

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Everywhere you look there are articles, resources, consultants, and gurus compelling municipalities to 'try this' or 'change that'. There is no shortage of ideas for improvement. But does your organization *need* to change? And with all these ideas and flavours du jour, where do you start?

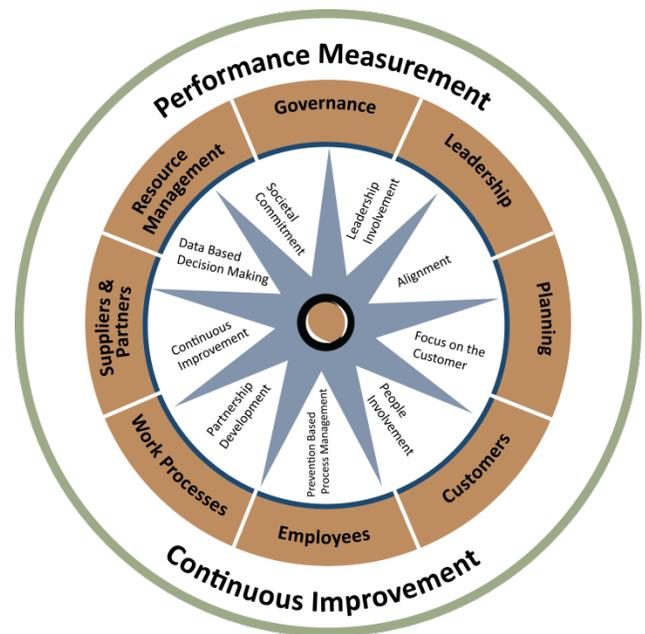
That is where the Organizational Excellence Framework (OEF) tool can add significant value. Through the completion of the self-assessment, the client is led through a process of developing an improvement plan that includes specific guidance that is unique to the organization's needs with the direct purpose of making the organization more high performing.

In other words, the OEF stimulates improvements with *intention* – specific, easy-to-implement, and measurable action tasks that encourage participation throughout the organization.

Interestingly, **only 10%** of the working population is **aware** of excellence models (Australian global research). Here are some quick facts regarding the benefits resulting from implementation of an excellence model:

- **25** years of research has proven the benefit of excellence models
- **95%** of improvement opportunities for an organization originate with ideas and suggestions from people doing the work
- A study in the United States compared the benefits received by award winners from 2007 to 2010 with the cost of operating the program and reported a benefit-to-cost ratio of **820:1**
- Municipal organizations have reported high (**>90%**) satisfaction ratings by residents and businesses; strong balance sheet positions (**AAA rating**) and lower mill rates as a result of increased organizational excellence related activities
- **32%** of payroll in small and medium organizations in Canada is being spent on **non-value adding activity** and this cost is higher for service organizations as opposed to manufacturing (Excellence Canada)
- **96%** of customers **do not complain** but they do tell 10 people on average about their concern - Every customer complaint provides an opportunity to correct flawed processes, educate customers, and strengthen loyalty
- Organizations implementing an excellence model **outperform** their counterparts (25 years of research with excellence models)

The evidence is clear. If your organization wants to increase performance and sustain high performance, the **Organizational Excellence Framework** is the place to **START**.



Excellence in Municipal Government

Australia

Australian research has shown how municipal government organizations have benefited by the use of the excellence framework. Case studies were undertaken with 8 local government councils facing similar challenges. Councils used the framework to assess and improve their organizations. They learned they could assess and improve any aspect of the organization (i.e. leadership, strategy and planning, people, information and knowledge, safety, service delivery, product quality, bottom-line results).

City Infrastructure Improvement Funding

City: **Lake Worth, Florida**

Population: 35,133

Lake Worth regained citizen confidence and passed a bond referendum providing needed funding for improvements to the city's infrastructure and to replace the existing fire station and expand the police station. The \$4.5 million general obligation referendum passed after a two-year education effort which streamlined government operations and showed citizens the responsible management of city business.

Seventeen departments were consolidated into seven divisions, and a surplus account was established totaling 10 percent of the city's budget. Armed with these improvements, commission members and department heads attended the meetings of every civic group in the city; participated in precinct walks to inform and educate citizens; and received endorsements from both local newspapers. The bond measure eventually passed in March of 1996 with 66 percent of the vote as a result of these efforts.

City Reorganization

City: **Webster City, Iowa**

Population: 8,176

To correct inefficiencies in city departments, Webster City reorganized its staffing structure. The city's goal was to reduce the number of departments to five while refraining from demotions or layoffs. To begin with, twelve city employees, seven of which were department heads or assistant department heads, were offered early retirement. All seven of the department heads/assistant department heads and two others accepted the offer. Next, the number of departments was reduced to five: public safety (police and fire) public works (streets, water, wastewater), utility (electric generation and distribution), recreation/ public grounds (parks, recreation, and cemetery), and administration offices. Job titles were simplified and job duties were combined to create more generalist positions. Salaries remained the same. The total cost of the reorganization was a little over \$235,000, but first year savings due to retirement and transfers were \$188,000 and annual salary savings in subsequent years are expected to be \$137,200.

For this effort, Webster City received the 1998 All-Star Community Award from the Iowa League of Cities.

Service Improvement Strategy

City: **Windsor, Connecticut**

Population: 28,778

Windsor's Service Improvement Strategy focuses on customers, cost control, and continuous improvement. When the strategy was first implemented in 1992, the town reorganized its departments into eight self-directed teams, or service units, with the authority to control and coordinate their own work.

Those units are: administration, building and land development, family services, health and environment, information services, library services, public facilities, and safety services. By shifting responsibilities from management to front-line workers, and creating a culture of service and partnership, the town continues to implement dozens of innovative service-oriented and cost-saving ideas. Between 1992 and 1998, Service Improvement Strategy saved the town \$10 million.¹

Would you like to see your municipality achieve results like these?

How the Organizational Excellence Framework can help municipalities

Are you ready to advance your municipality to a higher level of success? If so, the Organizational Excellence Framework may be a source of support for you.

The **Organizational Excellence Framework** provides specific guidance for municipalities to develop and implement best practices in the nine key management areas common to high performing organizations and assists the organization through the process of responding to current influences and trends.

You can begin today by evaluating the culture of your organization. Try the [OEF Teaser Assessment](#) to self-assess your organization against the 9 principles common to high performing organizations. The assessment will take 5 minutes to complete and the complimentary report will be delivered about 1 minute later by our valued partner, QLBS.

See additional articles published on LinkedIn, outlining how the OEF can assist municipalities with addressing key challenges in each of the nine key management areas.

Take your excellence journey to the next level by contacting Contigo Business Services to arrange for an assessment of your key management areas complete with guidance on improvement initiatives.

Tracey Seitz Burkholder, Contigo Business Services Inc., is a CMA and Registered Organizational Excellence Specialist (ROES) providing services to municipal clients throughout Alberta. Services include organizational improvement, strategic planning, productivity and process enhancement, performance management, interim management and mentoring. Contact Tracey at

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¹ National League of Cities, August 2007