Building Sustainable Performance Management Frameworks

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What is a sustainable performance framework? A sustainable performance management framework exists when an organization has vision, “spirit”, management structure and quality systems that consistently demonstrate value to their customers.

There are three overall areas critical to the success of an organization: Leadership, Management, and Process

- **Leadership:** Are the reasons why the organization exists understood by management, staff and customers? Do they provide “spirit” and “inspiration”?
- **Management:** What are the services being delivered to make the organization a success? To what extent are they accomplishing these results, and do they have the ability to continue accomplishing these results?
- **Process:** Are the services being delivered at the necessary level of quality and efficiency to consistently provide desired results to its customers?

These critical success factors can be supported with a sustainable performance framework established within an organization. A sustainable performance framework ensures clearly communicated desired results throughout the organization. It identifies the services, activities and projects being undertaken. It illustrates the relationships between the services, activities and projects and the organization’s desired results throughout the organization. It provides for performance measurement and costing of programs and activities. It surpasses the dynamics of organizational structure and staff turnover, enabling succession planning and mitigating the effects of organizational change. It engages all staff in recognizing the reason for the organization’s existence and engaging in the “spirit” of the organization. It recognizes that process is dependent upon people.

To maintain its existence, an organization must use its money successfully. A performance management framework fosters communication and informed decision-making. It enables adjustment to management structure and process, as necessary to meet customer needs. The framework is critical to development of cost effective information technology development and reporting.

The development of a framework involves strategic planning, program logic modeling, performance measurement development, process system development, performance reporting and collection of reliable data. A fully functional, comprehensive framework should be expected to take 5-7 years. This length of time is necessary for the collection of reliable trend data and analysis. However, benefits from the process are recognized early in the process.

Performance management training is needed, one for users of the performance framework, and more in-depth training for developers of the performance framework. Developers need four to six months of experience in performance framework development to be “certified”.

The following framework components need to be recognized:

- **Desired Results:** The purpose for which an organization exists and the intended effect of services (e.g., Healthy Community, Safe Community, Decreased Incidents of Disease, Decreased Number of Traffic Incidents).
- **Services:** Describe what an organization is in the “business” of doing (e.g., Health Services, Law Enforcement Services).
- **Projects:** Describe what an organization does to implement a new service, delete a service or enhance a service (e.g., Technology Enhancements, Graffiti Task Forces).

The organization’s strategic planning process should “drive” the initial development of the framework. The remaining portion of this paper will illustrate the framework development for the animal control services being delivered by a governmental organization.