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This should take five hours by selecting comments about challenges and responses

Contemporary trends in local government

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. To John Nalbandian**
- B. To Lawrence**
- C. Objectives of this session (SLIDE)**
- D. Process: presentation, exercises, discussion**

II. SUMMARY (Handout)(SLIDE)

- A. Trends**
- B. Challenges**
- C. Gaps**
- D. Organizational responses**
- E. Individual competencies associated with bridging the gaps
and meeting the challenges**
- F. Responsibilities, roles, values of local government
professionals will emerge**

III. BEGIN WITH TRENDS (SLIDE 4)

A. Identify as modernizing the organization and building and maintaining a sense of community. Internal (organizational) and external (community) focus. These trends are taking place worldwide. They were noticed in the research that led some 10 years ago to the Bertelsmann award for efficiency and responsiveness in local government. This is when Phoenix was identified as one of the 10 model governments in the world.

B. Modernizing the organization (internal organizational focus; performance oriented)

1. Characteristics

- a) Connecting administrative processes to the strategic goals of the organization*
- b) Integrating personnel and financial systems*
- c) Finding ways of organizing around problems not around departments and hierarchy*
- d) Decentralized decision making to promote timely responsiveness*
- e) Market orientation including privatization*
- f) GIS/GPS related activities;*
- g) Internet based innovations*
- h) Performance measurement; quality assurance, performance budgeting, goal based performance appraisal;*
- i) Resident as customer*

2. Not only are effectiveness, efficiency and equity in service delivery and policy support the driving forces behind this trend. Included is the compelling nature technology, specialization, and the professions.

These latter forces combine to create a drive that is not fully visible.

An example would be why we are using computers with power that far exceeds our needs. Why do we do that?

C. Building and maintaining a sense of community (external; citizen engagement)

1. Characteristics

- a) Engagement of citizens in traditionally formal political AND administrative processes;*
- b) More emphasis on expressions of direct democracy (e.g. recall of public officials, but also in land-use decisions and development of comprehensive and master plans;*
- c) More emphasis on neighborhoods as base unit of community;*
- d) More accountability and transparency as well as communication with citizens;*
- e) Devolution of tasks and partnerships with non-governmental sectors—private sector, non-profit, faith based organizations;*

2. Driving force behind this trend is the desire for identity. Either creating it, maintaining it, or protecting against threats to it.

D. Group Exercise (handout pressures worksheets)

1. Divide the group so that one is doing pressures on elected officials and the other is doing pressures on department heads. “Make a list of the pressures elected officials will face in the next 5-10 years? Make a list of what you think they will be doing more of? A list of what you think they will be doing less of? Same for department heads.

- a) Establish priorities then report—ask each table for one priority and then go table by table*

2. Combine the lists onto flip chart paper

IV. CHALLENGES OF MODERNIZATION (SLIDE); THESE ARE NOT ALL THE CHALLENGES, JUST THOSE WE HAVE SELECTED TO HIGHLIGHT))

A. Gap between professionalism and politics (show GAP overhead, slide) Read Newsweek quote

1. CAO and other senior managers' jobs become more political-- someone has to bridge the gap. Challenge is to create conditions and opportunities where the full administrative capacity of the staff can be engaged (as in gears on a car) to achieve political/community goals.

2. Power of administrative rationality is like a spider web; it easily can create tension with politics (judgment)

a) E.g. pavement management programs then and now

b) E.g. goal setting process that disconnects elected officials from day to day work of the government they are suppose to be guiding and overseeing. Electeds feeling no control.

c) Young people manage stores—how can this be? They have no control over key administrative systems—inventory, finance, budgeting, purchasing;

B. Decentralized service delivery designed for timely responsiveness brings into question the role of central administration

1. Client-oriented operating units create value. Value of central management lies in services it provides to operating units

a) Establishing decision premises—corporate principles like in San Jose

b) Absorption of political pressure

c) Alignment of political, administrative, and service delivery goals and processes

d) Strategic management of cultural change and other change processes

C. Specialized staff necessary to bring the best knowledge to public policy making creates challenge of coordinating teams

1. 80 percent? Of problems can be handled within departments; 20 percent cannot and the 20 percent is crucial. How do you organize both hierarchically and with teams?

D. Challenges of privatization

1. Value placed on markets makes building trust in government more difficult because we tend to contrast the market place with government rather than seeing the government as essential to effective markets

2. Requires rethinking of the role of government; for example, what part of h.r. cannot be contracted out?

V. CHALLENGES IN COMMUNITY BUILDING (SLIDE)

A. Redefining the relationship between government, residents, and other sectors

1. Looking at the role of government in community building terms takes us beyond service delivery as the core of what we do
2. Diversity complicates the government-citizen relationship where immigrants bring diverse expectations about the role of government and community based organizations. Many are used to the government having a larger role than it does in the U.S. This can be very confusing when it comes to accessing city services and simply in defining expectations and obligations of what it means to be a citizen of the United States.

B. Connecting citizens with administrative processes

1. Traditional relationships from citizens to elected officials and from elected officials to administrative officials are changed. Role of elected officials is questioned.
2. Citizens understand that dealing with staff is important.
 - a) *Give example of Ken Collier and planning staff*

C. Problems are regional or sub-local/neighborhood. Formal boundaries do not necessarily match the problems. Thus, the problem solving capacity must be augmented by partnerships, alliances, and agreements—some formal, some informal.

D. Serving customers versus allocating values

1. Expectations about time and public versus private life

VI. FROM THESE TRENDS AND CHALLENGES EMERGE CRITICAL GAPS THAT CONSTITUTE THE FOUNDATION OF CONTEMPORARY ADMINISTRATIVE WORK FOR SENIOR STAFF. BRIDGING THESE GAPS RESULTS IN A NEW KIND OF ADMINISTRATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE. THE BRIDGES REDUCE DISTANCE/CONNECT ELEMENTS THAT ARE ESSENTIAL TO EFFECTIVELY “CONTROL”/AND ADAPT TO THE TWO TRENDS. GAPS EXIST BETWEEN: (SLIDE)

A. Training and experience of staff and the volunteer-citizen elected official (refer to gap slide)

B. Departments as they become more specialized and technical and with community problems that cross departments

C. Formal and legal processes of governing institutions and what they are prepared to do and the passionate expressions of community-based, democratic values

D. Specialized staff and citizens (Ken Collier)

E. Trying to simultaneously deal with the two trends creates these gaps. Each gap reflects tension inherent as we bring the two trends together

F. Exercise (reference the gaps and the pressures lists from earlier exercise).

- 1. Two groups, given these changes, how will the role of professional staff change to add value to the work of elected officials? Make a list of what you think local government professionals will be doing more of and less of in 5-10 years to support the work of elected officials?**
- 2. Flip chart and discuss**
- 3. What should the city manager's office be doing more of/less of to help department heads and other senior staff work effectively with the mayor/council, and its members? Make lists, share and discuss**
- 4. What are you best prepared to do? Least prepared?**

VII. RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGES—BUILD BRIDGES, CREATE INTERSECTIONS (SLIDE)

A. Organizationally

1. Build leadership capacity

a) Realization that professionalism requires more than mastery over technical knowledge—how to integrate knowledge into public debate

b) CHALLENGING question: How does the professional help foster the deliberative citizen rather than bemoaning its absence?

2. Think strategically to gain perspective and some control over the centrifugal forces of change

a) Only way this can happen is if you know what your business is. Give Jim Collins example of hedgehog concept

b) CHALLENGING question: What role does the local government play in the community building process that cannot be duplicated? .

3. Promote learning and planned change

a) What this means is understanding the dynamic of change (responsiveness) and stability (efficiency)

b) Reconsidering the axiom that “people are resistant to change.” Understanding when change is resisted and when it is likely to be adopted easily

(1) E.g. pay at the pump, using cell phones, debit cards

(2) Change perceived as loss is likely to be resisted no matter what the upside

4. Develop partnerships and alliances

a) Capacity building and temporary organizations. Relate to incongruence between political boundaries and problem solving boundaries

b) Interdepartmental as well as external

c) Discussion of intersections.

(1) Terry Woodbury story

(2) Use Lawrence aquatics center as an example

(3) Partnerships and alliances create intersections

5. Make diversity a strength—understand how diversity affects expectations

a) Managing expectations becomes crucial as organizations and communities become more diverse

b) The concept of “justice” within the organization becomes more relevant, and the four values and their importance is enhanced in assessing organizational commitment

6. Understand technology as a driver of innovation

a) Driver of change e.g. super tanker

b) Homogenizing of life e.g. gas by credit card; engineering; strip centers

- c) *Pace of life e.g. cell phones, working vacations*
- d) *We are constantly in transition, no resting points, anchors*
- e) *Efficiency plus technology = change*

7. Which of these responses will command most attention in the future?

B. Individual competencies (handout) (slide 12)

- 1. Knowledge, Skills, Talents and Emotional and Personal Attributes**
- 2. Ask participants to identify four knowledge, and four skill and talent areas they are most competent at individually today. Will not share unless you want to.**
- 3. At their tables, ask participants to identify four in each area that will be need by the organization in the next 5-10 years in order to respond to the challenges and gaps. Share these at each table and see if you get a combined short list**
- 4. Large group consensus at flip chart**
- 5. What is it about these that makes them so important**
- 6. (NOTE: if there is consensus, it can lead to a strategic training/educational emphasis; compare individual to organizational needs can lead to identification of personal educational plan/portfolio for ICMA).**

7. Personal and emotional attributes (JN lecture)

a) With uncertainty and change, personal attributes, predispositions, talents more heavily influence what the work is and how it will be done. No one is an agent of the changes that are occurring. Increasingly, we are pieces in webs of influence.

(1) E.g. fight or accommodate?

b) Emotional and Personal Attributes (Edgar Schein and Donald Wolfe)

(a) Capacity to be stimulated by emotional and interpersonal issues and crises, rather than become exhausted or worn down by them.

(b) Capacity to bear high levels of responsibility without becoming paralyzed.

(c) Ability to exercise power and make difficult decisions without guilt or shame.

(d) Capability of absorbing the emotional strains of the uncertainty of interpersonal conflict, responsibility, and other stressors.

(2) These attributes can only be known and learned through experience. I cannot teach them in school,

even though I know they are crucial. It is like riding a bike.

(3) Understanding of these attributes comes from accumulating what can be called tacit knowledge—knowledge that is hard to articulate to others—e.g. skiing, biking.

VIII. EMERGING FROM FRAMEWORK ARE SOME OBSERVATIONS ON RESPONSIBILITIES, ROLES, AND VALUES OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROFESSIONAL (SLIDE)

a) Responsibilities

(1) Modernizing the organization

(2) Community building

(3) Bridging gaps in divergent perspectives

b) Roles

(1) Facilitate partnerships

(2) Build bridges

(3) Create intersections

(a) Discuss concept of creating intersections

(Lawrence aquatics center) as important metaphor in community building both external and internal (San Jose budget process centered around themes rather than departments)

c) Values

(1) Representation

(2) Efficiency

(3) Social equity

(4) Individual rights

IX. SUMMARY (Slide)

A. If time, what is the most important idea we have talked about today?

X. CONCLUSIONS

1. The fact that these are worldwide trends should give us pause.

Why are these trends taking place worldwide? (Ask participants)

a) I think the reason is that democratic governments worldwide understand that in this age of cynicism, skepticism, and apathy toward government, we have to find ways to build trust.

Information/accessibility alone can be destructive.

2. Overall, these trends in local government are designed to provide local governments with more credibility and trust. It does this by getting things done collectively that cannot be done individually and by respecting the value of inclusion and citizen engagement.

3. To the extent that these efforts produce more trust and credibility they will result in more permission—permission to build an environment where risk is tolerated and accountability is tempered with forgiveness.

B. Local government professionals are embarked on one of the most challenging journeys of the past hundred years. It is appropriate that we start the century thinking about new ways to engage in public service.

C. In an environment of uncertainty and stress, it is impossible to lead by formula. Lessons learned are personal. Successful managers understand their lessons and incorporate them into who they are individually and professionally in ways that do not seem arbitrary or inconsistent even if difficult to convey to others.

D. With the uncertainty that can be foreseen, leadership capacity only can be built if we are sensitive to opportunities to explore, to be curious, and to ask of each other questions that will help sort what value we can add to our organizations, our communities, and the enterprise of public service.