



## **BIG Ideas – The Future of Local Government**

**An Alliance for Innovation Event**  
October 14-16, 2011 ~ Fort Collins, CO

*Where do big ideas come from – the collision of ideas... Tom Miller*

### **ABOUT THE ALLIANCE FOR INNOVATION**

The Alliance for Innovation is an international network of progressive governments and partners committed to transforming local government by accelerating the development and dissemination of innovations. The Alliance seeks out innovative practices, challenges existing business models, exchanges knowledge, and provides products and services that help our members perform at their best. Together with its partners, ICMA and Arizona State University (ASU), the Alliance promotes excellence in local government to build a community of practice in local government innovation.

### **ABOUT BIG IDEAS**

BIG Ideas is an invitation-only event that gathers progressive leaders to explore the future of local government. Approximately 100 participants from think tanks, foundations, businesses, universities, public interest groups, and of course, local governments are in attendance at this two and one half day event.

BIG Ideas participants contribute to provocative conversations and explore important topics in an innovative and interactive format. In groups, participants are called upon to provide thought-provoking ideas around changing society, critical and timely issues, and to identify the innovations needed to better address timely issues.

**Friday, October 14, 2011**

**Opening Panel:**

- Frank Benest, Next Generation Advisor
- John Nalbandian, University of Kansas
- Karl Smith, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

(See links to White Papers on final page)

**Frank Benest**

Local government operates in a disruptive world. It is non-linear and can't be anticipated. VUCA is a military term standing for volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity where troops can't rely on headquarters... Local government faces a similar VUCA.

VUCA forces happen at the local level because change is a constant and can't be predicted.

The primary challenge for local government is how to do we promote adaptive change. When we consider lessons from the American military the modern military had been designed to meet the challenges of the cold war. As of 9-11 the American military had to adapt to change military practice to one that could fight street to street in new ways.

There are three necessities to adaptive change:

1. Know what is different and act on it – the new world requires new solutions
2. Free up people – build a culture of learning to allow people to learn through experimentation
3. Keep watch – role of leader is to protect and keep watch

Local government operates in a risk adverse environment. Yet in the new VUCA world local government needs a genesis of ideas and the potential to rally new employees.

**QUESTION: How do we create an environment that allows for risk taking?**

**John Nalbandian**

What is the framework for bridging the gap of what is politically acceptable and the administrative feasible? This is an inherit challenge to local government, and the gap is growing. As it continues to grow it becomes a failure in the confidence of government.

Challenge 1: There is a necessity to think about new or adapting roles and responsibilities to bridge the gap – this is just part of a manager's role. But increasingly you are spending more time in the gap, working the politics. Department heads are being drawn into the gap as well. Department heads will long term provide value in the gap.

Challenge 2: As the gap grows – the connections allow more people in the private sector and the non-profit sector to make contributions in the gap. But the question is who is going to represent the values of equality, efficiency, and effectiveness of service?

Challenge 3: Influx of information and expression – how do we take all of the expressions of public opinion and articulate them with our traditional rules of inclusion.

**QUESTION: Can we generalize from California's experience? What is the future role of a department head? Ie. The Police Chief has to be very community minded or the Community Development Director does not need to be a planner.**

**Karl Smith**

At UNC Chapel Hill we are working on the Forecast which is a look at what is actually going to happen in local government and the tensions that forces resistance. What we saw were pockets of change and the majority of organization who have hopes of waiting it out. As we looked at it we realized there are many tensions that have existed for a long time between service delivery and the costs and resources to deliver those services. So the question becomes what are actually the core services of a local government? For local government much tension exists in the effort to identify what is core.

Additional Tensions:

- Regionalism verse localism – These efforts seem to be successful only when focused around a charismatic leader.
- Resistance to change – There is a general resistance to change as it relates to infrastructure, finance changes, core service changes, human capital.
- How to deal with inequality across communities - Compromises public services. There is a widening gap between the have's and the have not's.
- Culture of innovation – communities that have a culture of innovation will continue to build on that while those who don't will resist, hunker down.

**QUESTION: Is the culture of innovation rather than the outside circumstances that leads communities to engage in innovation?**

**LARGE GROUP DIALOGUE WITH PANELISTS**

**Thoughts on Risk Taking**

The riskiest proposition is to hunker down and do nothing. What do we have to deal with personally to take risk? How do we manage the personal risk vs. the betterment of the community?

How do we in this environment minimize the feeling of winners and losers? There are generally accepted objectives for assessing risk but in an organization in the way we are talking about – there is a subjective sense of risk taking. If we expect that the downside of not taking a risk is very serious then we must also deal with the possibilities of developing a reputation of not caring or reckless behavior.

Local government professionals have begun to recognize that you have to take risk to make change but the culture is not designed to support risk taking. It is very natural in local government to hunker down. You can do simple things to promote risk – use of pilots, “pre-mortems” and postmortems, celebrating failure. Responsible risk taking is what we have to do.

Consider in recruitment that you bring people into the organization based on their tolerance for risk taking. While there is change, a lot is also staying the same. Are managers the reformers or are they the one's that need to be reformed?

We are the ones that need to take on the charge of fundamental change.



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What causes change – calamity or major invention? Part of our risk taking has to enable our vision and ability to see better what is happening and taking the risk to get us there. See and anticipate and be willing to risk everything. What really is the nature of transformative change?

Problems do not always need to be solved at the manager's table. How do we recognize that we are not the only table in town? Time of fundamental transcending change and there are big time winners and losers that are mad about government as a whole. The struggle is amazing and fundamental.

Trying to encourage staff to take risk but not be reckless. If failure is not an option, then neither is success. The future has already been invented that just haven't been tried yet.

Surprised about the risk the manager's have to take. As an elected official the manager and the elected official we have to be partners in risk taking. The elected official is your partner in risk taking.

The bright spots... Managers have worked really hard with your elected body and the local government structure and system has been very resilient over the course of the last three years. Why do companies grow from nothing to become superstars? They are consistent in the path they follow. Manager's need to do bold things but it is also very important to be consistent. (20 miles a day everyday manager, not 5000 miles in one day)

How much does technology play into the resistance to take risk? Government is in a fish bowl. Even if we think about technology as taking us closer to democracy it can also take us away from it. Those who have the time, have a growing voice. The loudest voice in the community, the most technical savvy are not representative of the entire community.

What if we assume that successful innovation is a random event? What is more important is the diffusion of the innovation. Are you an early adopter, in the middle or a laggard? Does everyone have to innovate or should we be spending more of our time focusing on whether you are an early adopter?

Is crisis the only thing that gets innovation going... no. It can be just the one of the things that gets you going. The organizational culture is the driver of change and willingness to innovate.

We see change through crisis. Forced change is pretty ugly, the only way to change without crisis is the experimentation and learning. We have to create an environment of experiments, perceive possibilities and seize opportunities.

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**Saturday, October 15, 2011**

**1<sup>st</sup> Discussion: Place**

- Ray Patchett, Consultant, Former City Manager
- Peggy Merriss, City Manager, Decatur, GA
- David Warm, MARC
- Damian Thorman, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

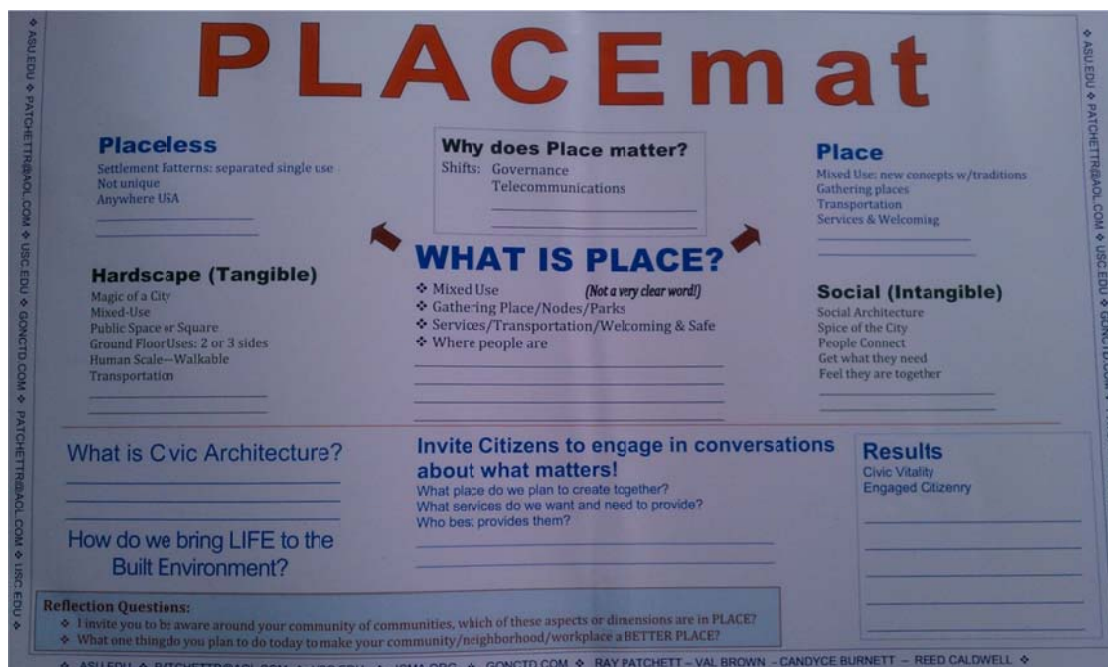
**Ray Patchett**

Place seems like a simple concept but it is not a meaningful word unless you have a context to describe it. On the Placemat, which was developed by much of my work with cities, you can think of it as ideas and a language for place. It is an attempt to create a holistic view. First, why do we care about place?

The opposite of place is being placeless. When I apply that to land use planning, the uses of place are stand alone and not unique. An office in Denver could be the same as San Diego. Costco here is the same as at home. That is placeless it could be anywhere USA.

When I think of place, I think of mixed-uses. There is the hardscape and softscape that is related to placemaking; the tangible and intangible. The way to create magic in our cities is to use mixed-use. The

spice comes from all of us being in the place where people connect. Developing a welcoming, safe, candid, personal community should be our number one goal.



If that is the nature of place, with the tensions and opposites, how do we manage that? There is a civic architecture broader than the city organization. It is the nucleus of citizens built on government, non-profit and citizens all working together. We often look at city governments as a hub of a wheel. We need to find opportunities where we position ourselves as a spoke on the wheel.

How do we bring life to the community? We expand our horizons and invite citizens to the table for the conversation. What place can we create together? What service do we need to provide? Who best provides those services? We don't need to be the only service provider if we engage citizens and partners. The results and outcomes of this we call the quality of life but it could be engaged citizenry and cultural vitality and civic vitality.

**QUESTION: How healthy is the civic architecture? What are the civic space connections? What one thing are you willing to do today to make your community a better place?**



**Peggy Merriss**

Here is a challenge for you as a manager or leader in your community, if you are not considering placemaking as primary responsibility to advance your community you are behind in new economy. Place in the new economy is what industrial parks were in the old economy. Those who have money to invest and consumers are looking for a place to be and are looking for choices. The fact is that with our mobility in our work you can choose to live where you want and do your work which makes place extremely important. It is about competition, place and happiness. There are five things that are most important: leadership, community aesthetics, openness, good basic services, and the physical economy. In Decatur the top 3 are to protect and develop our brand, infrastructure and the capacity for connection.

What is infrastructure? It is the capacity to build public spaces that welcome the public. It is like the mall concept with consideration to lighting, comfortable space and urban design. Supporting and building these things/places is what supports the public ground.

Capacity for connection: Connection determines how happy we are with our community. Helps us develop relationships and ties to community. Make people feel safe next store in their neighborhoods. Provide opportunity to create the community song. Daniel Pink says, "We can build a symphony that we call strategic planning." The symphony of a community is related to their ability to find their song which relies on leadership and openness to build connections. It is a symphony of different voices coming together.

Branding: a picture is worth a thousand words and a good brand could be worth millions. People know what you stand for through it and it creates an emotional response.

For Decatur, this stuff works! For example, we recently had a gaming company decide to relocate to our city because they loved our access to mass transit, they loved the school system, they liked that we were physically attractive, and we had the number 2 beer pub in the world. It will bring 150 jobs to the community year one, and 300 expected over the long term.

**David Warm**

Forces of seismic and demographic shifts are causing us to rethink the business of local government. When we talk about forces and how they relate to place making and local governments in it we realize that:

1. We are in a process of Reinventing place: A new time is emerging in how we think about the city based on demographic changes and economic forces. Deindustrialization is changing our interactions, there is an increase access to broadband, there is a general decline of the middle class, energy costs are rising, and other mega forces are changing how we form ourselves. We don't know how cities are going to respond yet. Part of that process is denser urban form, more rental housing, low rent market that we have to serve, and redevelopment....and all of this equals tough politics. This is an escapable reality of the markets and how we respond to it is just as important.
2. There will be more competition among places: we confuse real estate development with economic development. Place making creates an enduring construct which makes investment attractive and sustains itself over time. Cities will increasingly work to attract assets where these places are constructed. All central plans will need economic focus to attract amenities in the broader market. As competition in the economy grows and varies in character it will change the assets that drive the market. As competition intensifies, politics will as well.
3. Local government involvement in placemaking will expand not contract: We need to prioritize and focus objectives of local governments to aim and focus what local governments does. Communities will demand that we get involved in place making using our political power and strategic planning ability. Cities are ratcheting up place making. We used to think of cities planning at the local level, and then regulating it, but that is changing rapidly and will continue. We invest and take risk positions...the lines are completely blurred and it impacts the

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competencies of city hall. This yields a governance question were we have to manage governance and while taking a fiduciary position.

4. Focus will be on as much outside the borders of a community as inside: This will require the development of a regional strategy that manages natural resources. Creating assets like urban transit systems. Regional constructs for framework for local plans. Requires a different attention level. Managers have not been as engaged as a group. Disconnected from borders looking at a regional view. Managers need to bridge the gap from what is administratively feasible verse what is politically feasible for a regional strategy and larger context.
5. Successful places will be equitable places: the most important factor/driver character of cities is isolating and concentrating poverty. It has accelerated after WWII as we focus on real estate investment. Problem is undermining competitiveness and the social fabric we have to find solutions to it. Engagement and urban design reveal ways to engage in problem solving. In a majority minority country, it is critical that we address, none of us succeed if there are impoverish zip codes.

### **Damian Thorman**

The big idea - the Soul of community. The idea is what attaches people to place. Why do people feel an emotional connection to place? At the Knight Foundation we conducted a survey on the connection to place because we wanted to see what the drivers for attachment were.

The survey revealed 3 primary drivers:

1. Openness: a sense that you have a diverse focus on welcoming people of all types
2. Social offerings: BEER! What things in the community have a lively sense of place for people to engage in
3. Aesthetics: is it a beautiful place?

We wanted to know how much of this matters. Do the drivers have consequences? Communities that have the most engaged citizens have the highest economic growth. High attachment level equals high economic growth. How do we implement this?

1. Miami: funding a community with a community foundation. Do we need more parks? Creating a sense of welcoming. 70% of Miamians born outside USA. In this environment the sense of welcoming is very important to place. Be welcoming in a diverse place. We are assisting in the development of more art institutions while placing an emphasis on aesthetics.
2. Charlotte: working with a university to develop a curriculum to work at neighborhood level on how to change impoverished neighborhoods.
3. Detroit: Use technology to develop new ideas from citizens. City governments used to drive technology change, but now governments are chasing technology and the gap is getting wider and wider. How do we inject technology solutions into cities? How do citizens help implement in the community..."change by us" allows citizens to develop individual projects and provide them resources to implement them.

[www.SOUlofthecomunity.org](http://www.SOUlofthecomunity.org) for more information from the Knight Foundation.

### **PLACE: Report Out from Small Group Dialogue**

#### **QUESTION: What is needed to create a sense of place?**

- Aesthetics, quality of infrastructure and redevelopment
- Community events (ie. Events for kids)
- Reinvest in traditional downtown – walkability, central markets
- Connectivity – create an art walk, spray park, public entertainment in public spaces
- Pay attention to streetscapes and roads
- Libraries as a civic place – include digital facilities

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- Aggressive volunteerism
- Building the capacity of neighbors to understand and be active in their community
- Cities and counties learning how to share
- Using and mixing use of private resources for public programs
- Politics is/can be a critical inhibitor to creating place
- Community values
- Good urban design through good/robust civic engagement
- Allow and encourage a sense of play and experimentation
- Can “place” exist in places where there is just an event or an interaction?
- What is the role of government to create a greater sense of personal responsibility and have a sense of responsibility in creating space?
- Key challenge is government’s ability to lead space making – frame the public need with two or more benefits to create place. How do you create the right combination of history/public/private space?
- How do we blend the visions (between younger folks and older folks) of what place should be?
- Still need sense of relationship/connectedness.
- Whose responsibility is it?
- Take advantage of light rail
- Maintain Police DARE and athletic programs
- Add service programs (ie. Resume writing)
- Welcoming greenspace creation
- Neighborhood councils
- Renovated dead space into open and warm inviting shopping and gathering space
- City park places in between east or west sides of city
- Use food as a driver, not retail – have lots of restaurants that create a sense of an urban village
- Branding efforts is important
- Less core service focus on social – are these the new core?
- There is no magic formula that makes us aware of how to create place/spice – each community has to discover what works for them
- Densification needs differentiation for multi-family high density?
- Interest of private (security) verse open (public)
- Transportation strategies – every trip being on foot (ie. Don’t allow for free parking)
- Small town feel regardless of size
- Active citizen engagement
- Considering annexation to maintain without loss of charm
- Public art/murals – deters graffiti and can build a sense of pride – supporting local artists and musicians that give back
- Church was place, then public buildings, then private malls – private sector public spaces is increasing – why is that?
- Tourist tax and a community board to determine what the money is used for
- Have BIG meeting – get input from diverse stakeholders
- Won’t have city halls in the future
- Supporting athletics is important

### Education

- Heart and soul of the community is the schools... Good schools heighten diversity and a driving (or the driving force) for selecting a community.
- Decrease the need for busing
- Increase the feeling of community
- Trade academies
- Programs for after school, summer, etc.



- Can school be multi-purpose facilities

#### Partnerships

- In Gainesville/Alachua County, FL we are using a collaborator concept which is a partnership among the city, county, University of Florida and the chamber to support United Way. On football day from noon to midnight there is a party which raises money for United Way to achieve mutual goals.
- Public-private partnerships is playing an increasing role in the creation of places. Evolution of public spaces.
- Partner with homeowner's associations.
- Partner with the non-profit sector for service delivery.
- Create connections for HOA's and non-profits – share office space, infrastructure, resources.
- Allow for initiatives to be framed as NGO or citizen driven – our staff will take your lead – empower other groups and increase social connections.
- Partner with universities – city/university and downtown development authority and community foundations to construct vision of the future.
- How do public/private work together to create third place? How do we make this intentional?

#### Social Equity

- Poverty aspect – how communities are stepping up and addressing the issues of poverty. How to empower neighborhoods. The importance of schools and its impact on the diversity of neighborhoods. Try to limit the have and have not concepts.
- Neighborhoods which have designated the neighborhood mom. Taking the streets back for the kids. Neighborhood moms are organizing events to build community connection among the children.

#### Use of Technology

- Consider the differences between the virtual community as a sense of place and the actual community as a sense of place. How do they differ and how do they converge? Diverse based on their age groups. The virtual community wants things done and done quickly. As it relates to accountability leadership has to learn to govern based on the differing perspectives.
- What is the role of “social community” (ie. Tweeting) in building communities?
- Can design virtual space to encourage community?
- How can we create virtual communities (like Facebook community) that are significant and matter to people?

#### Regionalism

- Distinction to the attachment to the small place vs. the regions as a whole. How do you balance competition of the regional interests and promote sharing more regionally. Core services are more of the aesthetics and we farm out more of the traditional one's as opposed to what was traditionally thought.
- Need to balance collaboration and competition in regions. Center cities have an advantage in regionalism efforts.
- How do we promote shared resources?
- Can we build attachment to places and regions?
- Finding the right balance between regionalism verse spirit of individual place – individualism verse regionalism

#### **PLACE: CLOSING PANEL COMMENTS**

David Warm: Cities are getting increasingly good about creating events that help build a sense of place. But there are two things needed to change our future:

1. Get better at saying no to investment (ie. Saying no to the big box)



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2. Cities are not paying attention to the context that will allow their place to drive for the long haul. Have to create a new economic rationale for this in order to plan into the future.

Peggy Merriss: Don't forget the importance of community events in placemaking. It is an economic development strategy to show companies that you can attract a large number of people in any given event. Two thirds to three quarters of the economic engine of this country is the companies with 10 or fewer employees. Build places were a 100 companies with 10 employees can be.

Ray Patchett: Transit oriented developments. Cross sector collaborations are tricky but the more open they are the more likely to succeed.

Damian Thorman: What is community? Is it the online community? With the virtual world things are being redefined. The Knight Foundation is looking to identify the activators that build connections. The technological revolution that is hitting individuals is profound and is changing the way we relate and function as a society. What does that mean to the sense of place and our physical community? There is a real tension between the evolution of technological advancement vs. the physical connection.

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### **2<sup>nd</sup> Discussion: People in the Local Government Workplace**

- Tony Gardner, University of Virginia:
- Bob O’Neill, ICMA:
- Daniel Ortiz, City of Casa Grande:

#### **Tony Gardner**

Money is not really linked to performance; it is not a great motivator or engager of people. People don’t come to work in local government to make lots of money. Is it possible that we are too future focused about what we need to do to accommodate the next generation (millennial)? We are worried about what we have to do for them when we already have the workforce we have for the next decade or more. The baby boomers and gen Xers are sticking around. Should we focus on what we need to do for the future workforce or what we need to do for the current one? What do we need to change?

Research indicates only 1 out of 4 employees is engaged in their work; that means that 3 out of 4 are not terribly engaged at work. What keeps millennials attracted applies to all workers in the end it is what most people want to have. What triggers engagement? There are vastly disengaged workforces in America; what creates attachment in the workforce?

Are we in the knowledge economy now? Characteristics of people in knowledge economy: 1. Expected to learn; 2. Expected to create; 3. Work with smart people 4. Desire to do things better. Do you want your public works people acting like that? You want them to be creative, be innovative, make things better.

According to Daniel Pink people are motivated by:

1. Clear purpose that is meaningful to them
2. Autonomy to get things done to fill purpose
3. And the mastery to get things done

People work for these three things. So what are the characteristics of a fabulous job?

1. Understand what we are about
2. Have a say in what that is
3. Make decisions ourselves
4. Trusted
5. Appreciated
6. Learn and Grow

Reality is most do not experience these factors. We know these factors are important but generally do not do it. We need to work on the culture of our workplaces and formulate the right expectation for our managers and supervisors. If they have working managers what does that mean? It means they are focused on the work they used to do (technical work). What is sacrificed is developing the team at all levels.

**QUESTION: Why are we waiting for the next generation to force us to create a culture that is precisely the culture that would unleash passion engagement, and commitment from our current workers?**

#### **Bob O’Neill**

We need a radical rethinking of the social contract with local government workers for public service. Reason: we lost over 500,000 local government jobs in the last five years; 350,000+ from state government...one million jobs gone from local and state government and haven’t reached the bottom. Social contract we think of is that you can have a lifetime

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job in public service. Now we know for a fact that is false. People were primarily drawn to public service for extraordinary benefits (health, pensions, etc.). Now that is being challenged and is at risk. Pension crisis today has nothing to do with public sector pensions. Pension crisis in USA is with regards to the average amount a US resident has in their 401K (avg. \$73,000). The value of public service is important but relying on pensions is not the answer. They will never look like they have over the last 30 years.

Public service is threatened today more than ever; not by external forces but internal ones. Workforce is disengaged.

1. The standalone police agency of the future will not exist; we are trying to create cross disciplinary, cross-departmental and multi-faceted.
2. We are cannibalizing the intellectual capacity of human capital in organizations. Sacrificed training and professional development. Eliminated: entry level positions (interns, analyst)....threatened by these actions

**QUESTION: What should be the social contract with the future workforce in local government?**

### **Daniel Ortiz**

There are eighty million millennials: that is more people than the baby boomer generation. Millennials have far different expectations about what is to come and what they expect. Beyond your current workforce, the future is uncertain.

#### MILLENNIAL STEREOTYPES:

1. We are often called narcissistic. But it is not completely our fault, our attitudes were established by our parents who coddled us and were/are over protective. Self-esteem in schools is overvalued and this has also contributed to a narcissistic attitude. Social media has done this as well, (we can have 100,000 friends!) we can make change and adapt very quickly.
2. Poor work ethic: difficult to work with, challenging the rules, work flexibility demanded. Reason why: 1. Grew up in a time when we saw relatives that have lost the jobs they devoted their whole life to. 2. Pension fund issue. Limited social safety net. Work till you're dead...so why rush into committing to a job.
3. We want to job hop and "play the field" and find the job we are most passionate about.
4. Generation wants to be rich or famous. Technology is enabling that (Facebook).

PROBLEMS in SOCIETY: Dramatic rise in the cost of tuition; rising prices of gas; limited ability to find a job.

#### CHARACTERISTICS:

- Millennials want to keep personal and work life separate: no overlap.
- Optimistic and energetic individuals. Nothing we can't conquer.
- Everything we do makes us connected to technology.
- We do not like to work in silos. Our generation has been taught to work on group projects and are very team oriented people; value relationships and collaborative work.
- We want to embrace our value to an organization and fully understand what is our value contribution worth to the organization? If we are going to be there for long time we need to see that we are valued.
- We want to be recognized; we want feedback.
- We want to learn from your experience, be a sponge and apply it to ourselves. Consider the brain drain – when knowledge is gone or is leaving the organization...how are you going to transplant it?

**QUESTION: Do you see millennials as change agents in your organization/culture or are you hoping that your culture will change millennials?**

## **PEOPLE: Report Out**

### **Why are we waiting for the next generation to change our organizational culture?**

- The challenge is a staff decrease and less support.
- Need to increase not decrease training.
- There are no jobs for younger generations. Are those employed in local government being selfish?
- This is not a silo – we can't generalize by age – it is an artificial fight to pit generation against one another
- We all want the same things – who is at the table?
- There are five generations in the workforce – what are the values of the organization – how are the different generations impacting the value/culture of the organization.
- Need to manage the tensions between the generations.
- People have ability at all levels to contribute – how do we foster that – get away from people as technicians/specialists.
- Do we let bureaucracies kill good ideas?
- Agree we must provide learning and growing opportunities to the workforce.
- People are drawn to public service for service – what we articulate is wages and benefits, but not what people really care about.
- Leaders need to be bold – reinstate training and travel, entry level positions, structured systems need to be revisited.
- There is a tension between autonomy for workforce and responsibility to taxpayers.
- Impatience to immediately be at the top is not new.

### **What is the social contract of the future?**

- We used to be able to talk about the great benefits people which are no longer available nor can we talk about job security. But we can talk about the immediate ability to make a difference in people lives.
- Look to younger people to look at issues of dependence like IT, the real power in the staff to help us solve these issues.
- Social contract – is emotional. Our job as managers has been to placemake (make a place) within the organization, creating the environment to excel. The situation has changed we have to manage people by confronting the reality. Be bolder and have more courage on the issue of training and professional development. Be authentic in our actions and convey that to the workforce. Need to speak up on the value – even in the media. We all have different skills and we need to harness those such as have younger folks work with social media and technology to create an environment to tap into the skills of all.
- Everything that is being used against us can also be used for us. There is some work balance in our organizations. There have always been people who have been motivated by service to others and they will maintain the work into the future.
- Between public and private employers the public is held to a different standard – the social contract is different.
- The social contract needs to focus more on the fun in the work place; public service social contract needs to look different.
- What is not affordable (sustainable) in current social contract?
- Systems are not in place for accountability.
- Need to pay market rate to get the best and the brightest employees – private sector has stock options – how do we counteract private benefits?
- Consider a leadership Academy as a regional approach.
- Reinstate step system in public safety.
- CAO does twice a year meetings with all employees.

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- Video blogs after council/staff meetings.
- Professional development plans; bringing in trainers; read books.
- Cross department delivery of services; cross training opportunities.
- Strategic change team.
- Get to know employees and recognize them.
- Think of job opportunities as an opportunity for new ideas.
- Find ways to capture knowledge.
- Sell government work as work/life balance and an opportunity to be of service
- Is our screening process we are killing the ability to hire entrepreneurial individuals... Need 10 years of experience to apply... Look for people with new ideas not just experience. Look for people who are entrepreneurial thinkers.
- Even though there is a less of an emphasis on security is that possibly because people have changed their priorities and are starting the “traditional family life” later in life.
- Is this a maturation issue? Starting later. Why are we putting this on the backs of the millenials. We have cut training and the entry level jobs, time to put those back into our budgets. Need organizational development. We are no longer an employment center and need to discuss that with the employees. Supervisors are not recognizes the entire employee, not looking at the whole individual.
- The new social contract – you will make a difference and develop marketable skills while you are here.
- We shouldn’t be getting too hung up with the generational differences. We simply need to blow up our structures... How do redefine or rearticulate the discussion. Local government can learn a lot from the non-profits in talking about problems as it relates to outcomes. Hate the word human resources, need a new term for what we do in establishing the social contract.
- Organizations should be more strategic and rely on data to direct performance.
- There is a mixture of different types in our organizations.
- Redefine the organization of the future – connect to community
- Traditional organizational structures are a problem – how do we change them?
- Police Organization of the future – police is the most visible in the community. Police organization of the future is something deeper where the police chief of the future is a convener of the partners within the community.
- There are multiple social contracts in organizations.
- Need strategic thinking about the past – What is it that has value? What did we learn from those experiences?
- Need to challenge organizational structure – how do we respond?
- Non-profits frame jobs as a problem to be solved – can we change how we frame jobs?
- Speak a common language.
- We need to retain folks (culture and knowledge) with part-time jobs and different structures. Need to experiment at this.
- Need “younger” mast to run systems – master of technology.
- Need to develop a culture that will prepare an individual for the future including marketable skill building.
- What is our obligation as a profession to put people where they need to be?
- Be more mission driven and get that message out – this is a calling.

### **Millenials – are they change agents or will they be changed...**

- We do not want millenials to be changed by the organization. Are we just saying that because it is the correct answer? The real answer is we want both. We want them to be change agents and to be at the table. Everyone has something to offer, so how can everyone be at the table. Do you (we) really need these labels, we are all people part of the culture of our organizations working to make them better?
- We should be changing organizations for all, rather than just the future. Create more team based organizations. We may never get back to the first traditional rungs of the career ladder come back... so what might be a new



career ladder that allows people to rise in the organization in new ways. One of the first steps is to evaluate how we have overtaxed our requirements, allow for people who can come into the system to come in. Change some of those jobs who have a more organizational mindset do our systems support that.

- Often different generations have same values – just different ways of getting to values.
- In Washoe County: allowed managers to leave... reconstructing the organization without departments so we don't lose only the newest to the organization. Eliminate and redesign the department configuration.
- In Alachua County: Alternative futures – how would you completely redesign the business of service delivery. Tough discussions that are authentic but allow us to ask tough questions regarding the leadership in an organization and making room for future leaders.
- How do we change the career path, ladder with no interns, management analysts – they have to go where the money is – there really are no generalist positions. Consider giving specialist analyst more general experience.
- Develop cross functional teams for broader perspectives.
- Create problem solving task forces across hierarchical organization.
- What is the “real work” – specialization AND general skills.
- Ask the question of millennials in your organization – what do you need, what makes you stay?
- We push for performance measures, accountability for results – need to make folks accountable for broad results.
- Middle managers are still in silos – it is a collision course. Leaders have to help mid-level managers adapt.
- Must change how supervisors see their role – build leadership into evaluations – management, leadership, teamwork, task.
- Integrate task and teamwork.
- Mentoring in informal groups.
- Allow for idea generation – focus groups.
- How do we create structures and culture to support different values?
- High educational attainment levels of emerging workforce – how do we keep them challenged? Are we setting job specifications too high?
- How are councils and commissions changing in age cohorts – term limits create openings – average age in some areas is dropping by 15 years – they want a new identity and perspective – won't continue old programs – more driven by ideology
- The negative image of public service is making it difficult to attract good young people.
- Open up the government.
- Government doesn't have to be the convener.
- Need to do the work of operationalizing the value and culture work of the organization.
- Millennials are not so different from Generation X.
- Find ways to bring entry level positions back into organizations.
- This is a false dichotomy – need to connect all people to the mission.
- We have a responsibility to help prepare millennials.
- We need to do a better job of taking advantage of everyone – stop the “That's the way we've always done it!”
- Not just invite them to the table – give them the ability to run the table. Not just for one generation – everybody does everything and has something to offer.
- Millennials are especially good to advocacy positions – sustainability, arts, open space. But there is a hard time to balance when to be an advocate and when to balance goals of the entire organization. Is that a function of age and experience or is it the same for every generation?
- Gen X and higher are just glad to have a job.
- Are we breeding a culture of resentment?
- While millennials are different at work – are they really different?



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- The manager's job is to manage the organization – How much time is the manager spending on developing a shared purpose, making people feel valued and risk taking – building an environment where there is so much trust that there are no risks.
- How will current economic conditions affect the Millennials drive for purpose?
- Millennials brains are wired differently.
- Future of millennials role is very situational.
- Why are gen xer's waiting for millennials to change the organizations?
- Local government is not employment centers – that is the new social contract

### **CLOSING COMMENTS BY PANEL**

Tony Gardner: Managers tend to focus on the real work, which is the technical substantive work and therefore the other managerial work about the “dead wood” often gets put aside. Layoffs – how many were managers and supervisors? A lot of people who were laid off are line folks, how do you get out of the business of managers as technicians rather than developing broader spans of control and supporting the people who do the work more directly.

Bob O'Neill: Foundation of the future of the social contract... Meaning in the work, allow me to do the work. In organization charts we beat the meaning out of the work. Does the organization allow me to develop valuable skills and experiences that even if I don't work here prepare me to be marketable in the future? Our reality is much better than our perception. There is substantive and branding work ahead.

Daniel Ortiz: We have managers and leaders, which are you?

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Discussion: Service Delivery/Priorities**

- Retha Hill, New Media Innovation Lab, Arizona State University
- Pamela Goldsmith-Jones, District of West Vancouver
- Mildred Warner, Cornell University

#### **Mildred Warner**

There is a need to balance between high tech and high touch services. Services are important for their human interaction. We have challenges of multi-generational planning and its response.

1. Aging population: doesn't look like a pyramid but a house. Where the roof meets the house is where the workforce is supporting the house. The future is below which we are underinvesting in. Three times as many public dollars are spent on the elderly than on children. State and local government carry the burden of investing in children not federal government. Serve school age and then 75+ as you need more support. Federal government is facing pressure to push the liability of the elderly down to the local level. Financial pressures at both ends of the life cycles. It is time we began to think about integrating across generations on how we provide services to build political will and effectiveness.

From an environmental perspective, you can design a city for independence. (i.e. children are disabled by an urban form that doesn't allow them to walk to school). Think with planning on how to redesign our cities to promote independence. You can spread the costs out.

We need to reintegrate across silos. Not just departments and local government units but with schools. We also need to reintegrate between schools and local governments. Example: use school bus to pick up elders after schools. Schools need to learn to "play well with others." There is the opportunity to co-produce with citizens.

#### **Old Productions**

1. Privatization: You cannot say there is a saving from privatization across the board. Contracting and contracting out is about equal. Problems are service delivery erodes.
2. User Fees: not everyone can pay (elderly and kids)
3. And other private interest neighborhoods approaches: when you have higher collectives providing private goods how sustainable are they?

When we think about private approaches we need to ask whether they will be sustainable for the future? Maybe we can, but the issue is we need to identify what the public value cores are in whatever delivery structure we have. The idea of open access and attention to equity and reintegration across silos and communities

**QUESTION: How does local government build the political will to invest in the future? What are the opportunities for integrated service delivery?**

#### **Retha Hill**

There are three ways to look at innovation and citizen involvement.

1. Innovation can be taught and learned. How do we go about doing that? Successful companies never stop innovating. They create incubation opportunities. New products should be created whoever has the best idea. For local government, managers should have regular brainstorming meetings no matter where they are in the hierarchy. Have lunch with them and have them talk about the issues. Don't debate the issues as they come up. People will come up with risk-adverse ideas at first and need encouragement to think outside the box. What Would

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Google Do? Talks about tapping into your existing resources to see if you can extract new ideas. What is innovation: sustainable, incremental, and disruptive.

2. What we know is that mistakes are made through innovation. You can't be afraid of failure. But you want to fail quickly and cheaply. Come up with small prototypes; if they don't work, tear them up and start over.
3. Innovation can't happen in a vacuum: need more citizen involvement in decision making process. Human design work: when you have a problem, recruit extreme personalities (poor, disabled) and follow them for an afternoon. Follow them and understand them. Try to get prizes out there to encourage citizens to come up with solutions.

### **Pamela Goldsmith-Jones**

The way I think about every problem is you cannot make good policy that flies in the face of human nature or local loyalties. The status quo is flying in the way of human nature and local localities. I can't imagine as an elected official running on a platform of taking away services, but I can give back the responsibilities to solve their own challenges.

The first thing we did after I was elected in West Vancouver was get rid of advisory groups. They were isolated and privileged groups that had political control on the community. We replaced them with working groups that were arranged around public problems (i.e. housing destroying mountains). The solutions need to be developed by the values of the communities. When citizens come to council with recommendations to council in a similar open manner, council can't disagree. They aren't seen as political. It is a means to delegate authority. We figure out how to get outside organizations to take responsibility for large scale events (ie. The Olympics).

What we have done with attachment is remove local government from the equation and make it about community values and the world they want to see. The idea of citizen mistrust should be celebrated. They trust each other not government. Provide meeting rooms and staff to groups that can raise money for projects. Community demonstrates value when they take ownership. Fear needs to be flipped to hope.

**QUESTION: Do you view your citizens as your best asset and when you do what can you do with that?**

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Discussion Report Out**

#### **Building Political Will**

- Have to start with building trust (two-way trust). Engage citizens in problem solving. Civic engagement – how do we train our people to be involved in civic engagement? Engage with the community as they get to know you as a person and vice versa. Develop partners and reach out.
- To building political will we need to do a better job at telling citizens what and how local government does their job on a regular basis. Local elected officials and managers have a responsibility to help citizens to ask the right questions. The role is to see problems in new ways. Create something for citizens to move toward and allow them and empower them to create solutions.
- The ways we engage people has to foster trust which helps give the governing bodies the political will and cover to do what they need to do. Trust is a journey... it can go well and poorly. Work on the fringes of the service integration issue and focus on the things we can do as managers, but when we really have to ramp up to the issues that require a lot of political will it become extremely difficult because of the political implications.
- Getting citizens involved – Use small incremental steps to build alliances, walk in the neighborhood programs, invite the neighbors, integrate services with younger folks, integrate old and new residents in the community, get city employees out in the field.
- Bring children to the table – engage them to comment on the future.
- Make the business case – includes sustainability.
- Widen the circle of involvement.
- Bloggers – hang out with them and get to know them as people – find a common ground and reach out.



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- Public trust remains fairly consistent at the local level.
- Consider citizen engagement training for local government employees.
- Citizens that are the most engaged are the least trustful.
- Engaging the average citizen will build trust and political good will – extend the invitation and act on what you heard.
- Are we at some points not able to respond? What are the expectations?
- Be honest with residents about how soon it will be done.
- Are citizen's issue-based or want based.
- There is complexity to the solutions.
- User fees – erosion of fee support that draws away from true public needs (ie. Gas tax) – how do we use fees to those that have the ability to pay and provide the opportunity to subsidize those that need it? Where are user fees appropriate?
- Huge elements of Human Services at counties can't be addressed by current revenue structure (criminal justice, mental health).
- How do we create the groundswell that swings political culture?
- Who is responsible for youth? Consider integrated models of service delivery. Adaptive reuse/partnerships between school and city.
- To engage the political will there has to be a political win – what is the compelling story?
- Be careful that “little wins” don't masquerade system issues.
- Financial anxiety limit willingness to invest – can we tie investments in other areas that will draw down liabilities – can we tie prior lack of investment to current problems.
- Political will is not just a local issue – we need to communicate what local government does and capitalize on positive local perception.
- Create accessible concepts and ideas.
- Harness marketing.
- Frame the problems and let the citizens come up with the solutions.
- Develop authentic engagement – two-way dialogue versus “representing” the dialogue.
- Professionals need to do a better job of helping politicians identify problems.
- There is an assumption that citizens want to be involved.
- Where are citizens naturally engaged?
- Does technology engage any better?
- Engage diverse groups.
- Have to define the future and understand it.
- Need to trust to get investment – can happen if they have actual examples of where it worked.
- Need to engage those that often aren't heard from (Not just squeaky wheel).
- Trust takes time – needs good follow through and listening to be part of the culture.
- Include the community when taking risk – can build trust.
- Trust may be stronger when many institutions work together to encourage more investment.
- Redefine the role of government using community. Government as the convener.
- “Tea Party” ideas have positive and negative effect. Over time it pushes back to the middle (too extreme). Tea Party is just one other segment of the community.
- Community conversations are important in getting all points of view.
- Taking the lead from the community can push you to do more than you may otherwise. Government doesn't have to lead.
- Large multi-day visioning sessions – steering committees and then open discussion.
- Strategic planning process with surveys and focus groups.
- Have stakeholders educate each other.

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- Engage employees in the same way you engage citizens (as opposed to with authority for making decisions).
- Issue: Elected officials are less future oriented. Are those not look for higher office less risk averse?
- Use partner voices – often works better than hearing from politicians.
- Use charrettes to encourage officials to be more future oriented.

### Can citizens co-produce services and assist with service integration?

- Of course city managers are a great asset, but you are not alone. There is a whole team of asset to draw from within the community. We can get farther together than alone. Never be afraid to open the windows and let the wind blow through, just be sure we are on strong foundations.
- Do citizens want to be co-producers? There is hope. Focus on providing inspiration. Are we the assets to encourage citizens to realize their dreams?
- Community is an important partner in the investment in the future. People involved with Service integration need to be ready to integrate and grab hold of integration. Building the will and engaging the community in service delivery.
- Caution that the compelling story is on a systems issue as opposed to a fringe issue. Recognize the role of financial anxiety plays in the organization. Try to get all partners to move forward and get alignment while moving forward. Co-location of services to meet diverse needs of the population.
- Consider repurposing facilities including schools.
- Are we disabled by infrastructure?
- Disabling kids – learn how to invest in them early on.
- Leaders should allow time to brainstorm and be innovative.
- Consider multi-sector collaboration – who should be part of these conversations?
- Are citizens our best asset? Do we want them to question us? Need to find shared goals.
- Fees can be applied in an appropriate manner.
- When it comes to services delivery we should widen the circle of involvement – including children. Make the business case as to what resonates to people and framing the question so that it is something they understand. Knowing the audience and broadening the audience. Partnering with schools and education is extremely important to this. People are disabled by what we have provided them. We have the job of managing the values of our organization. Citizens are an asset as a vehicle to leverage for community involvement. How can we respond to community input or the lack thereof... Use the information that we have from the citizens to develop the political will.
- Place and service delivery are deeply tied to one another.
- Need to get citizens involved – normal people.
- Consider pilot projects – meet them facet of face.
- Citizen block leaders – city dollars for projects
- Tap into local citizens – there are many that are knowledgeable
- Consider the New City Example – community is the base
- Build a volunteer corps.
- Pair citizen volunteers with not-for-profits who need the assistance.
- Get the younger people to lead the “work group”.
- Still reach out to those that do not agree.
- Need to address both ends of the age spectrum.
- Education has helped to spark ideas.
- In dealing with homelessness – consider a registry to understand the extent of homelessness. Integrate groups to work on it. Use community foundations to reduce.
- How do you do shared services but maintain individual identity?
- Consider having staff at different municipalities coordinating (ie. Hiring). Good example is joint crime labs – identify which government has the expertise and tap into that.



**Reflections on the BIG Ideas – Surprise Closing Panel ( this panel is selected during the conference to emphasize what they learned and intend to act on)**

- **Susan Mays, Vice President, Marketing and Strategic Relations, CH2MHILL**
- **Dr. Benoy Jacob, Assistant Professor, School of Public Affairs, University of Denver**
- **Meredith Roark, Assistant to the City Manager, Decatur, GA**
- **Norm King, Retired Manager, Management Consulting**
- **Clay Pearson, City Manager, Novi, MI**

**Susan Mays**

At the heart of what we talked about is culture and finding common place for people that serve our communities. At CH2MHill we look at culture based on our "little yellow book "values which highlights our culture. It touches on:

1. **Ethics:** Do you want to see what you're doing in the headlines for the newspapers tomorrow.
2. **Empowerment:** The person closest to the task has the best opportunity to solve it. As we talk about doing more with less and people want to do more in the organization and contribute quickly, we give them an opportunity to be empowered.
3. **Leaders:** We need to be clear about our vision and set boundaries and provide guidelines based on that vision. We need to trust our employees and work cross-departments.
4. **Collaboration:** We need to break down internal barriers to make things less expensive. We need to collaborate outside the organization engaging citizens in new way (social media) always keeping in the mind to serve the citizens. Who are those in your community that share your mission and how can they leverage resources and support you? How can you band together to serve citizens in new and different ways? Leverage the business community to help you solve problems by sponsoring events and finding solutions and dialogue; reducing costs, and improve service levels and improve efficiencies.

**Dr. Benoy Jacob**

I have two questions from this weekend: the big question of innovation and the paradox between place and provision.

The innovation question is not a matter of if you are going to innovate but when. Are you an early adopter or laggard? The question of, "We need to innovate to get out of this mess," is the correct question. The innovation cycle works when an entrepreneur/risk taker creates something or does something in a new way, and then it is taken up by early adopters. Through their customizing and modification they make slight changes which create a market for the innovative idea. A technology leader emerges and then late adopters pick it up.

Not everyone is innovative but rather a small group and I contend that that is a good thing because you only want a small group to experiment. Late adaptors take the approach of waiting to find out what works before adoption. I think this model works. We don't want all local government to be innovative. They don't have a political environment to effectively test and modify to find the acceptable, and they may not have the resources or culture of exploration. That is ok as long as you have a group that are early risk takers and innovative. It is reasonable to ask whether we should be innovative and what we should be innovative about. The question is what is the innovation we are talking about? Are we blindly believing in innovation or do we have a vision? Before you can innovate you need a clear idea of what the problem is. I would say the question is not when you should innovative but who should and around what.

The emphasis this weekend was on creating an interesting place using diversity to attract residents. That is an admirable goal. At the end of the day we talked about provision providing services in an efficient way. This creates an interesting paradox for local government. A real problem is that when you create a diverse community and environment, it is very

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hard to provide goods and services efficiently. Diverse communities have trouble receiving efficient services. Creating a diverse environment makes it challenging to provide service efficiently.

### **Meredith Roark**

I much rather be called an early career professional than a millennial because we are all in this profession together. We have a lot to teach each other. I am a part of this conversation, not just a demographic.

### **Norm King**

The only people who can consistently represent the long-term view are local government professionals, not the elected officials. The idealism we can bring can be our greatest resource and/or our greatest liability. Creating an environment that is conducive for collaboration and trust is a primary role of the manager. A good idea is a bad idea that works. A manager needs to make sure that bad ideas are always coming up. You can't eliminate risk that something won't work but you can reduce the risk of risk taking.

I couldn't disagree more that user fees won't be applicable in the future. If we don't use them, it leads to over consumption of resources, siphons money from true public goods, and increases entitlements. When a user isn't paying the full costs, the top income levels benefit the most because they consume proportionately more. The ultimate fee is the carbon fee. If we had a carbon fee, we wouldn't be fooling around with subsidizing different sources of energy or green behavior and we would have a level playing field and the financial motivation for the private sector to produce cleaner and more benign products to reduce climate change at less cost to society than with subsidies.

Engagement and taking responsibility: the old mode is public hearings to hear what the citizens want; the new model is citizens taking ownership of the problem; no passive citizens. Local government needs to create an environment for citizens to take more personal responsibility and to co-produce in partnership with the local government.

Place: not just about creating good design but creating events so the community takes ownership of their community.

Creating rewards for everyone in an organization. Employees need to feel they are taking part of a bigger purpose. The fundamental responsibility of the manager is to manage the values of the organization. Many managers think they are doing this but a survey of employees likely reveals otherwise.

People do get stuck in positions, but by overlaying the typical hierarchal structure with task forces and cross-department teams you can provide employees with experiences outside of their normal positions and also promote creativity in the organization.

Regarding Facebook and new ways to communicate with citizens, what if a city set a virtual election for three years hence and created a three-year communication strategy to show the voters the city deserved their support. If we did, what would our communication systems with our citizens look like? It could lead different way to formulate a communication strategy.

"We should not spend so much time predicting the future we should inhabit the future." We should focus on what things we can change that will help create the future.

### **Clay Pearson**

The role of manager is to honor what is precious in the past and not ignoring that. Change has to be tempered. If you don't recognize the past you are insulting those you are working with. Speak about what's great but not be satisfied



with that. Buy ourselves some space to continue doing what needs to be done to make us great. The Alliance brings together organizations that are doing great things but I worry there are not enough of those hard changes occurring.

We need big ideas for these big problems. We are having small changes but the manager needs to advocate an environment that will result in these bigger changes occurring. The tension lies where we are and where we want to go. We can't be satisfied with the status quo. We are defending the status quo too often and not doing the changes that are demanded of us. You need to be energetic but also recognize that there are serious problems that need to be solved. If managers are not doing that we are in big trouble. The real changes we are seeing are not in council-manager form of governments. Look at New York and Chicago they are making some big changes even though they aren't council-manager cities. The big changes are occurring with the strong executive.

### **Closing Panel Report Out**

- Our budget is balanced and now I need to get back to the basics. I started out doing outcome budgeting and I need to get back to that. Instead of struggling with budget balancing, I need to get back to pulling it all together.
- I think it is normal for employees to get on the street and if you have systems that allow them to bring those ideas forward, it will make your organization more successful.
- The model that we have of the innovator and entrepreneur is of someone in their garage fooling around; and I'm trying to contrast it with people working on DNA. They are the product of discipline thinking and investment. What model are we talking about and which is more relevant?
- We all don't have to be innovators. We created a team to plunder other jurisdictions for their ideas. They were inter-departmental and they brought back what they thought was best.
- You can go back and do something different.
- Is innovation necessarily good? Not necessarily. It is a change of events that can build on each other. Is the tea party innovation? It may be a step in the process to something else? Was the Nazi party an innovation? Innovation has to have some context. Sometimes it is not just innovation but change that we are talking about. We are in some place that isn't working right now. We need to guide that change in a way that aligns with our values to an outcome we envision. We should spend more time in finding agreement of this outcome. Sometimes we talk about innovation as if it is some way to talk us through our problems. In the end innovation is one contributing process that helps us move from one place to another. What extent is there a shared experience in our communities and in what way are we in the same place. If the outcomes are not the same, than the ability to plunder innovative ideas doesn't work.
- I think you are right on point. We use catchy terms like innovation. We say we are going to innovate and solve problems. Innovation is not necessarily linear. The other question is to what degree do we have general problems. There is such differences between cities and asking what is the average city is problematic. One thing we know is that from innovation literature is that it tends to disperse geographically.
- There is a tension between efficiency and effectiveness. In order for us to be effective, we need personal relationships from working with community. These conversations are not efficient but they improve our effectiveness.
- I hear us talking about innovation as a "big I." I don't have aspirations for us to do "big I" innovation. I do think about the innovation that occurs accidentally on the job. I wanted people in the organization working daily thinking about how to improve it. There is a lot to gain from having people in the organization thinking about their job to do it better.
- Creating a culture where the little innovation every day can help create that "little I" you are talking about.
- There is a distinction. That is what you want in your organization, thinking about doing things better. Millennials are tinkerers and do this very well; a "culture of tinkering."
- If you look at how we innovate, it is based on needs. We need to focus on which of these major changes are threatening to a point that they are dangerous. There are other changes that would do to search for excellence. We need to create an environment where we will innovate on the little things but we need to identify the life-

threatening problems that require innovation. We need a threat analysis. One of those we have to drive and the other is that we have to create an environment.

- Department head perspective: you allow us to innovate as staff. When I'm not working for someone like that, what are you going to do as early adopters to get your peers to listen? What is your ability to do that?
- We talked about how resilient local governments are and how they adjust to the economic crisis. We talk about "big I" innovation but we are not seeing that anymore. Are we unrealistic in expecting "big I" innovation that has occurred historically (ex. structure and mode of local government delivery)? Should we be more content with "little i" innovation? If we are going to focus on "big I" what is going to push it?
- The rules are so structured that a fundamental change has to occur. We lack honest prices which results in more government spending. Technology has given us the equipment to push the cost on others. If we have limited resources, our tools are regulation and spending, unless we change the rules of the game. Bad prices will also overshadow good planning. Bad pricing is when I use the freeway I don't pay the full cost.
- Giving two more I's to the list of innovations; we have all these ideas happening but we don't a forum for determine what we are doing. Big change looks like big change but it usually is the result of incremental change. The big change you are looking for might already be emerging. Example, Decatur changing the language from Planning to Urban Design. That is huge innovation but you won't see it for awhile.
- Better information results in more innovation. Disclosing pensions and hidden costs will result in change. I would love a communication effort for elected officials. We elect people and then they are on their own. We need an organization that can let them know about the best ideas in the country.
- My innovation came through my professional staff. I proposed the vision and the staff fulfilled it. Is it the professional staff or the strong executive?
- The executive is the one getting it done.
- I agree about the point of correctly pricing services. I think we have pushed the innovation of user fees as far as possible. The concern I have is young dependent children and the elderly that can't pay; if we move to all user fees, there are certain groups that can't pay. We undermine all public goods if we keep moving toward user fees.
- The long-term solution to environmental stewardship is to make the individual pay for it; privatize it. What are some of the barriers to innovation? You get tired of running into obstacles. We need to encourage people to be innovative but also how to tear down brick walls people run into.
- I would change the question. It is not a matter of what the walls are but whether they are worth breaking down. Some communities are in better position to innovate. Should we be taking on a culture of innovation if there are all these obstacles? If I pay all these tax dollars, do I want my local government taking risks? If you have that culture, I'd argue don't take the risk and be a late adopter. What is the cost of braking down the barrier? If it is high, than don't. If it is low, than it is worth it.
- Citizens more involved in governance and problem solving: who frames this agenda and what becomes the role of the elected official? If community comes up with a great solution, the council's role is limited.
- To be successful, the elected officials need to allow the citizens to frame the discussion.
- Stepping out of your comfort zone: you are allowed to relax at these conferences and think creatively, but if you don't allow your staff to step out of their comfort zone you don't give them the same opportunity to think creativity.



## **Additional Resources**

### **Closing Panel Videos:**

- [The Role of the Manager and Schizophrenia](#) - Clay Pearson, City Manager, Novi, MI
- [The Subject of Innovation: Developing Better Outcomes](#) - Jim Keene, City Manager, Palo Alto, CA
- [Who Should Innovate and Around What](#) - Dr. Benoy Jacob, Assistant Professor, School of Public Affairs, University of Denver
- [Place Verse Provision: Diverse Places and the Challenges of Provision of Public Goods](#) - Dr. Benoy Jacob, Assistant Professor, School of Public Affairs, University of Denver
- [The Private Sector Perspective](#) - Susan Mays, Vice President, Marketing and Strategic Relations, CH2MHILL
- [Millenials or Early Career Professionals](#) - Meredith Roark, Assistant to the City Manager, Decatur, GA
- [Take-Aways from BIG Ideas](#) - Norm King, Retired Manager, Management Consulting

### **Supporting White Papers:**

- [How can local government and academic professionals inspire and serve as a catalyst to influence the best and brightest individuals to become future local government leaders?](#) – By Jason Rollins, Alliance for Innovation
- [Bridging the Gap of Leadership Challenges from the Midwest](#) – By John Nalbandian, School of Public Affairs, University of Kansas
- [What's the Future of Local Government?](#) – By Frank Benest, Mark Denaj, Debra Figone, and Kim Walsh
- [Local Governments in the Wake of the Great Recession: Are Big Changes Ahead?](#) – David Ammons, Karl Smith and Carl Stenberg, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill