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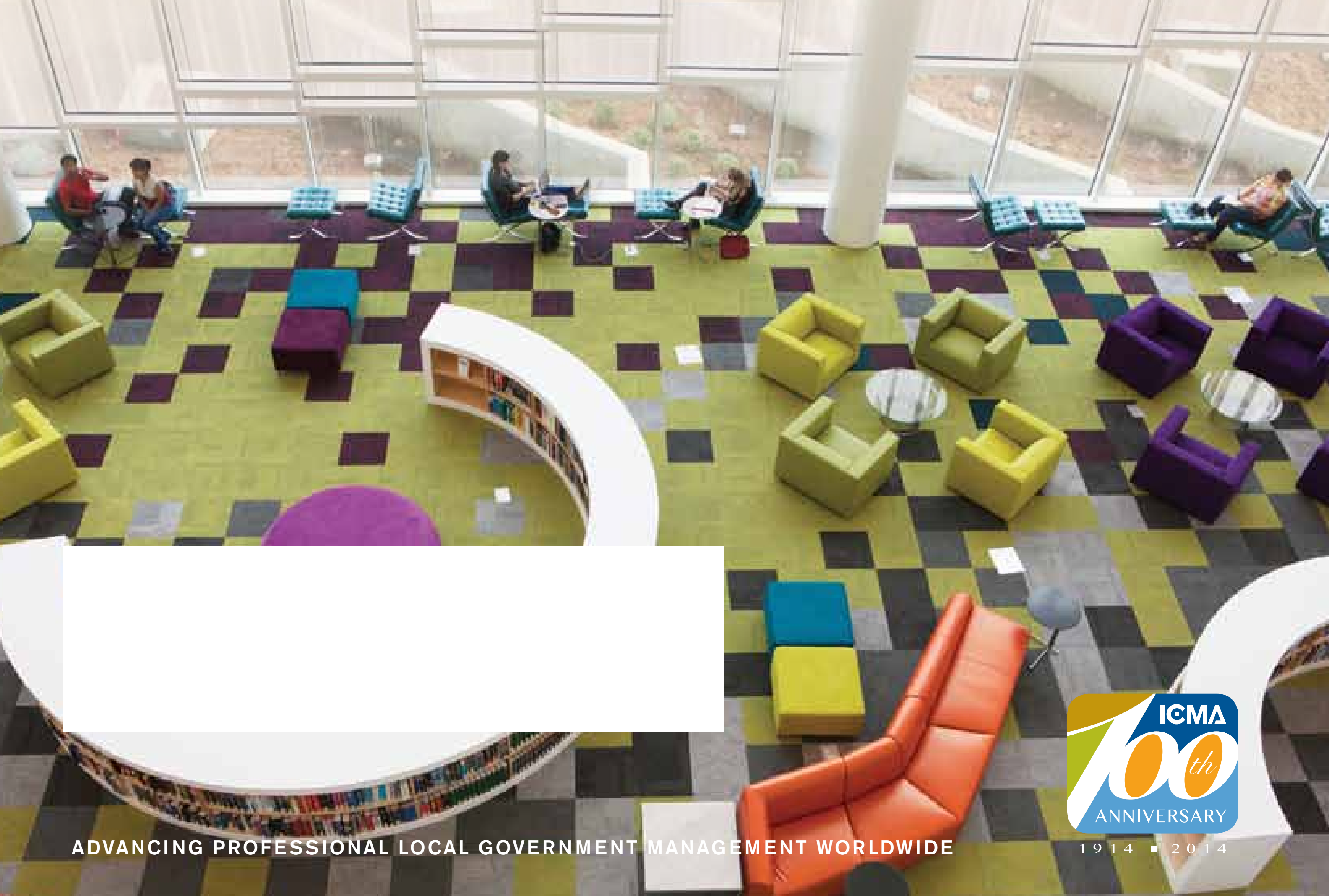
PM
PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

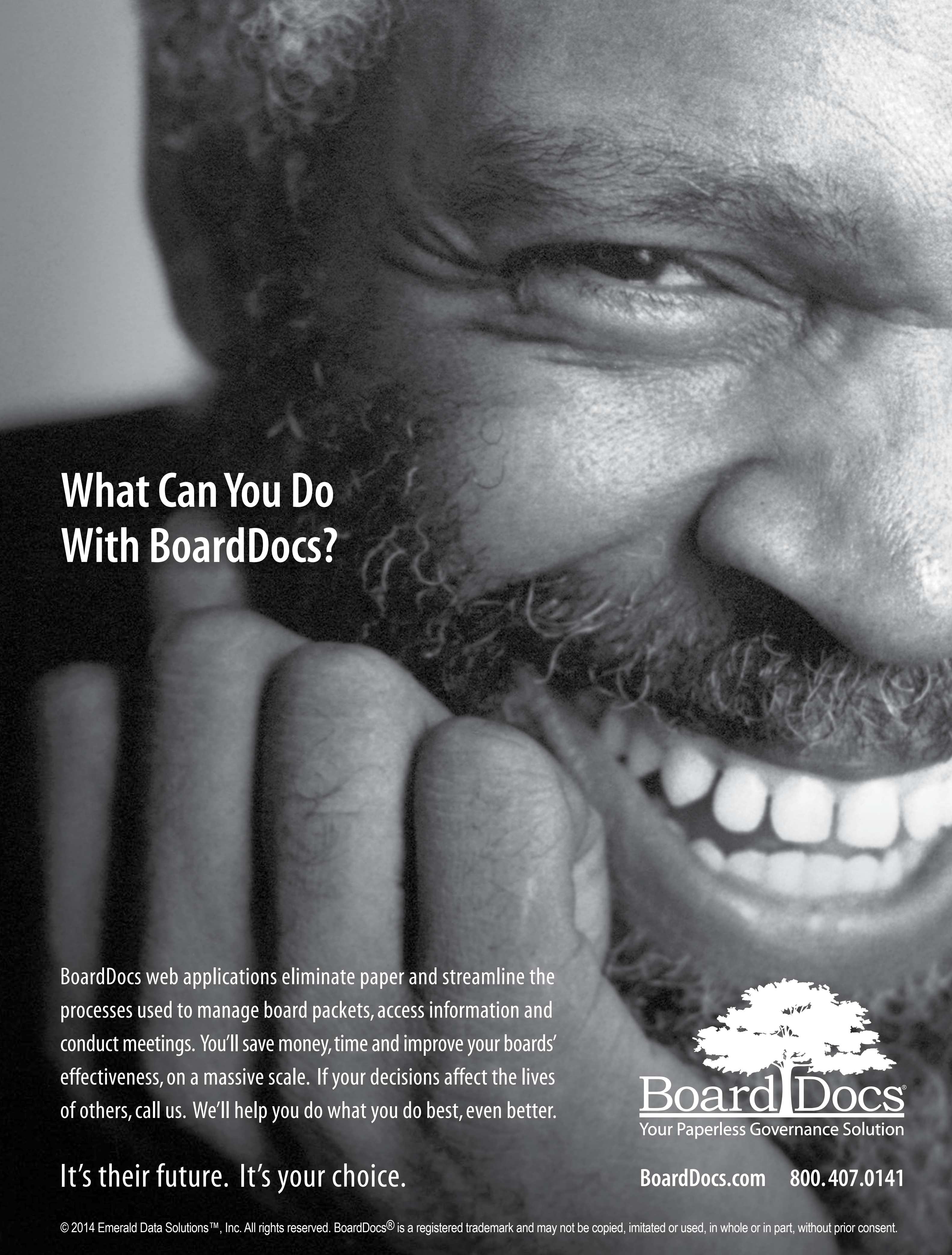
INSIDE

CHECK OUT THE NEW LIBRARY

A vital, multiservice hub for all generations



ADVANCING PROFESSIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT WORLDWIDE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This issue of *PM* is available online at icma.org/pm April 27, 2013.

BY MARTHA PEREGO

SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING

Why reporting wrongdoing is essential

Whether out in the field delivering services or occupying the manager's chair, all employees have a stake in reporting incidents of suspected or actual wrongdoing. An organization's reputation is built—for better or worse—on the conduct of each individual employee.

Creating a culture that encourages an individual to raise the red flag when something unethical or illegal is taking place is critical. Everyone needs to be willing to report what's happening behind the scenes or even take steps to stop it from happening in the first place.

But it's a tough sell. Whistle-blowing feels like a violation of that kindergarten rule not to be a tattletale. Very few of us enjoy confrontation or being the instigator who causes trouble for someone else (even if that person deserves it). The lack of certainty about facts and motivations keeps others silent. But the consequences of keeping silent can be significant and harmful.

Unethical Conduct Is Visible

The typical case of unethical conduct in the workplace is rarely a secret. Somebody besides the perpetrator knows. After all, the conduct is taking place in a fairly sophisticated work environment in the light of day to be witnessed by a work colleague or perhaps even a supervisor. And if it is a serial activity, the number of witnesses just grows.

Or perhaps no one actually witnessed the activity but suspects it based on some level of tangible evidence. Then there are the others who didn't see the conduct but heard about it.

Cost of Silence

This all begs the question: What do we need to do to create a culture where individuals feel personally responsible and safe enough to report questionable conduct and to convey the point that sitting on the sidelines while a colleague falls off the ethics cliff is harmful to all?

Leaders are not immune from the urge to sit on the sidelines. The topic at one city's management team meeting was the recent dismissal of the IT director. This individual, recruited from the private sector with high expectations, lasted only a year before the city manager asked for his resignation.

The manager explained to the management team that in several instances the director entered into contracts that violated city policy. This employee continued the practice even after being counseled on the matter. The final straw was his personal relationship with a direct report.

As members of the management team talked about their experiences with this individual, they were startled to realize that they all had inklings that things were not okay, that he just didn't seem to get it about operating in the public sector, and, yes, that they had heard those rumors about his affair.

But—to a person—no one had talked with the individual or raised the issue with the city manager. What was their ethical obligation to address their concerns with their peer? Would an early intervention have produced a better outcome?

The result of the team members' reflection was a personal and joint pledge for real, mutual accountability. In practice, this meant having the courage, in private, to call their colleagues on unacceptable conduct. The next step would be directly to the city manager's office, if required.

PM
PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

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Professional Accountability

As a profession, we face the same ethical obligation to hold our colleagues accountable for their conduct. And, yes, it's tough to do. We've walked in their shoes. We relate to the difficulty of having every misstep, big or small, reported in the media and kept alive by the bloggers.

The ICMA Code of Ethics establishes a uniform and high set of standards for the profession. In a murky and complicated universe, it defines clear lines of acceptable conduct. Some ethical violations, like taking extra compensation or gifts, are obvious. They get the required attention of elected officials, other authorities, and the public. Usually they will be addressed by both the local government and ICMA.

But there is a whole universe of inappropriate conduct where the associated risk and potential damage to the public and the profession may be visible and understood only by another professional in the field. Therein lies part of the value of self-policing.

Personal Responsibility

After many years of discussion about whether members have an ethical obligation to report incidents of unethical conduct by peers, the ICMA Committee on Professional Conduct concluded that we do. In 2004, this guideline was added to the Code: "When becoming aware of a possible violation of the ICMA Code of Ethics, members are encouraged to report the matter to ICMA. In reporting the matter, members may choose to go on record as the complainant or report the matter on a confidential basis."

See something that raises a substantial question as to a colleague's honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness to serve the public? See conduct that is damaging to the reputation of other professionals and to the profession? Then you should report it in good faith to ICMA, even knowing that you might not have all the facts. Allow an objective peer review process to sort out those facts and reach an independent judgment.

Bottom line? Create a culture within your organization that actually encourages employees to report wrongdoing. Blow the whistle on your peers. The cost of silence is too high to the profession and to your organization. PM

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HOW DO YOU PROMOTE "SMART" RISKS IN A RISK-AVERSE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT?

DALE IMAN
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Throughout my career, I have supported the theory that big risks equal big rewards. While the role of the manager is a risky proposition in and of itself, it is more so in a politically charged arena.

In order to evaluate the risk-reward ratio of a proposal or, as some would say, to determine if the juice is worth the squeeze, I follow three guidelines:

- Benefit to residents. Will the proposal or project create public value for residents?
- Apolitical. Politics should not be allowed to be a deciding factor when evaluating risk. Be careful not to be led astray.
- Collaboration and communication. Does the proposal provide opportunities to improve collaboration, citizen engagement, and/or methods of communication among stakeholders within the jurisdiction? Proposals that result in changing community dynamics in a positive fashion are often worthy of taking high risks.

MELINDA GREENWOOD
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A risk can only be "smart" when it is taken with the greatest extent possible of factual knowledge surrounding the risk. As a situation merits, a thorough analysis of potential benefits and consequences is well worth the time spent generating such a list. Making risky decisions isn't an easy thing for anyone, and it's even less comfortable when involving public monies.

What we as local government managers should want for ourselves, staff, elected officials, and our communities, is the ability to make well-informed decisions. When hindsight comes into play, which it often does, if a decision was made lacking pertinent information, the compromise could be lost trust, perceived lack of competency, or worse.

Some risks are worth the trade-off, and some are not. But if you don't make a decision or take a risk based on valid data, I don't think it's a "smart" risk, even if the decision turns out to be a favorable one.

CHRIS HILLMAN, ICMA-CM
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It is not a risk-averse business. There is more pressure than ever on the public sector to be innovative and to act, meaning more risk than ever. Elected officials are aware of this and need to feel confident that risks are minimized in decision making.

We accomplish this through informative and interactive discussions, by keeping the public well engaged, and then merging these pieces with financial realities. This develops rational choices that council knows are supported by data and public input.

Council also needs to be confident that staff can follow through and deliver. All these components give elected officials the confidence needed to tackle the community's most difficult and risky challenges.

BRENDA EIVENS
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As a manager, I have a firm understanding of the goals and expectations of the elected officials and their risk tolerance in order to provide a healthy environment that encourages staff to use creativity and innovation to advance community goals.

Sometimes that requires taking a risk, but making that risk "smart" should include thoughtful analysis and clear communication of the impacts of success, as well as the impacts of failure. Train staff to vet not just the end result, but also the risks and rewards of the steps along the way.

Also encourage them to identify unintended consequences of projects or decisions to better understand the level of risk associated, but acknowledge that the unexpected may still arise. Support staff in keeping people—elected officials, stakeholders, residents—informed along the way to reduce the surprise factor that can often elevate the perception of risk. PM

SHARING INTERNATIONAL INSIGHTS

1

Exchange visits between U.S. local government professionals and their Asian/Pacific counterparts set the stage for a lively blog in which contributors talk about their experiences and share what they have learned about local management practices and national customs and culture. The exchanges are a key feature of the Legislative Process and Governance Professional Fellows Program funded by the U.S. Department of State and managed by ICMA.

▸ **icma.org/fellowsblog**

2 POETRY AND CIVIC PRIDE

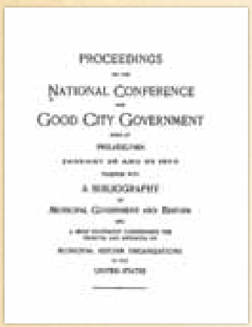
A civic pride campaign in Miami Beach, Florida–Like2Love Miami Beach–which highlights what makes the city great, invited residents to submit poems on why they love Miami Beach.

▸ icma.org/Like2Love

LIKE2LOVE MIAMIBEACH

icma anniversary

MOMENT IN HISTORY


PROCEEDINGS

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Public Service Recognition Week (PSRW) will be celebrated May 4–10, 2014, with the theme of "Honoring Our Public Servants; Connecting Citizens with Their Government." Celebrated the first week of May since 1985, PSRW is "time set aside to honor the men and women who serve our nation as federal, state, county, and local government employees and ensure that our government is the best in the world."

Connecting with residents has always been an important aspect of the professionalization of local government management. In January 1894, as part of an effort to "nationalize" municipal movements, 147 representatives from 27 cities met in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for the National Conference for Good City Government. This conference led to the creation of the National Municipal League (later to become the National Civic League), which would go on to endorse professional local government management and the council-manager form of government in the second through eighth (and most recent) editions of its *Model City Charter.*

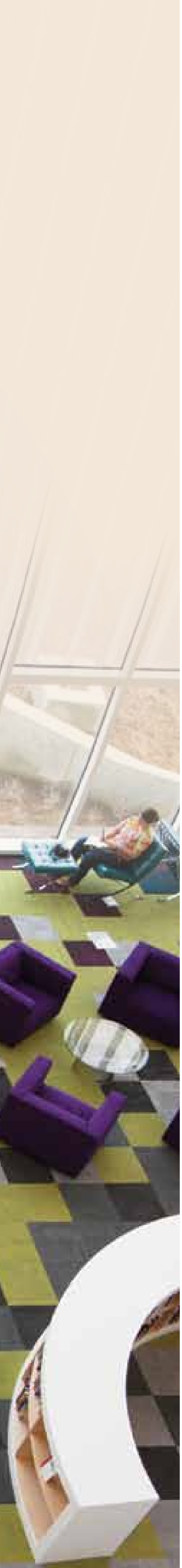
To learn more about the many milestones in the history of ICMA, its members, and the professionalism of local government management, visit **icma.org/anniversary** and scroll through the anniversary timeline on the homepage. Also, continue to watch this space in *PM*, where an anniversary moment will be highlighted each month.

ICMA 100th ANNIVERSARY 1914 ▪ 2014

CHECK OUT THE NEW LIBRARY

A vital, multiservice hub for all generations

By Craig Gerhart and Kira Hasbargen



In order to successfully improve the complex and interconnected issues facing communities today, local government managers are looking across their organizations to find the capabilities and skill sets that can influence creative and leading-edge solutions. One resource that might be undervalued and overlooked by managers is the public library.

Highly Relevant Places

When you hear the word library, what immediately comes to mind? Digital media labs? 3-D printers? Virtual and in-person homework help? Internet and information safety? GED and post-secondary education? Resume and interview skill building? Job search centers? Language instruction?

Early life experiences have left many of us with the image of libraries as quiet places surrounded by books. Yet, public libraries have become much more now, providing highly relevant services and engaging directly with residents. With this interaction and relevancy, library services and programs are constantly evolving.

In addition to providing residents with general developmental and educational opportunities, libraries also provide access to the Internet as well as technology training. In our technology-driven world, 30 percent of American adults ages 18 and older don't have access to broadband or wireless transmission in their homes.[2] As businesses, medical providers, and local governments transition to online-only registration, bill paying, and customer support, where do people turn? The free and welcoming library.

Here are a few statistics on what is happening at today's public library:

- 97 percent of libraries help people apply for e-Government services.
- 92 percent of libraries help people access online job databases and resources.
- 90 percent of libraries provide formal or informal technology training.
- 76 percent of libraries help people apply for jobs online.
- 62 percent of libraries report that they are the only free provider of public Internet access.[3]

Our preconceived notions of what libraries "are" have created barriers to engaging them in strategic problem solving and community building. Now is the time to step back into your library to recognize and strategically plan how libraries can help with community issues.

A Holistic Approach

A manager's openness to engage the library demonstrates a willingness to take a holistic approach to community problem solving and the enhancement of his or her organizational toolkit. ICMA's work with public libraries began more than five years ago[4] with a series of community-specific projects intended to demonstrate that a strong partnership between the local government manager's office and the library staff is a productive strategy.

94%
of Americans ages 16 and older say that having a public library improves the quality of life in a community.[1]

The goal of these efforts is to provide resources that help strengthen the manager-library partnership and to develop strategic and innovative ways to improve the lives of residents. While the library director and local government manager may be separately offering dynamic, relevant, and innovative services, the sky's the limit when the two partner together (see sidebar, "Working Together" for tips on building effective partnerships). Here are two case studies that provide a closer look at what is possible.

MIAMI PUBLIC LIBRARY

Library organization: City department
Area served: Miami, Oklahoma[5]
Population served: 13,570
Percentage of students eligible for free/reduced lunch: 69.9 percent

After Miami Public Library's (Miami PL) participation in Edge, a national assessment and toolkit intended to help libraries evaluate their public-access technology and services to better serve the community, the library began to

> **"After engaging with the library, it is evident that it leverages technology and education to help our community meet our greatest challenges."**
>
> —JEFF BISHOP, CITY MANAGER, MIAMI, OKLAHOMA

develop a long-range strategic plan. Library Director Marcia Johnson's first step was convening a focus group to understand the community's needs.

To ensure full representation from community supporters and promote library staff and board buy-in, specific names were submitted by the staff and board members. The library director and board selected the attendees. Invitations were then made either in person or on the phone.

After the focus group invitations were accepted, Johnson sent out a packet of material to enable group attendees to have a solid working knowledge of the services offered by the library and show how it compared to peer libraries.

Attendees represented diverse constituencies and areas of government, which included the former mayor, acting mayor, city manager, assistant city manager, local business owners, and representatives from the school district, hospital, tribal nation, and state workforce development office.

Through the focus group, Johnson was able to educate attendees on the services offered at the library and create a shared understanding of community issues, allowing focus group members to work together to solve them.

In addition to including community partnerships as a key element in the strategic plan, more opportunities for tangible partnerships were identified. Besides developing a three-year strategic plan, the library implemented a partnership with Oklahoma Workforce—a website at www.ok.gov/okworks that connects job seekers, employers, and community partners—to improve community employment through skills-building and training, along with a partnership with the hospital and tribal council to improve community health.

"Our issues are probably similar to many communities: an aging infrastructure, underemployment/unemployment, and literacy," says Johnson. "In response, the library has partnered with our local workforce development office to provide skills training. In fact, the courses have doubled in size since changing the venue to the library's computer lab.

WORKING TOGETHER

Here are five ways for managers to build effective working partnerships with library directors.

1. REACH OUT. Sometimes it's all about relationships. Reach out to your library director. Visit the library and get out to all the branches. Invite the library director for coffee or lunch.

A good way to get a firm handle on your community's needs is to ensure that representatives from all facets of your organization are invited to the table. If the library director is not already a member of your leadership team, invite him or her on board and encourage active participation.

2. SEEK UNDERSTANDING. Keep an open mind. The two most important factors of a successful partnership are to understand your community's needs and focus on what you have in common.

Recognize that sound partnerships create benefits for all parties and that engaging the library in community-wide problem solving must also work for the library system.

3. DEFINE THE PLUSES AND MINUSES. Identifying where you can make the most difference is one key to being relevant. Defining the key assets each party brings to the partnership is a great way to start the dialogue.

Another key to being relevant is to understand the real (and imagined) barriers. Sometimes you'll have to create opportunities and be open to nontraditional solutions with nontraditional partners.

4. BE PATIENT. Some partnerships may go off without a hitch, whereas others may be a little more difficult to implement. Think of collaborating like fishing.

You may not catch fish with every cast. Look for ways to expand the manager-library partnership through engaging such other community groups as nonprofit organizations, service clubs, and the media.

And remember, it's okay for partners to benefit from the relationship. Bringing attention to a group, getting its name out there, networking, and raising a group's community profile are not reasons to forgo implementing a partnership that will positively impact your community.

5. DEVELOP BENCHMARKS. Don't let the perfect get in the way of the good. Develop measures of success, establish ownership for outcomes and activities to hold partners accountable, and build in an evaluation plan. That way, you can incorporate the partnerships into decision making and operations.

81%

of Americans 16 and older say that public libraries provide many services people would have a hard time finding elsewhere.

Today's libraries are demonstrating a flexible approach to problem-solving by leveraging resources, finding partnerships in unusual places, and doing what they do efficiently and economically."

—JOHN SHIREY, CITY MANAGER, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

SACRAMENTO PUBLIC LIBRARY

Library organization: Joint Powers Authority
Areas served: Sacramento County and the cities of Citrus Heights, Elk Grove, Galt, Isleton, Rancho Cordova, and Sacramento
Population served: 1.3 million
Percentage of students eligible for free/reduced lunch: 42 percent

Seeking to decrease crime, engage residents, and assist in improving educational outcomes, Sacramento Public Library (SAC PL) partnered with the News10 television station to transform a unit in a transitional living center into a resource center/children's library for the station's 2013 "Make a Difference Day" project.[6] The team expanded on the success it built through the "10 Books to Read" program, which was designed to encourage parents, grandparents, and caregivers to read aloud and spend time with their children. The program still exists today.

The Sacramento Friends of the Library and SAC PL also worked with News10 to create a safe and fun place for residents at the Salvation Army's E. Claire Raley Transitional Living to model positive family interaction, help children with their homework, and increase literacy skills.

Also, to ensure mission alignment and manage expectations, all participating organizations agreed that the difference made could be small: one mom reading to her son, one dad playing reading games with his daughter on the iPad, or one child graduating from high school or even going to college.

The remodeling and installation took place in one day. "Like public libraries, local TV stations provide information and serve the community. When we join resources, we truly can make a tangible difference in people's lives," says Maria Barrs, general manager, News10.

The television station also donated $5,000 and provided media coverage and volunteers to design and set up the library room. SAC PL provided computers, shelving, expertise, and labor, while the Friends of Library provided books and materials.

"Education is what makes the difference. If people can read, they can learn. If people can learn, they can make informed decisions. By making informed decisions, people can participate in democracy."

—RIVKAH SASS, LIBRARY DIRECTOR, SACRAMENTO PUBLIC LIBRARY, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

It's All Good

The past five years have forever changed the way professional local government managers lead their organizations. Building partnerships with libraries to proactively and effectively provide services and programs is, and will continue to be, integral to building communities where residents can happily live, work, and play.

ENDNOTES

1 Pew Research Center, December 2013, "How Americans Value Public Libraries in their Communities."
2 Pew Home Broadband 2013: http://www.pewinternet.org/2013/08/26/home-broadband-2013.
3 iPAC publications: http://ipac.umd.edu/publications.
4 icma.org/libraries: http://icma.org/en/icma/knowledge_network/topics/kn/Topic/161/Libraries.
5 Because Miami Public Library is the only library in Ottawa County, Oklahoma, residents of the county that live outside of the city limits are able to obtain complimentary Miami Public Library cards. The library does not receive funding from the county.
6 "Make a Difference Day," which was launched more than 20 years ago by USA Weekend magazine and the Points of Light volunteer program, encourages volunteers to complete local community projects.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By Scott Lazenby, ICMA-CM

CHANGE THE BUDGET GAME

Incorporate good management principles

TAKEAWAYS

› Budget management systems have seen little change in the past 100 years and have not kept up with new research on management practices.

› Innovations in budget systems have shown that it is possible to align the organization with the policy direction set by the governing board, while giving operating managers a high degree of flexibility in managing both resources and expenses.

› These systems not only improve the organization's efficiency and effectiveness, they also reinforce good management practices.

In the October 2013 *PM* cover story, authors Jon Johnson, Chris Fabian, and Cheryl Hilvert argue that in the coming "decade of local government," city and county managers will not be able to return to the status quo that existed before the recession. We will instead need to "manage, use, and optimize resources in a much different way than has been done in the past." (To review article, go to icma.org/pm and check "Archives" tab.)

The authors emphasize the importance of effective communication of financial information, developing a multiyear perspective on revenues and expenses, and framing budget decisions so that policymakers can set priorities for government services and programs.

I believe this advice is spot-on. The emphasis, though, is on the activities of the governing body, the chief executive officer (CEO), and the chief financial officer (CFO). How do we engage the rest of the organization in meeting the challenges of a new fiscal reality? Have budget and financial management systems changed to match what managers now know about effective leadership and management of organizations?

Age-old Traditions Hard to Shake

As we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the management profession, we can credit the strong financial management skills of the pioneering city and county managers, along with a public service ethic, for a large part of the success of the council-manager form of government.

But the way that budgets are managed has changed little in the past century. These steps in a budget cycle would be as familiar to the first managers as they are to those in present-day organizations:

- Departments prepare budget requests.
- The CEO or designee reviews the requests, which inevitably total more than the available revenue.
- Top management goes through a process of forcing the total of the departments' budgets to balance to available revenues. Because this requires shaving the requests, this is typically referred to as a series of budget cuts, even if the net result is an increase in the total budget from one year to the next.
- The governing body receives the proposed balanced budget and goes through a series of work sessions and hearings that may result in some changes in a few areas, but leaves the bulk of the proposed budget untouched.
- Operating managers are given legal appropriations, and are told not to go over budget. They may even have limits at the line-item level.
- If general fund programs generate revenue, this revenue is typically accounted for in a separate place (the general fund "black hole"). Once the budget is adopted, operating managers focus on expenses, not revenues.

Good managers confronting this process learn to become experts at playing budget games. Tricks of the trade include padding of line items; over-estimation of revenues; the "Washington Monument" syndrome, which is defined as offering up popular services for budget cuts; and spend-it-or-lose-it behaviors, among others.

This kind of central control, top-down approach may have been okay 100 years ago when managers worked under the assumption that their employees avoided both work and responsibility. But we've learned a lot about people in organizations, especially during the past half century. From authors Douglas McGregor's *Theory Y* (1960) to Daniel Pink's *Drive* (2011), we know these things:

- People are intrinsically motivated to do good work.
- Individuals in an organization not only accept, but seek responsibility, and can exercise self-control.
- Operating managers and their employees need to have the tools and resources to get the job done.
- Direct feedback on performance, including financial performance, should go directly to the line managers who provide the service.

A top-down centralized budget management system is completely at odds with a management philosophy of delegation and empowerment. It's no wonder it tends to produce such pathological behavior in managers and governing boards.

A 21st Century Budget Process

Over the past three decades, a number of governments have experimented with a variety of ways to change the rules of the budget game in order to bring budget systems in line with principles of good management. The pioneers include cities (primarily in the Southwest); the state of Minnesota; and even, on a pilot basis, some federal agencies.

Some of the concepts were introduced in Ted Gaebler and David Osborne's *Reinventing Government*, under the label "Expenditure Control Budgeting."

In my 35 years of preparing city budgets, reviewing other governments' budgets for the Government Finance Officers Association, and studying budget management as a doctoral researcher, I've drawn conclusions on how budget systems can be shaped to work with, and not against, good management principles.

Here is what a 21st century budget process might look like:

- **Citizen input is at the front of the budget process, not the end.** This input should take the form of expressions of values and priorities, not technical issues. Surveys and focus groups are good tools for soliciting this input.
- **The governing board sets overall priorities and goals,** per the advice of the authors of the October *PM* article "Embracing the `Decade of Local Government.'" In a continuing environment of fiscal scarcity, these will be difficult decisions. As managers, it is our job to provide good background information and help frame the decisions. And above all, we need to empower elected officials to own this policy domain.
- **Based on the governing board's priorities, the CEO sets the amount of general tax revenues** (e.g., property, sales, and income taxes; franchise fees; state-shared revenue; and more) that will be allocated to each general fund program. Revenues for enterprise funds are limited by the utility rates approved by the governing board, and special revenue funds typically face similar limits.
- **Costs for internal support services (administration, IT, human resources, and legal services) are fully allocated to the direct-service programs**, including those within the general fund. Their customers—direct service managers—should have a say in the amounts of these budgets, and as much flexibility as possible in exploring such alternatives as using contractors or even other departments for IT services or facility maintenance.

SAMPLE BUDGET

What does a budget prepared under the management principles explained in this article actually look like? This example is the budget for a direct-service program—police or sheriff services, for example—within a government's general fund.

ITEM	AMOUNT	COMMENT
Beginning balance	$350,000	Carryover savings estimated by department; can only be used for one-time expenses or contingency.
Departmental revenues	$950,000	Estimated by department.
General revenues	$8,216,000	Allocation set by the CEO.
Total Resources	$9,516,000	
EXPENSES		
Personnel	$7,800,000	Estimated by department with finance assistance.
Services and supplies	$226,000	
Operating capital	$200,000	
Indirect support expense	$1,040,000	Based on support service budgets approved by direct service managers.
Departmental contingency	$250,000	
Total Expenses	$9,516,000	

Once these steps are completed, the budget balancing process is essentially done. If the operating managers' priorities are truly aligned with those of the governing board, as they will be in a well-managed organization, then the governing board's job is done as well.

Operating managers work out the line-item details. For general fund departments, the available resources include the allocation of general revenues noted above, plus any carryover savings from the prior fiscal year and any direct departmental revenues.

Expenses include indirect support service charges as well as direct operating costs, including personnel, supplies and services, and operating capital. Each program should have a contingency account to eliminate the need to pad line items.

Note that the line-item detail is simply there to give operating managers a way to plan and manage their own programs. They are not subject to further review or approval by a central budget czar.

Each program within the general fund is self-balancing: Resources equal estimated expenditures plus contingency. During the ensuing fiscal year, the operating manager is accountable only for the bottom line: Expenses must equal or be less than resources.

If more money comes in—departmental revenues or carryover savings are higher than estimated—then the operating manager can spend more without interference from the finance department, or put more aside in contingency. Someone in the organization may need to amend appropriations to conform to antiquated legal requirements, but this would be done automatically.

By the same token, if resources come in less than estimated, the operating manager must make adjustments on the spending side.

Many Side Benefits

This process also has some side

benefits. First, most budget games are eliminated, since there is no request process and no zero-sum game where operating managers compete with each other for a slice of the budget pie. The CEO must use skill and judgment in allocating general revenues, but this allocation is nonnegotiable.

As a city manager, I've been doing this for more than two decades, and it works. Department heads may think their allocation is too small, but if they have full freedom in how they manage their limited resources, the trade-off is worth it to them.

By allowing 100 percent of the savings—and revenue that comes in higher than estimated—to be carried forward, the spend-it-or-lose-it problem disappears. Knowing that they have flexibility in how to allocate the savings, operating managers constantly look for ways to reduce the cost of doing business.

A major benefit is that the governing board and CEO have now enlisted all the operating managers in the hard work of managing with constrained resources. I've been amazed at the innovative and thoughtful ways that operating managers have met the challenge of stretching resources to provide excellent services. I've also had to admit they know their operations better than I do; they can make tough decisions, and because they own them, they buy into them.

Another benefit is that with operating managers responding immediately and independently to external pressures on revenues and expenditures, there is little need to go through an annual budget process. Budgets can be adopted for a 24-month fiscal period.

The time freed up from number crunching can be used, in the off-year, for a thorough review of the government's services and programs using best practices in performance measurement. And the next step in this evolution will be to eliminate budgets altogether and replace them with rolling forecasts, allowing the organization to make continuous fine-tuning adjustments to priorities and the allocation of resources. (For more on this approach, check out the work of the Beyond Budgeting Round Table at bbrt.org.)

The primary benefit of this system has nothing to do with finances at all. It simply reinforces the principles of good management—delegation, empowerment, alignment of goals—that managers follow or should follow in other aspects of leading an organization. Better budget decisions are a side benefit, but here are the ones that really matter:

- Ability of the organization to respond quickly to abrupt changes in the environment.
- Resilience of the organization to external and internal challenges.
- Adoption of creative or innovative solutions to problems.
- Alignment of the activities and output of the organization with the priorities of the governing board.
- Job satisfaction of employees.

Going for the "Best-Managed" Moniker

If we are entering the "decade of local government," local governments may emerge as leaders in dealing with the challenge of providing government services, doing so more effectively than state and national government counterparts. But that's a pretty low bar.

Wouldn't it be nice if local governments emerged as the best-managed organizations, period? When author Jim Collins next speaks to managers at an annual conference, wouldn't it be great if his presentation was based on a book highlighting cutting-edge leadership in cities and counties? That won't happen if we continue to cling to a century-old budget management system. PM

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THE PARKING PRICE I$ RIGHT

Achieve urban planning goals through strategic pricing

By John Dorsett

Parking can be a powerful resource for promoting economic development and improving the quality of life in any community. And one of the most important tools at the disposal of city and county administrators and planners is parking pricing. By implementing strategic pricing, local governments can influence where drivers park and for how long.

When done right, this can have an extraordinary impact on a community's economy and the health of local businesses. It can also affect the quality of life for residents. The problem is, most communities don't do it right.

The good news is that some places are starting to recognize the power of pricing and are beginning to leverage parking pricing as an important tool for supporting local businesses, reducing traffic congestion, cutting vehicle-borne pollution, and generally improving the quality of life for residents. A number of cities, including San Francisco and Santa Monica, California, and Seattle, Washington, just to name a few, have begun setting prices strategically to achieve urban planning goals.

TAKEAWAYS

› Learn how pricing on-street parking can support economic development and urban planning goals by freeing up short-term spaces for customers.

› Learn how not to price on-street parking and reasons why.

Common Mistakes

The most common mistake communities make is not charging—or at least not charging enough—for parking, particularly in downtown business districts. Often, local officials and planners, as well as business owners, assume that the best way to attract shoppers, patrons to local entertainment venues, or other visitors is to offer plentiful free parking. This approach, however, typically has significant unintended consequences, making it even more difficult for people to conveniently access businesses or services.

The problem is that when free or underpriced parking is provided, it typically causes the most valuable spaces—those that are located adjacent to local businesses, services, and entertainment venues—to be overused. Often, these spaces are occupied early in the day by employees of area businesses, even before the visitors for whom they are intended have come downtown.

And they tend to remain occupied by these same parkers throughout the day. In addition to reducing—or even eliminating—the number of open spaces, this practice also dramatically increases roadway congestion as drivers circle blocks looking for available spaces or waiting for occupied spaces to open up. This unnecessary congestion makes roadways less safe for both drivers and pedestrians, and needlessly generates unhealthy emissions.

In the end, the common practice of providing free or excessively cheap parking doesn't accomplish the desired end of supporting local businesses and providing convenience for residents. Instead, it merely ends up frustrating drivers who are trying to get to local businesses and those who are trying to get home. If the problem becomes acute enough, it can cause shoppers to look for other options outside the city, and even for residents to consider moving to less-congested communities.

A Planning Solution

So what's the answer? The solution begins with setting a goal of 85 percent occupancy for on-street parking spaces. This threshold is based on the accumulated knowledge of parking planners on what level of occupancy maximizes use while assuring sufficient on-street parking.

When cities and counties achieve and maintain this 85 percent threshold, their on-street parking resources are doing their job—providing accessible and convenient parking—while ensuring that there will typically be parking spaces available for newly arrived parkers.

How can communities achieve this level consistently? The most powerful tool available is pricing. Downtown spaces that are in close proximity to such high-demand destinations as retail establishments, restaurants, and entertainment venues are worth a premium, and they should be priced as such. For these spaces, parking prices should be set at levels that will be acceptable to short-term parkers, but too high for long-term parkers.

This depends on the market. A $6 hourly rate in San Francisco or Chicago, for example, may be acceptable to consumers parking on-street and then dining at a nearby restaurant, in lieu of paying $10 to $20 or more for restaurant valet parking. A $6 hourly rate in a Nebraska community, however, probably is not going to be acceptable.

The on-street hourly rate should be higher than the off-street hourly rate. Although some patrons will park on-street no matter the rate, the aim is to move most of the long-term patrons off the street and this can be accomplished through strategic pricing.

This requires a balancing act of sorts, with prices set low enough to attract parkers but high enough to encourage frequent turnover. This balance can be difficult to achieve and is a moving target. Trial and error is the best way to arrive at the right balance.

Local governments practicing demand-based pricing should raise or lower on-street rates on a block-by-block basis until the 85 percent target occupancy rate is achieved and hold at these rates until changes in occupancy patterns develop. Regular monitoring of space usage is necessary for purposes of informing decision-making. Turnover can be promoted further by limiting how long parkers can stay in a given space.

This market-based approach can only succeed if less expensive parking is available within walking distance. Parkers need to have an attractive alternative available, particularly if they are planning to park for an extended period of time. If tiered pricing is established throughout a community, drivers are able to make conscious choices about where to park and how much they are willing to pay.

When this approach is pursued, employees of local businesses and visitors who are planning to stay for an extended period of time are more likely to use more remote and less pricey parking spaces, leaving premium spaces for short-term parkers.

Some communities are even refining their market-based pricing to the point where they are adjusting prices periodically, or charging different rates at different times of the day, to make sure that the cost of parking reflects current utilization. These places conduct periodic use surveys that indicate whether individual spaces are under- or over-used, and when demand is greatest for those spaces, and then adjust prices accordingly.

This option is made possible by such new parking technologies as smart meters and single-space sensors. These new tools record and measure when parkers are using a given space and for how long. When parking administrators use this information to set varied prices throughout the day, they can go a long way towards ensuring that their spaces will always (or almost always) enjoy 85 percent occupancy.

Even though market-based pricing has gained widespread acceptance throughout the parking planning community, many communities are still hesitant to implement it. Part of this hesitancy is the result of discomfort with change and part is due to opposition from community and business leaders who are afraid that raising parking will hurt businesses.

Explain the Pricing Rationale

That's why it is essential for communities to undertake strategic communications efforts designed to inform local business and community leaders about how free parking is hurting downtown business, and why strategic pricing will actually promote economic growth. It may seem counterintuitive to say that raising parking prices will result in more economic growth, but experience demonstrates that this is indeed the case. By educating key constituencies about these benefits, cities can garner the support of local business and community leaders.

And the need for education extends to residents, too. In fact, whenever a parking planning initiative is undertaken, local officials should undertake a strategic program to communicate to the entire community what the parking program entails, why it is being pursued, and how the community will benefit. Fortunately, local governments tend to reap the benefits of strategic parking planning quickly, and opposition to market-based pricing tends to disappear soon after it is implemented.

Parking is one of the most valuable resources that any community has at its disposal. Unfortunately, it is typically underused by communities, which don't recognize its power or just see it as a way to raise revenues.

By establishing strategic parking pricing, localities can promote some of their most important urban planning goals, including supporting local businesses, creating a more sustainable community, and improving the quality of life for residents.

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BY MIKE CONDUFF, ICMA-CM

THE PRINCIPLE OF ONE VOICE

What good councils do when they disagree

As a freshman in the civil engineering program at the University of New Hampshire (a long, long time ago), I learned Isaac Newton's law of motion, "A body in motion tends to stay in motion" and its corollary, "A body at rest tends to stay at rest."

While Newton's Laws of Motion, which were developed by this 17th century scientist, and governing may not seem to have much in common, my experience tells me that good governing bodies tend to stay good, and one of the key principles that they use to do so is "The Principle of One Voice."

Group Power

In essence, this principle says that the power of the group is as a group and that no individual—even if he or she disagreed with and voted against the decision—has the ability to counteract the group. Further, the group accepts split decisions without rancor or concern because in ongoing good governance the group does not always have to (and even should not always) agree.

What I tell governing body members is that this does not mean that if they voted against a particular course of action that they have to become the spokesperson for the decision. It simply means that they cannot undermine or act contrary to the decision.

What they can certainly say to their constituents, the media, or others who might ask is something along the lines of, "As you know, I opposed this decision and voted against it. Now that the council has voted, however, in the interest of good governance, I will be supporting the decision as we move forward."

If this sounds too perfect to be true, consider this. At a recent training for city councilmembers in the Wichita, Kansas, area sponsored by the Hugo Wall School, I was joined by a panel of successful mayors who shared their experiences in these matters. I heard a great story by Willis Heck, the former mayor of Newton, Kansas.

Mayor Heck talked about an exceedingly controversial item involving a shared facility with the school district that he spoke strongly against, going so far as to attend a school board public hearing to try to influence the decision. The community was sharply divided and after much debate, the school board and the city council, of which he was a member, voted to proceed with the endeavor. Willis voted against the motion.

After the vote, and when it was clear that the facility was indeed going to be shared, the council asked him to help negotiate the terms because in their words, "We think you have the best skills for this." As Willis so simply put it when I asked him about that situation recently: "I, of course, did the best I could because that was the will of the majority!"

Group Wisdom

Another example came to me early in my career by one of the first mayors I worked with in Pittsburg, Kansas. After an extremely controversial decision in which he sided with staff and lost the vote, I asked him what his next course of action was going to be.

He looked straight at me and said, "Why, support the wisdom of the group of course. I learned long ago that I was going to win some and lose some. I didn't prevail on the item today, but guess what? There always will be another item."

When council can take this type of long view, you see good governance tending to stay good.

If councilmembers behave this way now, be sure to reinforce their behavior by pointing it out and complimenting it. Also be sure staff plays by this rule as well. If the council votes against the staff recommendation, even if you believe in your heart they were wrong, remember my early mayor's admonition—there will always be another issue. Make sure council knows that you and the staff always follow the majority direction.

If your council does not adhere to the Principle of One Voice and you experience pushback, subterfuge, or outright defiance on the part of individual members, try to get good governance going by reminding them, privately at first and then publically if necessary, that the staff is duty bound to follow the will of the majority.

You also can point out that even though they disagree personally with the decision, it hurts the community to try to undermine it, and that it is in the best interest of all to look to the next issue, because there always will be one.

Group Support

Mayor Heck closed his story this way: "When I look back on my time as mayor, I can say that ensuring that both sides got a fair deal on that one issue brought me so much credibility that I was able to advance many other causes that were even dearer to me.

"Folks knew that I could be trusted to support the will of the council, irrespective of where I stood as mayor, and so were much more willing to listen to me than they otherwise might have been." PM

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BY KAREN THORESON AND GREG STOPKA

NETWORKING LEADS TO BETTER RESULTS

Local governments show how it's done

Merriam-Webster's definition of *networking* is: "The exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions; specifically: the cultivation of productive relationships for employment or business."[1] An important part of the mission of the Alliance for Innovation is to further develop networking among local governments and their staff members for the purpose of accelerating innovative practices.

Most organizations, public and private, recognize the benefits of well-networked members. Longstanding civic organizations, for example, were formed to do good work in their communities and to provide a platform for networking community leaders with one another.

While networking can take place in informal settings, increasingly local governments intentionally create opportunities for employees to learn from others in their field or their region. This article highlights two exchange programs that intensified the networking experience. Benefits realized through these activities include:

- Learning how others accomplish similar work or tasks.
- Sharing ideas on how to do tasks and projects better.
- Building stronger bonds with other staff and organizations.
- Providing staff development for participants.
- Providing an attractive workplace in order to recruit and retain talent.

Cities Unlimited

The Cities Unlimited program between Coon Rapids and Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, allows them to share internal expertise and resources purposely but without contracts. With increasing demand for service and limited capacity, the goal of the program was for the cities to focus on developing and strengthening their natural talent to maximize the effectiveness of internal resources deployment.

A program developed by Brooklyn Park Assistant City Manager Michael Sable and Coon Rapids Assistant City Manager Matt Stemwedel, which is under the guidance of Matt Fulton, city manager of West Saint Paul, and Jamie Verbrugge, city manager of Brooklyn Park, allows a city to identify its natural talent and develop it into strengths for each organization.

When a problem arises where one organization needs the expertise it lacks, instead of outsourcing to a consultant, the city can share (i.e., trade) its own internal experts with each other, saving financial resources to be reinvested in internal talent.

When Coon Rapids wanted to create an innovation team, for example, and recognized it needed facilitation services, the city contacted Brooklyn Park where trained internal facilitators were able to help with the initiative Coon Rapids was undertaking. Brooklyn Park offered to facilitate the Coon Rapids meetings and in return, Coon Rapids offered performance measurement expertise to help Brooklyn Park coach its staff on improving that performance measurement program.

The two organizations have gone on to collaborate on a number of other training programs, saving both time and money. While not all problems can be solved by borrowing talent, it creates a powerful tool for managers to cost-effectively address challenges.

Some cities have collaborated this way informally for years but usually only where established relationships already existed. By formalizing this process, Coon Rapids and Brooklyn Park have created new opportunities to share costs, train more staff, and build connections that didn't exist previously.

Both organizations have been able to network more, promoting greater collaborative opportunities and idea generation. Building on the initial success, Coon Rapids and Brooklyn Park envision a document or website that could identify experts in the communities so that participants know what is available to them.

Recently, Coon Rapids created the Wizard Program to catalog staff expertise that will better enable it to use and deploy resources internally and externally in the future. The city is currently encouraging as many "wizards" to come forward as possible. The next phase will include recruiting people who can be identified as having such specific skills as Word, Excel, or PowerPoint.

Management Talent Exchange

In 2003, two Silicon Valley city managers at the time (Frank Benest, Palo Alto, and Ed Everett, Redwood City) were discussing the upcoming retirement of baby-boomer managers and the lack of interest in public service from younger generations.

As they developed the litany of shortcomings their organizations faced in offering high-quality training and opportunities for advancement in small organizations, they also outlined a potential solution that came to be known as the Management Talent Exchange Program (MTEP), which is now entering its 10th year.

MTEP provides high-potential employees a three-month opportunity to work in a nearby Silicon Valley community to develop new skills, relationships, and context for their future careers. It currently consists of 20 local governments (cities, counties, special districts) that nominate an employee and generally receive an employee from another agency in return.

The "hosting" agency agrees to provide a supervisor who also acts as a coach and mentor. Learning forums also allow all exchange employees to hear speakers on such topics as leadership and career development.

In order to supercharge the development of the high-potential employees, they are not only placed in a different organizational culture but in a different discipline and work on projects with which they are not familiar. Thus, the participants develop new competencies, experiences, and relationships.

The program is sponsored by the City/County Management Associations of Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. It is administered by the Human Resources Department of San Mateo County. Participating jurisdictions pay $1,000 to cover administration costs.

Participants and local government leaders are unanimous in their praise of the program. They say that MTEP exposes high-potential employees to professional development beyond what any single organization could provide, as well as experience in different work cultures that will assist them in future career choices.

Lessons Learned

These two programs highlight the vast potential of networking exchange programs:

- There is tremendous underused talent within most organizations. Identify it and leverage it!
- Organizations can seek out expertise within the organization and use it to train their own staffs. This is inexpensive and helps connect your own employees to one another and highlights skill areas that aren't included in traditional trainings.
- Talent can be traded with other organizations. Which communities nearby do you admire? What could you trade them for access to their expertise?
- A broader exchange program can leverage mid-level staff who would benefit from more challenging work opportunities, which aren't offered in their home organization. This creates a chance for an up-and-comer to get exposure to a new organizational culture and new ways of operating.
- "Fire bullets, then cannonballs" (Collins and Hansen, 2011, p. 69)[2] allows ideas to be shared from experts in other communities before an organization develops something new. Narrow some of your options by getting ideas from others who have addressed the problem you are trying to address.
- Grow the organizational talent capacity by teaching each other. The opportunities are unlimited.

Networking takes time and intentionality. For low costs, organizations can support their own employees, increase their skill set, help position mid-level employees to prepare for leadership roles, and build regional relationships that will bear fruit through new collaborations and enhanced expertise. PM

ENDNOTES

1 Networking [Def. 1]. (n.d.). Merriam-Webster.com. In Merriam-Webster. Retrieved February 6, 2014, from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/networking.

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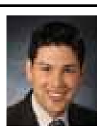

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BY JEFF DAVIDSON

ONE THING AT A TIME

Increase your productivity by slowing down

Every day, virtually all city and county managers and their staffs engage in multitasking. This might feel temporarily satisfying, but multitasking cannot compete with the long-term productivity of handling one thing at a time.

To become a master of doing one thing at a time, pick an activity—work related or not—that you enjoy and where there's a high probability that you can engage in that activity without doing anything else. It could be driving your car with the radio off or reading in your favorite armchair without having a snack.

THE MORE OFTEN YOU CAN GET INTO THE HABIT OF DOING ONE THING AT A TIME, THE BETTER YOU'LL DO, AND THE MORE TIME WILL SLOW DOWN FOR YOU.

Start with small segments. If you're reading in your favorite armchair, promise yourself you'll go 10 minutes without any snacks the first night. The second night, go 15 minutes, then 20, and so forth. Eventually, you might get to the point where you can read for an hour or more without having to resort to snacks.

If you're trying to engage in reading, conceptual or breakthrough thinking, or creative problem solving, find as quiet a place as possible. Your ultimate goal will be to focus on work-related tasks one at a time, so that your concentration and quality of performance goes up, your anxiety level goes down, and the clock slows down.

Tackle One Key Task

When you're surrounded by tasks competing for your attention, identify the one that's most important to tackle and stay with it until completion, or for as long as you can. If you're temporarily pulled away by something else, return to the important task at hand and, again, stay with it to completion, or for as long as you can.

When you have no choice but to handle a multiplicity of items competing for your attention, practice the ability to give at least short bursts of your full attention to the task at hand, before turning to something else that begs your attention.

If you've ever noticed airline reservation personnel in the middle of a pressure situation, you know what I mean. Suppose the plane is going to be leaving in a matter of minutes, and several passengers have arrived late.

Rather than trying to deal with three or four passengers at the same time, the ticket agent deals with one person and ticket situation at a time, often not even raising his head from the computer screen. He is ensuring the ticket will be correct once it's printed.

The same observation can be made of a bank teller, a bus driver, or a construction worker walking on scaffolding five stories above the ground. Indeed, when you look around, you find all kinds of people who are adept at doing one thing at a time.

Other habits can also help you master this habit:

- Initiate personal balancing techniques. Take deep breaths, stare out the window, envision yourself tackling the situation easily, or close your eyes for a few seconds before confronting the task again.
- Observe the people in your organization who concentrate well. What do they do differently than the rest? Talk to them, learn from them.
- Bring earplugs to work, if it's necessary. Use a sound screen if it helps.
- Encourage others to join your mission to increase your powers of concentration.

Some Wiggle Room

While you need to disengage in multitasking far more than you realize, there are times when it's perfectly permissible to do more than one thing at a time.

Most of those times occur away from work. Obviously, at dinner with a friend or loved one you'll be talking and eating simultaneously. Generally, it's okay to drive and listen to the radio, CDs, or your iPod. The exception is when the decibel level is so high that your concentration is impaired.

The issue becomes foggy when it comes to using a cell phone and driving. Both have the potential to diminish your concentration and increase your probability of being involved in an accident. Some people argue that cell phones come with speakers, so you can hold a phone conversation while keeping both hands on the wheel.

The problem with engaging in conversation and performing other tasks is that speaking requires far more brain activity than the passive act of listening to the radio or a CD player. If you insist on engaging in conversations while using your cellphone in the car, perhaps it's best for you to pull off to the side of the road.

The more often you can get into the habit of doing one thing at a time, the better you'll do, and the more time will slow down for you. PM

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BY DOUGLASS HANLEY

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

Complaints for the record books

I've had some 36 years of local government experience, with more than 32 years of it in Uwchlan Township, Pennsylvania. When I'm asked for advice on what I have learned during my career and if any of it is entertaining and humorous, I immediately think, "There isn't anything funny about this job." This, from a manager who was a real optimist back in 1978, when I started as a management intern at Derry Township (Hershey, Pennsylvania).

Sweet and Sour

I must say that over the years, the management profession can wear on you as all managers must plan for potential negative outcomes in any given situation and deal with the outcomes when they occur. This practice naturally can turn you into a pessimist.

I'm surprised by my colleagues who, when leaving the profession, say how much they have liked specific aspects of their positions, along with the people with whom they have worked. When you're in the real trenches of local government where residents can actually reach out and touch you, you get to see some bad aspects of human behavior.

I'm not going to focus on the standard "does the good outweigh the bad" question as it relates to management. Managers probably have heard or tried to answer it before. I will say, however, that older managers like me do soldier on, do keep the faith, and do persevere, these being more important at times than talent, intelligence, or education.

One piece of advice, however, is to never burn a bridge, because you don't know when you'll meet and perhaps need the person who is on the other side. Also, count your blessings. I have a great family, including my wife and three kids, and my management jobs have been truly rewarding during the past 36 years.

Recalling Memorable Complaints

At times, it is remarkable what people will call or complain about to a manager and this is a good topic of conversation with my colleagues. Here are a few complaints I've encountered:

After a somewhat lengthy rain event, one resident who was a tennis player called to complain that worms had come out of their holes and had crawled up onto the tennis courts in a sufficient number so that it prevented play at a particular community court one day.

The player felt that township personnel should come to the court, clean off the worms, and then put little fences around the courts to prevent this from ever occurring again. Even the board of supervisors couldn't believe the resident's idea.

Another time a resident, who the township staff knew was in complete control of his faculties, claimed he saw a goat boy running down one of the main state roadways. Seriously, he related the half boy, half goat story but, unfortunately for the resident, police couldn't find him.

And yet another resident many years ago complained that the government was bombarding his home with microwaves and radioactive materials so they could harass him and listen in on all his conversations. Perhaps it was a foreshadowing of today's NSA activities?

We've been told—not asked—by our residents that we have to come out and remove mice from basements or bats from attics; asked how to bury a dead horse; and been told our snow plows were going so fast that the snow coming off the end of the barrel knocked down people while they were walking on the sidewalk. We've even had residents throw their snow shovels at township trucks.

These few examples show you that sometimes we do hear and see it all at the local government level. It's been an interesting and at times incredible ride for me. After all, nurturing a community to maturity is a lot like raising teenagers. Just like them, when they graduate, get a good job and finally pay for your dinner, it makes it all worthwhile.

It's similar to staying the course until success is achieved on a large community project that is difficult and time-consuming, just like the one we most recently completed—the widening of Route 100 in Exton, Pennsylvania, to six lanes. Believe it or not, it took 15 years to complete, from the initial kick-off meeting to the bid letting in December 2013. PM

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Bring the *Life, Well Run* campaign **to your community**

ICMA has developed a wealth of resources you can use to help raise awareness of and appreciation for the value that professional local government managers bring to building great communities we're ***proud*** to call home.

Visit the *Life, Well Run* website to download campaign resources and learn how you can bring *Life, Well Run* to your community.

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Life, Well Run