HOW IS YOUR CITY PERFORMING?
ARE YOU SURE?

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BACKGROUND

Basic Criteria
Shouldn’t we all have similar basic criteria when assessing our cities’ current performance?

Common Characteristics
What are the common characteristics of failed, mediocre, and high-performing cities?

Private Sector Comparison
Are we similar to the private sector, and if not, where are we different?
THREE CRITICAL BUILDING BLOCKS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE AND HIGH PERFORMANCE

- Innovation and Focus on the Future
- Ensuring Excellent Services
- Corporate Support, Accountability, and Value Systems

CORPORATE SUPPORT

- Finance, IT, Human Resources, Purchasing, Fleet, etc.
- Executives and governing bodies
ACCOUNTABILITY & VALUE SYSTEMS

Consider This: What will the “owners” of your municipal corporation think if an article was written about all your business practices?

► The ends DON’T justify the means in US governance.
► Transparency laws lead to much higher standards.
► Organizational Culture — You are either managing it, or it’s managing you!
► Culture is the biggest determinant of performance.

It’s how we conduct business, not just what we accomplish!

HOW TO EVALUATE CORPORATE SUPPORT

Finance, IT, Human Resources, Purchasing, Fleet, etc.

► Are they providing the tools for operating departments to serve their mission?
► Are they properly balancing their support role with their internal control role?
**Executives and Governing Bodies**

- Are there mutually supportive and accountable relationships within the governing body?
- Is direction consistent and clear?
- Do you encourage staff to bring both problems and solutions to you?
- Do you encourage staff to tell you what you need to hear, not necessarily what you want to hear?
- What happens when there are mistakes?
- Is there stability or high turnover?

**How to Evaluate Accountability & Value Systems**

- Is there a robust understanding of the ethical standards in your city?
- Is there a stated value system, i.e., desired behaviors of staff?
- What is the organizational culture like? Is there dissonance between what is stated vs. what really is practiced?
- Does the leadership of the City invest in their employees, value professionalism and reinforce it?
- Are the organization’s “levers” designed to reinforce this desired culture?
THREE CRITICAL BUILDING BLOCKS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE AND HIGH PERFORMANCE

Ensuring Excellent Services

Corporate Support, Accountability, and Value Systems

Innovation and Focus on the Future

ENSURING EXCELLENT SERVICES

- The “score” on the previous building block impacts this one, whether you know it or not
- Discord at the leadership level and lack of tools greatly impacts operating departments
- Are you expecting people to be engaged in their professions?
- What are best management practices?
- Are you asking about best practices in each service area?
- Are you asking about outcomes and performance indicators?
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INNOVATION & FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

- Turn on your high beams! Always look further ahead to anticipate the next turn.
- Do not assume too much risk before mastering the first two building blocks!
- Ignoring the first two building blocks can and has led to massive failures, often resulting in excessive, unnecessary expenses.
- **Strategic Planning** can be a powerful transformational tool... but most agencies do not follow the proper model.
STRATEGIC PLANNING

► It starts with honest self-evaluation: the first two building blocks!
► Make amends — shore up the weaknesses and accentuate the strengths.
► Examine the trends and develop innovative strategies to ensure your city’s future success.
► Additional factors affecting success: discipline and leadership tenure.

FOUNDATIONS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING can be the most powerful tool for your community… if you do your homework on the other building blocks!

THREE CRITICAL BUILDING BLOCKS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE AND HIGH PERFORMANCE

Innovation and Focus on the Future

Corporate Support, Accountability, and Value Systems

Ensuring Excellent Services
The way we conduct business in cities is almost always in the open, and has more of an impact than private sector counterparts. Don’t fall in the trap and ignore the least sexy foundational block. The city leadership’s relationships, i.e., council and city manager, have a huge impact on performance. The organizational culture also has a large impact... and it’s being designed, with or without your help.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- You have the criteria to assess your agency’s performance
- Don’t fall in the trap and ignore the least sexy foundational block
- The way we conduct business in cities is almost always in the open, and has more of an impact than private sector counterparts
- The city leadership’s relationships, i.e., council and city manager, have a huge impact on performance
- The organizational culture also has a large impact... and it’s being designed, with or without your help

**Questions?**

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