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Closing the Communication Feedback Loop With Citizens

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What This Presentation Will Cover

- Who we are
- What we have been doing in the field of civic engagement and performance measurement, reporting and management
- What we have learned from 70 local and county governments when they engage with the public in new ways
- How you can close the communication feedback loop with the public and why that is important

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Since 1995, Our Center on Government Performance Has Been:

- Conducting research to determine how the public assesses government performance and urban conditions, and
- Identifying the public's measures that are different from what government uses

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We Have:

- Created some new measures that reflect the public's perspective
- Used/developed data that government and the public can trust
- Encouraged local governments to do the same

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We are the Center on Government Performance (CGP)

- Established in 1995
- Continuing support from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation
- Serves two related, non profit, non-political, independent organizations:
 - National Center for Civic Innovation (2002)
 - Fund for the City of New York (1968)

Our work: To be responsive to the needs of local government and to seek opportunities to improve their performance and the quality of life of their citizens

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At CGP, We Start Our Work By Listening to the Public – Focus Group Research

Why focus groups?


- Used successfully in the private sector for decades to align services and products with the needs of the public (Several hundred thousand/year in U.S.)
- Historically, market research had not been used to align government services with the public's point of view
- Focus groups can elicit why people say, rate and feel the way they do...

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- Our purpose: To find out what indicators people use to judge local government performance
 - How they rate government services and why
- First round of 15 focus groups in 1995; second in 2001; third in April 2009
- A private non-political research firm was our partner in conducting the groups

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9



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LISTENING TO THE PUBLIC
 Report the Success of the Public in
 Government Performance Measurement and Reporting

- Describes our work and the importance of citizen-based performance measurement
- Introduces/suggests over 120 specific new measures for 21 agency functions
- Describes three examples of applying new public-suggested performance measures
- Calls for others to join in this work

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Three **New** Measures We Introduced

1. Jolt Scores and Smoothness Scores for Urban Roadways
2. Assessing conditions on city streets (ComNETsm)
Computerized Neighborhood Environment Tracking
3. Rating how services are delivered

12

Jolt Scores and Smoothness Scores

- Focus Group Finding:** City roadway conditions are highly important and received poor ratings in 1995, 2001 and in 2009
- Action:** Using profilometry, matched IRI ratings (accurate and objective) to focus group ratings as they rode in car
- Developed and applied the public's new measures: **SMOOTHNESS and JOLT SCORES**
- Measured and reported on 676 randomly-selected miles of city streets, 1997 & 1999

13

Assessing Conditions on City Streets (ComNETSM)

- Focus group finding:** People judge government performance by observable street level conditions. People often don't know or care which agencies are responsible.
- Action:** Created ComNET: street level conditions captured accurately on handheld computers. Changing conditions tracked over time.

ComNET - surveyors follow a prescribed route. Database matches the responsible agency to the problem.

ComNET2Go - surveyors use their own smartphones to record conditions as they are noticed. Web-enabled databases store data, produce reports.

- Introduced in 9 cities: 138 areas; 68 outside NYC**

14

Rating How Services Are Delivered

- Focus Group Finding:** The way people are treated by government determines how they judge government performance. First impressions count.
- People want from all city agencies and employees:

1. Accessibility	4. Timeliness	= ACKTRESPONSIVELY
2. Courtesy and Respect	5. Responsiveness	
3. Knowledge	6. Evenhandedness	
- Suggested Action:** An independent website where people can report and rate – without recrimination – their experiences with government (positive and negative)

15

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Other Consistent Findings From Our Focus Groups

- People do assess their government's performance
- People care about government, understand that the work is difficult and complex, and recognize improvements
- People want and need information from government and about government

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- People assess government differently from the way government assesses itself:
 - The public is interested in outcomes and the quality of work performed
 - **Government reports workloads, costs, fte's,.....**
 - **People do not care about which agency or level of government is responsible for what**
 - **Government reports performance by agency**
- People feel powerless

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Examples of Government vs. the Public's Perspectives

	Government Measure	Public Measure
Public Libraries	# of feet of shelf space # of reference queries	Staff helpfulness Availability of materials needed Accessible hours
Emergency Medical Services	Response time	"They came quickly, knew what to do, and took my grandmother to the right hospital right away."
Health	# of restaurants/food stores inspected	Cleanliness and food safety ratings
Roadways	# of work requests # of roadway miles resurfaced	Smoothness Scores Jolt Scores
Street Cleanliness	Tons of refuse collected	Absence of litter Reliable collection schedule

18

“95% of Trains Are on Time? Riders Beg to Differ”
 The New York Times, July 20, 2010

Government Measure	Public Measure
<p><u>On-time performance:</u> Averages all trains at all times of the day Allows for 5 minute, 59 second leeway</p>	<p>What is the record for the train that I take?</p>

19

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Implications: There is a disconnect between government-created performance measures and the way the public views government performance

- Performance measures, if any, are set by government alone
- When we started, few governments inform the public about performance measures they use
- None (!) conferred with the public to find out the measures that they use and their needs

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Misalignment

If performance measures are used by government to assess how it is doing, and those measures are different from the way the public judges government, a major disconnect is the result

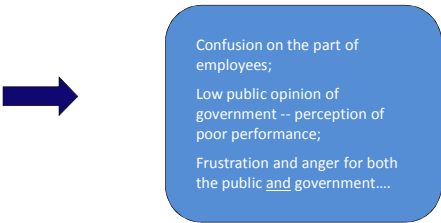
Government

Agency workloads, inputs, outputs, costs, FTEs, revenues, etc.

The Public

Cross-agency work, outcomes, the results of government's efforts, quality, relevant information, being treated with respect

21



Confusion on the part of employees;
 Low public opinion of government -- perception of poor performance;
 Frustration and anger for both the public and government....

Makes effective performance management difficult.

22

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Our Question in 2007

Is there a way to encourage governments to do work similar to what CGP has done?

To involve the public in their performance measurement and reporting processes, and then to bring greater alignment between government measures and the public's?

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Government Trailblazer Program:

Governments Involving the Public in Performance Measurement, Reporting and Management

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The Government Trailblazer Program 2003 – present

Encourages cities, counties and special entities to:

- Communicate with the public in new , non-confrontational ways that yield mutual understanding
- Align government’s performance with the public’s perspective whenever possible
- Improve government performance

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Requirements, Incentives and Outreach

Requirements:

- Support from top management
- Project manager in place
- Adhere to timeline and project plan
- Make performance report available to the public
- Broad outreach to the public
- Solicit feedback from the public
 - Use professional market research techniques
 - Neutral space and neutral moderator
- Heed some or all of the public’s suggestions when considering revising performance measures and reports, and reviewing and formulating management practices and priorities

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Requirements, Incentives and Outreach

Incentives:

- Small grant
- Recognition
- Annual meetings
- Part of Trailblazer listserv

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Requirements, Incentives and Outreach

Our Outreach:

- All major government organizations, websites, emails.....
- Ads and announcements

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Why Some People and Places Chose Not to Be Trailblazers

- Lack of management support
- Inadequate financial support
- Insufficient staff capacity
- Initiating innovation too difficult

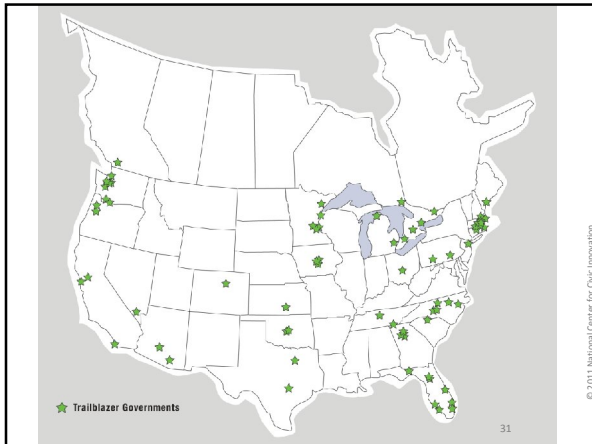
And more....

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Who Are The Trailblazer Governments?

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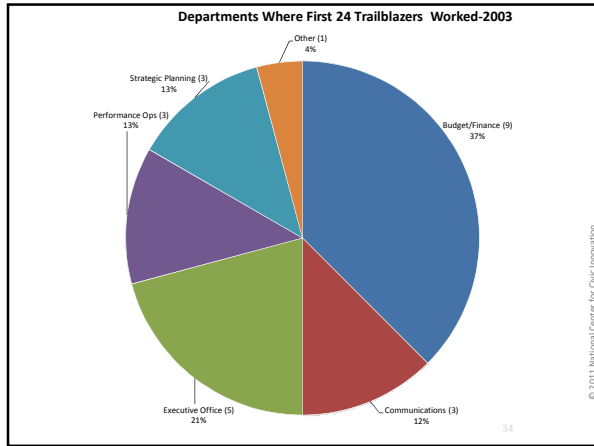
- **Type of government**
 - 42 cities or towns, 16 counties, 2 city-counties, 2 states, and 8 special entity governments including a fire district, health authority, and Odawa Indian tribe
- **Location**
 - U. S.: 20 Southeast, 14 West, 12 Midwest, 12 Northeast, 6 Southwest
 - Canada: 6
- **Budget**
 - City: \$14 million to \$9.8 billion [Brisbane, CA to Toronto]
 - County: \$59 million to \$5 billion [Stanly County, NC to Miami-Dade County, FL]
- **Population**
 - City: 3,500 to 2.73 million
 - County: 59,000 to 3.1 million [Stanly County, NC to Maricopa County, AZ]

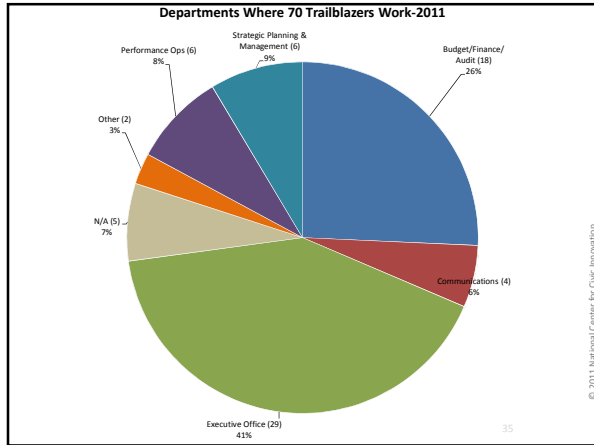
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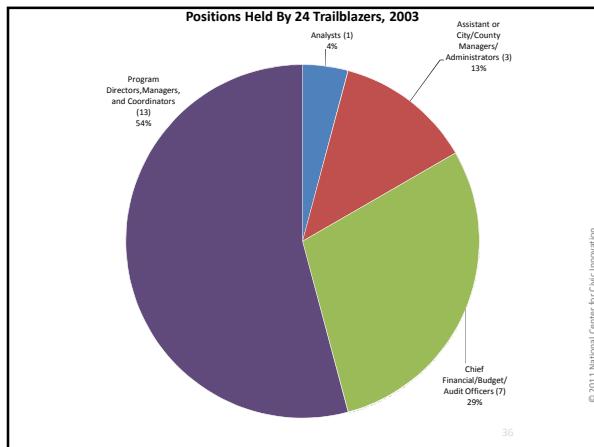
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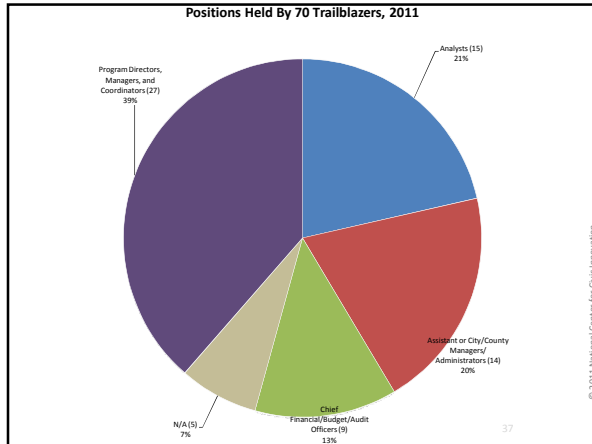
Who Are the Trailblazers?
Some Things Changed, 2003-11

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What Trailblazers Have Been Hearing From the Public

People dislike traditional performance measures and reports that governments produce

- Many were irrelevant and inconsequential to them
People say *“So what? Who cares?”*
Governments say *“Why are we measuring this anyway?”*
- Reports were hard to understand, ponderous and otherwise unappealing

– continued

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People want information and reports from and about government:

- Reports and information presented clearly and simply
- Honest reports about how government programs are working
- All the news, not just good news
- To be able to evaluate information for themselves, without “spin”
- To know how and where they can obtain additional information about services and key issues
- To understand the challenges that their government and their community are facing
- Outcome measures and quality measures
- To know what other jurisdictions are doing and how they are doing in comparison

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Trailblazers Responded By

- Changing their reports:
 - Introducing new measures defined by the public
 - Not just good news
 - More readable
 - More interesting
 - Easier to understand
 - Graphics
 - Varying lengths
 - Discarding some old, unneeded measures

continued

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- Disseminating
 - Broad reach
 - Various methods
 - Through newspapers
 - Mailings
 - Distribution points
 - Websites
 - Inclusive meetings
- Continuous feedback
 - Focus groups
 - Questionnaires
 - Other nifty technology

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Changes Since 2003

- From** no performance reports or foot-high budget documents
To imaginative, creative, more readable, understandable reports
- From** reports for internal use only
To broad distribution using varying means; including on practically every Trailblazer government's website
- From** unused measures
To new outcomes measures relevant to the public
- From** antipathy, reluctance, skepticism, fear of engaging with the public
To Trailblazers saying:
 - "It's good to know that [the public] is interested in us."
 - "They helped us recognize that we have been collecting some data needlessly."
 - "All encounters with the public do not have to be confrontational."



42

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Other Remarkable Things Happened:

Some Trailblazers...

- Released a performance report to the public for the first time,
- Provided hard copies of performance report to the public,
- Conducted or are conducting focus groups for the first time to determine how the public judges government services and/or what reports they need and want,
- Conducted or revised citizen satisfaction surveys to yield insight into the public's ratings about government performance,
- Conducted Trailblazer work even as their administration changed,
- Informed and shared their work with local legislators,
- Are using performance measures and reports to influence programs, policies and planning, on an ongoing basis

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In the Trailblazers' Own Words.....

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Changes to Performance Measures:

"[The measures are] very closely integrated with a set of concrete community-informed outcomes rather than with the interests of programs and staff. They have been created, worded and visually displayed to be accessible and relevant to community members rather than to staff."

"We have expanded the number of measures/indicators we are monitoring..., as a result of an increased focus on customer service ..."

"We made a major series of cuts and redesigns of city services over the past two years that were informed by a combination of performance measures and citizen input. Very successful so far, despite the enormous pain."

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"Our measures have evolved; they are now meaningful and aligned with the strategic plan, staff and customer requirements. Through training, discussions and alignment we now have meaningful measures for the public and operations."

"The county has more emphasis on using performance measurement and quality improvement tools to help departments make decisions and manage operations. Measures are used more on an operational level to inform decisions and ensure accountability to policymakers and the public."

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Changes to Performance Reports:

We have modified all of our reports based on the Trailblazer funded focus groups and civic innovation publications....

They must be succinct and "tell a story" in a way that means something to the public. We are changing them to make them less work to produce, and more meaningful.

[We now] cover 28 service areas. It is using an FAQ format and colour coding on a summary table (for those who want summarized information only), with much more detailed graphs and explanations in areas where users want more information.

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Changes to Communications with the Public:

"We have also established a "speakers bureau" – an organized group of employees that regularly engages the public in various community meetings."

"The county does a better job of communicating results to the public through different venues. The County Board continues to value performance measurement and now expect to see measures and results as part of staff presentations and requests, more county-wide publications focus on results-oriented topics; and departments have started communicating the outcomes of their programs, initiatives, and operations."

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What to Expect if You Are Starting Out: Observations of Government Trailblazers

- Struggled at first
 - Not accustomed to listening to the public without a defensive pose
- Initially unsure about how to reach out to the public
- Expect resistance

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Their Advice Overall

- Support from the top is needed
 - Navigating political seasons is challenging, but don't give up
- Expert market research assistance was highly recommended; trying to do it themselves did not work

...more

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Their Advice on Dealing with Resistance

- Be patient – change does not happen overnight
- Be persistent – do not give up
- Enlist support from the top, middle and bottom up
 - figure this out
- Be sure the staff understands what you are doing and why
- Lay low when necessary, but do not give up

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Their Advice on Performance Measures

- Do spring cleaning of your performance measures
 - Are they used ? By whom? For what?
 - Are they needed?
 - Are they duplicative?
 - Can they be improved?
 - Discarded? (Look before you leap)
- Create and use
 - Outcome measures
 - Quality measures
- Data integrity is fundamental to the process
 - What can you do to assure accurate data collection and reporting?

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Their Advice on Reports and Dissemination

- Avoid jargon, initials, other 'insider' language
- Consult with the public about content, style of the report, preferred dissemination modes , frequency....
- Seek regular feedback from the public and provide regular responses to them
 - Get expert market research assistance when communicating with the public
- See GASB and the National Performance Management Advisory Commission and CCAF recommendations about reporting

...continued

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- Ask yourself: Are we reaching all sectors of the public? Are we hearing from them? Are there opportunities for them to learn from us?
- Be aware that few are likely to read your website in its entirety or at all
 - Don't rely on website dissemination exclusively to tell your story
- Find ways to connect policymakers and legislators with performance measures

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Summing Up

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There Are Always New Challenges Where Communicating with the Public Can Be Helpful

- Technology changing every day
 - Provides new opportunities for listening, communicating, feedback
 - Is magnifying both the demand and challenges governments are facing
- Social media
- Emphasis on open data
- Demands to cut government costs
 - Eliminating analyst positions and functions
 - Eliminating state university schools of public administration
- Other?

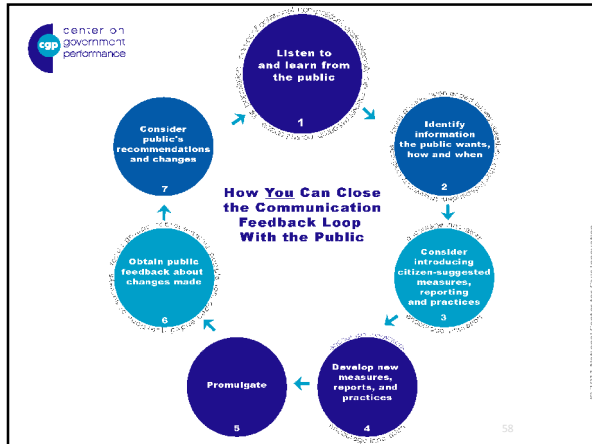
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What Trailblazers Said After Starting This Work

- Comments from the public are: “eye-opening,” “interesting,” “useful”
- Creating new, understandable reports is a welcome, creative challenge
- Glad to learn that people are interested in what they are doing
- They are learning new communication skills

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Why is it Important to Involve the Public in Performance Measurement, Reporting and Management?

- Remember the misalignment diagram
- An important role in government transparency and accountability
 - "It is the right thing to do."
- Non-confrontational methods of listening and informing have improved the public's understanding of government and the level of their trust

This work embodies the essence of democratic principles and emboldens your work as public servants.

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Thank You!

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Director of Planning
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City of Minneapolis

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Topics we will cover

- Where performance reporting to the public fits into Minneapolis' Results Management (a.k.a. performance mgt.) program
- Listening to the public – what we needed
- What we learned from focus groups
- *Results Minneapolis* website
- Lessons learned and next steps

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Results Management and Reporting to Residents



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graph TD; CI["Continuous Improvement  
(change strategies, reallocate resources, improve processes)"] --> SP["Strategic Planning"]; SP --> BRP["Business and Resource Planning  
(actions, measures, personnel, budget, technology, etc.)"]; BRP --> PMR["Performance Measurement & Reporting"]; PMR --> GPE["Goal & Program Evaluation"]; GPE --> CI; BRP == RESULTS; PMR == RESULTS; GPE == RESULTS; CI == RESULTS
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Focus Groups: Background

- Participant profile:
 - Four groups; three "active," one "less active;" 35 total participants
 - Average years of residence: 19 years
 - Ten out of 11 "communities" in the City represented
 - 71% homeowners
- Prospective participants identified via neighborhood group contacts and flyers at local libraries
- Invited participants selected following demographic screening

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Focus Groups: Findings

<u>Organization of data</u>	<u>Services of interest</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By subject area rather than City goal or department Geographically by neighborhoods Comparative to standards and other known cities Government lines are irrelevant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Safety Education Neighborhood vitality Housing General health and well-being

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Additional Findings

<u>Cues citizens use</u>	<u>Preferred mediums</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct: personal observation, experience Indirect: newspapers, neighborhood newsletters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet Email Major newspapers Community newspapers

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Results Minneapolis Website recap

- External complement to our internally focused performance measurement reporting
- Format and content focused on residents' interests (ex. neighborhood, precinct and ward data)
- Key component to our overall results management program
- Demonstrates commitment of transparency and accountability to taxpayer
- Based on input from focus groups funded by a grant from the Sloan Foundation and NCCI

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Results Minneapolis Website

<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/results>

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David K. Dubauskas

Use of
Communication
Audits and Citizen
Involvement & Tips

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Introduction

- Background
- Identified Communication Issues
- Tying it Together
- Communication Audit
 - Environment/Target Audiences
 - Review Current Marketing Material/Stakeholder Input and Activities
 - Recommendations
- Summary

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Background

- City Population 20,000 - 7% Annual Growth
- Part of Greater Edmonton Region ~1.2 million
 - City of Edmonton 700,000 pop. – other 21 municipalities 500,000 pop.
- Not a Bedroom Community – Full spectrum of land uses.

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Background



- Alberta – 2nd largest oil reserves in the world
- Strong Economic Growth - 100 Billion (Announced Projects) in Investment in the next 20 years
- 12 Billion within 25 kilometers

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Background

- Alberta Industrial Heartland - Canada's largest hydrocarbon processing region
- 582 square kilometer region is home to 40+ world class companies
- Dow Chemical, ME Global, BP, Sherrit Gordon, others



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Background

- Changing workforce/changing citizen demographic
- Existing Communication was successful (Audit) – however becoming ineffective (lack of citizen participation)

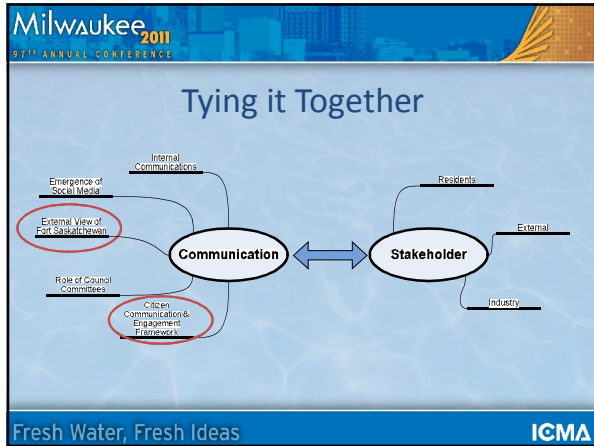
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Identified Communication Issues

- Changing Demographics – new communication processes?
- What is effective with current process
- What do we need to be more effective

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- ### External View of Fort Saskatchewan
- Work completed External Consultant
– Dagny Alston, The Dagny Partnership
 - Following slides are the process and findings
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-
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- ### Communication Audit
- The Current Environment
 - External Target Audiences
 - Review Current Marketing Material and Activities
 - Recommendations
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Review Current Marketing Material and Activities

- External Messaging driven by many people
- Two distinct creative platforms
- Creative design standards vary
- Inconsistent Messaging
- Logos – enhance or distract
- Current products do not leverage brand image
- Mechanisms are missing to manage collaboration (decentralized vs. centralized)

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Final Recommendations

1. Appoint Chief Brand Officer/Manager and Brand Management Team;
2. Revamp creative platform into a current family of creative alternatives;
3. Integrate more image advertising into current products, current community or promotional activities;
4. Consider expanded distribution or overprinting of key products to leverage the investments within the trading area;
5. Development and implementation of a multi-year image campaign;
6. Explore the feasibility of a public/private marketing consortium – 'Events Fort Saskatchewan'.

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Marketing goal & objectives

<p>Goal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To position the City of Fort Saskatchewan as a well managed, vibrant, fully rounded urban environment offering a small town welcome with a wealth of lifestyle experiences and economic opportunities. 	<p>Objectives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To strengthen and expand the image of the Fort as a thriving, fully rounded contemporary urban community with targeted audiences 2. To strengthen the consistency of marketing messages delivered through civic marketing 3. To enhance cross promotion of civic messages within civic marketing materials, products and events 4. To expand the delivery of key messages to targeted audiences 5. To support the development and promotion of major events/initiatives designed to attract incremental visitors to the community 6. To retain the confidence of taxpayers through enhanced understanding of the City's major priorities and direction
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Citizen Communication & Engagement Framework

- Work completed External Consultant
 - Praxis Group
- Following slides are the process and findings

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Citizen Communication & Engagement Framework

- Purpose of the Framework
- Framework objectives
- Framework contents
- Who should use the Framework
- When the Framework should used
- How to use the Framework

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Review of Existing Practices (Audit)

- Existing Policies
- Random Sample Telephone Survey
- Online Survey
- Small Group Session
- Stakeholder Interviews

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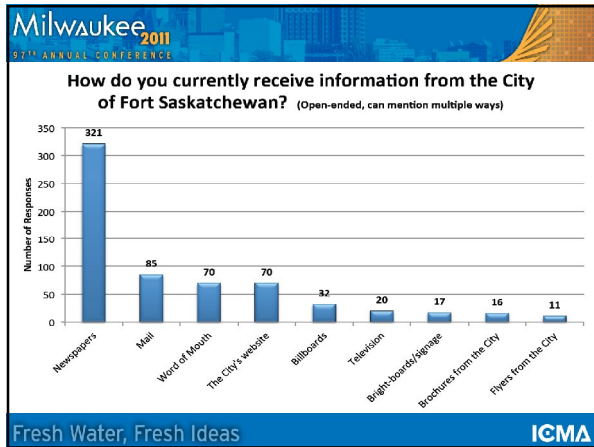
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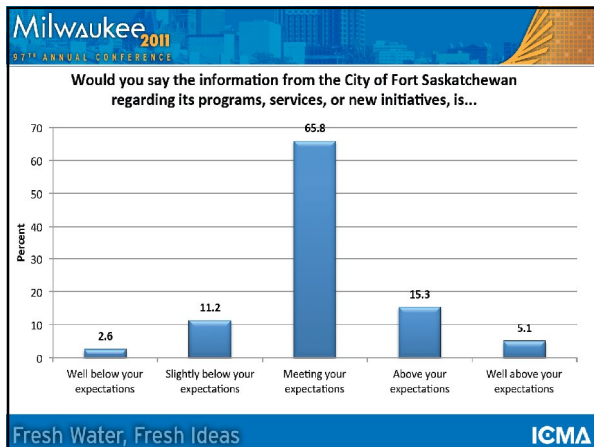
Findings from Survey

- Current Situation
- Municipal Issues of Interest
- Communication Mediums
- Interaction with City

Fort Saskatchewan Survey
June 2011 Public Telephone Survey

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Summary

- State of Affairs
- Identified Communication Issues
- Tying it Together
- Communication Audit
 - Environment/Target Audiences
 - Review Current Marketing Material and Activities
 - Recommendations
- Summary

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