reduced to a set of rules, routines, and instructions. That's why narrow left-brain work such as basic computer coding, accounting, legal research, and financial analysis is migrating across the oceans. But that's also why plenty of opportunities remain for people and companies doing less routine work like programmers who can design entire systems, accountants who serve as life planners, and bankers expert less in the intricacies of Excel than in the art of the deal. Now that foreigners can do left-brain work cheaper, we in the U.S. must do right-brain work better.

AUTOMATION

In the 20th century, machines proved they could replace human muscle. This century, technologies are proving they can outperform human left brains—they can execute sequential, reductive, computational work better, faster, and more accurately than even those with the highest IQs. (Just ask chess grandmaster Garry Kasparov.)

Consider jobs in financial services. Stockbrokers who merely execute transactions are history. Online trading services and market makers do such work far more efficiently. The brokers who survived have morphed from routine order-takers into less easily replicated advisers who can understand a client's broader financial objectives and even the client's emotions and dreams.

Or take lawyers. Dozens of inexpensive information and advice services are reshaping law practice. At CompleteCase.com, you can get an uncontested divorce for $249, less than a 10th of the cost of a divorce lawyer. Meanwhile, the Web is cracking the information monopoly that has long been the source of many lawyers' high incomes and professional mystique. Go to USlegalforms.com and you can download—for the price of two movie tickets—fill-in-the-blank wills, contracts, and articles of incorporation that used to reside exclusively on lawyers' hard drives.

Instead of hiring a lawyer for 10 hours to craft a contract, consumers can fill out the form themselves and hire a lawyer for one hour to look it over. Consequently, legal abilities that can't be digitized—convincing a jury or understanding the subtleties of a negotiation—become more valuable.

Even computer programmers may feel the pinch. "In the old days," legendary computer scientist Vernor Vinge has said, "anybody with even routine skills could get a job as a programmer. That isn't true anymore. The routine functions are increasingly being turned over to machines." The result: As the scut work gets offloaded, engineers will have to master different aptitudes, relying more on creativity than competence.

Any job that can be reduced to a set of rules is at risk. If a $500-a-month accountant in India doesn't swipe your accounting job, TurboTax will. Now that computers can emulate left-hemisphere skills, we'll have to rely ever more on our right hemispheres.

ABUNDANCE

Our left brains have made us rich. Powered by armies of Drucker's knowledge workers, the information economy has produced a standard of living that would have been unfathomable in our grandparents' youth. Their lives were defined by scarcity. Ours are shaped by abundance.

Want evidence? Spend five minutes at Best Buy. Or look in your garage. Owning a car used to be a grand American aspiration. Today, there are more automobiles in the United States than there are licensed drivers, which means that, on average, everybody who can drive has a personal car.

And if your garage is also piled with excess consumer goods, you're not alone. Self-storage—a business devoted to housing our extra stuff—is now a $17 billion annual industry in the United States, nearly double Hollywood's yearly box office take.

But abundance has produced an ironic result. The information age has unleashed a prosperity that in turn places a premium on the less rational sensibilities of beauty, spirituality, emotion. For companies and entrepreneurs, it's no longer enough to create a product, a service, or an experience that's reasonably priced and adequately functional.

In an age of abundance, consumers demand something more. Check out your bathroom. If you're like a few million Americans, you've got a Michael Graves toilet brush or a Karim Rashid trash can that you bought at Target. Try explaining a designer garbage pail to the left side of your brain!

Or consider illumination. Electric lighting was rare a century ago, but now it's commonplace. Yet in the United States, candles are a $2 billion a year business for reasons that stretch beyond the logical need for luminosity to a prosperous country's more inchoate desire for pleasure and transcendence.

Liberated by this prosperity but not fulfilled by it, more people are searching for meaning. From the mainstream embrace of such once-

exotic practices as yoga and meditation to the rise of spirituality in the workplace to the influence of evangelism in pop culture and politics, the quest for meaning and purpose has become an integral part of everyday life.

And that will only intensify as the first children of abundance, the baby boomers, realize that they have more of their lives behind them than ahead. In both business and personal life, now that our left-brain needs have largely been sated, our right-brain yearnings will demand to be fed.

As the forces of Asia, automation, and abundance strengthen and accelerate, the curtain is rising on a new era, the conceptual age. If the industrial age was built on people's backs, and the information age on people's left hemispheres, the conceptual age is being built on people's right hemispheres. We've progressed from a society of farmers to a society of factory workers to a society of knowledge workers. And now we're progressing yet again—to a society of creators and empathizers, pattern recognizers, and meaning makers.

But let me be clear: The future is not some Manichaean landscape in which individuals are either left-brained and extinct or right-brained and ecstatic—a land in which millionaire yoga instructors drive BMWs and programmers scrub counters at Chick-fil-A. Logical, linear, analytic thinking remains indispensable. But it's no longer enough.

To flourish in this age, we'll need to supplement our well-developed high-tech abilities with aptitudes that are "high concept" and "high touch." High concept involves the ability to create artistic and emotional beauty, to detect patterns and opportunities, to craft a satisfying narrative, and to come up with inventions the world didn't know it was missing. High touch involves the capacity to empathize, to understand the subtleties of human interaction, to find joy in one's self and to elicit it in others, and to stretch beyond the quotidian in pursuit of purpose and meaning.

Developing these high-concept, high-touch abilities won't be easy for everyone. For some, the prospect seems unattainable. Fear not (or at least fear less). The sorts of abilities that now matter most are fundamentally human attributes. After all, back on the savanna, our caveperson ancestors weren't plugging numbers into spreadsheets or debugging code. But they were telling stories, demonstrating empathy, and designing innovations. These abilities have always been part of what it means to be human. It's just that after a few generations in the information age, many of our high-concept, high-touch muscles have atrophied. The challenge is to work them back into shape.

Want to get ahead today? Forget what your parents told you. Instead, do something foreigners can't do cheaper. Something computers can't do faster. And something that fills one of the nonmaterial, transcendent desires of an abundant age. In other words, go right, young man and woman, go right.

Daniel H. Pink is author and presenter (dp@danpink.com), Washington, D.C. This article is adapted from *A Whole New Mind: Moving from the Information Age to the Conceptual Age*, copyright by Daniel H. Pink, published in March 2005 by Riverhead Books. Printed with permission of the author. It was originally published by *Wired* magazine.

Daniel Pink will be a keynote speaker at ICMA's 93rd Annual Conference, Pittsburgh/Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, October 7–10, 2007.

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FEATURE

Hurricane and Storm Season 2007. . . Is Your Community Ready?

by Samuel Oppelaar, Jr.

On February 27, 2007, weather experts from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reported the onset of a possible weather-producing phenomenon, known as La Niña, in the Pacific basin. The experts predicted a significantly active Atlantic hurricane season as a result of the La Niña effect in the Pacific.

The 2006 storm season was mostly benign in its impact on the United States, but many communities along the Gulf Coast are still recovering from the destruction caused by the multiple tropical storms that struck in 2005. This year, we might not be quite as fortunate as we were in the 2006 season, and it is imperative that we take some actions in advance of that first-named storm that eventually will be headed for landfall in the United States. The La Niña advisory of February 27 could be our first call to action for 2007.[1]

DISASTER CAN STRIKE

Some say that you can never be fully prepared to face disasters. There may be some truth to that, but the opposite is also true. Inherent risks are associated with the potential for naturally occurring disasters, and taking no preparatory action is equivalent to accepting fate without mitigating any of the risks.

The core of this concept is based on fact. We know that tropical storms will develop during the storm season, and with some certainty the hurricane experts2 predict at least some of these storms will make landfall in the United States. What we don't always know is where exactly this will occur.

In the aviation business, pilots sometimes (rarely, we hope) invoke the big-blue-sky theory of collision avoidance, arguing that, because the sky is so big and aircraft so small, a midair collision is unlikely at best. Those who take this risky approach to safety place themselves and others at significant risk. Actual midair collisions do happen, and they might have been avoided by not subscribing to the big-blue-sky theory of aircraft separation.

The unfortunate parallel to this is that some people seem convinced that "it can't happen to us," and they invoke such varying reasons as "a storm has never hit here before," "we are not in the path of most storms," or "we are safe in this part of the country."

If any part of this mind-set ever becomes business as usual in local government, the potential for increased destruction and loss of life will expand exponentially as a result of inadequate or noneffective preparation. To answer the question posed by this article: One would need to know the potential outcome of disaster striking the community.

County governments in coastal areas publish a graduated floodplain chart that shows the areas of the county that would flood under varying storm strengths should a direct impact occur. This is an excellent preparatory step as it makes citizens aware of the potential flooding of their homes if a storm strikes the area. Understanding floods is good, but there are significantly more risks associated with a storm strike than just flooding.

This article takes a look at the major risk categories that a local government should consider in the development of disaster response plans, long-range plans, and short-term actions. Practical steps can be taken toward preparation, steps that address risks, risk avoidance, risk mitigation, and recovery.

Certainly the potential for destructive flooding is a risk category associated with storms. Several other areas of risk to the community must also be addressed; these can be called risk groups.

NATURAL DISASTER RISK GROUPS

Citizen Safety Risk Group. In preparing for natural disasters such as tropical storms, protecting citizens from loss of life and injury is the top concern. And, in the aftermath of a storm strike, taking care of survivors who may also be injured is also most important. People may be displaced from their homes and in need of food, water, and shelter.

Local Infrastructure Risk Group. The essential services that people rely on day to day are most likely going to be interrupted as a result of a storm strike. We know that most power grids will be shut down as a result of storm damage to the power sources, transmission substations, and residential and commercial power line connections. Water supplies may be cut off because of the loss of power, and water might be undrinkable because of line breaks and treatment center flooding or failure.

Loss of power may take primary communication systems out of service, in-cluding landline telephones and cell phone services. Fuel supplies will be reduced or not available because of damage to service stations, loss of power, or exhausted supplies.

Real Property Risk Group. The outright destruction or damage to residential, commercial, and government structures directly contributes to the first two risk groups. Loss of residential structures will increase the number of survivors who require shelter. Loss of commercial structures will decrease available supplies of food, water, fuel, and emergency items such as flashlights, generators, lumber, and other construction materials.

Loss of government structures will result in the interruption of local services, including services by first responders. Loss or damage to roads and bridges will hamper relief efforts during and after the disaster by preventing emergency personnel from reaching citizens in distress.

Economic Risk Group. Local businesses that provide services to citizens may face a serious economic impact as a result of a storm strike. Jobs may be lost or interrupted because workers have been displaced or a job site damaged or power lost, and jobs may be suspended or terminated because of employers' financial distress.

The impact of this loss has second-level effects: People who need money the most may lose their source of income at the worst time. Loss of commercial enterprise will eventually affect the local government's tax base, which is needed to provide continuity of essential services. In short, a storm strike places enormous pressure on individual citizens, the local economy, and government resources.

Emergency Services Risk Group. In the immediate aftermath of a storm strike, the sheer magnitude of the impact on people and property may exceed the response capability of even the best-equipped and -staffed emergency first responders. Communication systems may not operate properly, vehicles may be damaged or destroyed, and the responders themselves may not be able to report for immediate duty.

Taken together, these five risk groups include the bulk of potential risks that a community must plan for. They are not mutually exclusive because the effects of one or more risk groups impact the others. By establishing this basic set of risk groups, a baseline is formed from which to plan and prepare.

Preparation is essentially a two-step process. First is the identification of specific risks, followed by the establishment of mitigation actions that can reduce or eliminate the risk. It is critical to note, however, that the best-planned mitigations may prove inadequate or ineffective. When this happens, the risk transforms itself into a real problem that will require immediate attention. What can your locality do to make your preparations less vulnerable?

PRACTICAL STEPS TOWARD PREPARATION

Despite the enormous potential destruction and chaos in the wake of a disaster, there are important actions the local government should use in preparation. These steps offer local governments a quick guide to preparation:

Develop and fine-tune your disaster response plan. In the face of impending crisis, having the ability to deviate from a plan to accomplish the mission is always better than having no plan at all. On the battlefield, commanders must have the flexibility and agility to react to unexpected actions of the enemy, which translates to deviating from the plan of attack or adjusting to meet the threat.

A naturally occurring disaster is the enemy of order and good government. It makes unexpected moves, attacks without mercy, and is indiscriminate in its target. The job of community leaders is to have a sound plan of action that addresses each of the five risk groups and that allows the response team the latitude to deviate from the plan when needed to preserve life and property. Some of these steps may be organic to a plan, but they deserve individual description.

Establish mutual support agreements. As stated in the emergency services risk group, during a massive crisis, your response capability may not able to meet the requirement for services. To mitigate that risk, mutual support agreements should be established with neighboring communities, county-level government, and state agencies. In the event of a disaster, these supporting agencies can be quickly summoned to support your locality.

Establish an emergency response command-and-control capability. This step has several components that form a synergistic capability set:

- Establish a disaster control center (DCC). Your locality may already have a DCC housed in a government facility, but it is also important to arrange for an alternate facility or mobile command post in case your primary facility cannot support operations. The DCC functions as the hub of decision making and communications, with both your response teams and outside support agencies.
- Establish a team of experts to lead and staff the DCC. Simply having a facility to operate from is insufficient in terms of

preparation. The team to operate the DCC must be identified in advance and train regularly to operate the equipment and communication systems, while team members practice the processes needed to coordinate response actions.
- Equip the DCC with robust command-and-control communication systems. Your DCC must have the capability to communicate vertically and laterally during operations and be able to operate on its own power source, independent of the local power grid. Communication systems should include access to satellite phones, Internet access, UHF and VHF radios with spare antennas, and an adequate supply of tactical hand-held radios for distribution to response leadership. Commercially available satellite network access equipment can provide your DCC with Internet access even when land-based service providers are not operational.
- Define the chain of command. Establish in writing who is in command of the response. In most cases, it will be the local government manager, police chief, or fire chief. Describe the reporting chain so there is no doubt where information must go and who is responsible for decisions.
- Conduct DCC exercises. This cannot be overemphasized. It is imperative that the team exercise together regularly to gain understanding and mastery of procedures and actions that will be needed in a real event. Personnel should understand thoroughly the responsibilities of the other team members and have the opportunity to make decisions in a benign environment to test their effectiveness and impact. Emergency communication systems, networks, and radios need to be activated, tested, and used during exercises to the maximum extent possible.

Establish a disaster awareness program for the community. Everyone who lives and works in the area must be aware of their responsibilities in case of disaster. This includes evacuation instructions, awareness of emergency notification procedures, preparation of personal property, and, most important, what to do when disaster strikes.

Residents must be able to identify and locate emergency shelters, know how to notify response teams of the need for emergency care when telephone systems are inoperable, and provide important phone numbers. Individual citizens can also take other precautions in advance, such as setting up a planned evacuation location at a friend's or relative's home outside the local area.

As part of training the DCC, notify and remind the population of emergency preparation activities and include community and business leaders in the preparation of the disaster awareness program.

Open the lines of communication. No command-and-control system, whether civilian, government, or military, can be expected to function effectively within minutes or seconds without routine use. Military, police, fire, and medical response communication systems are used constantly. Relationships with superiors, subordinates, and lateral organizations are established and, when called into action, require minimum coordination because the relationships across agencies are already well established.

It is also critical that the members of the DCC team routinely make regular contact (not only during a crisis) with local, county, state, and federal agencies to establish close working relationships. Crisis situations that involve time-critical decisions and actions are not the time to realize that you don't have the phone number for a critical support agency, the governor's office, FEMA, or nongovernmental relief agencies that you might rely on. Practice makes perfect (or, at least, effective) when the time comes.

Stock an emergency consumables supply. Part of your disaster response preparation is the establishment of a basic supply of emergency consumables. Food packs, such as meals ready to eat (MREs), bottled water, fuel supplies to run emergency generators, medical supplies, clothing, and blankets are essential components of this contingency supply stock.

Have a plan for how this supply can be accessed, and by whom. Although your stock will probably not be sufficient to service the needs of everyone, it should be sufficiently robust to service your response teams and relief workers right away.

Establish a community disaster response committee. In the event of a disaster, help can come from a wide variety of sources. What's critical is having the organizational structure in place to enable effective and efficient management of relief aid. A multidisciplined committee made up of government, business, and community members can provide a valuable forum for establishing a coordinated set of responses, and it also allows some ownership to the community for emergency planning. Efforts of this committee can directly contribute to the local government's overall disaster-planning effort.

READY FOR WHATEVER TAKES PLACE

When we turn on the Weather Channel in the morning and hear the hurricane expert tell us a tropical depression is forming in the Caribbean, we should not be in a state of panic. We should already have taken proactive steps toward having a plan of action if the storm heads our way. We should have practiced our command-and-control procedures, established working relationships with collateral agencies, tested our emergency communication systems, and activated our local emergency notification system.

Now we wait and see where the storm will go. If it heads our way, our disaster response plan kicks in well in advance of the storm, and our response teams, equipment, supplies, and procedures are ready to deal with whatever nature hands our community.

[1]Although this paper addresses tropical systems as the core issue, the concepts and ideas presented also apply to other significant natural events such as tornadoes, flooding, severe or destructive thunderstorms, and even wildfires

and earthquakes.

[2]The Department of Atmospheric Science at Colorado State University pre-dicts that the 2007 Atlantic hurricane season will include 14 named storms, seven of which will be hurricanes. Three of these are expected to be severe hurricanes. There is a 40 percent probability for landfall along the East Coast of the United States, Florida, and the Gulf Coast.

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FEATURE

Ethics

QUICK QUIZ ON ETHICS

Test your knowledge of the ICMA Code of Ethics and advice. Answers and explanations are provided in this magazine.

1. The county council has asked me to raise funds for the Arts in the Parks festival this summer. As the county manager, can I raise funds for this cause?

A. Yes
B. No

2. I am the city manager, and my husband was active in community affairs before we married. He was the district attorney when we met, and he recently filed papers to run for the state legislature. Although I have explained that I cannot make financial contributions to his campaign or publicly endorse him, one aspect of his campaign platform advocates saving open space by purchasing it with state funds. Last year, I spoke at numerous public events to promote the city's ballot measure to purchase open space and parklands. Our city is considered a model by many observers. My husband plans to distribute copies of my land conservation speeches at his campaign events. Is this a violation of the ICMA Code of Ethics?

A. Yes
B. No

3. I've been asked to lend my name to various products and services. Which ones are ethical for me to support?

A. A recycling partnership program that the city has with a private company.
B. A book on leadership published by a friend.
C. An ICMA University workshop.
D. All of the above.
E. None of the above.

To find out whether you answered the questions correctly, scroll down...

—Elizabeth Kellar
Deputy Director
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1. Yes, but use good judgment. Tenet 12 of the ICMA Code of Ethics and its guideline on gifts remind members to avoid soliciting money if the individual or the individual's organization might view the contribution as a favor and expect special treatment from the member in the future. Members should exercise good judgment and refrain from soliciting funds from a business if the business has a specific issue that may be coming before the local government in the near future for action or a decision.

Members should not make direct requests of their subordinates to donate because that may create a situation in which employees feel uncomfortable or even coerced into making a donation. It is appropriate for members to provide employees with information about the cause and give them an opportunity to donate if they so choose.

In raising funds for this local government project, members should be as open and transparent about their efforts as possible. They are advised to:

- Obtain governing body approval for the fund-raising effort.
- Provide clear guidance and direction to staff who may be engaged in fund raising.
- Publicly announce that a fund-raising campaign is under way and outline in writing the parameters of the campaign.
- Regularly report on the sources and amounts of donated funds and services.

2. No, it is not a violation. Your public speeches and articles can be distributed by any candidate for office with or without your permission. The ICMA Code of Ethics does not prevent family members from running for office, although their political activities may disturb some members of the city council. You can try to minimize their concerns by talking with them about your husband's plans and explaining your responsibility as a professional city manager to stay out of political activities. As you already told your husband, Tenet 7 of the ICMA Code of Ethics does not permit you to raise money, endorse, or make donations to candidates for elected office—even if the candidate is your husband.

3. D, all of the above. Tenet 12 of the ICMA Code of Ethics has a guideline on endorsements that reminds members not to endorse any commercial products or services. Members, however, may endorse the following as long as they do not receive any compensation: (1) books or other publications; (2) professional development or educational services provided by nonprofit membership organizations or recognized educational institutions; and (3) products or services, or both, in which the local government has a direct economic interest.

Ethics advice is a popular service provided to ICMA members. The ICMA Executive Board members who serve on the Committee on Professional Conduct review the inquiries and advice published in PM magazine. ICMA members who have questions about their obligations under the ICMA Code of Ethics are encouraged to call Martha Perego at 202/962-3668 or Elizabeth Kellar at 202/962-3611.

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DEPARTMENTS

On Retirement

It's Never too Late to Save

As a provider of retirement plans for more than 700,000 state and local employees, ICMA-RC always encourages young employees to sign up for their employer-sponsored retirement plans as soon as possible. That way, time works to their advantage.

For all sorts of reasons, however, employees often wait until they are getting close to retirement age before they realize that they could face a difficult time after they leave service if they do not begin to seriously start putting money away.

Although older workers may not have the miracle of compounding working for them for as long as those who begin saving for retirement at the beginning of their careers, they should not despair. It is still possible to build a significant retirement savings balance if they begin contributing immediately.

So, where should they begin? The most important principle that workers should understand is that they are saving not for the first day of retirement but for 20 or 30 years beyond that date. In other words, a person who retires at 65 today can expect to live to be about 90 years old—a 25-year investment horizon after retirement.

Second, they should try to save every dollar possible for their retirement. Even a small amount can add up considerably. For example, $10 per day in a 457 deferred compensation plan will amount to more than $100,000 in 15 years at a rate of earnings of 8 percent per year.

In 2007, an employee can contribute a maximum normal contribution of $15,500 to a deferred compensation plan. Employees who are age 50 or older are also eligible to contribute up to an additional $5,000, for a total of $20,500. Employees who are age 50 or older can also choose to use a "pre-retirement" catch-up provision that permits them to contribute an extra $15,500 in addition to the normal contribution of $15,500, for a total of $31,000.

The "pre-retirement" catch-up provision allows public workers to contribute additional dollars in the final years before retirement. This helps them make up for years in which they did not contribute the maximum for which they were eligible to contribute under their current employer's 457 plan.

If the worker is eligible, a tax-deductible IRA may also be available in 2007 for an additional contribution of $4,000. For people who are over 50 years old, the maximum IRA deduction for those eligible in 2007 rises to $5,000.

Even if an employee starts saving later rather than sooner, there is still time; and tools are in place to help build retirement security. It's important for older workers to take advantage of those savings tools now and to encourage their younger colleagues about the importance of starting early.

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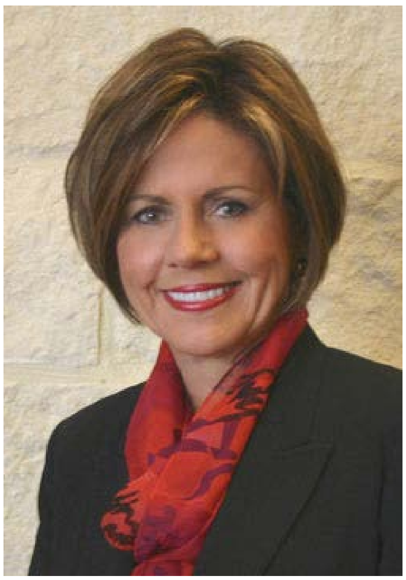
Profile



Sheryl Sculley is the city manager of San Antonio, Texas.

Phoenix Go-Getter Lifts San Antonio

Phoenix, Arizona, city government is drawing rave reviews in San Antonio.

Former Phoenix Assistant City Manager Sheryl Sculley, now the hard-driving city manager of the Alamo City, has imported Phoenix-style strategies, policies, even some people to help bring change, energy, and civic support to city government there.

Sculley has been the top administrator for more than a year and has earned widespread support for her professionalism and openness. She is respected and popular in a very close-knit, traditional town not always friendly to outsiders. Resentments over her high salary (now $260,000) have withered under a blitzkrieg of well-received accomplishments.

San Antonio Mayor Phil Hardberger described her as “the finest city manager in the United States, the (NBA All Star) Tim Duncan of city managers” in his State of the City address [presented in January 2007], words remarkably similar to the lavish praise Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon showers upon long-time Phoenix City Manager Frank Fairbanks.

Phoenix insiders are not surprised by her early successes or her take-charge style. “Have you ever known Sheryl Sculley not to be running?” observed Don Keuth, president of the downtown economic-development group Phoenix Community Alliance and a longtime Sculley friend and ally. “San Antonio was looking for the aggressive, go-to approach that she has.”

Still, she has shaken San Antonio with a blur of hyperactivity and change, especially for a city that has been described as a “sleepy border town”—by its own mayor. Since taking office in November 2005, she has appointed 44 top executives, reorganized a significant chunk of the city’s top administrative departments, developed the largest bond proposal in city history, prepared and got passed a two-year city budget, and authorized a top-to-bottom makeover of the city's developmental services department.

During her first week on the job, a crisis blew up when firefighters' breathing equipment malfunctioned. By the following summer, new air masks had been analyzed, purchased, and delivered. According to her own count, she also delivered 100 speeches and met with more than 600 community groups.

Whew!

Upon closer scrutiny, equally striking is the extent to which Sculley has taken Phoenix-style approaches to her new job.

- For several key appointments, Sculley created citizen advisory panels to interview candidates, a strategy borrowed from her years in Phoenix. "This approach has never been done here, and people really liked it," according to Joe Krier, head of the local chamber of commerce, who interviewed police chief candidates. "When they announced the appointment, and it was one of the candidates that we liked, you get buy-in."
- Similarly, the budget was developed in a more "open and deliberative" way, according to Councilman Richard Perez, from a largely Hispanic southwestern district and an early Sculley supporter. In a move straight from the Phoenix playbook, Sculley initiated a series of budget hearings in the council districts, a "traveling road show" designed to drum up public support. A stupendous success.
- When the city started working on a bond issue, Sculley suggested the city form a citizens panel to help assess needs and make recommendations This was a first for San Antonio but a ritual in Phoenix. The citizens, and later the councilmembers, embraced Hardberger and Sculley's idea of forging a citywide agenda for the bond program.

  In the past, councilmembers merely divided the money among themselves and the mayor. But Hardberger, backed by Sculley, convinced the council that San Antonio would be better served by a citywide approach. "It took a lot of convincing, and the city council was giving up a lot, but what we've done is historic for San Antonio," Hardberger says in retrospect.
- On occasion, Sculley has recruited Phoenix officials for help. One, Scott White, now heads the convention and visitors bureau. He was the no. 2 person here. Bob Dorfman, former head of the Phoenix Municipal Court, is advising San Antonio on a reorganization of its court system. And Alan Brunacini, longtime Phoenix fire chief, helped her whittle down the finalist list for San Antonio's new fire chief, a group that includes two prospects from Phoenix.
- At Sculley's behest, the city formed an 18-month management intern program to provide students work experience in city agencies. Phoenix has a similar program that has produced dozens of its current administration.

Sculley's results-first ambitions made her a respected, even feared, city administrator here, especially popular with the downtown business establishment. Two years ago, when Texas officials began courting her, some major Phoenix movers and shakers put pressure on the council to raise her salary or have her designated as city manager in waiting. Those efforts failed.

The council really has authority to appoint only one administrator: the city manager. And the current council wants to keep Fairbanks on the job several years after he could have retired. The new first-term mayor, considered an outsider to city government, the councilmembers, and the public were all looking to raise the bar.

"We aspire to be a Tier 1 city. We are not there, no, but we want to get there. She has brought a level of professionalism that will help us achieve that," said Perez, the councilman.

"The city fathers were eager for an action-oriented person and got that in Sheryl Sculley," offered Richard Gambitta, director of the Institute for Law and Public Affairs at the University of Texas–San Antonio.

Sculley's attention to detail and her willingness to communicate with councilmembers have resulted in lopsided 8–3, 9–2, and 10–1 council votes, much like the Phoenix city council's ho-hum unanimity. That may change in the longer term.

Practically every political watcher in southern Texas mentions that San Antonio has the one of the most restrictive term limits of any major American city. The mayor and 10 councilmembers are limited to two, two-year terms.

"For Manager Sculley, it means she has the current council's support for a short moment in time," said Char Miller, director of Urban Studies at Trinity University. "Upon this May's election, she will have to bring up to speed half the council—a process that is replicated every two years."

Secondly, although Sculley notes that more than half of her staff appointments have been Hispanic, she has yet to name a Mexican-American to a top position in a town that is majority Hispanic. Many will be watching her choice for the new fire chief and her negotiations on collective bargaining agreements with police and fire unions.

Sculley says she misses Arizona's sunshine, her friends, and the South Mountain Preserve, but she has acclimated well to her new digs. She and her husband, Mike, who got a contract with the county government to push San Antonio's bids for professional sports, share a condo along the River Walk, just a few blocks from city hall.

Meanwhile, Sheryl Sculley keeps moving at a breakneck pace, running hard and driving even harder. And no one is surprised.

> **—Richard de Uriarte**
> **Staff Writer**
> **The Arizona Republic**

Phoenix, Arizona

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Performance Matters

Performance Measurement *Is* Rocket Science, and Citizen Surveys Provide the Lift

A rocket scientist brags to a colleague after an intense lead-up to an experimental launch: "This was the most successful engineering project I've ever been part of. We held 10 mock EVAs with the robot exploration team. I had the most advanced jet engine configuration from Lockheed, the best O-rings, and the tightest heat-reflecting tile. Every engineer who worked on the project was cum laude from an Ivy League grad school; even the space rats had pedigrees. The operation went off without a hitch, and each of our team members performed like a surgeon on a transplant team."

"That's fantastic!" the colleague said, "Has the payload landed yet?"

"No," the engineer admitted, "It blew up a few feet off the pad."

Certainly by some measures of performance, the scientist did not draw a perverse conclusion about his success. But this example emphasizes the fact that not all performance measures are created equal, and even rocket scientists face measurement problems that are like those faced by government managers. Performance outputs in local government, like staffing ratios, dollar allocations, and number of services performed, fail to capture critical successes or failures.

Performance outcomes—whether a rocket flies and lands or a patient lives or dies—are harder to come by in local government because few cities or counties go defunct for lack of adequate management. Instead, the bottom line in local government tends to be what the people think about the quality of service delivery and the quality of community life. For rocket scientists and local government managers, it comes down to this: It's not just how hard you try; it's how well you do.

How well you do in government doesn't get measured as easily as how hard you try because how hard you try relies on common metrics like minutes, miles, and money. But how well you do often depends on belief—the belief of the residents you serve.

Perception and reality are two sides of the performance coin and both have currency, but even if your community's streets are smooth as olive oil and just as safe, you have a street repair and public safety problem if residents think the streets are pitted and they're afraid to walk them at night. Most residents know what they think about the job you're doing, and it doesn't take a psychoanalyst to tease the hidden truth out of them. Citizen surveys are the medium by which a savvy local government manager eavesdrops on the people who are served. More and more managers are putting their ears to the door to listen.

Citizen surveys done right provide a statistically defensible read of an entire community's perspectives about the quality of local government services, the quality of community life, the engagement of residents in local activities, and general trust in local government. With service and community evaluations as well as resident reactions to proposed new policies and programs, the citizen survey defines success and provides insight into how success can be sustained.

If you listen closely, though, you almost can hear the hand-wringing of America's survey researchers who worry about the changing environment in which survey research occurs. The truth is, despite declining response rates for certain kinds of surveys, scientific surveys continue to provide accurate estimates of opinion and projections of behavior.

Virtually all of the best national surveys anticipated the hairsplit vote of 2004, they predicted the democratic landslide in the 2006 midterm congressional elections, and they continue to project accurately where voters plan to mark their ballots. Both politicians and private sector purveyors of products rely on surveys to plot strategies, hone messages, and swing behavior.

For local government managers, innovations in citizen survey research have transformed the enterprise from a straight-razor shave to (slight exaggeration here) a trip to the spa. The National Citizen Survey™ (NCS) was created by National Research Center, Inc. (NRC), and in 2001 was offered to ICMA members in a partnership between NRC and

ICMA.

It is a turnkey survey service designed to minimize cost and burden to local government staff and at the same time provide scientifically valid resident opinion relying on completed sample sizes of 400 to 1,000. The survey has been conducted in more than 100 jurisdictions in 35 states.

In 2005 and 2006, the response rate from the mostly mailed surveys for NCS clients averaged 40 percent. Meanwhile, response rates were much lower for typical phone surveys from which national estimates of voting behavior were made. The basic NCS sample of a random 1,200 households (with about 400 returns expected) offers a margin of error of about five percentage points. It employs a widely tested five-page survey with questions clients select about their community characteristics, service quality, community engagement, public trust, and demographics.

Clients also can create unique questions that gauge the public stomach for new taxes, assess their priorities for new services, or report their perspectives in their own words. One of the most important features of NCS is that it permits local governments to compare their results with results in scores of cities or counties roughly of their size across the United States or in their regional backyard. NCS typically costs less than half that of a fully custom survey.

As local government managers and rocket scientists measure their successes, each must broaden definitions beyond proven processes and stellar materials. In local government, tracking the arc of resident perspective draws the map of service success. Resident opinion is the path to sustainable government quality and done correctly, it provides a management vehicle that won't blow up in your face.

For more information on citizen surveys, visit the NRC Web site at http://n-r-c.com/services/nationalcitizensurvey.html or the ICMA Web site at http://icma.org/ncs.

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