



THE SECRET TO MANAGING SCOTTSDALE'S AWARD-WINNING CITY PERFORMANCE

The City of Scottsdale is a high performing city, with the awards to prove it. For six years, Scottsdale has earned the ICMA Certificate of Excellence in Performance Management, and in 2018, the city's performance management program was named to the What Works Cities Certification Honor Roll.

So, what's Scottsdale's secret to success? Top-notch leadership, strategic thinking, a long-term outlook... and a willingness to retire spreadsheets in favor of a purpose-built planning and performance management tool. This is all done with a focus towards delivering on its mission:

“ *Simply better service for a world-class community.* ”

THE SPREADSHEET PERFORMANCE CHALLENGE

Achieving Scottsdale's strategic plan has been a journey. "We actually started getting into the business of organizational effectiveness about 10 years ago, in 2009. Our city manager at the time wanted to build a leaner, more nimble organization," explained Brent Stockwell, Assistant City Manager for the City of Scottsdale in Arizona.

For a decade, management worked hard, not just operating a world-class city, but also prioritizing achievement of Scottsdale's long-term strategic goals and city council priorities. Brent found he had to revamp the city's toolbox along the way.

Early efforts with spreadsheets made it challenging to track progress towards the city's strategic plan. "We started by using the tool we had: Excel," said Brent. "But, when it came time to update all of our six priorities and 40-some objectives, we were getting constructive feedback from council saying, 'Hey, we've got to figure out a better way to really highlight what's changed and what's remained the same.'"

The team also automated the process using the city's budgeting software. "We also implemented a quarterly performance report at that time that included all of the division objectives and measures from the budget book," described Brent.

“ After a year, our performance management team noticed the reports had grown to an unwieldy 50 pages, which city council simply didn't have time to read. ”

The City Manager's Office needed a better tool to manage, track and report on its strategic plan. "We knew something needed to change. We needed to do it differently," said Brent, "and I wanted to make sure that we kept it simple. For me, KISS meant Keep It Simple Stockwell."

CASCADE PLANNING BRINGS FOCUS TO SCOTTSDALE

The City Manager's Office chose a centralized cascade planning and performance measurement system to define, align and execute all city strategic and operational plans in one place. Brent described its advantages:

“ You can cascade all the way out from the organization mission statement, through one of our council or strategic goals, into the department center and to the employee level. That really helps us to focus and ensure that we're working on the critical things that must be done to achieve our goals. ”

Brent went on to describe how the city is building cross-functional teams to bust departmental silos. “It’s a great idea to use a team approach,” advised Brent. “We’ve found that it doesn’t work well when you only have one person assigned to each of the goals. It works much better when it’s a team effort with staff from throughout the organization. Some of the best ideas have come from staff, including synthesizing our 50-page report down to six pages!”

TRACKING PROGRESS FEELS “AWESOME”

The system automatically sends out friendly email reminders to management and staff to provide updates on action items. “I get regular emails to update my initiatives. I simply follow the link to my personal dashboard, where I’m greeted with a friendly ‘Loading awesomeness’ message. I love that,” said Brent with a smile. Updates are a synch too. “I just look at what I said about the action item last time, add my updates and submit. It’s so easy to do.”

Megan Lynn, who works with Brent as Management Assistant to the City Manager, explained how the system helps track city-wide performance to provide instant visibility,

“*We have the progress status bar which, at a glance, visually indicates whether an initiative is on track, behind schedule, delayed or completed. Progress at the initiative level rolls up to the objective and the overall goal. We’re able to monitor exactly where we’re at for each strategic goal.*”

“As part of that process, we’re also blending performance measures that match up with our strategic plan,” continued Megan. “And we do quarterly reviews with the performance management team to dive into each measure to make sure we’re measuring the right thing in each area.”

Brent further emphasized the importance of performance tracking, “One of the lessons we’ve learned is that to make strategic plans effective, you need to have a robust performance measurement program internally as well.”

ABOUT SCOTTSDALE, AZ

County: Maricopa

Incorporated: 1951

Official Food: Chili, by 1994
Mayoral proclamation

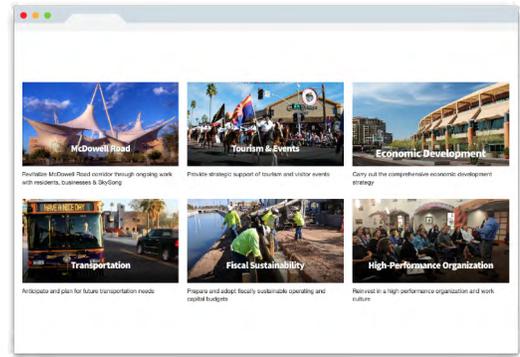
Slogan:
“The West’s Most Western Town”

Population:
249,950 (July 2017 estimate)

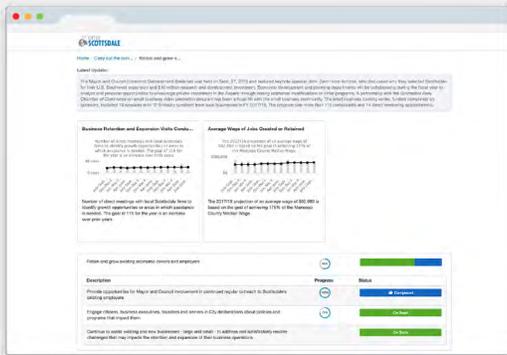
Size: 184.5 square miles, stretching
31 miles from north to south

BEAUTIFUL DASHBOARDS BUILD TRUST WITH COUNCIL & CITIZENS

“Everybody is busy,” explained Megan. Too busy to read 50-page reports. Today, the City of Scottsdale is using an interactive dashboard to showcase the great work that their staff is doing for the city’s 250,000 residents.



“ We switched our quarterly performance reports over to the interactive dashboard to make reporting more accessible, interactive and usable. Today, everyone has web access to the measures that match up with our strategic plan—be it the public, a council member or a staff member. Everyone can drill down to that performance measure level within our priorities. ”



Scottsdale’s public dashboard is a dynamic web page that is accessible from the main city website that features select planning and performance data. Public recognition for their efforts toward meeting strategic goals keeps public staff engaged. City council members can quickly explore progress on their six priorities. All the while, the public can better appreciate all the outstanding work being accomplished to build a world-class community.

The journey to award-winning planning and performance management took time. “We didn’t go from zero to 60 all at once,” concluded Brent. “We’ve been working on this over a number of years. We worked on the strategic planning side; we built the performance measure side; and, now we’re bringing those together. We now have the tools to be able to do that.”

Note: This case study was developed from a webinar hosted by Envisio that Megan and Brent participated in. The City of Scottsdale has been an Envisio customer since 2016.

ABOUT US

We believe that public institutions thrive when there is trust, and that nothing builds trust like a well-executed plan. Envisio is the #1 strategy and performance management solution used by public sector organizations.

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