Fixing the Potholes Inside
Before Measuring How You’re Filling Them Outside:
North Hempstead’s Experience Implementing “TownStat”

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Town of North Hempstead, NY
The Town of North Hempstead is One Municipality…

Town of North Hempstead, NY
With Many Distinct Layers and Jurisdictions

- 31 Villages
- 12 School Districts
- 19 Town Operated Component Districts
- 26 Commissioner Operated Districts
  - Sewer
  - Water
  - Fire
  - Library

Town of North Hempstead, NY
Where We Began

- Few metrics
- No consistent record keeping
- No centralized reporting
- Limited utilization of data for operations or budget development
- Developed Traditions deeply in place
First Steps

• 2004: New Administration authorizes implementation of 311 constituent service system and accompanying performance management program
• Staff implementation team created
• Consultant retained to assist with project development/implementation
• Baseline analysis of technology infrastructure/departmental operations
Is Management On Board?

• Top Level Management Support
  – Without this, your project will stop once it hits the first serious obstacle
  – Neutrality isn’t support – they must either be leading the effort or the project’s biggest supporter(s)

• North Hempstead
  – Town Supervisor campaigned on implementing 311 and performance management
  – Town Board was supportive
Is Your Infrastructure Sufficient?

• Do you need new software?
  – Sufficient network resources
  – Sufficient tech support resources
  – Are staff prepared to use it

• Do you have data sources?

• Do you have the capacity to create data sources where you need to?

• Is funding in place? For everything?
Is Your Infrastructure Sufficient?

• North Hempstead
  – Phone system antiquated, new system purchased and installed
  – Some IT infrastructure solid, upgrades needed throughout (including data center)
  – Staff training deficit
  – Grants procured to fund software, hardware purchases, support services
What Will You Actually Measure?

• If you don’t know where you’re going, you’ll never get there
  – Goal(s) can be simple, but must be clear AND connected to desired outcome

• North Hempstead
  – Tracking every request for service and recording the eventual response
    • First Department – Highways
      – First goal - Filling all potholes in 48 business hours
      – Tree planting, tree trimming, stump removal
Make the Measurements Matter

- Performance Measurements are tools, not an end in themselves
- **North Hempstead Highway Department**
  - Yard Supervisors shown performance data in group meeting - lagging crews improved performance
  - Tracking tree trimming performance uncovered a major backlog, which led to new allocation of resources
Put Staff At The Table

• Managers see Performance Management as:
  – Tracking and analyzing performance
  – Improving resource allocation
  – Getting better results

• Staff see Performance Management as:
  – Tracking them like Big Brother
  – Finding ways to reduce their overtime or eliminate their position
  – More Work/Disciplinary action
Put Staff At The Table

• North Hempstead
  – Service requests developed with staff input
  – Performance measures tied to SR’s developed with staff input
  – Staff included in meetings discuss TownStat findings
  – Results used for positive reinforcement and recognition rather than discipline
  – General expectations written into Contract
The Results

- November 2005
  - 1,214 “Service Requests”
  - 62 Calls per day

- August 2012
  - 15,276 SR’s
  - 493 Calls per day

- 750,000th call achieved this summer

- Center open 7 days 12 hours day

Town of North Hempstead, NY
TownStat

• Data drives operations
  – Regular reports to Departments
  – Regular meetings to assess performance
• Data informs budget
• ICMA Certificates of Distinction

Town of North Hempstead, NY
Thank You

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