Contemporary Trends and Leadership Challenges

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Goals

• Describe fundamental prerequisite for effective governance
• Introduce two contemporary trends that widen the gap
• Describe the leadership challenges associated with bridging the gap
• Identify attitude/mindset to deal with the challenges
Prerequisite for effective governance: “bridge the gap” between political acceptability and administrative sustainability

Politics of Identity

Leadership Challenges

Administrative Modernization

Administrative roles facilitate bridge building

Match structures of authority with problems to be solved

Engagement processes for decision making

Adaptive Work

Examples of gap

• Post Office closings
• Fiscal Cliff
• Thornton, Colorado, water
• Your examples

What are the consequences of failing to bridge the gap?
Political Acceptability

• Do we agree on the problem to be solved, its importance, and what we are trying to accomplish?
• Do we agree on the scope of the problem and important dimensions of the problem?
• What are the philosophical/ideological differences that will affect the discussion?
• Do we agree on who should be at the table, who we will listen to and who our audience is?
Administrative sustainability

• Do we understand and agree within admin staff on the problem to be solved?
• Do the solutions proposed reflect professional/technical expertise?
• Will proposed solutions solve the problem?
• Will the solutions be affordable and sustainable?
Challenge

• Agreement must exist within political and administrative arenas and then between them
Gap between Political Acceptability and Administrative Sustainability*

*Credit to John Arnold
Contemporary Trends

- Administrative modernization
- Create, maintain, preserve sense of community/identity
Your Changes

• Modernization: Compared to the past, how are you making decisions based on hard data today that is systematically available? What databases exist today electronically that were not available electronically in the past?

• Identity: How are you helping citizens discover, maintain, preserve community or neighborhood identity? Citizen engagement? How have you seen the importance of tribe, family, religion worldwide?
Norman Rockwell. The County Agent
Wal-Mart
Saint Paul’s Cathedral

Simon Colvin 2007
Indicators of Modernizing the Organization

• Connecting administrative processes to strategic goals
• Integrating personnel and financial systems
• Organizing around problems, not departments and hierarchy
• Decentralized decision making for timely response, but centralized tools
• Market orientation including privatization; citizen as customer
• GIS/GPS activities and Internet-based innovations
• Results-based & quality-based performance measurement and benchmarking
• Goal-based performance appraisal
• Performance budgeting
• [http://www.pleier.com/pacd.htm](http://www.pleier.com/pacd.htm)
• Change in expectations re: time
Two Features of Modernization

- Hard data drive out soft data (experience, intuition) when efficiency and quality are improved. Examples: casinos, actuarial projections; assessing property values.

- Modernization means centralization, standardization, consistency, high quality, and familiarity. Example: McDonald’s; airports (If I did not know where I was, could I tell from the inside of the airport?)
Surrender “to the world of your Blackberry”--Lasgo
Indicators of Desire for Identity/Community

- Focus on us/them: passion in community/identity issues—NIMBY (Gardner intermodal)
- More emphasis on neighborhoods as the base unit of the community (de facto governments)
- Emphasis on preservation of the past
- The past viewed idyllic/wistful/nostalgic
- More emphasis on expressions of direct democracy
- Engaging citizens in administrative processes
- More avenues for opinions/feedback
- More accountability and transparency with citizens
- More communication, contact, and educational opportunities
Somewhere Over the Rainbow—
Israel Kamakawiwo'ole
The Challenge

• How do we use the techniques of modernization to build unique communities?

• How do we use the techniques, approaches and spirit embodied in Federation Square to create unique and enduring character like that reflected in Flinders Station? To connect the worlds of Surrender and Rainbow?
Communities of Character

• Economically and socially vibrant
• Citizen trust and confidence that jurisdiction can deal effectively with public problems
• Assist citizens retain control and build identity
• Value spontaneity yet foster tradition
• Encourage generosity and diversity
• Embody and add to the greater good
Challenge 1—roles and responsibilities

• How to create and reinforce “bridge building” administrative roles and problem oriented approaches

...without becoming politically aligned or administratively compromised.
Joining the Worlds of Politics and Administration

Politics

Administration

Interdepartmental policy arenas

The arena of power!

Join the arenas of what is politically acceptable with what is administratively feasible

CAO
Question

FOCUS ON WORKING THE GAP:

• Are some department heads more skilled than others at working the gap?

• What do you think are the administrative skills/mindset/attitude that “working the gap” requires?

• (No use of “communication” or one word lists)
Prelude to Challenge 2

• Problems extend beyond established boundaries contributing to the gap
• As the gap increases, and in the absence of trusted government authority willing/capable of solving problems:
  o Third parties emerge
    • Non profits, associations (C of C), clubs (rotary) Foundations
  o Shared services created
  o Cross sector partnerships, contracting out, privatization
Challenge 2--Structure

How to synchronize government jurisdiction and third party players with problems to be solved

Your examples?

- Challenging existing boundaries—shared services and privatization
- Imperative for collaborative relationships and skills
- Managing in networks as well as hierarchy
- Managing boundaries becomes a new concept
- Minneapolis-St. Paul example
Question

FOCUS ON NETWORKS, COLLABORATIVE WORK, PARTNERSHIPS:

• Are there some managers who seem more skilled than others at establishing and working in networks, collaboratively, and in partnerships?

• What skills/mindset/attitude sets them apart?

• (No use of “communication” or one word lists)
Prelude to Challenge 3

• Creates possibilities for comprehensive approaches (e.g. land-use, transportation, eco-devo, environment)
• Imperative for planned engagement emerges
  o Communication
  o Potential to reach beyond normal players (e.g. recent immigrants; youthful geeks?)
  o Forums for problem identification and problem solving
  o Forums of deliberation
Challenge 3

A. How to incorporate citizen engagement (planned and spontaneous, including social media) with traditional government structures and processes

B. How to embrace internal organizational networks while respecting traditional lines of authority.
Summary Challenges

A. **Roles and Responsibilities**: Administrative staff moving into the gap (without political alignment or administrative compromise)

B. **Structures**: Developing skills/mindset where the problems to be solved drive pol/admin work and jurisdictional and/or departmental boundaries adjust

C. **Processes**: Imperative for engagement as a decision making approach
   A. Citizens
   B. Networks (including within the org)
Adaptive Work

• Problems for which there are no “correct” answers
• Solutions lie outside the current way of operating
• Problem approaches demand learning as you go; progress requires adaptation
• Responsibility often shifts to stakeholders
• Distinguish between what is precious and expendable within culture/past
• Time frame different from technical problem solving

Questions

1. Which of the challenges is most relevant to you and your organization?
2. Which skills that you identified are you best positioned individually/organizationally to enhance or develop?
3. Which are you least prepared for?
4. What is one step you can take to meet the leadership challenges?