



## **Tips for Conducting Municipal Department/Service Reviews**

Prepared by Jim Damicis, President, PolicyOne Research

[jim@policyonersearch.com](mailto:jim@policyonersearch.com)

[www.policyonersearch.com](http://www.policyonersearch.com)

- Be very clear about why you are conducting the review – trying to lower costs, lower taxes, improve service, expand service, improve morale, improve customer satisfaction?
- Do not try to lump everything including the kitchen sink into your review – be clear and focused about which departments are included, which services, which goals/objectives you are trying to achieve.
- Separate human resources items like personnel reviews/coaching from the service delivery analysis – most importantly, do not conduct such an effort simply to make the case to terminate someone.
- Be aware of processes that that utilize one technique – there are many good tools/techniques – each has strengths and constraints at meeting your needs. Often a customized analysis is the best approach drawing from several tools and techniques to meet your needs.
- When working with consultants, make sure they take the time and effort to understand the local culture/environment – this will greatly improve chances for implementation.
- Be clear and upfront on the level of public/council/staff involvement desired and required.
- Be clear and communicate to staff what is being done, why and how information will be used.

- Don't be afraid to compare yourself to private sector or entities that at first glance don't seem directly comparable – think about the customer service experience.
- Reviews require data and information – the better the information that is regularly collected, the better the review and analysis.
- **Do not conduct the review if you are not prepared to implement solutions and follow-through – it is too resource and time intensive to do the work then ignore the solutions**

## Tools

- Benchmarking – measuring against established, measurable goals and objectives Problem: There is a lack of reliable, comparable, readily available local government service delivery data
- Activity based costing – allows for process improvements to be measured in terms of \$ costs
- Fiscal trend analysis – allows a look at cost and revenue drivers and the overall impact on the fiscal bottom line – This is another area where reliable, comparable, and readily available data is a constraint
- Surveying/focus groups – used to identify issues and perceptions, engage customers, staff, and constituents. Web has greatly reduced cost of surveying!
- Lean & Six Sigma - initially designed for manufacturing process but increasing being adapted to services

## Resources

APQC – An internationally recognized non-profit resource for process and performance improvement. APQC focuses on benchmarking and metrics, best practices, knowledge management, measurement, performance improvement, and professional development. [www.apqc.org](http://www.apqc.org)

The American Society for Quality (ASQ) -, this professional association advances learning, quality improvement, and knowledge exchange to improve business results, and to create better workplaces and communities worldwide.

<http://www.asq.org/index.html>; Government Division -  
<http://www.asq.org/gov/index.html>

The Benchmarking Network - an international resource for business process research and metrics. Provide benchmarking training and research to individual companies, professional and trade associations, and industry and process based groups. [www.benchmarkingnetwork.com/](http://www.benchmarkingnetwork.com/)

Public Performance Measurement and Reporting Network - Promotes the use of valid, reliable data as a key element in improving the delivery of public services. [www.ppmrn.net](http://www.ppmrn.net)

Government Accounting Standard's Board (GASB) Service Efforts and Accomplishments (SEA) Project – Provides performance measurement tools, data and resources for use in planning and budgeting. <http://www.seagov.org/>

Michigan Local Government Benchmarking Consortium -  
<http://web5.msue.msu.edu/slg//benchmarking/tabid/180/Default.aspx>

Florida Benchmarking Consortium - <http://www.flbenchmark.org/>

North Carolina Benchmarking Project - [www.sog.unc.edu/programs/perfmeas/](http://www.sog.unc.edu/programs/perfmeas/)

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