Collaborating to Meet Constituent Needs
Local government helps itself, and others, leverage technology for improved performance

A Case Study

A collaborative approach to serving constituents

While no area within the public sector is immune to the competing pressures of shrinking budgets and rising expectations, perhaps nowhere is this pressure more sharply felt than at the local level. So what's a local government to do? The answer, for one local government organization, lies in leveraging sophisticated performance management technology and processes to effectively align all organizational resources — both financial and human capital — to improve performance toward its strategic objectives.

Not content to focus on helping just its own organization improve performance, this county government takes to heart government-wide calls, such as those outlined in the President's Management Agenda, for agencies to focus their application of information technology on improving agency mission performance, reducing duplication, and coordinating efforts with other agencies in an integrated manner. Toward this end, ingrained in its own performance management efforts is a philosophy intended to help themselves and other local governments:

- Collaborate for more efficient utilization of available resources;
- Reduce costs through sharing of technology assets;
- Gain the use of the latest technology without suffering the costs and aggravation related to obsolescence; and
- Achieve all this with minimal start-up costs and technology requirements.

It is by pairing this philosophy with its own internal drive for performance improvement that this county government hopes to help fellow resource-constrained local agencies do more with less to meet the ever-increasing demand for services in their communities.

Performance at its heart

A commitment to performance permeating its culture, this particular local government's very organizational structure is built around it, with departmental hierarchies organized around strategic projects. A Process Quality Innovation (PQI) department oversees performance management implementation, education and training, with an Enterprise Management Education Series (EMES) required for all management — from utilities to parks and recreation to health department management — to be trained in

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performance management. Weekly Operational Excellence TV broadcasts to all 10,000+ county employees, in which a specific county area's performance is reviewed, help ensure that county-wide, in-depth cross-pollination of learning is occurring regularly.

With a $12MM data center and a sophisticated, home-grown integrated strategic planning, budgeting and performance management system already in place, the organization saw the next step to taking its performance management program to an even higher level was integrating it with third-party software that incorporated years of performance management learning by other organizations along with the latest technology in the marketplace.

The right balance between high-level overview and executional details
As it searched for a solution to help advance its existing system, the organization was introduced to Pilot Software. Pilot's operational alignment software framework, PilotWorks, proved to fulfill all of the organization's initially-specified basic requirements. Moreover, PilotWorks included a host of additional innovative functionality, such as initiatives management, that the organization previously had not considered nor had seen anywhere else in the market. Having seen these, the choice of PilotWorks to advance this organization's performance management capabilities quickly became clear.

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Up and running quickly
In a matter of months, Pilot's operational alignment software framework had been integrated with the organization's own original home-grown system. The combined system was then initially rolled out to three of the county's 13 core service areas which align the county organizationally by the services — or outcomes — they provide to taxpayers. Accessing PilotWorks within the organization's own system, stakeholders can quickly understand current progress toward goals and initiatives within their core service area; in other words, their effectiveness in delivering desired outcomes to their taxpaying constituents. For example, public safety stakeholders can quickly understand their progress in reducing the time it takes ambulances to get from an accident scene to a major hospital — one of the key measures under Emergency Medical Service (EMS) — while process and service automation stakeholders can view their progress in boosting the percentage of customers rating system availability as "good" or "better."

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Since each core service area's objectives and measures are created by managers within that area — Parks and Recreation objectives and measures are defined by Parks and Recreation managers, and so on — the organization is assured they are working toward meaningful goals county-wide. The array of visualizations and analyses within PilotWorks — strategy plans & pathways; initiative management & prioritization; scorecards and dashboards; and reports & ad hoc analysis — help the organization and each of its employees intuitively map contributions to these organizational goals all the way to the individual employee level.

> *The county views the system as such as promising asset that it has decided to work with Pilot to offer the integrated system to other counties and municipalities, calling it a "prime example of how organizations can share resources to better serve their constituents."*

With the combined power of its own developed solution integrated with PilotWorks, the organization can ensure alignment of all of its precious resources, across the organization, with strategic objectives. Budgeting is all outcome-based, with dollars and staff assigned in support of organizational objectives and initiatives; projects failing to meet performance targets will not receive future funding. In addition to providing a service-based view of the budget, the organization's outcome-based system helps break down organizational silos as the budget is built to support community goals and objectives — all of which contributes to a higher performing organization.

"Plug-and-play" performance management for local agencies
With 400 county employees using the PilotWorks system already, the county intends to continue extending system use to all 10,000+ employees. The county views the system as such as promising asset that it has decided to work with Pilot to offer the integrated system to other counties and municipalities, calling it a "prime example of how organizations can share resources to better serve their constituents." Offered through cost-sharing agreements on hosted basis — a virtually "plug-and-play" environment, with no upfront hardware or software costs — the combined offering allows other local governments to take advantage of the sophisticated, years-in-the-making performance management functionality at truly minimal cost.

Other communities, both within the state and nationwide, have already expressed interest in adopting the integrated system in their own municipalities.

With local governments collaborating to employ innovative solutions to deliver more for less, constituents everywhere win.