Cartegraph

BUILDING HIGH-PERFORMANCE GOVERNMENT

A How-To Guide for Local Government Agencies

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A HOW-TO GUIDE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

High performance. It's not always easy to define, but we know it when we see and experience it. Think of a sports car with smooth handling and a fine-tuned engine. It serves an apt metaphor for how efficient, well-oiled government departments get the job done—individually and as a team.

That kind of execution, of course, is no random thing. Over the last decade, local governments have been leveraging sharp strategies and sophisticated, high-tech tools to meet—if not exceed—the expectations of citizens and local leaders.

Some organizations might express caution over trying something new. But, the truth is this: today's best technologies are both user friendly and can achieve something remarkable. That is, they not only pay for themselves—but also produce tremendous cost savings and workflow efficiencies from the moment they come online.

But, what does high performance look like close up, broken down to its most essential parts and the bedrock values that drive it? The goal of this guide is to help you understand the practices and components that drive high performance. You'll also discover how the right tools and partners can transform "excellence" from an abstract concept into a concrete, everyday reality.

SO, WHAT DOES HIGH-PERFORMANCE GOVERNMENT LOOK LIKE?

Private or public sector aside, an organization qualifies as high performing when its members are:

EFFECTIVE

They do things the right way.

EFFICIENT

They do more with less energy.

PRODUCTIVE

They create more impact with less work.

FOCUSED

They fix squarely on their goals.

> *Local governments are entrusted with an awesome, powerful responsibility: to do together that which we cannot, or should not, do alone.*
>
> **NICK KITTLE**
> GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE AND INNOVATION COACH
> CARTEGRAPH

When you center solely on the public sector, there are five tenets of high-performance government according to Government Performance and Innovation Coach Nick Kittle. They include:

1. EFFECTIVE, INNOVATIVE TEAMS
2. EFFICIENT PROCESSES
3. MEASURABLE, ACTIONABLE RESULTS
4. CLEAR, ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENT
5. PROACTIVE ENGAGEMENT OF CITIZENS

WHY DOES MY LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEED TO BECOME HIGH PERFORMING?

Many factors have changed and challenged the local government landscape over the last year. These include:

- **A crumbling infrastructure in desperate need of repair.** The U.S. infrastructure received a near-failing grade of D+ from the American Society of Civil Engineers in their Infrastructure Report Card. The report noted infrastructure assets across the country are mostly below standard and exhibiting significant deterioration with many elements approaching the end of their service life. Local governments across the country need to act fast to avoid failures and strategically invest in maintenance—repairing the right assets at the right time.

- **Citizens are looking for a consumer-quality experience.** The day-to-day operations of local governments directly impact the quality of life of their citizens. Today, residents think of themselves as the end users and government services as a "product" they have "purchased" with their taxes. What's more, in our mobile-driven world of instant e-commerce, citizens increasingly demand a personalized, customer-focused experience with platforms that support two-way communication—and a quick response.

- **The "Silver Tsunami" is making a big splash.** According to the Center for State and Local Government Excellence's recent survey, 54 percent of local governments have experienced an uptick in retirements and 40 percent have seen a rise in quit rates. With fewer skilled workers pitching in with day-to-day operations, local governments need to become more effective and efficient to keep up. Additionally, with most maintenance knowledge hidden away in paper work orders or lost to the memory of former employees, communities are shifting to mobile solutions that provide a digital archive of maintenance history.

HIGH-PERFORMANCE GOVERNMENT *IN ACTION*

The **City of Arlington, TX Parks Department** used to visit each of its 90 parks every day. In an effort to be more efficient, they analyzed their park maintenance data in Cartegraph. Any park that took less than an hour to clean was put on a new schedule and visited less frequently. **This change saved the city 3,300 labor hours or $60,000 in just 9 months.**

- **Sluggish revenues equal mid-year budget cuts.** According to the National Association of State Budget Officers' Fiscal Survey of States, lackluster revenue performance prompted 22 states to make net mid-year budget cuts totaling $3.5 billion. This is the highest number of states reporting net mid-year cuts since fiscal 2010 and the Great Recession. In an uncertain world, agile, data-driven communities will come out on top.

- **Citizens are calling for more open data initiatives.** By law, government data is public data and citizens are calling for more transparency and accountability when it comes to their local government. In fact, the single biggest fear of American citizens is the corruption of government officials according to Chapman University's Study of American Fears. To make positive strides, communities not only need to make more data open and available, but also ensure the info they're sharing is crystal clear and easy for citizens to understand.

To overcome these hurdles, local government agencies must evolve into high-performance organizations that manage assets effectively, deploy resources efficiently, and are more productive for the benefit of their citizens.

HIGH-PERFORMANCE GOVERNMENT IS A JOURNEY, NOT A DESTINATION

Just as your streets and sewers need constant upkeep, a high-performance government requires constant attention and dedication that can't be defined by checking off a punch list. The high-performance government journey means you are always striving to be better today than you were yesterday—you're forever evolving and improving, you're never "finished."

So how do you begin?

- **Start small on your journey**—take the first step and build bigger; but start.
- **Use small wins** to drive momentum.
- **Get buy-in** from key, organization-wide stakeholders. Stress mutual pain points, such as excess paperwork, shared goals, or making more efficient use of taxpayer dollars.
- **Address culture change challenges** and leverage best practices for smoother transitions.
- **Enlist a trusted partner** to walk this journey with you.

5 TIPS TO MAPPING YOUR HIGH-PERFORMANCE JOURNEY

Before setting off on any journey, you first need a map that pinpoints where you're going and how you'll get there. In the case of high-performance government, your team should identify where you are at today and what goals you want to accomplish—ultimately streamlining your operations and improving the quality of life of your citizens.

Maybe your first goal is to stop using paper work orders so nothing gets lost in the shuffle. Perhaps you'd like to feel better equipped to present rock-solid budgets to council. Or maybe you want to be prepared for the next time disaster strikes and your team must respond at a moment's notice. Every organization has unique goals and needs—it's just a matter of defining them.

Here's 5 best practices to help you get started:

1 STRIVE TO BE SMART AND CLEAR

Your agency may already be using SMART goals—aka Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-bound—to stay focused on what matters most. Now, take your goals to the next level by also making sure they're CLEAR.

CLEAR stands for goals that are:

- **Collaborative:** encouraging employees to work collaboratively and in teams

- **Limited:** both in scope and duration

- **Emotional:** making an emotional connection to employees that taps into their energy and passion

- **Appreciable:** breaking large goals into smaller ones so they can be accomplished quicker and easier for long-term gain

- **Refinable:** giving yourself permission to refine and modify your steadfast goals as new situations and information arise

2 BUILD YOUR GOALS OFF LARGER COMMUNITY DIRECTIVES

Don't make more work for yourself. Set your team up for success by ensuring your goals tie directly back to council priorities or initiatives. That way, everything your department is working on is driving toward the larger directives established by your community leaders and citizens.

Instead of engaging what in the past was often an adversarial relationship, high-performance teams can make a case for fulfilling and enhancing council directives through data analysis, needs analysis, and clear goal setting. It's a cooperative effort.

"When you go in with a report that says here's how much I need, here's why, and here's what I will do with it, it's more powerful to the finance guy to be able to budget."

JOE CORY
DEPUTY PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR
CITY OF WEST DES MOINES, IA

3 MIND YOUR KPIs

In following the high-performance roadmap, KPIs—or Key Performance Indicators—play a major role. But, calculating these by way of paperwork, guesstimates, or weekly/monthly assessment fails to take advantage of high-tech, high-touch resources that save time and money—as well as improve efficiency.

The KPI key: take advantage of dashboards that track your KPIs in real time. That way, leaders can not only keep a finger on the pulse of operations, but also can make data-driven decisions to increase performance with the most accurate information available.

4 WIG OUT TO STAY FOCUSED

Establishing WIGs, or Wildly Important Goals, with your team turns scattered energy into a laser focus. Concentrating on a wildly important goal is like hammering just one hole through a wall at a time—all your strength goes into making that hole.

Keep in mind the four golden WIG rules, adapted from "The 4 Disciplines of Execution" by Chris McChesney, Sean Covey, and Jim Huling:

- No team focuses on more than two WIGs at the same time.
- The battles you choose must win the war.
- Senior leaders can veto, but not dictate.
- All WIGs must have a finish line in the form of from X to Y by when.

5 MOTIVATE YOUR TEAM WITH SCOREBOARDS

Simply put, people play differently when they're keeping score. The intensity and drive around a pick-up game instantly changes as soon as you start tracking who's winning.

WIG scoreboards serve two purposes: they keep members accountable and they give teams a sense of accomplishment as they close in on the goal. Keep your eye on the prize by figuring out a fun, creative way for your organization to track progress. That way, everyone knows where the team stands at a moment's glance.

> *"Great teams know at every moment whether or not they are winning. They must know, otherwise, they don't know what they have to do to win the game."*
>
> **CHRIS McCHESNEY**
> AUTHOR
> THE 4 DISCIPLINES OF EXECUTION

DON'T GO IT ALONE:

TOOLS AND PARTNERS TO HELP YOU ON YOUR HIGH-PERFORMANCE JOURNEY

Lewis and Clark. Marco Polo. They're all renowned explorers, but do you know what else they had in common? They leveraged the right equipment and tapped into trusted guides to help them navigate uncharted waters.

For example, with the latest high-performance technology you can now:

- Track how quickly you respond to citizen requests.
- Monitor infrastructure performance with detailed reports and dashboards.
- Gain visibility on spending—and whether you're on track with your budget.
- Analyze data to find opportunities to increase efficiencies.
- Prepare budgets and capital improvement plans.
- Measure the ROI of your maintenance methods and plan accordingly.
- Prioritize projects based on budget or asset criticality.
- Develop emergency response plans for your critical assets.
- Run projections to see the impact of budget on asset condition.

Outdated asset management technologies are no longer efficient, nor sufficient, for meeting modern high-performance government goals. Here are 7 characteristics you should look for in your high-performance technology:

1 USER-CENTRIC DESIGN

When choosing a high-performance system, consider the ease of use and intuitiveness of its design. A clean and simple interface enables workers to concentrate on the task at hand, rather than trying to muddle their way through inefficient software that makes tasks more difficult to manage and complete.

2 MOBILITY

The system you choose needs to provide optimal power and functionality for the mobile workforce. Look for a system that performs as well, or better, on a mobile device as it does in the office. That way, no matter where the asset is located, your mobile workforce has everything it needs to access and complete work accurately and on time.

3 DATA ORGANIZATION

Does the system make it easy to input, view, and find data? If not, look elsewhere. Quick, easy access to well-organized data, such as a particular asset's work and inspection history, helps your team to make well-informed decisions when performing their work in the office or on the go.

4 ADAPTABILITY

Identify your technology needs today and consider how those needs might evolve in the future. Use that knowledge to choose technology that has the ability to expand and grow with the needs of your community and the operations that service it.

5 INTEGRATION

It takes more than one system to keep an organization running efficiently. High-performance operations technology is the place where those enterprise systems connect. The right system integrates easily with everything from your fuel management system to your 311 request platform, and will share data with them in real time.

6 CROSS FUNCTIONAL

A system should be able to meet the needs of multiple departments and areas of your organization. Organization-wide thinking—along with the communication and collaboration that makes it successful—isn't possible using a system that creates data silos. Productivity and decision-making improve when every user has access to the same data.

7 AUTOMATION

To be more effective and efficient, high-performance governments must accomplish more with less energy. Look for automation features that let the system do some of the heavy lifting for you when it comes to data entry and repeatable actions. You'll be out creating more of an impact while the system saves you time, keeps you organized, and reduces data entry errors.

WHAT SHOULD YOU LOOK FOR IN A TRUSTED PARTNER?

Building a high-performance government—and staying there—means that you have the right tools and ongoing monitoring to keep your operation at peak levels. It also means choosing the right partner to help navigate the road ahead.

A partnership is more than just a software purchase. It's the start of a new way to do business, and you'll need experts that can help you set and achieve your high-performance goals. Look for an organization that's as invested in your journey as you are, and one that offers a thorough combination of training, support, coaching, and consulting.

Remember, high performance is a journey—not a destination. And your partners should be with you every step of the way.

NOW YOU KNOW

Your citizens are counting on you to manage your infrastructure assets effectively, deploy resources efficiently, and take care of their community. By using the insights and best practices outlined in this guide, your team can begin your high-performance journey. Remember, it's all about striving to be better today than you were yesterday. Start small, be CLEAR, keep score, and leverage the right tools and partners. You've got this.

IF YOU LIKED BUILDING HIGH-PERFORMANCE GOVERNMENT, YOU'LL LOVE THESE GUIDES:

ABOUT CARTEGRAPH

Cartegraph is in the business of building high-performance government. They offer software solutions that help local government agencies manage their physical assets and associated operations. With Cartegraph, users optimize the life of their infrastructure, deploy maintenance resources efficiently, and increase productivity.

To build high-performance governments, Cartegraph uses a comprehensive, three-pronged approach that combines success coaching, expert consulting, and state-of-the-art software solutions for asset, work, and resource management to help agencies capture data, analyze it, and prepare for the future. For more information, visit cartegraph.com.