

SEPTEMBER 2005 · VOLUME 87 · NUMBER 8



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Managers need to pull together to create the right environment for the next-generation transition.

Lynne C. Lancaster, Sonoma, California, and David Stillman, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

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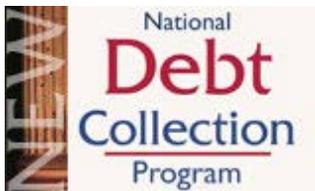
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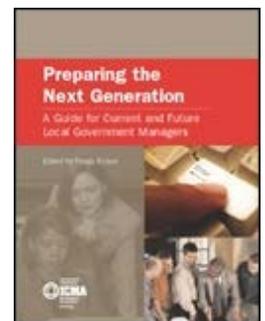
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**Information and
Technology
Leadership for
Local Governments**

If I Pass the Baton, Who Will Grab It? Creating Bench Strength in Public Management

by **Lynne C. Lancaster, Sonoma, California, and David Stillman, Minneapolis, Minnesota**

A Baby Boomer who is a city manager in Northern California was frustrated and perplexed. "I've got a talented Gen X assistant city manager I've been mentoring for several years," he says. "She's smart, organized, politically savvy . . . just the right profile to take over my job when I retire. But when I recently told her she was the top candidate to inherit my role her response was, 'Thanks but no thanks. I wouldn't wish that on my worst enemy!'"

It took the stunned city manager a while to realize that the position he fought so hard to achieve and worked so hard to succeed in held little appeal for the next generation. Too many public managers are hearing similar responses from the next generation of talent, and for many, it's a surprising situation.

After years of budget cuts and hiring freezes, the impending retirements of millions of Baby Boomers will create huge opportunities to hire the next generation of leaders, giving them important responsibilities and authority. Yet, too often, Generation Xers are doing anything but leaping at the chance to advance. In fact, some are running kicking and screaming from jobs many boomers deemed highly desirable.

Demographic Challenges

Public management now faces a war for talent many leaders never expected. First of all, the profession is being challenged by demographics. As 80 million Baby Boomers (born 1946-64) move into their retirement years, they are followed by a much smaller population of Generation Xers—just 46 million people born between 1965 and 1981. That means the pool of workers available for grooming as managers is much smaller than it has been for decades. While the next generation following the Gen Xers (Millennials, born 1982 to 2000) are larger in number at 76 million, they are just beginning to enter the workforce and won't be available in this large number for some time to come.

The good news is that with fresh tools available, like Web-based recruiting sites, it's going to be easier to reach out and touch a new generation of employees looking for an opportunity to make a difference. But to do that successfully, it will be vitally important to understand the value propositions of those to whom we wish to appeal.

To complicate matters, Generation Xers are harder to lure into public management. This is a highly independent and entrepreneurial generation. They are skeptical of large institutions and uncomfortable with layers of bureaucracy. By the age of 20, Generation Xers had already watched 23,000 hours of television. And in the media, they saw every major American institution called into question, from the presidency to the military, to organized religion, to corporate America, and yes, even state and local governments.

Too many Xers think if you can name the institution, they can name the crime. It will be tough to convince this cohort that they can have meaningful careers as public servants because the first question on their minds will be, "Can I really accomplish anything?" followed by questions like, "Can I be true to my values?"

Another aspect of the hiring challenge is that Generation Xers have so many choices. The 1990s saw the emergence of Xers into the U.S. workforce in parallel with both a decade-long economic boom and the tech boom. So this generation has had a plethora of options, ranging from working at a high-tech start-up out of someone's garage to joining private industry with a great title and big signing bonus.

Too often the option of working in the public sector wasn't even on the table. For one thing, many local governments weren't actively hiring; in fact, many were downsizing. For another, the Baby Boomers held most of the managerial

jobs. And because boomers were relatively young and capable, there wasn't much room for the Gen Xers working in their shadows to move up.

A January/February 2003 article in this magazine entitled "What Can Be Done? Attracting Young Adults to Careers in Local Government," by author Michele Frisby, included a chart outlining the age distribution of appointed managers. In 1971, when boomers were emerging into the public workforce, 26 percent of appointed managers were under the age of 30.

By the year 2000, appointed managers under 30 numbered only 2 percent! Clearly, when Xers complain they can't advance fast enough, they aren't just imagining it. But too many older managers have pigeonholed Xers as greedy, impatient, and even disloyal because of their desire to keep their careers in motion.

With workers on the leading edge of the baby boom turning 60 and public pension plans rewarding senior managers for retiring on time or even early, we are about to experience a massive workforce shift. As boomers retire en masse, will the next generations be around in sufficient numbers to succeed them? The answer is yes, but only if managers of all generations in the public sector pull together to create the right environment for this transition.

ATTRACTING THE YOUNGER GENERATIONS

One of the first steps in attracting the younger generations to public service will be to consider perceptions. Too often, local governments have been seen as slow moving and low tech. They are viewed as being too bureaucratic to get anything done, with a daily schedule of meetings about meetings about meetings that seems almost strangling to an outsider or to someone accustomed to lean and flat organizations.

Then there's the challenge of the hiring process. Prohibitive civil service exams, long waits to hear whether a resume has even been received, unresponsive personnel offices, and unclear career paths are just a few of the obstacles Gen Xers cite when asked about why they gave up and went to work somewhere else.

With tech savvy Millennials, the challenge will be even greater. The majority say the first place they go to find out about jobs is the World Wide Web. Yet far too many public institutions have out-of-date Web sites with limited use of color and unexciting messages on why anyone would want to work there. These sites are often loaded with boilerplate language on required exams and job specifications and fail to communicate the vision, values, and challenges that might draw an individual to public service.

These sites also often miss opportunities to hit the hot buttons that would encourage a Millennial to take a second look. In one study, for example, Millennials were asked to name the single most important factor they would look for in a career. Their No. 1 response: the ability to make a difference. Yet, this kind of goal is seldom addressed in recruiting materials, whether Web-based or on the printed page.

Once hired, what happens? With so many boomers in the top spots, upward mobility for the younger generations has been slow. Career pathing doesn't seem to happen as rapidly as impatient Xers might hope, and they often fall victim to a dues-paying culture where the number of years they put in appears more important than what they actually accomplish. For multi-tasking Millennials who are used to loads of variety in what they do, the "silo mentality," in which moving between departments is next to impossible, will be a significant demotivator.

But even if we understand generational differences intellectually, they can be painful to confront on the personal level. Think about the city manager described above. He loves his job and is proud to have spent decades revamping the way his city is governed, creating opportunities for change and having an impact on his community. His achievements, however, seem less significant when viewed through the eyes of his assistant, who expresses these sentiments about the manager's position: "You never go home on time, you've accrued about a million hours of vacation you never use, and you're divorced. Besides that, you're starting to lose your hair! Why would I want that? I'd like to actually spend time with my family!"

What better opportunity to paint the picture of urgency and encourage them to document and pass along the most critical knowledge? And what better chance to let the younger generations in on the secrets to their success? Remember, the brain drain won't just sap organizations of experience. When we lose top people, we lose a lifetime of contacts and affiliations.

Pretty depressing, huh? Especially the part about the hair! Boomers may feel overworked, but we always believed we looked pretty good! Seriously, when asked about their jobs, many idealistic boomers working in government today feel their sacrifices have been justified because they were able to have a significant impact on the way things get done. They are proud of their accomplishments and can see tangible results for the battles they've fought. Why is it so hard to get the next generations to grasp that side of things?

First of all, managers need to do a better job of touting local government success stories and painting a picture of what does get accomplished. It's too easy for the media to cover budget shortfalls or the latest public works snafus that make local leaders look more like Abbott and Costello than Donald Trump. Successes in government can be tricky to cover and are often thought of as "not sexy enough" by those writing the articles.

The good news is that with fresh tools available, like Web-based recruiting sites, it's going to be easier to reach out and touch a new generation of employees looking for an opportunity to make a difference. But to do that successfully, it will be vitally important to understand the value propositions of those to whom we wish to appeal.

MANAGEMENT HAS PLENTY TO OFFER

What is an employee value proposition? Simply put, it's the set of values that will attract an employee to come to work-and stay-with you. The challenge with value propositions is that different values appeal to different generations. For example, the Traditionalist generation (born prior to 1946) felt the fear and force of the Great Depression. A government job with an accompanying pension, benefits, and promise of lifetime employment was highly desirable.

For many boomer public employees, the pension plan has never looked better, especially when they can retire at 90 percent of pay at age 58! But for younger generations, who are looking at potentially holding down six to 10 different careers in their lifetime, a far-off pension guarantee doesn't hold the same allure. Remember, Xers are the generation that in one study said they believe they have a greater chance of seeing a UFO in their lifetime than a Social Security check. So when recruiting this skeptical workforce, playing the pension card won't be as effective.

What does work in appealing to the next generations? It's important to realize that public management has plenty to offer. Rather than completely reinventing itself, the public sector must take stock of its best value propositions and put these front and center. How do we do this?

First, the managers and recruiters who are handling the hiring should keep in mind that Generation Xers are searching for a place to call home. The financial upheavals of the dot-com bust and the post-9/11 world are fresh in the minds of many. This generation is beginning to seek a career where they can settle in for a long-term commitment to work that feels more stable.

They also are a generation in search of mentors. During the formative years of Generation X, the U.S. divorce rate tripled. Too many came home after school to an empty house or were packed off to after-school programs. Their grandparents often lived 2,000 miles away, and the neighborhood parents weren't out on the front porch dispensing valuable advice—they were at the office. For a disaffected generation, the opportunity to find stability and have access to seasoned mentors can be a big draw.

A second value proposition to consider is that Generation Xers are looking for work/life balance. A recent Harris Poll found that 80 percent of Gen X men said that having more time with their families was more important than more money or more challenging work. We certainly wouldn't have seen that type of response from Baby Boomers at a similar age.

And even if boomers craved more balance, they would not have felt comfortable asking for it. With some 80 million peers competing with them for the same jobs, boomers quickly learned to sacrifice personal needs to get ahead. With their fewer numbers, Gen Xers have had the leverage in the workplace to pressure employers to create more flexible options. In many cases, public entities have a hiring advantage—they can offer more reasonable work hours than the private sector.

In its colorful and appealing new recruiting Web site, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) provides a Letterman-like list of the "Top Ten Reasons to Join the IRS." One of the first reasons is time for fun, family, and friends. Not the language you'd expect from a huge government agency, and yet the IRS realizes its ability to offer balance can be a key recruiting advantage.

TIME TO START TRAINING AND MENTORING

A third value proposition to be aware of in attracting the next generation of leaders is that they want to hit the ground running. They are not willing to wait around for years paying dues until someone decides to grant them responsibility. The good news is, with so many boomers approaching retirement, lots of new positions will be opening up. Now is prime time to start grooming, growing, and training younger employees to fill these spots.

Rather than see the upcoming boomer exodus as disastrous, which is how many boomers tend to view it, we need to see it as an opportunity. As one seasoned and wise public works manager put it, "When we bring in a new generation of managers, we can bring in a new generation of management styles and techniques. There are changes we've needed to make for years, and with an influx of new people, we can get a fresh start."

The coming talent gap creates an ideal opportunity to create special training programs for high-potential employees to be groomed for their next career step. This should provide plenty of motivation for those who were worried that upward mobility in the public sector would automatically move at a snail's pace.

A fourth consideration in understanding the value propositions of the younger generations is the coming brain drain that could occur as highly-skilled Traditionalists and Baby Boomers walk out the door, along with decades of insider knowledge. Too often this is knowledge that won't ever be replaced unless we start now to capture it. While this can seem daunting, it's a prime opportunity to put the best and brightest senior people to work as coaches, teachers, role models, and mentors to the next generations.

We said earlier that Xers are a generation in search of mentors but don't underestimate how important hands-on coaching will be to the Millennial generation. Remember, they've been raised by intensely involved, communicative Baby Boomers who have included their offspring in all sorts of family decisions. As a result, the Millennials are a highly collaborative generation that reports that their best role models are their parents.

This is a far cry from the "don't trust anyone over 30" mentality of the boomers when they were teenagers. You can expect Millennials to see access to coaching from those a few notches up the ladder as an attractive recruiting value proposition. One-to-one coaching and mentoring can be a chance to let the younger generations in on the secrets to

Baby Boomers' and Traditionalists' success.

Remember, the brain drain won't just sap organizations of experience. When we lose top people, we lose a lifetime of contacts and affiliations. One county manager put it this way: "If we have a problem, I can pick up the phone and call exactly the right person to solve it. When I retire, my replacement won't have those contacts because it took a lifetime to build them." That's true, unless we start the transitioning process now.

Who Are the Generations?		
Generation	Influences	Traits
Traditionalists: Born prior to 1946 75 million	Great Depression, New Deal, World War II, GI Bill, Cold War, Pearl Harbor, Korean War, and A-Bomb.	Patriotic, loyal, desire to leave a legacy, fiscally conservative, and faith in institutions.
Baby Boomers: Born 1946- 1964 80 million	Booming birthrate, economic prosperity, recession, women's and civil rights movements, expansion of suburbia, Vietnam, Watergate, anti-war protests, sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll.	Competitive, question authority, desire to put their own stamp on institutions, sandwiched, and optimistic.
Generation Xers: 1965- 1981 46 million	Sesame Street, MTV, personal computer, divorce, Title IX, AIDS, crack cocaine, and missing children on milk cartons.	Eclectic, resourceful, self reliant, skeptical of institutions, highly adaptive, and independent.
Millennials: 1982-2000 76 million	9-11/terrorism, fall of the Berlin Wall, expansion of technology and the media, mixed economy, violence, drugs, and gangs.	Globally concerned, integrated, cyber-literate, media savvy, realistic, and environmentally conscious.

Younger employees need to build their own network of valuable contacts if they are going to succeed. To make the connections that will allow them to get ahead, they will have to be willing to join such professional and networking associations as ICMA or the International Personnel Management Association, and to attend local meetings held by the chamber of commerce or Rotary. Unfortunately, many seem uninterested in sacrificing family time for time spent in meetings and on committees. Mentors can do a lot to bridge this gap by inviting high potentials to join them in attending a special program and by introducing them to people they need to know.

Associations can do more to adapt meetings to fit members' schedules. They can rotate meeting times to accommodate members with daycare and family challenges, hold meetings by phone, and complete other tasks via the Internet and e-mail. They can also create committees with shorter time horizons. A Gen Xer might be willing to serve for a few months on a program committee to plan the upcoming year, as opposed to signing on for a multi-year term.

We also recommend that associations give younger members a place at the decision-making table. Too often a committee is tearing its hair out wondering what kind of programming will attract Xers and Millennials, but when you look around the room, no one in the group is under 40!

Why All the Energy Around the Generational Divide?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demographers predict a coming worker shortage as Boomers retire. ▪ Within seven years, 30 million currently employed workers will be over age 55. ▪ For the first time ever, the next generation of skilled workers will be neither larger nor better educated than the previous one. ▪ The skilled worker gap is estimated to be 5.3 million by 2010, 14 million by 2020. ▪ Organizations that become "employers of choice" now will have the advantage in finding and keeping employees in the future.
Source: BridgeWorks. Lynne Lancaster and David Stillman. Copyright 2005. Web site, www.generations.com .

Another tip: Sell Xers on the career benefits of joining associations. The old value proposition of joining because it is one's civic duty is likely to fall on deaf ears. But a new value proposition of creating contacts that will help advance your career or of taking home valuable knowledge to help you do your job better might just click in.

Younger employees need to do their part as well. Although family and personal time is important, much can be gained by donating time to creating professional affiliations among all generations. While Xers tend to have strong networks of friends, they have often felt shut out by Baby Boomers and have not made the commitment necessary to loop the older generations into their networks. Everyone needs to be willing to invite another generation to attend a

meeting or meet with a critical contact.

BECOME ADVOCATES

Fifth, in recruiting and retaining younger employees, a critical value proposition for Generation X will be the ability to build robust career paths. This is a generation that wants to hit the ground running and make an impact. They want to know what's in the future and what steps they will need to take to get there.

Too many managers today are reluctant to talk with employees about career paths or hesitant to fight for new ways of moving their high potentials through the system toward promotion. Seasoned employees are going to have to stop feeling competitive with members of the next generation and become their advocates.

In terms of career paths, the public sector has a real advantage in being able to offer younger employees the chance to work on huge projects with big budgets. A garage-based business might look fun because you can wear jeans and a tee-shirt to work. But when the total project budget is 50 bucks, ambitious employees will eventually want the opportunity to do and to create something more.

The careers Web site for the Social Security Administration scores a direct hit with this language: "At Social Security, we don't follow the newest IT trends—we make them. . . . You won't find the challenge of maintaining systems this complex and innovative anywhere else." That's smart talk coming from a large institution and a powerful message for a generation looking for big challenges.

Finally, in thinking about value propositions, recognize that the changeover from the Baby Boomer- and Traditionalist-dominated workplace to the next generation of leaders may require more than just retooling expectations. We may have to retool some jobs. Job descriptions that are 20 or 30 years old may need to be rewritten to reflect the complexity of today's positions.

Also, jobs currently requiring a superhuman effort to perform might need to be redesigned to be more manageable. Work assignments that are repetitive, boring, or frustrating might need retooling to allow more variety. At the very least, managers should consider cross-training employees in some of the more mind-numbing jobs to provide new challenges.

One local government-owned utility recently embarked on cross-training back-office employees in at least three different customer service jobs. Not only are most of the employees energized by the change (granted, some are intimidated), but the utility now has back-up for when a key employee is out sick or leaves.

Rewards		
The generations view rewards in different ways. This can affect the strategies that are used to recruit, engage, manage, and retain them.		
Generation	Factoids	Tips
Traditionalists. . . want help easing into retirement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40% of traditionalists said their company did not do a good job of making them want to stay. • 65% said they would not feel comfortable talking with their manager about a different career track within the company. • 73% plan to return to work in some capacity after they retire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize and tap into the loyalty of existing workers. • Remember, traditionalists need career paths too. • Provide training to bring them up to speed. • Put them to work as mentors, coaches, role models.
Baby Boomers. . . want robust careers and help juggling it all.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 43% of boomers said they lack opportunities to be mentored where they work. • 30% said that not having a mentor contributes to their job dissatisfaction. • 75% said time off would be the best reward they could receive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that boomers want to put their own stamp on things. • Focus on "making an impact." • Continue to offer training and careerpathing opportunities. • Beware of boomer burnout. • Offer support to help them balance their busy lives.
Generation Xers. . . want balance and freedom.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only 17% of Xers thought a lifetime career with one company was a good goal (compared to 35% of boomers and 70% of traditionalists). • 30% of Xers have left a job due to lack of training opportunities. • 80% of Xer men said time with family is more important than challenging work or a higher salary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on career security not job security. • Communicate regularly about development and career path opportunities. • Offer flexible work options. • Create opportunities for work/life balance. • Provide constant, unfiltered

<p>Millennials. . . want work that has meaning for them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Millennials are globally aware, cyber-literate, and techno-savvy. • They recently ranked “making a difference” as the most important factor when looking for a job. • They don’t just accept diversity, they expect it. 	<p>feedback.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure they know about you. • Help them visualize the role they could play in your organization. • Understand their need to collaborate. • Focus on how they can make a difference from day one.
<p>Source: BridgeWorks, Lynne Lancaster and David Stillman. Copyright 2005. Web site, www.generations.com; toll-free, 888/519-1187. Lancaster’s and Stillman’s latest book <i>When Generations Collide: Who They Are. Why They Clash. How to Solve the Generational Puzzle at Work</i> (HarperCollins) is available in bookstores and online.</p>		

An additional bonus is that the newly trained employees feel their skill set has become more valuable. Multitasking Millennials are gratified by the opportunity to do multiple jobs simultaneously and will see this as a chance to enhance their resumes, as well as learn more about their work skills and preferences. The point is that it's not an insult to current job holders when we admit the job has to change to work for the next generation of employees or to be more relevant within an ever-changing public system.

By recognizing the need to build bench strength in public management and understanding the values of the next generations of employees, leaders can do a lot to ease the coming war for talent.

Remember our boomer city manager with the reluctant replacement? He got over his frustration with his employee and decided to work with her to see how he could retain her in local government. While she still doesn't want to take over his job, he has uncovered other high-level positions in which he believes she can excel. She is enthusiastic about the possibilities, and he has never felt more positive about placing the future of his city in the hands of the next generation of leaders.

Lynne C. Lancaster and David Stillman are co-founders of BridgeWorks, LLC, based in Sonoma, California, and Minneapolis, Minnesota (phone, 888/519-1187; Web site, www.generations.com). Lancaster and Stillman are authors of the book *When Generations Collide. Who They Are. Why They Clash. How to Solve the Generational Puzzle at Work*. (HarperBusiness, 2002). They will be keynote speakers at ICMA's 91st Annual Conference in Minneapolis, September 25-28, 2005.

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Ethics

Hitting the Interview Jackpot

Q. The city manager felt as if she had hit the lottery. After months of looking for a new job, she found that she was a finalist for two positions and the interviews are scheduled within two days of each other. A different executive search firm was handling each job search so the recruitment personnel were unaware of the competition. The city manager could see herself in either community and intends to interview for both openings. Are there any ethical considerations?

A. It is a good idea for the city manager to let the search firms know that she will be interviewing with two communities. She can expect that her interviews become public knowledge as interviews are usually publicized. By taking the initiative to alert the search firms of her interview plans, she demonstrates professional consideration. A guideline for Tenet 3 addresses the manager's obligations regarding a job search and employment offer:

Appointment Commitment. Members who accept an appointment to a position should not fail to report for that position. This does not preclude the possibility of a member considering several offers or seeking several positions at the same time, but once a bona fide offer of a position has been accepted, that commitment should be honored. Oral acceptance of an employment offer is considered binding unless the employer makes fundamental changes in terms of employment.

To avoid making mistakes in the interview process, ICMA offers these tips:

- Do your homework. Be sure that you understand the political environment in the community, including when council elections are held. Some managers accept a position only to discover that the majority that hired them must stand for election in less than a year's time. Look at the cost of housing so you factor that reality into salary negotiations.
- Involve your family. Be sure that your family will support the decision to move to the new community should you accept the new job. Your new employer has a reasonable expectation that you will check with your family before you make a commitment.
- Give yourself time to consider the employment offer. If you want to be sure that you have a minimum of six months severance pay and certain benefits, be sure that that you have these understandings in writing.

Coming Events: Annual Conference and More

Promoting an ethical culture is a key leadership responsibility. For this reason, ICMA offers a number of workshops, forums, and informal ways for attendees to strengthen their skill and knowledge of personal and professional integrity at its annual conference and throughout the year.

Here are the training opportunities that will be available at ICMA's 91st Annual Conference in Minneapolis:

ICMA University Workshop: "Building a Culture of Ethical Behavior in Your Organization," Sunday, September 25, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and Monday, September 26, 12:45 to 4:45 p.m. Preregistration required; call 202/962-3599.

ICMA University Forum: "The Ethics Court," Sunday, September 25, 12:45 to 2:45 p.m.

For information on local government ethics workshops and peer assistance services, call the ICMA Ethics Center at 202/962-3521. Workshops on such topics as "Promoting an Ethical Culture," "Aligning Staff Values with Strong Ethical Principles," and "Orientation to Ethics" are available for staff, leadership, elected officials, boards, and commissions.

Ethics advice is a popular service provided to ICMA members. The inquiries and advice are reviewed by the Committee on Professional Conduct, the ethics committee of the ICMA Executive Board. Some of the inquiries are revised and published as a regular feature in PM, to give guidance to members in the big and little ethical decisions they make daily. If you have a question about your obligations under the ICMA Code of Ethics, call Elizabeth Kellar at 202/962-3611; e-mail, ekellar@icma.org; or Martha Perego at 202/962-3668; e-mail, mperego@icma.org.

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Scenario Planning-Envisioning Your Organization's Future

"We needed a tool that was flexible—to accommodate not only the evolving needs of our customers and challenges of our system, but that would also leverage our current strengths so that any improvements would be sustainable," recalled Greg Meszaros, Fort Wayne's director of public works and utilities. "Strategic business planning helped Fort Wayne meet multiple long- and short-term objectives. We were so confident in the strategic planning process we developed that we couldn't wait to get started on the implementation phase."

Municipal agencies struggle with complex challenges—responding to increasing public demands in the face of decreasing funding support, managing facilities to meet long-term public needs, protecting the environment through effective utility operations, and meeting tough regulatory standards. Especially today, municipalities want strategies that help them operate more efficiently and plan for the future.

Red Oak Consulting works with municipal agencies and utilities nationwide to implement formal strategic planning processes to ensure they will be prepared as they face an uncertain future. This planning process often includes scenario planning, a disciplined way to plan proactively today for uncertainties in the future.

THINKING STRATEGICALLY

The city of Fort Wayne, Indiana, faced challenges in its future—challenges that included managing a large capital program and annexing a township, which meant that the municipal utilities would have to be extended and integrated. The city's utilities division asked Red Oak Consulting to help prepare a five-year strategic business plan—a planning process that included scenario planning.

When the Honolulu Board of Water Supply (HBWS) decided to seek assistance in developing a master plan, it asked Red Oak Consulting to facilitate the planning process and transfer skills to staff so they could continue planning for strategic activities, but with more limited consulting assistance. Red Oak Consulting used scenario planning to assist HBWS as it dealt with the challenge of ensuring a long-term sustainable water supply for Honolulu.

The concept of scenario planning was new to HBWS, but Doug Murata, chief strategic development officer for HBWS, said the exercise helped HBWS "envision the potential scenarios 10 or 20 years down the road. It became clear to us not only that action in the near term was critical, but also what actions we could implement to put us on the road to sustainability."

RED OAK CAN HELP YOUR MUNICIPALITY CREATE PLANS FOR THE REAL WORLD

Most people plan for the futures they want to have. At Red Oak Consulting we use scenario planning to help organizations be prepared for anything.

Red Oak knows that no two municipal agencies or utilities are alike. Red Oak Consulting focuses on helping each organization develop more efficient pathways to lasting solutions.

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On Retirement

How Communication Tools Are Changing!

For many plan sponsors, Web-based technologies have dramatically changed the way they administer retirement plans and communicate with retirement plan participants. These new technologies have created more opportunities to share information widely, quickly, and in a number of different formats.

Today's Internet-based technologies now enable plan sponsors to quickly access retirement plan information, generate reports, and provide data for forecasting purposes. With a click of a mouse, plan sponsors can enjoy access to the retirement plan information they need, when they need it.

Take, for example, ICMA-RC's own Web-based state-of-the-art EZLink system for plan sponsors. EZLink enables plan sponsors to use the Internet for faster processing of information, for greater control over data submission, to see improved staff productivity, and have more access to specific plan and participant data.

With the goal of delivering the best technologies and services to plan sponsors, the industry continues to move ahead in identifying technologies to help plan sponsors administer their plans, as well as communicate with participants.

Of course, which technologies will emerge is unknown, but three new Web-based communications tools have caught the imagination of innovators and may have application in the administration of retirement plans: blogs, wikis and podcasts.

Blogs are online diaries; wikis are editable Web pages that require no knowledge of HTML or other programming language, so groups can share information; and podcasts are audio (or video) file broadcasts. Each uses a different way of transmitting information to the intended audience.

Clearly, it is too early to determine if these communications technologies will ever be employed by the retirement services industry. But finding more effective ways to communicate financial information to plan participants is certainly needed.

Plan sponsors and plan providers have long recognized that more work still needs to be done when it comes to educating plan participants. There is ample evidence that a great many individuals are not doing an adequate job of managing their personal financial situation, including their investment and retirement planning programs.

As the population ages—especially the enormous baby boomer segment—it is increasingly clear that millions of people are not prepared for retirement. In addition, surveys show that people generally lack confidence in their ability to make informed decisions about their personal finances and investments, and that a lack of time and knowledge is a significant contributing factor. Furthermore, leading educational leaders and ICMA-RC's own research agree that each person learns differently.

Education seems to be a big part of the problem, but it may also open the path toward a longer-term solution. Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve, noted recently: "No matter who you are, making informed decisions about what to do with your money will help build a more stable financial future for you and your family."

Plan sponsors now more than ever have access to Web-based technologies that can be highly effective in communicating to participants, as well as online tools to make plan administration easier.

As we move forward, access to information in the way that plan sponsors and retirement plan participants want it—and when they want it—will go a long way toward building retirement security for public sector employees.

—Joan McCallen
President and CEO
ICMA-RC
Washington, D.C.

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PM MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER 2005 · VOLUME 87 · NUMBER 8

COVER STORY

Call for Fourth Annual Swimming Pool Issue

The December 2004 issue of PM magazine featured a special section on swimming pools owned and operated by local governments. The December 2005 issue will feature this swimming pool section for the fourth time.

If you serve in a community that provides a public pool for its citizens that has not already been featured in the magazine, and if the pool is distinctive in style, structure, operation, location, cost, or other management aspect, share this information in PM.

Send a 250- to 500-word description telling why the pool is distinctive to PM Editor, ICMA, 777 N. Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20002-4201; e-mail is preferred, at bpayne@icma.org. Electronic photo files in high-resolution PDF format are welcome. The deadline for information is August 15, 2005.

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SEPTEMBER 2005 · VOLUME 87 · NUMBER 8

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On Retirement

Exhibitors at ICMA's 91st Annual Conference

Here are the companies exhibiting at ICMA's 2005 conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota. This list includes exhibitors known as of June 13, 2005.

- Active Government Solutions
- Advanced Pavement Technology
- Aerial Services, Inc.
- AIG VALIC
- American City & County Magazine / Primedia Business
- American Legal Publishing Corp.
- The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)
- American Water
- America's VEBA Solution
- Ameristar Fence Products
- Asphalt Pavement Alliance - NAPA
- Billy Casper Golf
- Brigham Young University - Romney Institute of Public Management
- Brother International Corporation
- Bucher, Willis & Ratliff Corporation
- Camelot Pewter Company, Inc.
- CDM
- Cellular Site Landowners Association
- CGI Communications, Inc.
- CH2M HILL o OMI
- Citizen Care by Civic Services
- City-County Communications & Marketing Association
- Civic Plus
- Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies
- CPS Human Resource Services
- Creative Outdoor Advertising of America
- Daystar Computer Systems, Inc.
- E-Gov Link
- Earth Tech, Inc.
- eCivis, LLC

Econolite
ESRI
ETC Institute
Finrock D-M-C, Inc.
First Vehicle Services
Gateway
General Code Publishers
Government Employee Travel Opportunities
GovPartner
Granicus, Inc.
HANSEN
The Humane Society of the United States
ICMA Retirement Corporation
ImageNow by Perceptive Software, Inc.
Imperatives, Inc.
Intelligent Products, Inc.
International Institute of Municipal Clerks
International Sign Association
Japan Local Government Center
Johnson Controls, Inc.
Laserfiche Document Imaging
LexisNexis Municipal Codes
Library Systems & Services
MagnetStreet
McGrath Consulting Group, Inc.
The Mercer Group, Inc.
Monterey Financial Services, Inc.
Most Dependable Fountains, Inc.
Motorola
Municipal Code Corporation
Mutual of America
National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork
National Research Center, Inc./The National Citizen Survey™
Nationwide Retirement Solutions, Inc.
Neighborhood America
NEOGOV, Inc.
NOAA, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
OFFICEMAX
The PAR Group - Paul A. Reaume, Ltd.
PARS
Permitsoft, Inc.
Plan-It CIP Software
Politically Direct
Priority Dispatch Corporation
Public Entity Risk Institute (PERI)
Public Systems Associates, Inc.
Ralph Andersen & Associates

Red Oak Consulting, a division of Malcolm Pirnie
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Reino Parking Systems, Inc.
REVERSE 911®
RJN Group, Inc.
Springsted Incorporated
St. Paul Travelers
Standard & Poor's
SunGard Pentamation, Inc.
Tele-Works, Inc.
Tischler & Associates, Inc.
TriData - SPC
U.S. Department of Justice COPS Office
Underground Infrastructure Management
United States Golf Association
Valmont Industries, Inc.
Vanir Construction Management, Inc.
Virchow, Krause & Company, LLP
Virginia Institute of Government
Virtual IT, Inc.
Virtual Town Hall, LLC
Walden University
Waste Management
The Waters Consulting Group, Inc.
Willdan Group of Companies

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