



Getting Better, Faster: Improving Milwaukee County Step by Step

Welcome!

We're from the Office of County Executive Chris Abele

- Roberta Drews, Director of Strategic Planning
- Sarah Milnar McLaughlin, Director of Legislative Affairs

And you?



Our Objectives for Today

- ✓ Understand Milwaukee County's three-year journey to performance excellence
- ✓ Grasp key takeaways and lessons learned throughout process
- ✓ Apply key takeaways to your own experience



The Milwaukee County Story

Overview of Milwaukee County:

- Elected County Executive with 12 administrative departments, from Airport to Zoo
- Eight other elected officers, including Sheriff, County Clerk, Treasurer and others
- 18-member County Board



Get Better, Faster

Why performance management?



OUR MISSION

Milwaukee County will provide high quality, responsive services that enhance self-sufficiency, personal safety, economic opportunity and quality of life for its entire people.

OUR VISION

*Milwaukee County is a **model government** in the way it empowers residents and strengthens community.*

OUR PURPOSE

Performance Mgmt. allows us to

- *Improve services*
- *Engage employees*
- *Better utilize resources*

Performance Management 1.0: The Process

Each department sets at least one goal that will move it closer to achieving its **mission** and becoming a **model** in its field.

- Departments set goals
- Report to the County Executive's office three times per year
- Budget, HR, IT representatives present to ensure coordination
- Group determines next steps and follow up before next report

“Don't wait to get better.”



Performance Management 1.0: The Process



- 1) **Find your baseline.** What's your biggest problem or biggest opportunity?
- 2) **Determine where you want to be.** What's the end goal?
- 3) **Build your strategy.** How will you get from A to B?
- 4) **Decide how you'll measure progress.** How will you know you're moving closer to your goal?

Milwaukee County's Performance Management



- What it is
 - Management tool: set direction and track progress, adjust if necessary
 - Communications tool: share what departments are doing, how well, why it's important
 - Space for accountability, celebration and continuous improvement
- What it is **not**
 - Individual performance evaluations for staff
 - A report of key performance indicators
 - Our strategic plan

Get Better, Faster

Performance Management 1.0: What Has Happened



- **Dept. of Housing:** Will announce this year that they have ended Chronic Homelessness in Milwaukee County, with over 300 individuals now in permanent housing
- **Fleet Dept.:** “Top 100 Fleets of the Americas” three years running
- **Facilities Sustainability Office:** 17 percent reduction in energy usage across County
- Both **Dept. of Health and Human Services** and **Dept. of Administration** submitted Wisconsin Forward Award applications

Performance Management 2.0: Why More?



- County is heavily siloed
 - No common goals
 - Few shared practices
 - No common measures of success
- Many issues our residents face are interconnected, even if our departments are not
- Fiscal pressures mean continually finding ways to do more with less
- Untapped opportunities to share best practices among ourselves and support one another

Performance Management 2.0: The Process



- Using the Baldrige Excellence Framework
 - A systems approach to improving your organizations performance
- Have launched three cross-county teams
 - Leadership
 - Customers
 - Operations
- Each led by Cabinet member
- Created three “burst” projects
 - New leadership assessment tool
 - First county-wide customer satisfaction survey
 - Revised / expanded procedures for Administrative Manual of Operating Procedures

Performance Management 2.0: What's Next?



- Expect to launch three more teams
 - Strategy
 - Employees
 - Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management
- Expand to other elected officials
- Take larger challenges
- Seek recognition / improvement
 - Wisconsin Challenger

Performance Management

What We've Learned



- **Keep it simple.** Choose one thing to improve, make it better; choose a second thing, make it better; repeat.
- **Start with basics.** We learned that departments with inconsistent or poorly performing core operations needed to address fundamentals before transforming.
- **Stay focused.** Every department reports on progress three times a year, and the meetings are restricted to discussing performance against goal: are you on track for the current period? For the overall goal? If not, why not? If so, what's next?
- **Make it important.** We celebrate success. We talk about what we're doing. We show that it matters.
- **Engage the front line.** Departments that have integrated the goal from bottom to top of the org chart have greater buy in and stronger results, as all staff can rally around a common goal and see themselves in it.
- **Ensure it's collaborative.** Our supporting organizations attend the meetings so that we can solve issues in real time. We've recently launched cross department efforts to improve Leadership, Customer Focus, and Operations, and people are constantly amazed at how similar their issues – and solutions – are.
- **Keep at it.** Progress really does start with a single step – and a single improvement.

Your turn

- Which of the takeaways from the Milwaukee County Journey stood out to you? Why?
- Which of these lessons learned applies to the situation at your organization? How?
- Based on what you've learned at this session (and/or today overall), what is one action step you can take to improve performance at your organization?



Thanks for coming!

Roberta Drews

Roberta.drews@milwaukeecountywi.gov

Sarah Milnar McLaughlin

Sarah.mclaughlin@milwaukeecountywi.gov

