**2013 Transforming Local Government Conference**

**Presentation Proposal**

**Title:**

“Service Through Performance”

**Category:**

Organizational Design

**Jurisdiction:**

Bernalillo County, New Mexico

(Albuquerque)

County Manager:

Tom Zdunek

**Rapid Fire Session Consideration:**

Yes

**Project Leader:**

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**Other Presentation Team Members:**

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**Synopsis**

Bernalillo County, New Mexico hired a new county manager, Tom Zdunek, in September 2011 who immediately stressed the need to provide services in a customer-focused manner. The county had already been tracking a variety of effectiveness and efficiency measures, but to these was added the “third dimension” of the customer experience. This customer-focused initiative was termed “**Service Through Performance” (STP).**

Kevin Kinzie, Management and Policy Analyst in the county manager’s office, and Chelle Stringer, consultant, have successfully implemented multiple phases of the STP initiative at Bernalillo County. The foundation of the initiative was defining success for each business unit and aligning those measures with identified customer needs.

The STP initiative focused on setting out to identify what citizens/customers want and need from county departments. The STP team met with departments that interact with the public to drill down and ask probing questions to answer: Who are your customers? What do they need from you? How can you measure the degree and/or extent to which your current service delivery meets those needs? What does success look like?

Once the answers to these questions were discovered, The STP team worked with county departments to identify customer-centered performance measures to be tracked and reported for the STP initiative. As the initiative matures, these new measures will be incorporated into and reported alongside other measures of efficiency, effectiveness and output. By so doing, this innovate initiative puts meeting customer needs on the same level as providing efficient and effective services and helps to cement a customer-focused service delivery mentality in place throughout county departments. Although the focus at this stage is on departments that interact with the public, similar efforts will be taking place with internal service departments whose “customers” are other county departments.

In this presentation, we will detail the process Bernalillo County employed to measure changes, monitor and sustain this new initiative and establish meaningful standards for determining its success. The presentation will include various examples of specific measures now being used across county departments to document its customer-focused service. At our housing office, for example, a new measure was added to ensure that clients seeking staff assistance are seen within 10 minutes of checking in at least 90% of the time. The process includes determining how to measure that and what internal processes might be necessary to document and ultimately report on that measure. Various other examples will be provided during the presentation.

**Costs**: The county spent $\_\_\_\_\_\_ on a consultant to provide a framework for this organizational change effort.

**Savings**: No direct monetary savings are anticipated from this initiative.

**Innovative Characteristics**: The Service Through Performance initiative is designed to get county departments to focus on the needs of their customers. Meetings with department directors and supervisors have challenged them to put themselves in their customer’s shoes and consider their service delivery methods through the eyes of the customer. While many who hear the words “customer service” may think of a smile and greeting as a customer walks in the door, our approach was to frame the customer experience as a performance measure. This means it must be a measurable action or process that meets one or more identified customer needs. This effort goes beyond basic customer service training (which the county provides) to identifying and reporting actions taken to move beyond “doing what we do” to doing it in meaningful ways that enhance the customer/citizen experience with county government. By meeting with departments and thinking through how they determine the needs of their customers (via surveys, word of mouth, or even as complaints) we are reinforcing our county as a customer-focused service delivery organization.

**Obstacles**: The primary obstacle encountered during this initiative was getting departmental employees to think outside their own needs and view their services through the eyes of the customer/citizen. For many departments this was quite challenging as their service delivery mechanisms had been well established with the goal of making things easier or convenient for staff—not necessarily the customer.

**Outcomes**: This initiative is currently underway and we have dedicated the first quarter of our current fiscal year (July through September, 2012) as the timeframe to develop measures. Data collection on the customer-focused measures will begin in the second and third quarters and departments will begin reporting data in the fourth quarter and thereafter. By the time the conference is held, reportable data will be available and incorporated into the presentation. The anticipated outcome is that the county will be able to demonstrate to citizens, management and elected officials that the county takes its customer’s needs very seriously and will be able to provide objective data to demonstrate its commitment to a quality customer experience.

**Real World Practicality**: The process used by Bernalillo County to enhance service delivery by focusing on citizen/customer needs and developing and documenting measurable data to demonstrate the extent to which those needs are being met is applicable to public bodies throughout the nation. Cities and counties from coast to coast provide a similar set of services that can benefit from re-focusing service delivery efforts on meeting the citizen need—which will obviously vary from service area to service area, thus making our individualized department approach more practical than a cookie cutter solution.

**Private Consultant**: Chelle Stringer, Ph.D., owner of OCM, LLC, was the consultant used for this process. Her experience driving organizational change efforts for local as well as Fortune 100 companies and even Federal government agencies made her a good fit for this effort. While Kevin Kinzie, a ten year employee of Bernalillo County, was able to bring an understanding of county departments, services and personnel, Chelle brought a well-documented process to this initiative similar to one she used in helping the county implement its enterprise resource management system over the past several years. Chelle’s contact information may be found on the cover sheet of this application.

**Presentation**: We propose to use PowerPoint as our primary presentation tool. Through informational slides and banter that borders on slapstick, Chelle and Kevin have developed a familiarity and rapport that session attendees will find informative as well as entertaining.