Automation Increases HRM Productivity

A Recent Survey of HRM Professionals Shows Planning and Training are Keys to Success

Roy Combs

Implementing legislation that adds 28,000 airport security workers to the federal payroll may seem like a daunting task, but to federal human resource management (HRM) professionals the number does not come close to matching their already impressive results. The federal government is the country’s largest single employer, hiring from 199,000 (FY 1996) to over one million (FY 2000 including census enumerators) workers each year. As downsizing and outsourcing compress the number of federal full-time workers, departments and agencies turn to automation to help meet expectations and find better approaches to fulfilling their missions.

Allocating resources to hire employees reflects tensions between budgets, time and outcomes. Many of us associate success with the need for more dollars, people and extra time to complete the last few tasks before implementation. Federal organizations are juggling these tensions and implementing automation to facilitate hiring processes. Today’s use of automated tools in the federal government covers the spectrum from organizations considering automation, to organizations developing hybrid HRM systems, to OPM’s USA Staffing designed to benefit multiple organizations. A recent survey of federal organizations found that the use of automated tools does increase productivity, although implementation planning and training are also keys to success.

The above conclusions reflect information gained from a recent survey of federal HRM professionals and supported by numerous interviews with HRM practitioners and consultants. In addition, background data was compiled from trade and academic journals, monthly publications and discussions with product vendors. The focus of the survey was to ascertain how automated tools are used in today’s hiring processes and to identify those organizations leading the way. Initial discussions pointed to the need to separate traditional automated (telephone, facsimile and flat databases) tools from the narrowly focused intent of the survey. The researcher labeled those traditional tools support-type functions while focusing the survey on emerging tools that provided pseudo analytical-type functions. The survey requested information on specific automated approaches or what the author labels human resources information technology (HRITn) tools. Examples of HRITn tools include interactive voice response systems (IVRS), resume-scanning and analyzing software, Internet-based response systems, and kiosks located in public areas. These tools are being used to summarize, rate and rank provided data, and record, store and retrieve responses to online questions. In essence, these tools allow applicants to apply anytime from nearly anywhere creating virtual 24 hours seven days a week HRM offices.

The use of automated tools in support-type functions is not a new topic. In articles published in Public Administration Review dating back to 1962, researchers lament the view that technology was taking HRM jobs and at some future point would replace HRM workers. These sweeping statements were based on mainframe computers’ abilities to rapidly and repetitively complete tasks. Now, nearly 40 years later, these predictions have not entirely come to fruition. In today’s HRM offices talented and dedicated workers use technology to attract applicants, store and retrieve information, and to serve as assistants in highlighting applicant-provided information to

Satisfaction With Government Agencies is on the Rise

Christine McCrith

2002 marks 25 years of the PA TIMES. Twenty-five years of reporting on the broad field of public administration, as well as ASPA (the Society) and it’s chapters and sections, while also providing readers a variety of position announcements in the popular Recruiter section of the paper. Conceived in 1977, under the tenure of then ASPA President H. George Frederickson, the National Council voted to combine two of the Society’s existing publications, Public Administration Recruiter and Public Administration News and Views, into the Public Administration Times. In 1977 the publication shortened it’s name to PA TIMES, which has remained it’s moniker ever since.

The purpose of the combined publication, as stated in a letter from Frederickson to then-Publications Committee Chair Mary Ellen Goe in 1990 war, “PA TIMES would combine the purposes of generally inform-

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Satisfaction Builds Trust

From SATISFACTION, pg. 1

the Social Security Administration (SSA), which slipped from 84 to 82–
still among the highest agency scores.

The overall ACASI score for government agencies is up from 68.6 a year ago to a
current mark of 71, a 3.5 percent increase. Federal services pertaining to
benefits (e.g., SSA, Veterans Health Administration), public information (e.g.,
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Student Financial Assistance,
Bureau of Labor Statistics), and services that are not tied to a specific
category, such as FISH & Wildlife Service, Army Corps of Engineers)
ranked well, with scores ranging from the 70s to the 90s, for the
most part.

Regulatory agencies (e.g., FDA,
Occupational Safety & Health Administration, Federal Aviation Administration), in general, scored in
the 50s and 60s.

These agencies face a more compli-
cated challenge as they have both an
enforcement task, as well as a service mission,” Forrest says. “The latter can
legitimately be subject to customer satisfaction feedback, but the enforcement task is more
intricate and issues other than individual satisfaction come into play.”

Overall, Forrest says that providing high
levels of satisfaction with govern-
ment services is a way to increase
customer trust, which is one reason
the ACASI in the public sector is important.

“Contrary to the private sector, the
dissatisfied recipient of government
service can simply punish a private
service provider by taking his or her
business elsewhere or by demanding a
lower price,” he says. “There is no
market feedback that forces the service
provider to improve or signals what to
improve. In this sense, the ACASI is a
substitute for market forces.”

“Similarly, as government expenditure as a
percentage of national income declines, it becomes essential to allocate
public resources in such a way that better service can be provided to
a growing number of citizens. Measures such as the ACASI make it feasible
to better balance cost with quality of service. Indeed, the service improve-
ments realized by the IRS from electronic filing is but one example of
this.”

Finally, Forrest says that although the impact of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks
on customer satisfaction with federal agencies was not measured directly, it is
possible that government services may have benefited from “greater effort and
understanding from both service providers and recipients, as the country
unites against a common foe.”

The ACASI is a national economic indicator of customer evaluations of the quality of
goods and services available to household consumers in the U.S. It is
updated each quarter with new
evaluations for different sectors of
economy replacing data from the prior
year.

In December of each year, the ACASI issues a report on satisfaction of recipi-
ents of services provided by federal
government. Agency participation is voluntary. This year, 53 different
customer groups served by 29 agencies
were measured.

The index is produced by a partnership of the U-M Business School, American Society for Quality and CFI Group, and
supported in part by Market Strategies Inc., a major corporate sponsor. The
Federal Consulting Group, a franchise of the Department of the Treasury,
is the executive agent for the ACASI and the federal government.

Agency scores can be found on the U-M Business School web site www.bus.
umich.edu/acasi and on ASQ’s web site
Where Does E-Government Go from Here?

E-Government, what does it mean, where is it going and how will we get there? From survey evaluation and examples to opinions meant to start a dialogue, these questions are all addressed in the following articles.

DO THE FACTS MATCH THE HYPE?
PUBLIC DEMAND FOR, AND GOVERNMENT ATTITUDES ABOUT, E-GOVERNMENT

Stephen H. Holden and Lidan Hs
The last couple of years have brought forth a torrent of visions, plans and blueprints for electronic government at all levels of government in the United States. To read these reports, or how the popular and trade press depict them, would have you believe that agencies are overrun with demand for electronic services, especially secure ones. While that may be the case in some selected instances, the broader reality is that public e-government will be services in not nearly as great as reported. Almost as telling, it appears that public officials may be more excited about electronic government than the customers, which has some interesting implications for public investments in it and e-government over the next several years. What follows is an attempt to summarize briefly some of the recent surveys of public and government official attitudes on e-government, acknowledging that different time frames and methodologies make direct comparison and evaluation challenging.

PUBLIC DEMAND AND ATTITUDES
For starters, public familiarity with the term electronic government is not particularly strong. Last year, the Council for Excellence in Government undertook a Hart/Teeter nationally representative survey to address this and other issues related to electronic government. Hart and Teeter report that "(O)ldly half of all adults say they are at least slightly familiar with the concept of 'e-government,' although familiarity is higher among Internet users (64 percent)." [1] Despite this lack of familiarity, the public believes by a five to one margin that e-government will improve the way governments operate over the next five to ten years. For those users who have some experience with e-government, their attitudes are more positive, indicating that some of the promised improvements may be present today.

With their expectations of future benefits from electronic government, Americans face a potential mismatch between their demand and what governments supply. A survey conducted by the Momentum Research Group in 2000 found that "...citizens favor e-government initiatives that are closer to home at the state or local level," while the Hart/Teeter report found that "...online Americans encountered electronic government more commonly at the federal level (54 percent) than at the state (45 percent) or local (36 percent) levels." When examining interest in specific e-government capabilities, though, it appears that users interest cuts across levels of government.

Megan Cook, from the Center for Technology in Governments, looked across a number of surveys and studies such as the Hart/Teeter poll and found some common themes for what citizens want from electronic government. When offered a menu to choose from, respondents said they would take advantage of such e-government capabilities as renewing a driver’s license, registering to vote and getting information on state parks. She also identified a common theme that users were looking for "one-stop shopping" for government services and information through portals. Some of the other most popular examples of e-government applications in demand included basic information dissemination functions such as getting medical information from the National Institutes of Health, viewing voting records for political candidates, viewing access to benefit information from the Social Security Administration. Echoing Cook's findings, the public seemed interested in a mix of both electronic information sharing and interaction, but only when presented with specific lists of e-government applications to choose from.

E-GOVERNMENT DEMAND INHIBITORS
A number of surveys and studies have also identified several consistent reasons why the public may be wary of using certain e-government services. For instance, the Momentum Research Group survey found that respondents cited the lack of person-to-person contact, security issues, quality and accessibility of information as reasons they would not use e-government. Not too surprisingly, several studies cite public concern with security of information, perceived lack of privacy on the Internet, and the potential for computer crimes as reasons why users are less likely to provide personal data to the government. Specifically, the Information Technology Association of America survey found that 63 percent of Americans said they were less likely to provide personal data, very data generally needed to access, e-government transactions online, to the government as a result of their concern about computer crime. The Hart/Teeter survey operationalized this public anxiety and found by more than two to one a public preference that governments proceed (65 percent) slowly rather than quickly (30 percent) because of concerns about security, privacy and access.

GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL ATTITUDES ABOUT E-GOVERNMENT
Compared with public, the government officials hold much more optimistic attitudes and are more confident in the development of e-government. For starters, the Hart/Teeter survey indicates that the government officials studied are much more aware (95 percent) of e-government with 63 percent very or fairly familiar with the concept. Beyond greater recognition of the concept among government officials, 92 percent are convinced that e-government will result in improved government performance in the future.

Despite the overwhelming evidence from a variety of surveys on public attitudes on privacy and security concerns from potential e-government and e-commerce users, government officials are apparently more sanguine about the risks. For instance, the Hart/Teeter survey found government officials’ level of concern is substantially lower than that of the public with these respondents more optimistic that the security problems can be overcome.

Differing knowledge about e-government and attitudes about privacy and security risks among government officials understandably results in divergent views from the public on the pace of investment in e-government. The Hart/Teeter data find that government officials support moving quickly (56 percent) versus slowly (31 percent) toward e-government. It’s interesting to note this is almost diametrically opposed the views of the general public.

New What?
Looking across these disparate studies of e-government knowledge and attitude, it appears the proponents and providers of e-government may be out ahead of their user base. This raises several questions. For instance, are public funds being wisely spent on e-government applications where public demand appears to be lukewarm at the Hart/Teeter survey... found by more than two to one a public preference that governments proceed (65 percent) slowly rather than quickly (30 percent) because of concerns about security, privacy and access.

BEST?
It is possible that government organizations or maybe even public/private partnerships can help to close the knowledge gap about e-government benefits or mitigate real and perceived risks? There seems to be some agreement that the benefits will accrue in the future, so what can we do to realize them?

There is some indication that as the public gains experience with this new form of information and service delivery, their confidence will increase and demand will grow commensurately. However, government officials cannot fall prey to what might be called the “Field of Dreams” approach to technology investment (i.e., build it and they will come) based on just their enthusiasm for e-government. Certainly more research is needed to better understand what citizens want (and possibly what they don’t want) from e-government. The question is whether public administration can respond quickly with both timely and appropriate research.

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The February issue of PA TIMES will have a special section titled International Relations after September 11

There is still space available for advertising and articles. Deadline for both is January 11, 2002.

For more information, contact Christine Jeveitt McCreain at: cjeveitt@paspanet.org Phone: 202-585-4313
ONE CITY'S LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE FOR SUCCESSFUL E-GOVERNMENT

Richard Margolis, a

Innovative civil servants and elected officials will determine the future of e-government. They will need to collaborate, as each has a unique role in redesigning government culture.

Is e-government just information technology (IT) systems? Innovative leaders are discovering that e-government is more about government than technology. Would a better machine to build streets equal a better transportation system? Vendors market services as giving buyers e-government. Some consult and provide products that integrate legacy systems. The problem is vendors and technologists cannot provide the leadership needed in government today.

Technology is but a tool. E-government is better government, using advanced technology and organizational innovation, to improve services, economic development, the administration of justice and democratic participation. E-government requires redesigning work processes, reducing bureaucracy, empowering employees and increasing collaboration. In this changing culture employees use technology to put residents and stakeholders first.

Bureaucracy's turf-fighting and stovepipe units undermine e-government. Civil servants alone cannot change this. It is the political leaders that can prevent turfism and stovepipe barriers by staying committed to the vision. In a large city I'll call "Alville" I assisted the mayor and government leaders. The Clerk & Recorder planned a digital records system with a vendor and a consultant. This system was initially delayed in hopes of enlisting all record-keeping departments in one citywide system and standard. Similarly, the police department needed a new records system for arrest, booking and case status. The police IT staff wanted to control the design and implementation of a new system. The problem was the police were not sole owners of the information; the courts, prison, child welfare and other departments also use it.

How can collaborative planning combine the IT expertise of operational leaders with the substance of strategic leaders? Leadership is distributed. Strategic leaders are elected officials, appointed agency heads and senior civil servants. Operational leaders, on the other hand, run agencies' operations, including the technical systems. In Alville I interviewed these leaders about their cultural readiness for e-government, and assisted them in moving forward. Over eleven months we achieved mixed results. The lessons might be useful to others.

The strategic and operational leaders needed a leadership process in which each has a role, and understands and values the contribution of the other. It took time and collaborative effort to select the right people and build this leadership process. The city leaders then created an e-vision, with shared values and operating principles. A project development process and strategic planning were begun, which included defining enterprise standards, five categories of projects, and a change in the culture of government. A strategic leadership group, the E-government Leaders Team (ELT) formed and met regularly. An E-Government Operational Leaders Team (OLT) was also created and met regularly. The OLT developed technical standards and the implementation methods of the strategy defined by the ELT.

Out of concern that the IT department (ITD) had been acting as if it were in charge of strategic technology planning, the ELT decided to recruit a leader to oversee e-government development. When the strategic leaders were no longer willing to let the "ship be steered from the engine room" several top ITD staff left for jobs in the private sector.

The enterprise-wide leadership process was just starting. The ELT sought a strategic leader to work collaboratively with city leadership on the new culture and e-government planning. They called this role the chief of e-government. Early applicants were project managers, but not strategic leaders. Out of frustration at the slow pace, the mayor's chief of staff and a member of the city council weighed in heavily enough, with limited ELT participation, to get a chief information officer (CIO) hired from another city. The political culture was pushing for faster action and more visible results as a new election loomed.

This person turned out to be uninterested in the city's groundwork in creating collaboration, and quickly aligned himself with the ITD staff. He subsumed e-government under technology as yet another service offering, and put ambitious technologists in charge. He rejected the strategic concept of chief of e-government and insisted on being called CIO.

To date the role of the OLT and the ELT has been marginalized, replacing their guidance and vision with turf wars. With the chief of staff's support the CIO is micromanaging to silence those early leaders who began to understand the value of collaboration and the effort it takes to build it. His authoritarian manner has alienated many leaders and already generated grievance complaints. This shows the importance of choosing leaders carefully, and forming a clear model and strategy that everyone is committed to.

How will this return to command and control bureaucracy play out? What will be the fate of the budding shoots of enterprise planning and people's motivation to build a new culture?

What are the lessons? First, leaders should expect resistance to this new culture. With technological expertise, operational leaders believe they should be in charge. Most do not think strategically about e-government as better government. Resistance also comes from elected officials who demand results quickly to fulfill the campaign pledges, and strengthen re-election prospects. Others comfortable in bureaucracy also resist, as e-government means relinquishing operational control, which requires new thinking and innovation.

How can leaders create e-government as better government? First, recognize the value of both political and civil service contributions. A leadership process in which both redefine government culture is essential. Strategic, operational, and technology leaders must learn to respectfully collaborate. A strategic plan/project development process must be co-designed and implemented with all agencies and elements of government.

Leaders need to understand why e-government requires reducing and transforming bureaucracy and the bureaucratic mindset. This needs to be understood historically. 1954 was the height of U.S. manufacturing employment. Today 75 percent of Americans are employed in knowledge and service work. Bureaucracy was the organizational form of the manufacturing era. Bureaucracy brought fairness and planning. It guards against encroachment and corrupt practices. Today bureaucracy's control stovepipes and tedious processes block the innovative collaboration that e-government requires. While bureaucracy will not disappear, it must be transformed to optimize the knowledge/service economy of today.

Courageous and thoughtful leaders can build a new culture based on redesigned work, enterprise planning, continual learning and improvement. Each government will proceed in its own way. Alville's experience shows that both political and civil service leaders must understand and create culture change. Injecting technology into bureaucracy does not work.

Who are the leaders to create this better government? They are among today's political and operational leaders, and technologists. They realize that e-government does not result from new technology, but from creating a new kind of government.

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As a new technology for conducting external relations, government agencies have focused on using the tools of e-government to get things done. The primary focus of e-government's growth until now has been on transactions, such as renewing a driver's license online, or on access to information, such as property appraisal data. Yet, there is another, democratic, purpose for bureaucracies to communicate with the citizenry. A relatively neglected side of e-government is its potential to implement the public reporting obligation of the public adminis-
trator. The Internet offers an opportunity for the government manager to report directly to the citizenry on agency activi-
ties instead of relying on the news media or printed publications to convey this information.

Elected and administrative officials are both accountable to the public, the ultimate sovereign in a democracy. While the accountability of elected officials is largely operationalized on election day, adminis-
trative accountability usually focuses on formal oversight mechanisms exercised by the executive, legislative and judicial branches. However, because public administrators are ultimately accountable to the public-at-large, they, too, have a duty comparable to elected officials to report on their activities to the citizenry. The premise of good government in a democracy is an informed public. Without information, accountability cannot occur. That's why public administration theory has identified, as a distinct activity, the public reporting responsibility of govern-
ment agencies. Almost 100 years ago, early public administration textbooks and research focused on the importance of public reporting. They stated that govern-
ment managers have a generalized obliga-
tion to report to the public on their activi-
ties. Unlike external relations and e-
government activities that are intended to accomplish specific and tangible goals, public reporting has no purpose or ulterior motive other than to contribute to an informed citizenry. A society that is well informed about the operations of adminis-
trative agencies will, through an indirect process, convey its consent or lack thereof through the political system. In this way, public opinion has an immeasurable influence on public administration.

Public reporting is an opportunity for agencies to summarize their activities, accomplishments, performance, results and stewardship of taxpayer funds. In its public reports, an agency can tell its story, of how it has pursued the public interest, organized itself as efficiently and effectively as possible, vigorously delivered on its mission.

Traditionally, public reporting was accomplished in two ways. First, through press coverage, ministers were presumed to gain ongoing information about the operation of government. However, in the last decade, the news media has virtually abdicated its role as an instrument of democracy, particularly in covering public administration. (Titillating charges of waste, fraud and abuse — well, that's another story.) The channel of e-report-
ting to the public has largely disappeared. A second traditional vehicle for public reporting has been through the issuance of printed annual reports. These reports, usually dull and unreadable, are routinely distributed to elected officials, libraries, local watchdog groups and the odd citizen. As dust collectors, they're pretty effective, but that's about it.

Parallel to the atrophying of these two means of accomplishing public reporting has been a similar diminution of attention to public reporting in public administration education and writings.

Now, however, on-line technologies offer a new opportunity to revitalize public reporting. Information can be posted on agency web sites that informs the citizenry of the activities of the agency. Brief reports, of interest to the casual citizen, can then be hot linked to other pages, providing much needed detail to the highly motivated citizen. The internet also offers the inexpensive opportunity, through the use of graphics and other presentation techniques, to assure that these periodic reports aren't the snoozers they've traditionally been in hard copy. Pictures, colors and easy-to-understand graphics can all contribute to the readability of agency reports.

Other benefits from using e-government for public reporting include savings in printing costs, reduced paper consumption, elimination of maintenance of mailing lists, the ability to reach all citizens in their homes and the ability to tailor information based on depth of detail desired by various attentive publics.

The Government Finance Officers Association has created an annual award for Popular Annual Financial Reporting that focuses on making the traditionally dense financial reports readable and meaningful to the lay public. That's a good role model for public administration as a whole. E-government can be used to perform our public reporting duty in a way that is interesting, useful and contributes to the quality of life in a civil society.

ASPA member Mordecai Lee is an assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He is author of "Intersectoral Differences in Public Affairs: The Duty of Public Reporting in Public Administration," Journal of Public Administration 2:2 (forthcoming in Spring, 2002).

E-Government:
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Gene Bacher

"Finding the political will" is one of the primary challenges of implementing e-
government according to D'Arcy Roper of the Department of Purchasing and Supply Management for Fairfax County, Va. Roper made this observation during an afternoon panel discussion of e-govern-
ment successes and obstacles sponsored by the Northern Virginia Chapter of ASPA. The other panel members were Priscilla Quine, associate professor in the depart-
ment of public and international affairs at George Mason University and Carl Kalish, director of procurement and contracts for the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), agreed with this assessment.

As we are all aware, the use of electronic telecommunication and computing devices is having a profound effect on the provision of governmental services at the local level, both in direct dealings with the citizens as well as for internal government operations. Roper reported that Fairfax County is recoding a million hits per month on its web site and a million hits per year from the 24 interactive kiosks scattered throughout the county. It is using interactive voice response systems to reduce staff (12 positions so far) and credits its use of the phone system for collecting nearly $100,000 in outstanding traffic fines. When used internally, e-govern-
ment has revolutionized the way the county government does business, the way it makes payments, does its shopping, how it deals with registrations and applications, and how procurements are handled.

Yet, as the use of these technologies matures, all is not a bed of roses. First of all, Roper indicated, this technology is expensive. However, the anticipated savings are not easy to document and the desire to maintain leading edge capabili-
ties (to match the best the private sector offers) generates constant pressure to replace and improve. In his case, the county is dealing with legacy systems and an information technology infrastructure that is increasingly old and isolated. Additionally, there is a lack of standards for both types of equipment (the even present context between PCs and Apple, for example) and even among the various forms that the county uses. A major challenge is what he termed "information security" in its broadest sense.

Information security takes on many dimensions. There is the problem of intentional virus attacks that can, and has, effectively shut down the county's web site for several days. Then there is the issue of information privacy, to assure that information about citizens is not inadver-
tently revealed to unauthorized personnel. On the one hand, the informational technology people need to put up barriers to maintain the integrity of the data yet there is the need to let people in. The challenge is to let them into only the information they are authorized to see and then to control what they can do with what they get in.

Most important, however, is the need to maintain manual processes for citizen without computer access while simultaneously providing for web based services.
While it is clear that trust is important, the research is inconclusive. Certainly it helps us achieve our goals. Occasionally it facilitates funding. It might even help us feel better about our work. But all of these intangibles tend to keep the problem of trust merely in the back of our minds, rather than the front where it needs to be. It is important, therefore, that we understand the significance of trust in a way that holds our attention.

Simply put, a government that is not trusted is not legitimate, for a lack of trust implies a lack of approval. Democratic government requires a significant level of knowledge about the details of administration. It is not necessary that every citizen approve of every decision. It is enough that we elect individuals who are in a position to make decisions and delegate authority. But it is also important that citizens have some awareness of what decisions are actually being made so that they can exercise their right to approve or disapprove. In this sense, knowledge of public administration is a crucial piece of the democratic process. Knowledge of what administrators do is necessary for even the possibility of approval by the public. Because citizens are largely unaware of how government is administered, they lack the ability to make our efforts legitimate.

Lack of Knowledge is a Barrier to Trust A significant part of the problem is that many citizens have a distorted perception of government. They talk about "the" government, as though there were just one. They tend to think of the federal government as "above" state and local government in a hierarchy. And the details of government are discussed only during times of scandal and corruption, or during times of tragedy.

But the public needs to know how government is supposed to function and how it actually functions beyond what it reads in the headlines. Although public administrators frequently make the "public relations" argument, most of the time the public has no way of knowing it. While one hopes that many within government are guided by the saying, "if you wouldn't want to see it on the front page of the local newspaper, then don't do it," it seems that we are actually guided by the alternate saying: "if you wouldn't want to see it on the front page of the local newspaper, then don't let it get on the front page of the local newspaper."

Of course, the lack of knowledge about government is not for lack of effort. There are more academic programs for public administration than ever before. And it is difficult to find a governmental agency that doesn't have a web page. But the federal government alone is more complex than most people imagine, not to mention the thousands of state, local and other governmental entities. Despite the continuos work toward educating the public about government, information about government is supposed to do and what it is in fact doing. It can help citizens see that government has responded and continues to respond in ways that justify trust.

e-Government is an Opportunity to Educate e-Government One of the best evidences that e-government can be used to educate the public is that we are already using it for this purpose. Firstgov.gov is a perfect example of how e-government organizes a vast array of resources and information in one place. As President Bush says in welcoming us to Firstgov.gov, it is "the first-ever government web site to provide the public with easy, one-stop access to all online U.S. federal government resources" and it "brings government closer to the American people." "We can expand the reach of democracy," he says, "and make government more responsive to citizens." And this is evident upon even a brief exploration, as it is clear that one can get to nearly every government entity with a web presence, not only in the United States but around the world.

Without a doubt, Firstgov.gov is a giant leap forward. It is what citizens wanted since the creation of the Internet, one web page that helps them get to "the" government. But while Firstgov.gov organizes resources and helps people get where they need to go, it falls short in educating citizens. There is no link that comprehensively answers the question, "what is government and what does it do?"

e-Government Should Commit to Educating the Public The question is not so much whether to educate the public but what exactly to tell them and why? Do all of the links to the electronic resources help citizens gain a functional understanding of what government does or do they merely herd folks toward the resources they happen to be looking for? As the world of information technology becomes increasingly rich and complex, focus becomes even more important. Given the wide-open possibilities of putting information about government at the citizens' fingertips, what is most important to them and how do we organize it?

Although further discussion is certainly necessary, there are four questions that must be answered clearly and consistently. What are the goals of government in general and the goals of each government entity in particular? How is government structured and who is the authority for what? How does government go about its business, what does it do, how does it spend its budget? What is government made of, where are its facilities, who are its personnel, and what resources are at its disposal?

All of these questions can and should be answered as citizens find their way to resources. Much of what we can find now on agency web pages answers these questions to some extent. But the answers need to be more than an appendage. For example, the fact that the federal government is divided into three branches should be stated and explained, rather than simply left implicit. When each of these questions can be answered for each governmental agency by visiting the agency web page, citizens will no longer have to trust government as a matter of faith. They will know what government is and what it does. They will trust government because they can see it.

ASP4 member James R. Heichelbech is an Ethics Section member and has recently completed a master's degree in public administration from the Graduate School of Public Affairs at the University of Colorado at Denver. Although he spent several years in the public sector, he is currently working in the private sector and teaching various courses, including business ethics. Email: jheichelbech@mindspring.com.

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E-GOVERNMENT AND HOMELAND SECURITY

The potential of e-technology is far from being realized when it comes to addressing societal threats and challenges. This is no less the case when it comes to homeland security efforts. Following are some recommendations for improvements that could be made in the use of e-technology and some ways in which the use of e-technology might be expanded to advance the federal government's homeland security efforts.

Improved Use of e-Technology

Hardware and software incompatibilities can serve as a major impediment to consolidating and assimilating knowledge, information, and data relevant to understanding and addressing homeland security threats and challenges.

Recommendation: Explore the use of cutting edge approaches to optimize the exchange and consolidation of information and data. A promising approach involves the development of a way of integrating previously incoherent hardware and software technologies so that decision-makers in any given agency are able to extract the data and information they need. One such breakthrough has been developed by TRW. It allows agencies that have not previously been able to exchange information and data electronically to do so.

Others who have developed similar kinds of tools that could be used for cross agency data integration and relational database management include PCE.

Responsibility in Government

Interviewing the skills of individuals in roles of responsibility in government and increasing their effectiveness as networkers, mediators, planners, and facilitators and implementers of change.

Recommendations: Establish or facilitate the establishment of a consortia of educational institutions, think-tanks, and training programs and encourage the consortia to develop homeland security-related courses, workshops, and seminars aimed at advancing the understanding and/or skills of the government officials, government support staff, educators and trainers, first responders, the media, and the general public. Existing educational programs such as the USDA Graduate School and the Office of Personnel Management's Eastern and Western Management Development Centers and Federal Executive Institute might called upon to play roles.

Maximize Clearinghouse Efforts

Focusing on Information Dissemination, Knowledge Transfer, and Technical Assistance

Steps need to be taken to create appropriate linkages among the many existing clearinghouse efforts. In a very rudimentary way, the General Service Administration's America's Small Business website currently serves such a function.

Recommendations: Possibly build a Homeland Security Clearinghouse, incorporating as a component a Homeland Security Information Network. This could be modeled in part on the federal government's Y2K, Information Center that functioned during 1998 and 1999. A similar Center is needed to respond to public concerns and inquiries relating to homeland security. Questions could be posed via an 800 number and by e-mail.

- Establish a technical assistance component of a Homeland Security Information Clearinghouse. Such efforts could build on or network with the efforts of the U.S. Army Center for Army Lessons Learned, the lessons learned efforts of FEMA's Training Institute, the work of The Oklahoma National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism, and other relevant efforts.

- Establish an Operations Center that would link all of the relevant government incident command and operations centers. The Operations Center could have some of the same features of the Information Coordination Center that had been established by the President's Council on Year 2000 Technology Conversion.

- Establish as a component of the Homeland Security Clearinghouse a resource bank of information and other clearings houses where individuals could address inquiries concerning volunteer or paid positions relating to homeland security.

Scenarios, Exercises, and Simulations

The use of scenarios, exercises, and simulations will be crucial to the use of these tools by strategists and decision-makers can accelerate the learning process and an APM means for rapidly expanding the understanding, knowledge, experience, and insights of those who are linking the first hand experience in dealing with any of a range of threats, challenges, and crisis situations.

Recommendations: Utilize e-technology and the Internet for collaborative planning and coordination efforts, scenario development, and for online simulations and exercises. Use of e-technology can save time and resources and allow for greater complexity.

- Use e-technology and the Internet to transfer lessons learned from case studies, scenarios that have been developed, and previously conducted exercises and simulations.

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International Commentary

A New Day at the U.N.

Bill Miller

The winds of change and progress seem to be approaching hurricane force at the United Nations. The U.N. is rapidly becoming the most important and influential international organization poised to deal creatively with international problems that, until recently, appeared to be insurmountable. The U.N. is quickly losing its unflattering reputation as an organization that thrives on talk, rather than action. What has happened to change both the substance and perception of the U.N.? Quite a bit. A few examples include the following:

- U.N. organs, agencies and member states rallied, and quickly after the tragedy of September 11. As President George Bush said, “The United Nations has risen to this responsibility” when, within 24-hours of the attack, the U.N. Security Council drafted a sweeping and binding resolution condemning the terrorist attacks and calling upon the nations of the world to bring the perpetrators to justice. President Bush also co-chaired the Security Council for Resolution 1373, adopted on September 28, which has strong, far-reaching implications. It requires every U.N. member state, under the threat of unspecified sanctions, to aggressively fight terrorism, and pursue terrorists’ resources, cut off their financial funding, and ratify all existing anti-terror treaties within 90 days. A committee was established to monitor compliance with this resolution.

Not only the Security Council, but other U.N. agencies have responded quickly and effectively to deal with the latest Afghanistan crisis. Other agencies include the U.N. Development Program, U.N. Human Rights Commission, U.N. High Commission for Refugees, World Health Organization, U.N. Children’s Fund, and the World Food Program. The U.N. has undertaken the nearly impossible task, headed by veteran Algerian diplomat Lakhdar Brahimi, of cobbling together a broad-based coalition government that is representative of the major Afghan ethnic groups and interests. It is hoped this group will bring peace and stability to this volatile area of the world. This undertaking is a mammoth challenge on the part of the U.N., since previous fragile peace efforts in that country were unworkable.

- U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, since his election five years ago, has vigorously pursued a double-track approach to improve the internal management at the U.N., improve its efficiency and effectiveness, and streamline the bureaucracy. Annan—who has been quite successful in his administrative, organizational, political and programmatic initiatives—and the U.N. were recently awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts to reform the institution and pursue a strategy of peace and development in a post-Cold War world.

This is the first time in its 56-year history that the body itself received the award. Other U.N. entities have received the Nobel Peace Prize on five previous occasions: the U.N. Peacekeeping Operations (1988); U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (1954 and 1981); U.N. Children’s Fund (1965); U.N. International Labor Organization (1969); and Dag Hammarskjold, the second secretary general, received the award posthumously for his efforts to strengthen the U.N.

The Nobel Peace Prize is not only well-deserved by Annan and the U.N., but is a tremendous moral booster for the approximately 52,000 U.N. employees. Many of these U.N. employees work in dangerous and life-threatening situations. Some U.N. employees also feel that many people around the world neither understand nor appreciate their dedication and substantive contributions to promote peace, justice, and social-economic development.

What does the future hold for the U.N.? Can it build upon its past accomplishments? Will the close cooperation between the U.S. and the U.N. continue? Doubtlessly, the U.N. will be the epicenter of reconstruction activities in Afghanistan. This task will be its number one challenge and priority over the next several years. The U.N. can be successful if, and only if, it receives sufficient financial, political, and technical support from its 189 member states. If the United States wants the U.N. to create a miracle and rebuild Afghanistan, without having sufficient resources, it will be a complete fiasco.

Congress, which finally repaid part of its legal arrearages to the U.N., should not revert to its old ways of blackmailing the U.N. and withholding the dues. President Bush, who is receiving high marks for his handling of the September 11 tragedy and immediate military-political action, should remember that the U.S. has an immense reservoir of international goodwill and favorable public opinion at the moment. If, when the fighting subsides, the U.S. revets to its arrogant, unilateralist foreign policy approach that was prevalent before September 11, we will squander the positive feelings toward the U.S. and destroy a large part of the coalition that is combating terrorism. President Bush should keep in mind that prior to the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks, his foreign policy had only a 16-23 percent approval rating in some European countries. If the U.S. turns its back, as it did recently on the Kyoto Global Warming Treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty discussions, we could quickly find ourselves out-of-step with the rest of the world. That would be disastrous. Every effort must be made to build upon the positive working relationship the United States has with the U.N. and the majority of its other members. The world’s future depends upon it.

ASPA member Bill Miller is the Public Administration Delegation Leader. Email: MillerRyan@jcom.com
A New Management Agenda for the Federal Government?

"We have found our mission."
President George W. Bush, September 20, 2001

James D. Carroll

In the short term the outbreak of terrorism in the United States has prompted the president to establish an Office of Homeland Security, partial federalization of airport security, legislation broadening the powers of law enforcement agencies, substantial extraordinary appropriations and related measures. As Donald Kett recently pointed out in these pages, in the longer term terrorism may serve as the catalyst for a new agenda for a new period of public administration in the United States, particularly a new agenda for federal management. While focused on the federal government this agenda will have major intergovernmental, intersectoral and international dimensions. For some time a formative agenda for public action has been simmering below the surface of events. Among other things, several national commissions have sounded warnings about the dangers of terrorism. This formative agenda goes beyond conventional contemporary concerns with efficiency and performance measurement, and the current belief that downsizing government, devolving federal responsibilities and marketizing public action will solve public problems. In the weeks and months to come an overarching concern—whether psychological, and economic and security and well being of the American people—may propel a new agenda to the center of American life and public management.

Three Questions

This new agenda will be shaped by answers to the three questions that have defined previous periods of federal management. These periods span American history from the foundation of the constitutional system to today’s emphasis upon new public management. They include the Civil War, the Progressive Era, the Great Depression, World War II and the Cold War, the Great Society, the Reagan revolution and the current emphasis upon new public management.

The first question is: What are the purposes, missions and roles of the federal government in American and world society? The second is: What values should the federal government respect, protect and promote? The third question is: What organizational forms, human and technical investments, and methods and technologies should the federal government employ in pursuing these purposes, missions, roles and values?

Purposes, Missions, and Roles

Today only tentative and speculative answers are possible. Prospective answers such as those outlined here will be the subject of debate. Conventional wisdom holds that long-term thinking and planning is foolhardy if not impossible in a political system driven by electoral cycles, impatient political maneuvering for position and power, annual plans and budgets, unforeseeable occurrences and persistent interest group demands. In recent years the short-term politics of electoral cycles and political maneuvering, and processes of annual planning and budgeting have yielded some ground to longer-term strategic thought. The intersection of long-term perspectives has occurred in some aspects of deficit control, Social Security, defense, federal acquisition processes, and other activities. The shift towards strategic, longer-term thinking will accelerate. The reason is threefold. First, the demographic imperatives of the entitlement state—which now commands 60 percent to 70 percent of federal expenditures or well over a trillion dollars a year “as far as the eye can see”—are long-term challenges that cannot be addressed through short-term maneuvers. The magnitude of the legal commitment of the nation’s resources through entitlement programs has no precedent in American history. The entitlement state, which vests legally enforceable rights in segments of the population that meet specified criteria, has dwarfed the discretionary administrative state of annual plans and budgets. The entitlement state consists of many tax expenditures and direct spending programs such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Child Care, Food Stamps, School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, The Workforce Investment Act, and dozens of other direct spending, tax expenditure, and credit and loan programs. The entitlement state employs legislative algorithms that sequentially structure program decisions according to predetermined rules in contrast to the administrative state’s delegation of broad discretionary powers to administrators.

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Homeland Security Can Build from Other E-Government Examples

From SECURITY, pg. 7

Advancing Knowledge and Understanding on Specific Topics Opportunities need to be provided for communication, brainstorming, consensus building, and building state of the art understanding particularly in evolving areas of knowledge or in areas of knowledge where there is no current consensus.

Recommendations: Hold open or closed access conferences or brainstorming sessions on cutting edge issues. The Office of Medical Applications of Research (OMAR) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) regularly holds consensus building and "state of the science" conferences on a variety of issues.

Commission virtual efforts to address protection, preparedness, and response issues surrounding bioterrorism, countering and challenging issues. Many groups have developed considerable expertise in organizing and facilitating such efforts. Once such group is GroupPazz

(www.grouppazz.com) One current example of their efforts involves a think tank discussion about security issues in progress at the website of The Western Behavioral Sciences Institute International Fellows Program at

www.wbsi.org/ifindex.html

Homeland Security

Technological and Other Breakthroughs Steps should be taken to ensure that adequate channels of communication are created for the flow of information concerning technological breakthroughs that could aid homeland security efforts.

Recommendations: Expand and build upon the kinds of clearinghouses that already exist to foster the development and assessment of innovative approaches and technological innovations. One such clearinghouse can be found on the web site of the Technical Support Working Group (TSWG) of the Department of Defense. (See www.tswg.gov and www.ndia.org/events/brochure/1996/1090.htm.) TSWG solicits specific online concerns technological breakthroughs from all interested.

In the end, implementation of the improvements and initiatives recommended here could enhance the knowledge, understanding, and capabilities of those in roles of public responsibility as well as the rest of society. It could also result in greater collaboration and cooperation throughout all sectors of society and contribute to the advancement of homeland security efforts overall.

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Will Long-range Problems Confronting Nation be Effectively Addressed?

From AGENDA, pg. 9

Long-term analysis and planning will increasingly superecede such current practices as counting receipts from Social Security and other entitlements as federal assets while not balancing the assets against long-term liabilities. Current practices often mask rather than reveal reality.

Second, in a very different vein but in a very similar way terrorism poses profound and important long-term challenges to the nation and to governance. Several national commissions have forcefully stressed that countering terrorism will require long-term, comprehensive thought, strategic planning and sustained action–action without any clear precedent in American experience.

Third, a unifying, long-range, comprehensive framework is needed upon which missions and roles is required for identifying and making scientific and technological investments and choices to correct the many developmental gaps in biological and genetic sciences and technologies, information technologies, materials sciences, and related fields are generating profound issues for public definition and choice. Human cloning is one example. Many of the emerging questions require a long-term, comprehensive framework for exercising choice. The answers will have profound long-term ethical, economic and military implications for the nation.

“Where there is no vision the people perish” (Hebrew Proverbs 29:18). In the emerging period of public management the demographics and finances of entitlement programs, terrorism, the complexity and magnitude of technical choices, and other trends increasingly will force interjection of long-term thought and planning into the governance system.

Values

In The Cycles of American History Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. argued that the U.S. alternates between periods of relying on government to solve problems, and periods of relying on markets and private action. The emergent era will be one of increased reliance on government. The central realization may be a simple redisciplinary. While markets often can satisfy individual needs and wants, markets cannot solve complex concerns, such as national security, that transcend market operations. In the emerging era the answer to the question of values will lie in reasserting the primacy and necessity of strong, well staffed, well funded public institutions committed to the common good.

The redirection of values will require renewed emphasis upon values and functions that are the distinct province and responsibility of government. This new emphasis will correct the many distortions of the conventional wisdom of the 1980s and 1990s that the central function of the federal government is to provide services to consumers. The view that the primary function of the federal government is to provide services implicitly reduces it to an appendage of the economy, one of many service providers—not necessarily the most efficient or best one.

In historical perspective, the service role of the federal government remains a relatively small, incidental and almost accidental one—the distortions of conventional wisdom are the norm rather than the exception. In the current preoccupation with marketing public action, the distinctive value premises and core functions of the federal government have almost disappeared from public as well as scholarly view.

In the spirit of the conventional wisdom of the time, the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 has been construed to require strategic planning and measurements directed to agency policy missions and program results—not but to the achievement of democratic and constitutional values. These non-variation values—the process of law, fairness in contract competition and public representation—are excluded from strategic planning and measurement. The implicit premise is that federal management has no particular concern with, role in or responsibility for achieving nondemocratic values. This premise reflects the notion prevalent in the 1990s that government is a business and should be managed as such. In the emerging era management for results under the Government Performance and Results Act and the like almost certainly will be extended to include management that takes into account democratic and constitutional results and values. Counteracting terrorism will create tensions between security values and democratic values that will heighten conflict for basic values.

Organization and Methods

What organizational forms, managerial and technical investments, and methods and technologies are needed to achieve core missions, roles, and values?

Today six actions are important:

• Establishing an institutional structure for developing a government-wide strategic, comprehensive, long range, unifying process and plan to clarify the missions and roles of government, and to identify issues and problems involved in managing the missions and roles;

• Recognizing the emergence of the electronic global culture, and the opportunities and constraints of large and collateral network management across organizational, functional, professional, technical and national boundaries, through electronic government and otherwise;

• Managing the phenomenon of the “luxus and the olive tree’ defined as the simultaneity intensification on the one hand of universal technological values, and on the other hand of particularistic local cultures and values. Managing synchronous centralization and decentralization changes government to intermediate between centripetal and centrifugal forces;

• Reinterpreting or amending the Government Performance and Results Act to require government-wide and agency accountability and planning for democratic and constitutional values;

• Reinvesting in and redeveloping the federal workforce, its schools, and the technologies to equip it to work effectively in the new era; and

• Recommitting the types and varieties of organizational forms, intergovernmental and intersectoral relationships, and instrumentalities used in policy functions to determine whether they are effective in attaining goals and objectives, and at what cost.

Perhaps the greatest challenge is establishing an institutional capacity to formulate a strategic vision of the roles and missions of the government, how these relate to each other, and how these can be pursued. A provision of the Government Performance and Results Act in effect requires the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to develop a government-wide performance plan. OMB has interpreted this provision narrowly.

At its core, the failure of the federal government to develop an institutional capacity to plan for long-term trends challenging the nation arises from the fragmentation and dispersion of power over federal management in the presidency, Congress, agencies and political networks. As James Madison intimated, the point of turf is alive and well in the system of countervailing power. Ambition counters ambition. The question is whether and how power can be reconfigured to address new national needs while retaining the contentious accountability of countervailing power.

Can greater coherence be achieved? Could Congress establish a Joint Committee on Federal Management Policy to work cooperatively with a new Office of Federal Management Policy in the Executive Office of the President to forge a strategic vision for federal operations?

Conventional wisdom says no, but conventional wisdom may be wrong. The history of federal management is highly instructive and extraordinarily creative. In every major period of the nation’s history, in response to crises and perceived national needs, members of Congress, presidents and public activists have forged coalitions to restructure, redefine and redirect public power and federal management to achieve national goals. Acting in the face of powerful obstacles they succeeded. The country has benefited from their legacy.

The question is whether this generation will contribute to that legacy and how, so that the long-range problems and opportunities confronting the nation can be effectively addressed.

ASPM member James Carroll is a professor of public policy and administration at Florida International University, and an adjunct professor at Georgetown University. He has served as director of the Government Research Division, the Congressional Research Service and the Library of Congress; chair and director of the department of public administration of the Maxwell School; and senior staff member and director of the advanced studies program of the Brookings Institution. E-mail: jamesmcarroll@yahoo.com

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The Airport that Reform Forgot

It is now clear that the September 11th terrorists had spent months and perhaps years planning the hijacking of commercial airlines for the purpose of flying them into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Based on extensive travel through airports on the east coast and careful observation of airport security, the terrorists chose Boston’s Logan airport as their point of departure, evidently because of its particularly lax security. What is it about Logan airport that might explain why it was attractive to airline hijacking terrorists?

Local airports are organized in two ways. Of the top 30 commercial airports, according to Spencer Dickerson, executive vice president of the International Association of Airport Executives, 10 are simply city departments of aviation, like departments of public works. The other 20 are semi-autonomous authorities either established by cities or by combinations of cities, counties, and/or states. Of the top 30 airports, all are, they claim, self-supporting, deriving their revenues from runway and gate fees charged to airlines, parking, vendor contracts, and the like. Airports are responsible for all security except passenger and luggage screening, which was the responsibility of the airlines, and is now being federalized.

Boston’s Logan airport is the primary facility of a Massachusetts state level authority called Massport. Governed by a board of directors appointed by the governor, Massport was established many years ago as a semi-autonomous result of political patronage. So, while professional qualifications might be assumed for most important public administration responsibilities elsewhere, requiring actual qualifications for those in the leadership of Logan Airport in Boston would be a very big change.

There should also be professional qualifications for a new position, airport Chief of Security. It turns out that there are presently no such requirements, and the former Massport Public Safety Director, Joseph M. Lawless (I did not make this up), had no professional background in airport security.

Patronage at Massport, "in all of its forms," should be eliminated. "We conclude that patronage at Massport is a four headed monster, taking the following forms: the hiring of unqualified individuals, the creation of new positions to accommodate applicants, the awarding of contracts to companies with inside connections, and financial contributions to charities or outside parties that go beyond community goodwill."

If there is a person who knows governmental affairs in Massachusetts and Boston it is Robert H. (Tex) McClain, Jr., a lifetime member of ASAP. According to McClain, the appointment of Massport patronage as a four headed monster is no exaggeration. Massport is, he says, corrupt like many cities were before the progressive era and the municipal reform movement. But, rather than a boss mayor, Massport is a political extension of the governor and the governor’s political party.

The Task Force Report reads: "The blame for patronage not only rests with the leadership of Massport; it rests equally with other political entities, including the Executive and Legislative branches of government, among others, which, without regard for technical and professional qualifications or fairnes, have frequently used this public agency as a vehicle for political reward."

It is estimated that at least 25 percent of Massport employees can trace their jobs to patronage.

The airport budget is laced-up with pork including the favored charities of political worthies, and capital projects in the districts of the influential. Read this and shudder: "in an odd way, the Authority is proud of how it has coped with patronage. Playing for positions to go away by accommodating high level hires on the payroll, by creating special positions in the organization, or spending $1.4 million to fund the preferred charities of influential people seems to be an acceptable compromise in the short run to win consensus..."

Massport is poorly organized and managed. It is "overstaffed, particularly at the top levels of administration. There is also duplication of functions and the need to cut out expensive management and lack of access to the CEO by the managers of the core functions..."

According to McClain, the logic of Massport as a semi-autonomous authority has neither insulated it from politics nor resulted in good business practices. It is the worst of both worlds—poor government and lousy business.

For the past 75 years city airports have been vital partners in the American commercial air travel system. The safety of the air travel is the net result of close and carefully designed linkages between airports, airline companies, federal and state supply companies, maintenance companies, the FAA and many other partners. If one of these partners in the airport security system fails to properly carry out its responsibilities, the whole system is compromised. We will never know how much of the responsibility for the September 11th attacks can be fairly associated with organization and management of the Logan Airport. It is, however, a good blueprint for reform, reform based on public administration principles like professional qualifications, the clear assignment of responsibilities, a chain of command, and, above all, a distinct line between politics and administration.

AspA member H. George Fredericksen is the Senior Professor of Public Administration at the University of Kansas and the author of "The Spirit of Public Administration" (Oxhey-Bass, 1997).

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Are Administrative and
Political Public Service
Mutually Exclusive?

Dear ASPA,

I am an assistant to a city manager in a small no-growth suburban community. I live approximately 20 miles from the community in which I work and have been involved politically in my home city for about five years. My home city has a population of 15,000 and is growing rapidly. Several years ago while serving as the treasurer of my home city, the city council refused to take action on my request to hire a full-time finance officer, instead ceding responsibility to the city manager and department heads for financial responsibility. Moreover, the council refused to take action on new investment strategies intended to make the most of short-term excess cash flows and responsibly reinvest them for a small yield. When the council ultimately hired a finance director, they hired someone who had never held a responsible position in a finance department in either the public or private sector.

I was told by the council that if I felt I could do a better job making decisions for the future of the community I should run for city council.

Hmmmm? This was a difficult decision because I recognized that I would have had to resign from my professional city management association. This I did by not renewing my membership and sending a letter to this effect to my association. The city council in November and am currently serving a four year term as city manager. I am also continuing my daily as an assistant to the city manager.

I was elected during a sweep of the council. Only one of three members was re-elected, and many citizens I spoke with cited the need for change and responsibility in public institutions as the reason for ousting incumbents on council. Essentially, I ran to protect the integrity of my home community and the city management profession that, in my estimation, was being tarnished by irresponsible actions.

My question is this: "Do you feel that the administrative public service and political public service are mutually exclusive? Is my professional city management association going to help me think through this?"

I know for a certainty (the lawyers reviewed the circumstances of the situation) that I have violated any laws. If the response to the question was yours to craft from an objective perspective, what would you say?

Troubled

---scenario based on a real case. Names, dates, and places are fictitious.

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For more information contact Dr. Donald C. Menzel, Director, Division of Public Administration, Northern Illinois University, dmenzel@niu.edu or visit http://www.niu.edu/~tp6dc1/keith/index.html
The Social Security/Medicare Handbook Is Now Available
Social Security and Medicare are easily the two most misunderstood benefits that federal employees, postal workers and retirees have. In years past, these employees didn’t really need to know too much about these programs because they were under a separate retirement and disability benefits package, the Civil Service Retirement System, and didn’t stand to get benefits from Social Security. Social Security and Medicare, largely were for somebody else—not them.

Not anymore. All that changed several years ago and these big changes in the benefits picture are just now hitting home for many federal employers and postal workers. With Social Security and Medicare now playing so important a role in your financial future, you can no longer afford to ignore them. It’s vital that you understand just what types of benefits you’re accumulating, what level of benefits you stand to receive, what your provisions might reduce or even eliminate them, and how they interact with your other benefits in sum, how to plan yourselves to get the most out of these two key programs.

Again, never before has there been such a huge need for this information. That’s why FEDweek has published its new Social Security/Medicare Handbook for Federal Employees/Retirees. Until now, there has never been a comprehensive, easy-to-understand handbook for federal employees and retirees that fully explains not only those programs but also how they dovetail (and, in some cases, conflict) with the federal government’s retirement and health insurance programs. Take a look at a partial table of contents for this all-new handbook:

For more information or to order go to http://www.fedweek.com/Publications/default.csp or by calling our 24 hour toll-free order time (866) 333-9335.

AGA to Award Five Federal Agencies with Certificates of Excellence in Accountability Reporting (CEAR)
The National Science Foundation, the Social Security Administration, the U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Department of Labor will be honored with Certificates of Excellence in Accountability Reporting (CEAR) from the Association of Government Accountants recently.

A distinguished panel of government financial managers chose to honor these five federal agencies for their exceptional fiscal year 2000 Accountability Reports.

In 1997, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the CFO Council called for a certificate program to encourage and recognize excellence in Accountability Reports. AGA was asked to step forward and answer that call. AGA established this award program in conjunction with the federal CFO Council. Its goal is to recognize federal agencies that have achieved excellence in the preparation, issuance and timeliness of Accountability Reports. This distinction is a significant accomplishment and honor for a federal agency and its management.

New Resource from IPMA Helps HR Professionals Establish Organizational Partnerships
As human resource departments become more prominent internal consultants, they are finding they must learn how to develop and nurture partnerships with other departmental units if they, and the organization, are to ensure the success of policy, planning, and other initiatives. In this setting, human resource professionals face a unique set of challenges: they must meet the ever-growing needs of diverse constituent groups; they must coordinate processes and policies with organizational initiatives and ensure that organizational, department/unit level, and individual performance goals are met; and they are expected to realize cost savings through efficient operations, as well as augment the value of products and services to their internal and external customers.

To address the concept of Interdepartmental Service, and how the HR department can use it as a tool to enhance its increasingly challenging role within the evolving organization, IPMA’s HR Center is offering a new report entitled, Interdepartmental Service Agreements: Partnering with HR to Deliver Effective Public Service.

Co-authored by Richard L. Hodrick, Senior Manager of The Innovations Group, a national, not-for-profit, local government organization in Tampa, FL, and John Thoeng, Director of Human Resources, City of Kansas City, MO, the publication discusses:

• The role of the Human Resource Department in the evolving organization
• Guidelines for developing an interdepartmental service agreement
• Case examples of Interdepartmental Service Agreements

To order, e-mail the IPMA Publications Department, indicating order code HRSAVA, at publications@ipma-hr.org. To order online, and for more information on HR Center products and services, visit: www.ipma-hr.org, and select HR Center. Orders and inquiries may also be faxed to: IPMA Publications, (703) 684-0948.

Resource Highlights Successful Municipal Government Workplace Health—Wellness Programs
Methods and features of workplace wellness programs sponsored by the City of Englewood, Colo., and Cheney, Wash., are among the employers programs described in the new Wellness Program Management Yearbook, second edition.

The new Yearbook spotlights what employers are doing, with tips on lowering back injuries, developing exercise programs and ergonomics auxiliary prevention. Proven workplace wellness program management methods, plans and ideas north hundreds of thousands of dollars, how to measure a program’s effectiveness, ‘must’ case histories of successful programs, and what’s working elsewhere, are featured in the new Wellness Program Management Yearbook, second edition.

The Yearbook provides 204 pages of tools, tips, new ideas, best practices, statistics and strategies for workplace wellness professionals, and has been published by American Business Publishing.

Chapters cover Trends In Wellness and Health Promotion, Cost-cutting Strategies, Management Tips, Program Planning, Weight Control/Management Programs, Exercise and Fitness, Nutrition, Smoking Cessation, Stress Management, Prenatal Care, Ergonomics and Injury Prevention, Empowering Consumers: Self-Care and Disease and Demand Management, and Spotlight on Wellness Programs.

The Yearbook also features keys to developing best practices for a program, along with strategies to nurture support from senior management, including a 10-point checklist of management tips.

Details from an exclusive survey that studied the key elements and program components that contributed the success of workplace wellness programs are included.

Several of the successful workplace wellness programs featured in the Yearbook are award-winners in a competition sponsored by the popular Web site WellnessJournal.com.

Workplace wellness initiatives and Ideas that are working elsewhere are featured in the chapter on Program Planning. Topics include the seven building blocks for a successful program, the top 20 characteristics that can make a program even more successful, how to overcome the hurdles to implementing a program, and the “Seven C’s” to a Healthier Workplace.

One of the most interesting and useful features throughout the Yearbook are the ‘mini’ case histories of what’s working elsewhere and what other companies are doing. For example, the winner of WellnessJournal.com’s first “Return on Investment” contest, a Rhode Island medical center’s Wellness Challenge that documented savings of more than $2 million over six years, is featured.

The Wellness Program Management Yearbook, second edition, was produced for managers who are responsible for their organization’s workplace wellness program.

For more information, visit the publisher’s secure Web site, www.healthresources.com/, call toll-free 1-800-516-4343, or fax toll-free 1-888-339-6242.

If you have a query relate appropriate for "Who Plays Hard," contact Courtney Klein at 202-585-4314, or cklein@aspanet.org.

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