Where’s the Carrot?

Municipal IT departments need new people. What will attract them?

Some food for thought:

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• What is the first rule for employee retention? Page 17
• Ontario conference examines new IT values, goals. Page 35

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- Principles and strategies for establishing a project-management office Page 21
- GIS seen as primary change agent for municipal people and systems Page 24
- ‘ClickWithMarkham’ introduces a new way to engage voters Page 27
- What’s the value of technology certification programs to IT staff? Page 30
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IT’S INTERESTING TO LOOK back on how far IT has come – and where it’s going now. When we see the distance we’ve travelled, it seems that yesterday we couldn’t build it fast enough, yet today we are under scrutiny to reduce energy consumption and public costs.

While I would never presume to educate this esteemed crowd on the evolution of IT, let me ask you to remember the road that has led us to this point. Sometimes a reflection back is a reflection forward, so I’d also like to ask you to reflect on the planet-wide infrastructure that is now maturing. Because ultimately, it was the efforts of local governments like yours and mine, striving to meet the needs of our customers, that helped to create this infrastructure.

Where have we been?

Dominant technologies for most of the 20th century were the telephone, the typewriter and paper file-systems. Later facsimile and photocopying sped the duplication and transmission of records, but large-scale communication with the general public was done conducted by mass mail, radio, newspaper inserts and telephone operators.

Very expensive mainframes and cheap terminals represented a way to enable many people to exchange information within an organization, but many local governments could not afford such expenses and there was little to no capability of connecting outside the walls of the business.

Finally the emergence of local area networks, personal computers and later interconnected networks led the way for affordable digital communication. It’s difficult to conceive of the Internet not always having been there or trying to do business without it. Today the sum communicative power of the public far exceeds that of municipal resources.

Conflicting Priorities

If yesterday we couldn’t build it fast enough and today we are under scrutiny to reduce energy consumption, how do we accomplish this? Understandably, we turn to technology to help us, but there are human costs that are not always considered.

As technology addresses the emerging need to reduce energy consumption, a number of solutions are rapidly being adopted in local government. The most obvious are server virtualization, smaller devices with efficient batteries, and intelligent power-management routines on desktops, peripherals and server equipment. The energy savings of these techniques can be statistically significant, but every new electronic service will erode these gains.

Our customers will continue to want more services, and the Internet will continue to remain integral to the distribution of information. This access will be increasingly wireless and fully mobile. Desktop PCs and laptops remain the standard for business desktop computing, but we will also see an increasing number of portable devices. Employees and the public alike will be accessing our services from anywhere in the world.

The de facto standard will be ubiquitous and fully unified communications – interoperability of cell/desk phones, handheld devices, voicemail and e-mail.

GPS and location-aware applications will become the norm, and consequently GIS applications will need to be accessible in every remote corner of our areas of responsibility and beyond.

The public will continue to demand new ways of accessing the information we provide, possibly before we’ve conceived of those methods ourselves.

Changing Our Habits

A change to greater environmental efficiency may well be a human process change more so than a purely technological endeavour. After all, this is all about service: service to one’s self, service to our organizations and most importantly service to the general public and the planet.

A large component of an organization’s carbon footprint is the need for employees to travel to the workplace every day. Perhaps IT could be a champion for change away from this age-old trend. After all, it was the IT industry that made possible remote access to corporate resources. What we helped create to facilitate public access can be used to assist employee access, possibly by adopting a modified work week or some system that requires fewer trips by employees to and from the suburbs.

Many IT workers have positions for which a significant amount of work could easily take place from a remote location. Local governments will need to embrace this idea in order to reduce energy consumption, which, if we’re honest with ourselves, is not likely to decline much further in the data centre because we simply aren’t done providing new or additional services. The energy used to provide services might decrease, but services themselves will always tend to increase. We should be striving to save energy in more ways than in the data centre alone.

dhennigan@crd.bc.ca
New Conference Centre Set to Dazzle Delegates to MISA West Conference

The MISA West 2008 Conference will be the first major event held at the newly opened Vancouver Island Conference Centre in Nanaimo.

By Cam Scott
City of Nanaimo, BC

INFORMATION SYSTEMS folks will be in their element checking out Nanaimo’s new Vancouver Island Conference Centre on September 23-26 at the MISA West 2008 Conference.

The new facility has many state-of-the-art features including high-speed wireless access and VOIP, digital signage, complete A/V and video equipment throughout, broadcast capability and a highly resilient, redundant network.

The theme of this year’s conference is “The Nature of IT” and will focus on making technology and its use more environmentally friendly.

The theme is inspired by Wednesday’s opening keynote speaker, David Suzuki, who will be addressing delegates and special guests from the Port Theatre next door to the conference centre. This opening address will also be broadcast over the 25-foot-wide LCD screen to the Diana Krall Plaza adjacent to the Port Theatre.

But wait, there’s more! Google’s chief technology advocate, Michael T. Jones, will speak on Friday the 26th about organizing the world’s information, and on Thursday the 25th, Nanaimo Recycling Exchange’s Michael Schellinck will offer his wisdom on implementing responsible waste management with a focus on technology.

This year’s sponsors include Bell, Microsoft, Autodesk, ESRI Canada, Softchoice, Agresso and many more. The trade show is not to be missed – 43 exhibitors to date will spread across the new conference centre’s main trade show floor with the latest in software, systems and security.

Of course there’s also golf, local tours, hospitality suites, a new MISA band and the ever-popular “Showcase” displays to entertain and inform.

Check out the program and register online at http://misa2008.nanaimo.ca.

Cam Scott, manager of communication and e-Government for the City of Nanaimo, can be reached at Cam.Scott@nanaimo.ca.
MUNICIPAL Interface SEPTEMBER 2008

MISA/ASIM News Across Canada

Municipalities Take Collective Action On National Scale to Evaluate ERP Options

FOR THE FIRST time ever, municipalities from various parts of Canada have collectively issued a formal request to vendors for information concerning technologies that individual municipalities might purchase in future.

The group of municipalities, acting under the auspices of MISA/ASIM Canada, has issued a request for information (RFI) seeking advice from vendors on how best to acquire and manage the technologies usually found in enterprise-resources-planning (ERP) systems.

The ERP Municipal Users’ Special Interest Group issued an ERP Options Assessment RFI on July 14 by posting it at www.biddingo.com. Deadline for responses was August 14. At least 85 organizations downloaded the RFI from the Biddingo site.

The ERP Municipal Users’ Special Interest Group, endorsed by MISA/ASIM Canada, is composed of about 15 MISA Ontario and MISA BC member municipalities, with participation from some Ontario provincial ministries. The municipal representatives are working to find ways by which each municipality can improve its efficiency and effectiveness and assess its own options in using ERP-related technologies.

The users’ group was founded in the fall of 2006 by Louis Shallal, chief information technology officer of York Region, Ontario. It marks the first time that municipalities in various parts of Canada have organized to conduct research and coordinate strategies in connection with a specific type of municipal information technology.

“This initiative continues to demonstrate that municipalities can work together for a common purpose and pool our resources,” Shallal says.

York Region’s Supplies and Services Department issued the RFI on behalf of the users’ group. The RFI was developed by York Region managers Jayne Blackburn and Mark McKnight as well as Joe Evers, consulting principal of JcEvers Consulting Corp.

Examining Strategies

“We crafted a broad RFI that spanned various municipal functional and technical needs as well as exploring new options of service and systems delivery,” Evers says. “Changes in technology and client needs enable municipalities to explore alternate ERP strategies, potentially capitalizing on software as a service, shared services and best-of-breed integration.”

The RFI asked vendors to consider more than 30 different functional and service areas. It also invited them to add other niche products or services that they felt would be of interest.

The vendors were asked to respond to each RFI category in structured one-page responses, Blackburn explains.

“With such broad RFI content, we were concerned about effectively reading and digesting the content. As a result, we developed a format and an approach that respects the vendors’ investment in developing the responses and anticipates the effort to read them.”

McKnight adds: “We have a number of participating municipalities volunteering to read, compare, and report back on the responses. We plan on having participants read specific categories, thus being able to provide a comparison report.”

User-group members plan to meet in September to discuss next steps. Anyone interested to join the initiative is invited to contact Shallal at louis.shallal@york.ca.
ROY WISEMAN, CIO of the Region of Peel, Ontario, has been named the 2008 recipient of the Peter Bennett Award.

Wiseman received the award June 2 in a ceremony at the Lac Carling Congress in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, before an audience of IT and service-delivery officials from all levels of government.

In presenting the award, Kevin Peacock of the City of Saskatoon, outgoing president of MISA/ASIM Canada, praised Wiseman as one of Canada’s most influential municipal IT executives.

“His work has been inspirational at local, provincial and national levels,” Peacock said.

The Peter Bennett Award is the highest award in the Canadian municipal IT community. MISA/ASIM Canada created it in 2005, shortly after the sudden death of the greatly respected municipal IT leader from Winnipeg for whom it is named.

In accepting the award, Wiseman said: “It has been a great pleasure to be part of the municipal community and the MISA community for so many years. I know probably every municipal IT director in Ontario and most of them across the country. They are a wonderful group of people.

“I love working in this broader community with our provincial and federal colleagues, and I hope to keep doing it for a long time. I get a lot more out of this than I ever put into it.”

Created Governance Document

Peacock noted that Wiseman is one of a small group of people, including Bennett, who guided the creation of MISA/ASIM Canada. As founding secretary, he directed the association’s incorporation process. He is the principal author of the MISA/ASIM Canada By-Laws and Operations Manual.

Wiseman served as a municipal representative on the Public Service CIO Council from 2006 until this year and was for several years a municipal representative on the National CIO Subcommittee on Information Protection.

He has been the municipal co-chair of the Lac Carling Congress since 2006 and has attended every Congress since its inception 12 years ago. At present he is helping to organize a meeting of the Joint Councils planned for the fall of 2008 with co-hosts the City of Toronto, Peel Region and the Province of Ontario.
MUNIFICIPAL OFFICIALS from across Canada have shown widespread interest in the Municipal Reference Model (MRM), and steps are being taken to turn the concept into reality by means of a pilot project.

Encouraged by positive response to recent webinars on the MRM, leaders of the initiative are in discussions with municipalities interested in conducting a pilot project that would establish the MRM as a Web-based service, which ultimately would be available to all municipalities in Canada.

Decisions on the structure and participants of the pilot project will be made this fall, reports Roy Wiseman of the Region of Peel, Ontario, who is chair of the Steering Committee of MISA/ASIM Canada’s Municipal Reference Model Version 2 Project.

The Steering Committee has endorsed a recommendation to work with IBM, using IBM’s Industry Business Value Assessment (IBVA) process to further assess both the business need and the technological approach for the proposed service.

The recommendation to work with IBM is based on evaluation of responses to a request for information issued to vendors in late 2007. The project team will be meeting with a selected number of municipalities to gather their input on this process, which is scheduled to be complete by the end of October.

MISA/ASIM Canada staged a series of interactive webinars on July 8, 10 and 15 to address the evolution and future of the MRM. Each of the webinars attracted a national audience of more than 100 municipal IT and service-delivery officials, the majority of whom expressed support for the MRMv2 project and optimism that their municipalities would be prepared to support it financially.

Audio recordings and PDF presentation slides from those webinars can be accessed from www.golcommunications.ca/MRM2/webcast_references.html.

The MRM, originally introduced in the 1990s, is being redeveloped in a national project as an automated tool to give Canadian municipalities a common way to define and classify their services, organize them by program and devise performance measures for them.
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IT Security Conference Calls for Papers

ARE YOU AN EXPERT in IT security? Do you have a story to tell that would be valuable to colleagues who are responsible for protecting municipal systems and networks?

You are invited to share your expertise with municipal IT professionals and managers from across Canada at the 6th Annual MISA IT Security Conference, November 9-11 in Oakville, Ontario.

Conference organizers have issued a call for papers from both municipal and associate members of MISA/ASIM Canada associations for the conference. Its theme will be "I&IT Security – Do You Have the Right Combination?"

The conference agenda includes two streams, management and technical, for each of five key topic areas:
- Risk/Governance
- Privacy
- Intellectual Property
- New Security Technology
- Technology Crimes.

“Security issues are no longer confined to just safeguarding one side of a firewall,” says Cindy Ravenscroft, senior IT adviser of Halton Region and the conference coordinator.

“I&IT managers are now dealing with security issues related to technology, information and privacy.”

If you are interested in presenting, please submit a proposal identifying the stream (management or technical), topic area and presentation title, also including a short description of one or two paragraphs describing your proposed presentation.

Proposals should be sent to cindy.ravenscroft@halton.ca by end of day September 3.

Halton Region is host of the conference, which will be held at the Holiday Inn Select and Oakville Conference Centre. The platinum sponsor is NCI Secured Intelligence, and gold sponsors are Digital Boundary Group, Microsoft, the Ontario Ministry of Government Services and TELUS.

Registration is available at www.misa.on.ca by clicking on “MISA 2008 Security Conference” on the home page.

New President for MISA/ASIM Canada

LEADERSHIP OF MISA/ASIM Canada, the not-for-profit corporation representing five regional municipal IT associations across the country, has moved to Atlantic Canada from the Prairies.

Daya Pillay, manager of e-Commerce and Web services for Halifax Regional Municipality, is the new president of MISA/ASIM Canada. He succeeds Kevin Peacock, branch manager of corporate information services for the City of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, who retired at the end of his two-year term as founding president but remains on the Board of Directors.

Pillay was chosen to succeed him by the 10-member board at their Annual General Meeting in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, on May 31, the day preceding the start of the Lac Carling Congress.

Pillay was previously vice president and was also a member of the interim executive that founded MISA/ASIM Canada in June 2006.

The association links the four MISA chapters in Atlantic Canada, British Columbia, Ontario and the Prairies, as well as the Réseau de l’Informatique Municipale du Québec (RIMQ). Each association appoints two members to the national board.

A new board member from RIMQ was chosen at the AGM to be vice president for 2008-09: Joseph Héral, directeur adjoint, planification stratégique, Direction des systèmes d’information, Ville de Montréal.

Héral joined the board earlier this year to succeed the retiring Daniel Malo, CIO of Montreal. Malo was also a former vice president of MISA/ASIM Canada and one of its founders.

Two other officers of the board will continue in their current positions: Secretary Gerry Matte, IT manager for the Municipality of Saanich, BC, and Treasurer Garry Bezzuki, director of information systems for the City of Waterloo, Ontario.

The process for appointing officers was supervised by Louis Shallal of the Region of York, Ontario.

Other board members are: Kathryn Bulko, City of Toronto; Maurice Gallant, City of Fredericton; David Hennigan, Capital Region District, BC; Gaston Huot, Villes de Boucherville, Brossard, Saint-Bruno et Saint-Lambert, Quebec; AnnMarie McDonald, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Alberta.

Security issues are no longer confined to just safeguarding one side of a firewall,” says Cindy Ravenscroft, senior IT adviser of Halton Region and the conference coordinator.

“I&IT managers are now dealing with security issues related to technology, information and privacy.”

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Registration is available at www.misa.on.ca by clicking on “MISA 2008 Security Conference” on the home page.
LOOK OUT, HERE COMES another service transformation.

It surprised many of the municipal delegates at the Lac Carling Congress on June 1-3. They had not realized the extent to which other levels of government have embraced the concept of government 2.0 in their strategies for service delivery, internal communications, and the recruitment and retention of young professionals.

“They are three to five years ahead of us,” declared Joseph Hélal of the City of Montreal, the new vice-president of MISA/ASIM Canada and one of the delegates who came away from Lac Carling thinking that municipal IT departments have much work to do.

“What I learned here is that it is very important for us at the municipal level to share information with the provincial and federal levels of government and integrate their accomplishments,” Hélal said. “They are working on data models, on technology, on putting the citizen at the heart of their works.”

About 150 delegates from all government levels attended the 11th annual Lac Carling Congress in the picturesque southwestern Ontario town of Niagara-on-the-Lake. From the perspective of the 30 municipal delegates, the Congress certainly achieved its objective: to provide a forum to explore the possibilities of government 2.0 – based on technologies commonly referred to as Web 2.0 – and its potential application in the delivery of next-generation government services.

Second Generation
Web 2.0 refers to a perceived second generation of Web-based communities and hosted services such as blogs, wikis, message boards and forums, social networking sites like Facebook and video-sharing sites like YouTube.

These technologies have been eagerly embraced by young Canadians in a short time. Facebook is less than two years old, but 7.8 million Canadians have an account with the service.

Are such technologies serious tools for doing government business? This was a new idea to many of the municipal delegates at Lac Carling, who came from member associations of MISA/ASIM Canada across the country.

Kathryn Bulko, manager of the contract management office of the City of Toronto and a past president of MISA Ontario, said: “Until the past couple of days I’ve always thought of these tools as being more like toys, because I have a young child and these are toys for her.

“It has been an eye-opener to see how new professionals are reaching out with them to communicate and collaborate.”

Maurice Gallant, CIO of the City of Fredericton, commented: “I had looked at Web 2.0 as new technologies. What I’m realizing is that it’s a new mindset within service delivery. So maybe this is mindset 2.0!

“What is becoming very obvious is that everyone is trying to take a fresh look at providing services to their organizations, their residents, their stakeholders, and everybody is fascinated with the ease with which consumers are using these tools to change the way that they interact with each other. We’d better get ready for this.”

It appears that the public does in fact expect to see government 2.0 offered in some form. An extensive national survey by the federal government in the fall of 2007 found “virtual consensus that government should invest in Web 2.0,” reported Cathy Ladds, senior communications strategist in the Chief Information Officer Branch of the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.

“The study shows that the Government of Canada can proceed with confidence in using Web 2.0 applications for greater communications and outreach in its interactions with Canadians,” Ladds said in a presentation. “There is strong support from the public.”

Other presentations painted government 2.0 as a social transformation in Canada and other democratic countries.

The tone was set Sunday evening, June 1, by keynote speaker John Manley, former deputy prime minister of Canada, recently chair of the Independent Panel on Canada’s Future Role in Afghanistan and a senior counsel with McCarthy Tétrault LLP. Manley said the current US election campaign has revealed the significance of government 2.0.
“Facebook, YouTube, MySpace, Flickr, LinkedIn, Digg and even Twitter are words not likely in the vocabulary of the average North American over the age of 50,” he said. “But these Web sites have in part reached and inspired millions of Americans, mostly in the generations X and Y, to get involved in politics, and I think more specifically to catch Obama fever.

“The challenge for all of us involved in public policy is to interpret the lessons learned from this political experience to the day-to-day task of governing. We surely have learned something from all of this about the polity which we seek to govern. It’s not content with a ‘we-they’ or ‘insider-outsider’ paradigm. The watch words are consultation, inclusion, collaboration.”

Strategies and Projects
Governments are debating and trying out these ideas. The Ontario government, which bans Facebook and YouTube for government staffers, nevertheless is developing a comprehensive Web 2.0 strategy. The federal government in May signed a seven-year contract with Open Text Corp. to develop tools for a collaboration and social-networking system to cover 58 departments. The BC government makes extensive use internally of blogs, wikis and sharing sites and is developing policies for how to use those tools to engage citizens on policy-making issues.

Anthony Williams, vice president of the think tank New Paradigm and co-author of the book Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything, gave numerous international examples of how Web 2.0 tools are being used to facilitate collective social activities and generate services through community interaction. Among them:

- In Estonia, entrepreneurs organized a grassroots project using software based on Google Earth to map illegal dumping sites, then organized 50,000 people who carried out a massive cleanup project in May of this year.
- In England, a Web site called www.curriki.org is an open-source curriculum development site providing universal access to free curricula and instructional materials for grades K-12, developed voluntarily by teachers.
- In Utah, citizens use a wiki called Politicopia (http://politicopia.com) to debate legislation and governance issues. State legislators often cite the postings.

Williams said these “digital-age engagement methodologies” have strong appeal for the Net generation, the first generation to grow up completely in a digital world, and can help meet their expectations for the workplace and for democracy.

“Web 2.0 is an opportunity to open up a conversation with the citizenry about priorities, engage with expert communities around the world to devise smart policies,
Manley Sees Web 2.0 Changing Society

Following are excerpts from a keynote presentation to the Lac Carling Congress by John Manley, former federal cabinet minister and now senior counsel with McCarthy Tétrault LLP.

AS OUR POPULATION becomes more familiar with and enamoured of the tools of Web 2.0, government will no longer be able to make policy in a vacuum or by consulting elites and interest groups. More and more, ordinary citizens will demand to be included in the process of policy development.

And as we recruit more Web-comfortable young talent to the public service, which I truly hope we will do, they will be mystified – mystified – if we continue policy development within departments of silos, without adequate collaboration, where they can’t get their ideas up to the top without going through 18 levels of approval until their ideas are no longer recognizable.

It was a turning point in the mid-90s when we developed the Government Online initiative. My sense is that this is another inflection point. Now it’s two-way and over the next couple of years we will see a lot of examples of how to make that work and how to make people feel that they are included in their own government.

For all of us, the hope is that we will build better communities, both virtual and real.

Impact on Municipalities

What about municipalities and their IT departments?

The impact of government 2.0 is beginning to be felt, albeit sporadically. Gerry Matte of the Municipality of Saanich, BC, said his IT department is “struggling to meet the demand” from other departments for wikis and blogs. He reported that about a half-dozen municipalities in BC have accounts on Facebook.

Ralph Blauel of Halton Region, president of MISA Ontario, said he has a wiki and a blog on the technology-services section of the Region’s intranet. The idea came from his younger staff, he said. Now he wants to use Web 2.0 technologies to provide information from the Region to community environmental groups.

Maurice Gallant said Fredericton encourages staff to use external tools such as YouTube and Facebook in addition to their internal business tools, and is conducting an experiment with the National Research Council in which high-school students are using Web 2.0 technologies to develop green ideas.

There is still considerable hesitation and uncertainty in the municipal community about government 2.0 because of the many potential risks involved. These include familiar issues such as privacy, security and threats to productivity and data integrity.

Other potential barriers were mentioned by Janet Harris-Campbell, CIO of the City of Ottawa, reporting on the results of a facilitated group discussion on the first day of the Congress. Some municipal employees will not want to use Web 2.0 tools, she pointed out. To add another service channel would mean that the municipality would have to offer the same service twice, because older channels cannot be abandoned.

Everyone at the Congress recognized, however, that the driving force behind government 2.0 has more to do with people than with technology or processes.
In particular, young people – the bright, ambitious 20- and 30-somethings now needed by all governments to replace the rising wave of Baby Boom retirements.

The Net Generation is different. This became completely clear during a presentation called the New Public Service Professionals Panel.

Three up-and-coming provincial government employees, Alexandra Banford from British Columbia, Lisa Marie McDonald from Nova Scotia and Alisa Ramratten from Manitoba, described their need for collaboration and the tools to support it.

All three are volunteer organizers with new-professionals groups supported by their respective governments, devoted to sharing information to facilitate career development for their members through educational events and conferences, Web sites and collaborative technologies.

“We thrive in groups and networks and teams,” said Banford, an organizer of NetWorx, created by the BC Ministry of Labour and Citizen Services.

Speaking for the three presenters, she said: “We are empowered by new tools and the new media. We are really hoping that the legacy systems we have now will be transformed into something new and that collaborative technologies will be integrated into our business infrastructure.”

The three pointed out that professionals new in the work force are acutely aware that organizations of all kinds need their skills to replace the lost expertise of retirees. They want to work where their needs and contributions are recognized and where the working environment reflects their personalities and characteristics, including their complete comfort with technology and sense of being disconnected without it.

Points Taken
The New Public Service Professionals Panel had a significant impact on the municipal delegates at Lac Carling.

“The young professionals said something that every government – municipal, provincial and federal – has to pay close attention to,” said Lorne Seaton, associate director, technology services with the City of London, Ontario.

“The younger people coming in need a whole different set of tools from what we think they need to do their job in the future. That was highly evident from that session.”

The delegates began talking about how to apply what they had learned to their own organizations and to MISA/ASIM Canada associations as well.

“MISA/ASIM Canada could set up a Facebook profile to show what we stand for and maybe we’ll get some younger people getting interested in municipal government,” suggested Kevin Peacock of Saskatoon, immediate past-president of the national umbrella association.

Dave Wallace, CIO of the City of Toronto, said he wants to set up test sites to obtain citizen feedback for the use of Web 2.0 consultative technologies but pointed out the first-priority need for policies and business processes to guide municipal employees in their use, both in Toronto and nationally.

Per Kristensen, chief technology officer of the City of Nanaimo, BC, suggested, “From a MISA/ASIM Canada perspective, we should be looking at a special-interest group to encourage the Net generation to meet and discuss issues across the local governments.”

Louis Shallal, CIO of the Region of York, Ontario, said the new technologies and people will create a different era.

“There’s no doubt in my mind that there will be a significant transformation in the next three to five years in both inter-employee collaboration and how we serve our citizens and businesses.”
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Competing for Good Employees: The Secret is Sticking to Core Values

By Terence M. Donnelly
Mandrake Management Consultants Corp.

This article is based on a keynote address to the City of Toronto’s IT Showcase in April 2008.

EMPLOYERS IN BOTH public and private sectors are facing a fierce new competition for talent. In this day of immediate transparency in budgeting and reporting, a quick review of the City of Toronto technology budget for 2007 showed that the City’s Information Technology Department delivered its services to the City under budget. It did so, however, only because it could not find the necessary talent to achieve its plans and objectives.

Is this a unique situation? Definitely not. In fact, it’s so prevalent in Canada that most organizations now need to recognize that this lack of required talent is the number one obstacle they face in achieving their business goals.

Talent Market

What’s been happening in the talent market? According to Statistics Canada, Canadian full time employment grew nearly 8 per cent during the last reporting period (2003 to 2006) to an all-time high of nearly 16.7 million full-time jobs, while unemployment reached its lowest levels in more than 30 years, to slightly more than 6 per cent.

A growing economy creates jobs and, generally speaking, employment is available to nearly all who seek it actively, especially those whose skills are in demand – professionals, engineers and information technology workers. In fact, the Conference Board of Canada reported in December 2007 that 4.4 per cent of all jobs went unfilled in the last quarter of the year, compared with 3.7 per cent of all jobs in the same period of the prior year.

A recent survey by the Information Technology Association of Canada (ITAC) and Deloitte & Touche determined that 85 per cent of all information technology and telecommunications companies in Canada expected their work force to grow, and another 10 per cent expected their employment numbers to remain stable. Most human resources professionals look at these statistics with trepidation because they know for certain that the remaining 5 per cent will not reduce their staff numbers enough to meet the needs of the 85 per cent looking to hire.

The bottom line? There will be not enough talent to meet the needs of the vast majority of organizations, and full-time skilled professionals will again be in a position to demand salaries, benefits and certain corporate cultures. Employers must adapt to these demands, or they will face the exodus of their most valuable assets to the competition.

Get Ready!

What’s an employer to do? Gone are the days when you could post a job, receive hundreds of great resumes, pick the best three to interview, and hire a superstar. It’s time to look very closely and strategically at your hiring and work-force planning strategies.

How can you address the core issues? First, you have to look at what motivates employees, and conversely, what makes them want to head for the exit. In our experience, there is nothing more important than the values of your leadership team, and specifically the person in the corner office – the CEO, or in municipal terms, the department head or CAO.

The CAO must transform his/her style into a new type of leadership – one based not on the execution of plans but on creating employees who are committed to the goals the organization is striving to achieve.

A quick look at the greatest business success stories of our time naturally involves the leaders who created these successes as well as their philosophies on building great teams. The names of those executives are not only synonymous with their organizations – Jack Welch (GE), Michael Dell (Dell), Steve Jobs (Apple), Indra Noori (Pepsico) – but also with the core values they have demonstrated throughout their careers, regardless of the fleeting interests of the market or analysts.

In keeping with this celebration of great leadership as a rare and valued attribute worthy of close study in best-selling books, it is not so remarkable then to learn that the number-one issue identified by the Deloitte/ITAC survey was the attraction and development of leadership talent (more than 67 per cent of companies surveyed).
Service and Staff Management

But what makes a leader great? I believe it is the simple fact that those leaders knew what their core values were and stuck to them through thick and thin. Their business or marketing strategies, and product or service offerings may have changed or altered to meet the needs of the market, but their core values never wavered. You can almost define them as success formulas: Apple=Innovation, GE=Excellence, Pepsi=Choice, Dell=Value.

What are values? Dictionary.com defines them as “the ideals, customs, institutions, etc., of a society toward which the people of the group have an affective regard. These values may be positive, as in cleanliness, freedom, or education, or negative, as in cruelty, crime, or blasphemy.”

Why are values important to your enterprise? For one thing, they are the reasons why your staff members keep coming to work. They are the core foundational elements of your culture that motivate your work force, regardless of your business strategies or operational policies, and enable your employees to perform as a cohesive unit.

During a 2006 survey, we asked our clients how likely they were to stay in a job if their values were not aligned with the values of their employer. Nearly 80 per cent of respondents said less than one year, and fully 95 per cent less than three years. Imagine if this was the staff of your department or organization!

It shouldn’t come as any surprise to learn that the top three attributes most prized by the head of recruiting for one of the largest software companies in the world are, in order: 1. strategic agility, 2. listening skills, and 3. true consultative ability (defined as the ability to come up with solutions to both theirs and their customers’ problems).

Hiring Strategies

How, then, to hire for values that are aligned with yours?

First, know what makes you tick as a manager or leader and what drives success in your organization. If you work 60 hours a week because you love to work and your culture is a high performance lifestyle-oriented environment, then hiring someone who is committed to working only 37.5 hours a week and requires work/life balance will only frustrate you and cause an endless source of aggravation between the two of you, no matter how well this person performs his/her tasks.

Both are valid demands and extremely important values for each party. Knowing your values, the foundations of your culture, declaring them to be so, and staying true to them is the key.

Our colleagues at the McQuaig Institute, a leading talent consulting firm, have devised a simple chart to help you focus on what’s important in the hiring process. Most companies hire only for levels one and two in the chart below, and then have to fire someone due to issues that arise on level three.

By simply focusing on specific examples of past performance relative to the fundamental values on the third level of human characteristics and attributes, and considering levels one and two as merely “table stakes,” you will significantly raise your chances for hiring new staff successfully.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important Hiring Characteristics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEVEL 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expressiveness</td>
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<td>Interests</td>
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<td>Goals</td>
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<td>Credentials</td>
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The chief talent officer of a leading technology company wrote in a recent e-mail, “If you don’t have a viable and robust top-down belief system which all employees feel a part of, you’re already languishing with the remnants of the war for talent.”

Technologies may come and go and, as a result of market changes, his organization has reinvented itself from a manufacturer of computers and circuit boards to a strategic adviser on technology issues for its clients. Throughout this remarkable transformation, it never lost sight of what it stood for to its staff, customers and investors.

A great quote from a US military and political leader sums this up perfectly. General Colin Powell stated: “Organization doesn’t really accomplish anything. Plans don’t accomplish anything, either. Theories of management don’t much matter. Endeavours succeed or fail because of the people involved. Only by attracting the best people will you accomplish great deeds.”

Terence M. Donnelly is executive vice president and practice leader of the public-sector and technology practice of Mandrake Management Consultants Corp. He can be reached at donnelly@mandrake.ca.
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A Project-Management Office Can Make Life Easier — If You Know The Key Strategies

By Roger Bruneel
Municipality of Chatham-Kent, Ontario

This article is based on a presentation to the MISA Ontario Annual Conference in June 2008.

IF YOUR MUNICIPALITY decides to establish a project-management office (PMO), be prepared for far-reaching consequences to your people and processes. Having a central office to manage all of the diverse projects in an organization is a concept only about six to eight years old. It represents a culture change and requires thoughtful management.

How do you know if you need a project management office? If you have difficulty keeping track of all the activities in your organization, if there is a lot of churn in the organization, and if key resources are stretched and continually fighting fires, you might want to consider a PMO. Some questions to ask are shown on the following page.

A project-management office can take various forms. It can be implemented as a corporate-wide model or one that is focused on a particular business area such as information-technology services.

From my experience, a corporate wide-model is the right approach. Not only will it result in more homogeneous project execution, it will also help to set priorities and balance the entire corporation’s project portfolio at the same time.

Chatham-Kent, a large, diverse municipality in southwestern Ontario with a population of about 103,000, instituted a corporate-wide project-management office in the fall of 2007.

The PMO is a corporate entity that carries two key accountabilities:

- To support the various project teams through the provision of training, processes, coaching/mentoring and templates to ensure that projects are conducted in a predictable, consistent and repeatable fashion.
- Through facilitation of project portfolio control and tracking, provide the corporation’s decision-makers with a full understanding of the project portfolio from various perspectives, including status of all projects on a regular basis, resource commitments and availability.

What Comes First?

What should you do first – buy software, develop processes, or establish governance for your corporate PMO?

Without hesitation I recommend you establish a strong governance model before proceeding with creating formal processes or investing in any applications to support your PMO.

Of course you will need to have to be able to “paint the picture” for your senior management, including your CAO, council and various department heads. Governance means the establishment of a supportive management group that endorses the principals and proposed processes of the PMO. Without this support the office is destined for failure.

The illustration on the next page depicts the three types of governance that exist for the various projects at Chatham-Kent. (EMT stands for Chatham-Kent’s executive management team: the CAO and all general managers.)

**Strategic Project**

- The project maps directly to the corporate strategic plan at the objective or action level.
- Council champion assigned.
Service and Staff Management

How Do You Know if You Need a PMO?

Do you:
- Find it difficult to set priorities for competing projects or other initiatives?
- Struggle with knowing what real capacity you have to execute projects?
- Experience that many projects come in late and/or over budget?
- Fail to share lessons learned in regard to project delivery?
- Experience some successful projects while others fail without knowing why?

- Lack a full listing and status of the project work within your organization?
- Wonder if project rigour should be applied to some initiatives that are often just “fit in”?
- Find you are constantly resetting priorities for initiatives and reassigning resources?
- Feel like the “fire fighting” mode is the norm when it comes to getting the non-standard, unique project work done?

If you answer yes to any or some of these questions, you may want to consider putting a PMO in place.

EMT Project
- The project is of significant interest and has impact on multiple departments.

Sponsor Project
- The focus and impact of the project are mostly within the general manager’s department.
- EMT awareness only.

It is recommended that, once you have your governance in place and have agreed to a PMO scope of accountabilities, you begin developing processes and tools for the project community.

While you can consider buying a software solution at this point, do you really know your needs yet? Once you have run your PMO model for several months you will, without doubt, develop, change, remove, and add processes and tools along the way.

Moreover, to be fair to your senior management team, it will need time to clearly identify its requirements to result in successful delivery of strategies for the corporation and the public through project initiatives. For these reasons, it is my recommendation that you run your PMO for several months before considering a software solution.

Developing Key Processes

Key processes can be divided into two groups, those that are needed to execute a project and those that are needed to manage the complete project portfolio. Here are some of those key processes by category:

Project Specific Processes

Processes need to be put in place to properly launch, monitor, and close projects. See the illustration on the page at right for Chatham-Kent’s example of the various project phases and the related tools to support them.

A formal training component is recommended. This reinforces how important it is for your entire team of project leaders and governance members to share a common level of understanding of the new processes and tools. It is recommended that your training program be a combination of proven project-management principals and the unique tools and processes that your municipality needs.

Chatham-Kent’s program is a seven-hour day with lots of interaction. This program was developed in-house with the help of our professional training staff.

The Players Within the Different Governances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council Champion</th>
<th>EMT</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Sponsor Rep</th>
<th>Project Lead</th>
<th>Project Core Team</th>
<th>PMO</th>
</tr>
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Note: Each role within the Governance requires clear accountabilities.

Strategic Project
- EMT Project
- Sponsor Project
Service and Staff Management

Project Portfolio Management Processes

Status reporting is a key component to enable the PMO to keep a finger on the pulse of the entire portfolio. Chatham-Kent has monthly status reports, which are summarized by the PMO and reviewed by senior management each month. In particular this monthly session includes five key agenda items:
1. Review of red or yellow projects
   - How to turn them green.
   - Scrapping or parking.
2. Charter presentations
   - Confirm governance.
   - Assign priority criteria.
   - Confirm/approve project key characteristics.
3. Closure presentations
4. Special updates
5. Resource allocation highlights

Other project portfolio processes that are needed include project prioritization/ranking and resource-allocation tracking (key resources only).

Chatham-Kent’s Experience

Chatham-Kent’s PMO initiative has been under way for several months now. Resources to get things up and running have been equivalent to approximately two FTEs.

Sustaining the PMO processes is estimated to require approximately two FTEs as well. The key accountabilities of these roles include:
- Continuously improve processes and tools.
- Support 40 to 50 active projects.
- Facilitate the management of the corporate project portfolio, providing the corporate decision makers with current information and recommendations to help them to execute their strategic goals – resource-allocation tracking, portfolio-prioritization exercises and monthly portfolio analysis.
- Provide continual training.
- Maintain a group of six to eight “PMO coaches” to assist with project lead assistance as the portfolio increases in size.

Critical Success Factors

Here is a list of what I believe are some of the critical success factors to respect when implementing your PMO.

- Ensure a strong, committed governance structure.
- Position the PMO to report to the proper level to ensure a full breadth of corporate accountability.
- Recognize that a culture change is likely in play here (be patient).
- Don’t underestimate the need for training.
- Ensure that the PMO is an entity that is there to assist, not police or dictate.
- Show value from day one and strive to continuously add more value.
- Keep processes and tools simple (don’t try to make project leads into professional project managers).
- Establish PMO coaches throughout the organization.

Most certainly we have not covered all the factors you will need to consider in implementing a corporate project-management office.

Take your time, do your homework – there is lots of great literature out there (Internet and hard cover) that can give you much more food for thought. It is my hope that I have spurred your interest and I wish you well on the implementation of your PMO.

Roger Bruneel directs the Project Management Office for the Municipality of Chatham-Kent and can be reached at rogerb@chatham-kent.ca.
MUNICIPAL Interface  SEPTEMBER 2008

Service and Staff Management

GIS Seen As Primary Change Agent For Municipal People and Systems

By Greg Duffy
Woodfield Consulting

This article is based on a presentation to the GISWorx 2008 IT Conference in Dubai in May 2008.

Corporate and IT decision-makers face two fundamental questions in approving and setting priorities for major systems projects such as new installations, upgrades or refits. These two questions boil down to:

1. Which projects should we approve?
2. Which project should take first priority?

As a principle for making these decisions, one can ask which IT system can be expected to build a stronger organization. Put another way, which project accomplishes more for the continuous health of the organization, beyond the immediate goals of the system itself?

A case can be made that GIS systems should be at or near the top of municipal priorities because they embed strength in the IT infrastructure, building confidence and capacity.

Confidence comes when employees and customers have ready access to necessary knowledge right there, right then, and can take appropriate action without delay – be it returning a call, making a return visit, or getting a second opinion or supervisory approval.

And capacity? It is increased by IT systems that offer at least five values, described below. GIS systems embody these values and are particularly well suited as enterprise change agents. GIS systems:

1. Are more than their data, hardware or software – they are paradigms.
2. Generate returns on investment beyond only the dollars.
3. Build robust enterprise assets and physical capacity.
4. Connect departments and divisions through applications and data.
5. Improve processes among divisions and their people; they challenge silos.

GIS Systems as Paradigms

Systems that alter the way employees think and act can be seen as methods or paradigms. In this case, the system is more than just technology.

When an organization adopts GIS, it adopts location-based mentalities. If we think of the “S” in GIS as standing for strategy, then GIS becomes your geographic information strategy.

A GIS paradigm is one in which the “where” factor is treated by employees and customers as valuable knowledge, as intelligence or as a strategic advantage.

Because humans are intrinsically geographically aware, they adopt this paradigm easily. Using location as a data element provides a familiar reference that gives confidence to employees and customers.

As the paradigm works its way through the organization, there is a heightened awareness and interest in using descriptive geographic data to make everyday decisions. Use of this data adds power to other systems. For example:

• A customer-relationship-management system (CRM) becomes more than data on transactions – it enables a one-to-one relationship with customers and becomes a customer-relationship method, mentality or mindset.
• An ERP system supported by GIS becomes enterprise-resource processes, preparedness or posture – a system for planning with the whole enterprise in mind.
• An asset-management system supported by GIS enables analysis of the location and properties of each asset, alone or in relation to other assets.

Looking at these systems in this manner generates value, present or future, and continuous return on the investment.

Value beyond the Dollars

Two measures for investment value are commonly used: return on investment (ROI) and net present value (NPV). ROI is used to measure the gain over time from an investment. NPV is the idea that, if you spent all your project dollars today and received all of your benefits today, then the net of benefits less costs would be a big positive number of dollars today.
Service and Staff Management

For many types of municipal IT investments, both ROI and NPV can be very hard to prove. So many assumptions must go into the spreadsheet of the business case that, if any one of the key assumptions is at all questionable, then clearly the bottom line is also questionable. So much change occurs during the project phases that it becomes rare to look back at ROI or NPV.

To evaluate business investments, we have developed another measure – the RVI model (return, value and impact). This includes the dollar-return calculations along with the values created and embedded in the organization, together with an impact forecast of which users, by department and by customer type, will actually use the application and subsequently benefit from it.

You can build a strong case for the holistic RVI of a GIS project because you can demonstrate that it enhances the capacity of the organization.

Building Robust Assets

One reason why large systems have major challenges in delivering significant NPV is that they often generate investments in hardware, communications and storage for which short-term payback is not possible. GIS investments, however, turn out to be good for medium- and long-term value because they build a greater computing capacity and reach out or give access to a much greater number of employees and customers.

Investing in these assets paves the way to implement downstream systems without adding more hard technology. GIS delivers marginal benefits from each onward system.

Data once located and made fit for use, or field computing devices once purchased and configured, become part of added net present value when used for added applications. The marginal benefits exceed the marginal costs, and that is where stronger returns are to be found.

Connecting Departments and Divisions

Enhanced returns from enterprise systems will be found when GIS data adds value for employees who may not have had access in the past. Also, improvements to related applications such as asset management, fleet management or CRM become more valuable because the project cleans up bad data or creates new data, often verified in the field or by the owner.

While these creations are direct costs to the named project application, they immediately become free assets to the subsequent applications. There is no charge in accounting for this value because the costs are what are known as “sunk costs” to accountants. They are reflected, however, in the business case for the next applications.

There are other benefits from connecting departments or divisions through unified GIS data. An advance from one project creates opportunities to upgrade other applications. Advancing the timing of a complete upgrade of a related application to achieve compatible and cooperative processing with new data becomes easier.

Challenging Silos

The new GIS paradigm will lead to improved cooperation and shared accountability among departments. This is not just because data is improved and accessible, but because the project forces significant process improvement in organizations.

Change management is well facilitated by GIS because employees, being geographically aware, welcome access to the new applications and the new information.
Service and Staff Management

These improvements actually create the new environment for implementing other major systems. This is one of the paradigm changes. Data will improve but, more importantly, the rules for data ownership, data maintenance and data verification will be updated and improved, maybe for the first time.

The result will be a stronger organization. It cannot be emphasized enough just how important and valuable your GIS project can be in preparing the base data for other enabled systems.

Adding Confidence

GIS adds confidence and capacity to the enterprise.

When new GIS projects empower the integration of other major systems, the enterprise-wide benefits are well beyond the narrow project- or dollar-only benefits because the enterprise has:

- Enhanced its capacity for information and technology.
- Increased the volume of accurate, complete, current data.
- Implemented data-management rules and product owners.
- Developed inter-departmental processes to use the knowledge from that data.
- Made employees more knowledgeable, which in turn makes them more confident and more effective.

Now the organization is more robust and more resilient. And that is the best return on investment, the one that is embedded, the one that goes first.

Projects to approve are those that create or add confidence and capacity. The project to lead with sets the groundwork for the others – the GIS.

Greg Duffy is president of Woodfield Consulting of Toronto and a board member of the Geospatial Information & Technology Association, Ontario Chapter. He can be reached at woodfield@cogeco.ca.
‘ClickWithMarkham’ Introduces New Approach to Public Engagement

By Nasir Kenea
Town of Markham, Ontario

This article is based on a presentation to the Lac Carling Congress in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, in June 2008.

CITIZENS IN THE TOWN of Markham can now participate in their own municipal governance – all via an innovative new program called ClickWithMarkham.

And it truly is as easy as a click! It is also convenient and inclusive. Citizens know that, by clicking on the options presented on a special Web site, they can send their feedback on Markham’s strategic direction to their elected municipal leaders. Judging from the response to this program, it looks as though Markham has created an idea with an exciting future!

How It Started
Following the November 2006 municipal election, Markham initiated a strategic-planning exercise to set the direction for the current council term and beyond. Initiated in the spring of 2007 and completed that October, this planning process was collaborative and relied on the full participation of senior management staff and directors.

It resulted in the identification of six strategic priority areas of focus: growth management, transportation, environment, municipal services, parks/recreation/culture & public safety master plan, and diversity. To identify possible action items, working teams composed of both staff and council members were established for each strategic area.

Right from the outset, the mayor and council emphasized the importance of engaging residents in this process in order to validate the identified priority areas as well as the corresponding action items. Since broad public participation was paramount to success and the traditional method of town-hall meetings seemed less than optimal, it became readily apparent that a better way to achieve this objective was required. Enter ClickWithMarkham.

Markham Context
Home to more than 800 high-tech companies, Markham is host to a large community that is comfortable with using technology. As an organization, the Town of Markham recognizes and supports an increased role for technology in its business operations and service offerings to citizens.

During the 2003 municipal election we offered online advance voting to our residents – arguably the first binding online municipal election in North America. Online voting was also offered as an alternative means during the 2006 municipal election.

Although no remarkable increase in online voting over the two elections is evident, the general outcome from these experiences has been positive. The number of Internet voters grew in 2006 to 10,639, or 6.5 per cent of the eligible electors, from 7,210, or 4.5 per cent of electors, in 2003. This has succeeded in setting a different standard and raising citizen expectations.

The online advance voting option and other service offerings currently conducted online, including the recreation program registration with 60 per cent of users opting for the online option, have been very successful and are well received in the community.

Technology Solution
Building on these service experiences, an interactive online tool seemed an ideal way to engage broader community participation and validate the strategic priorities and proposed action items.
Integrated Geocentric Solutions

Aging infrastructure?
Limited funding?
Increased demands from citizens?
Legislative reporting?

ESRI Canada’s solutions will help you provide safe and dependable services to citizens by efficiently managing and maintaining aging infrastructure with limited funding.

- ESRI Canada’s solutions support critical business functions such as infrastructure planning, service delivery, regulatory compliance, and performance monitoring.
- ESRI Canada’s solutions for public works integrate systems, streamline workflows, and provide more current and accurate information.
- ESRI Canada’s solutions provide the leading geocentric technology platform for municipal public works departments across North America, and ESRI Canada is committed to helping public works professionals meet their daily challenges and plan for the future.
- ESRI Canada supports PSAB (CCSP in Quebec) PS3150 - Tangible Capital Assets by providing tools for data collection, asset valuation and computerized maintenance management that are fully integrated to the GIS asset database.
- ESRI Canada’s solutions help you achieve asset sustainability by developing long range capital plans and eliminating infrastructure gaps.
- ESRI Canada’s solutions are interoperable with other enterprise systems and compliant with IT standards, providing the foundation for geospatially enabling a service-oriented architecture (SOA).

For more information please visit www.esricanada.com/publicworks
Service and Staff Management

We retained Toronto-based firm Delvinia Group of Companies, which has been a key player in the online advance voting solutions. Among the requirements were simplicity of use, interactivity, multilingual support, 24/7 availability, selective input to any or all of the strategic priorities, reporting capability, the option to provide contact information for future follow-up, and quick turnaround time.

To enhance public awareness of the program and increase participation, about 80,000 hard-copy forms and information packages along with pre-paid envelopes were distributed to residents. In addition, media releases, public displays on town-owned facilities, and the Web site were also used.

Branded as ClickWithMarkham, the program was launched on Nov. 8, 2007, with the availability of online technology supported by the multi-media solution, and lasted for three weeks.

The browser-based tool offers a combination of multi-media (videos, flash and other graphic features) that educates citizens in each of the strategic priority areas, and a database-driven tool to store and report on results.

The video clips through the different steps of the process add a personal touch to the whole experience. This simplified and semi-interactive tool provides residents with the option to select as many priority areas as they choose, indicates completed areas, rates their importance and the proposed actions, and provides the opportunity to provide additional comments. The same forms were also made available in six other languages for downloads and mail in.

Favourable Outcome

Among the more than 5,800 people who visited the Web site during the three-week period, direct input was received from 3,080 participants (3.8 per cent of households) through the online tool, while about 1,200 people (1.5 per cent of households) responded by mail.

Although the total response of 5.35 per cent of households (4,280 people) is generally considered to be a very good participation rate for such a public-engagement process, the fact that the overwhelming majority (72 per cent) of the participants opted for the online option demonstrates the public’s receptiveness to such an engagement method.

The success of this approach is further reinforced by the 1,100 people who indicated an interest in receiving future updates via e-mail – another indication of citizen engagement and interest in the process.

As Markham was undergoing this process, many other Ontario municipalities were also in the midst of a similar strategic-planning exercise using traditional town-hall meetings, which were considered to be successful with a couple of hundred people in attendance.

It is generally accepted that the citizen-attendance rate in town halls is largely dependent on several factors including convenience in time and location, personal responsibilities and other conditions such as weather (particularly for winter sessions). These forums may also be dominated by a few vocal members, and it is often impractical to solicit input from all the attendees – thereby further limiting the already constrained participation.

In comparison, the ClickWithMarkham approach encourages people from all walks of life to provide feedback at their convenience, with few constraints and over a much longer time period. It also permits an opportunity to follow up with interested citizens, as opposed to the traditional town-hall approach that seems to end the engagement process right after the meeting or requires more costly and demanding efforts.

Next Steps

The ClickWithMarkham program will also provide progress updates to interested residents via e-mail and other channels.

Based on this experience, a similar engagement process that uses equivalent collaborative technology tools is currently under way, focusing on youth participation in the Green Print initiative in school programs. Markham is also actively investigating how to enhance its technology infrastructure to facilitate future initiatives and enhance residents’ roles in addressing community issues.

As governments continue to seek broader public participation in the political process, such tools and methodologies will continue to offer more viable alternatives to both citizens and governments. The recent growth in the use of social Web sites, wikis and so on has demonstrated beyond doubt the power and significance of these tools in gaining public input.

As these technologies continue to be adopted, particularly by the younger generation, governments can facilitate community feedback by using these technologies to solicit citizens’ input on social and community challenges. This will also help them be transparent and open – prepared to manage this new approach to public engagement.

Nasir Kenea, chief information officer of the Town of Markham, can be reached at nkenea@markham.ca.
Certification: What Is the Value? Employing Certified Professionals Viewed as Boost to Productivity

By Ken Foster
ctc TrainCanada

IT SEEMS TODAY that everything is certified. We have food that is certified organic. Auto dealerships are selling certified used cars. Accountants, health care professionals, lawyers, pilots and tradespeople are all certified.

It is a good business decision to trust your organization’s data to certified professionals. Certification demonstrates to your customers, suppliers, staff and stakeholders that you use industry-respected best practices and have a commitment to quality and customer service.

What is the real value of certification? What are the benefits to the employer and the employee?

Numerous studies prove that training does increase efficiency and productivity in any organization – but what about certification? Most successful organizations invest in training, and the certification process is the best way to gauge the success of that training.

According to Tony Redmond, vice president and chief technology officer for Hewlett-Packard: "Setting standards is important, especially if those standards are high enough to create an assurance that someone is capable of performing the high-quality job that you count on. Apart from individual achievement, a program like this is great for customers because you know that, when you work with one of the elite, you truly are working with one of the best."

Training and certification play an important role in improving service delivery in information-technology departments. Certification is a valuable tool for assessing and allocating human resources to meet the business demands. It is also a reliable way to identify if there are any gaps in the team’s skill set that may affect service delivery.

The complexity of today’s software makes it practically impossible to understand and implement successful software-based solutions through experience and trial and error alone. Training provides the insight to the power of software. Certification verifies that an individual has a firm grasp of the technology and ability to put it into practice.

Who Benefits?
Certification offers many benefits for an organization. Certified professionals make full use of technology features that optimize the return on technology investments. This also increases performance and productivity for the entire organization. System downtime is reduced as are support costs.

IT departments within an organization see improved productivity and lower operating cost as a direct result of training and certification. More reliable and consistent service delivery increases internal and external customer satisfaction and builds credibility.

“Training with certification provides the confidence that our personnel have the requisite common knowledge in the subject area that allows them to be an integral part of the support team. The knowledge held by these trained and certified people allows for better and timelier decisions, which are critical in a production environment. Certified support personnel in strategic areas will instill confidence in IT from the user population.”

— David Laneville, director, Information Technology Department, City of Timmins, Ontario

Certified staff provide leadership and are able to transfer skills to their team members. Certification recognizes and rewards employees by validating their expertise and provides a way to measure technical skills.

HR and IT departments reap the benefits from certification in hiring promoting, training, and retaining top quality IT professionals. Certification helps to support decisions to place the most qualified professional in the right position.

Most IT certifications are internationally recognized and, when considered along side of real world experience, provide a reliable benchmark for promoting and hiring. Certification enables managers to accurately determine individual and organizational training needs as well as increase employee retention by presenting new challenges.
Service and Staff Management

What’s Hot?
Microsoft’s MCSE certification is always in high demand due to the large number of Microsoft server placements. Microsoft recently overhauled its certification program for their latest product releases. The model is composed of three series: Specialist, Professional, and Architect and four credentials:

- Microsoft Certified Technology Specialist (MCTS)
- Microsoft Certified IT Professional (MCIP)
- Microsoft Certified Professional Developer (MCPD)
- Microsoft Certified Architect (MCA).

These new certifications take less time to achieve at the introductory levels (MCTS) and are stepping stones to the next tier of certification (MCITP, MCPD). Microsoft’s top level certifications (MCA) are highly regarded in the industry and require a rigorous review board interview to acquire.

Cisco Certifications are one of the most highly respected certifications in the industry. With 90 per cent of internet traffic traveling through Cisco routers and switches, the demand for Cisco certification has grown.

Cisco offers multiple tiers of certifications – Associate, Professional, and Expert – within several disciplines, including Routing and Switching, Design, Security, Storage and Voice, as well as specialist certifications for Data Centres, IP Communications, VPNs and Wireless LANs.

Routing and switching continues to be Cisco’s most popular track because it covers not only information about its products but also comprehensive information regarding network traffic, protocols, network interfaces and access control lists.

Red Hat certification is considered the premier certification in Linux, which is mainly due to the 100-per-cent performance based exams. More and more data centres and IT departments are integrating Linux into their infrastructure. Companies like Red Hat, Novel and Oracle all offer their individual brands of Linux certification.

Testing Accuracy
More than 300 types of IT certifications are available. Each vendor creates its own certification process and procedure. Many are simply multiple choice exams. More often, vendors will use computer-adaptive testing to maximize the precision of the exam by tailoring the questions to the tester and analyzing the answers to previous questions to determine the difficulty of the subsequent questions.

More sophisticated exams use virtual environments to present real-world scenarios for test takers to work through.

These performance-based types of exams are considered to be the most accurate measure of practical skills, while multiple choice exams tend to be a measurement of theoretical knowledge or book smarts. Some of the highest levels of certification require the candidate to appear before a panel of experts to be judged.

Bottom Line
Regardless of type of certification and the offering vendor, certification is a driving force in the IT industry. The return on investment is high and the benefits are far-reaching.

“While we do not require any certification as part of our basic job requirements, we have over the last several years been promoting an environment of continuous education and trying to develop opportunities to allow people to expand their knowledge and expertise. We are doing this more as part of our overall succession planning and employee retention strategies. We believe that providing an environment that allows people to grow will lead to a desire to stay within our corporation rather than move on. As the IT job market becomes more competitive, it will be these little intangibles that will help to retain staff.”

— Harry Turnbull, executive director of information technology, City of Windsor, Ontario

Confidence in the IT department increases. More than 70 per cent of IT managers think that certification is valuable to their team and worth the time and effort to earn and maintain, according to a survey done by IDC in 2006 of 400 IT managers.

Certified staff provide the benefits of less down time, less staff to do the same work, more efficient staff and less technical risk involved with a certified staff member.

Technology changes and implementations that are done right and efficiently lead to reduced customer-service-support requirements, cost savings and happier clients – internal and external.

Ken Foster is general manager of ctc TrainCanada, an associate member of MISA Ontario. For inquiries please contact Lori Hawkins Tsekouras, senior account manager, lorih@traincanada.com.
Editors’ note: This article discusses the problems, and opportunities for change, arising from knowledge workers leaving the municipal work force to retire.

CE N’EST PAS une grande nouvelle: la population vieillit. Les analyses démographiques nous indiquent clairement un renversement de la pyramide des âges. Il en va de même à l’intérieur des entreprises, et qui dit vieillissement dit départ à la retraite.


Cette situation n’épargne pas le milieu du travail municipal. Nos spécialistes en gestion des ressources humaines ont clairement soulevé le problème alors que dans les 5 prochaines années, près de 40% des employés quitteront leur travail pour prendre la retraite à laquelle ils ont droit. Les organisations leur doivent souvent l’excellent niveau de service à la population qu’ils ont mis en place au fil des ans.

Dans ces circonstances, les municipalités feront face à un important problème et ce, autant au niveau de la livraison des services aux citoyens, que de la gestion interne. Mais est-ce là un problème, ou une opportunité ?

La réalité municipale

Malgré une progression constante au niveau de la gestion de l’information, le milieu municipal n’est pas reconnu pour son utilisation optimale des technologies, ni dans sa gestion, ni dans son mode de prestation de services. L’information et l’expertise sont encore trop souvent concentrées dans la tête des employés… qui quitteront bientôt leur travail en emportant avec eux leurs connaissances? Il y aura donc création d’une brèche importante dans le modèle actuel sur lequel repose la livraison des services.

Outre le fait que de nombreuses et importantes informations soient concentrées dans la tête de quelques employés, il est fréquent que celles traitées par les technologies de l’information ne soient pas rendues disponibles à l’ensemble de l’organisation. On retrouve en effet de nombreux systèmes qualifiés de « silos », conçus pour répondre aux besoins spécifiques d’une unité d’affaires, sans considération globale au niveau de la municipalité, car incapable de partager la ressource essentielle à la gestion : l’information. Il est encore coutumier que la même information soit colligée dans plusieurs systèmes « silos », par plusieurs employés, entraînant ainsi une dépense inutile et un risque significatif d’erreur.

On note aussi qu’en contraste avec l’entreprise privée, il est rare que les villes vont procéder à une révision complète de leurs processus de travail, se contentant souvent d’analyses départementales, parfois sans questionnement véritable sur l’apport des technologies.

Pensons globalement : par exemple, un changement de processus qui amènerait une augmentation de la charge de travail de 0,5 année-personne dans un département pourrait engendrer des économies de 2 années-personnes dans l’ensemble des processus de gestion de la municipalité, en diminuant le travail dans plusieurs unités d’affaires. Sans volonté ferme de la haute-direction, ces axes d’amélioration ont d’une part peu de chances d’être explorés et identifiés et d’autre part, peu de chances d’être mis en place. Les interventions ciblées ont un effet limité sur le coût global des opérations. La diminution de services est trop souvent le moyen retenu pour décroître ou limiter l’augmentation des coûts.

Un contexte d’obligation de résultats

Pour réduire leurs coûts, d’une façon générale, les entreprises privées vont faire tout ce qui est possible pour permettre à leurs clients d’obtenir le service requis ou l’information requise sans intervention d’un de leurs employés. Elles y arrivent grâce à l’utilisation judicieuse des technologies de l’information, en s’assurant prioritairement que toute l’information est traitée par des systèmes intégrés. Paradoxalement, le client et l’entreprise y trouvent leur compte, même si, à prime abord, ce virage peut être interprété par certain comme une diminution de services; l’entreprise en diminuant ses coûts d’opérations et le client en obtenant le service ou l’information désirée le jour qu’il veut, à l’heure qu’il veut, et sans se déplacer.

Les entreprises les plus performantes vont réserver aux employés les tâches « à valeur ajoutée », celles où la personne peut vraiment utiliser ses capacités d’analyse, développer son expertise et mieux servir le client. Elles arrivent à diminuer leurs coûts non seulement en minimisant les interventions des employés, mais aussi en intégrant l’ensemble des activités d’affaires dans une même architecture, dans un modèle de données unifié.
Un long chemin parcouru

Le secteur bancaire est l’un de ceux qui ont connu une transformation importante. Pour bien mesurer le chemin parcouru, il suffit de se demander de quelle façon les clients transigeaient il y a 10-15 ans et de la comparer à nos façons de faire actuelles. Alors que nous devions nous rendre à notre succursale pour les dépôts, les virements, les retraits, les statuts, on constate aujourd'hui que pour plusieurs personnes, l'emplacement de la banque n'a presque aucune importance puisque la majorité des transactions se font électroniquement, sans déplacement. Il en va de même pour l'acquisition de biens. Quelques clics et le produit est livré directement à votre résidence.

Certaines personnes de notre génération (j'avoue 56 ans), et de celle de nos parents, ont exprimé des doutes sur le bien fondé de tels changements, mais une chose est certaine : les générations qui nous suivent et qui nous succéderont ne connaissent rien d'autre et exigent ce niveau de service. Et de toute façon, la tendance lourde est non seulement solidement implantée, mais la solution elle-même est connue et utilisée par les entreprises ainsi que par des pans complets de l'économie.

Problème ou opportunité ?

Les départs massifs : problème ou opportunité?... Tout indique que nous avons devant nous une formidable opportunité. La rater signifierait handicaper sérieusement nos niveaux de service, notre productivité et de ce fait le taux de taxation, soit le prix que les citoyens paient pour recevoir les services municipaux et gérer leurs infrastructures. Une chose est sûre : si problème il y a, il n'est pas technique. Nous sommes plus près de la simple application d'orientations et de techniques largement répandues dans l'entreprise privée (et aussi dans certaines villes), que nous le sommes d'une expédition sur mars!

Un positionnement essentiel

Que faire pour emboîter le pas dès maintenant? Premièrement, prendre rapidement acte de la situation. Ceci fait, convenir de la nécessité d’adopter des mesures pour parer aux conséquences prévisibles des départs à la retraite. Les membres des Conseils municipaux et les directions générales sont les principaux acteurs à ce chapitre. Pour assurer le succès de l'exercice et éviter les écueils de l'improvisation, une action concertée et globale basée sur une approche « top down » est nécessaire. Des modèles de maturité sont disponibles pour positionner notre ville en fonction d'une cible « idéale ». Ceci fait il ne reste qu’à déterminer les actions à prendre ainsi que les échéanciers pour l'atteindre.

Dans une telle démarche, les technologies de l’information joueront le même rôle à l’intérieur de l’organisation que celui joué par l’urbanisme dans le développement harmonieux et contrôlé de la municipalité. L’Urbanisme obtient du Conseil...
Service and Staff Management

de temps pour une municipalité n’est pas le même que pour l’entreprise. Une orientation adoptée par le Conseil municipal se traduit par des stratégies sectorielles. Ces stratégies incluent les ressources humaines et elles peuvent couvrir plusieurs cycles de négociation des conventions collectives. Rome ne s’est pas construite en un jour !

Est-ce qu’il nous reste du temps ? Quelle que soit la réponse, avons-nous le choix d’agir ? Le milieu de TI municipales change au Québec et il se donne présentement les outils pour favoriser l’entraide… pour ceux qui voudront attraper la balle au bond. Le RIMQ-G9 (le regroupement des 9 plus grandes villes du Québec, à l’intérieur du Réseau de l’informatique municipale du Québec) s’est associé au RISQ et à l’UMQ pour mettre en place un réseau de communication privé à très haute vitesse. Nul besoin de présenter l’UMQ, mais pour ce qui est du RISQ (Réseau d’informations scientifiques du Québec), il désigne le réseau de communication reliant les établissements de recherche et d’enseignement supérieur du Québec. L’infrastructure permettra de relier les villes de Sherbrooke, Québec, Montréal, Gatineau, Lévis, Saguenay, Laval, ainsi que l’agglomération de Longueuil, à une vitesse presque équivalente à celle de plusieurs réseaux municipaux locaux. On peut sans peine imaginer ce que peut apporter comme moyen de partage un tel outil. Déjà cette infrastructure permettra à la Ville de Québec de fournir aux Villes de Lévis et de Sherbrooke un solide environnement de traitement de la paye et des Ressources humaines. Ces dernières peuvent se concentrer sur les besoins fonctionnels, n’ayant pas à se préoccuper des aspects technologiques car l’application est hébergée et exploitée par la Ville de Québec.

Nous avons les connaissances, nous avons la technologie, nous avons les mécanismes d’entraide qui nous permettent de ne pas réinventer la roue, d’éviter les écueils, en profitant de l’expérience de nos partenaires.

Oui, nous avons le temps de palier aux effets du départ à la retraite des cerveaux, à condition d’agir maintenant!

Gaston Huot, Gaston.Huot@MaVille.net, est Directeur des Ressources informationnelles, Villes de Boucherville, Brossard, Saint-Bruno et Saint-Lambert, et membre du Conseil d’administration du RIMQ et de MISA/ASIM Canada.

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**Online IT Security Awareness Training Program**

SecuriT Savvy is an online program developed on basic principles and information security’s best practices. This simple and efficient program helps users understand and apply corporate security policies and procedures. It also inculcates the importance of protecting corporate information and data. By raising user awareness on computer security pitfalls and how to avoid them, SecuriT Savvy contributes in minimizing the risks and financial losses due to security breaches. In short, a tangible return on investment.

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**Web Application Penetration Testing**

Using a structured methodology that includes Enumeration, Vulnerability Assessment and Exploitation phases; testing each interface to the application including server operating system, application platform and database, Digital Boundary Group’s technicians have been assisting MISA members with web application security for the past four years. Web application testing provides the municipality with the opportunity to determine the existence of any vulnerabilities in the application and take corrective action before taking the application live.

Contact us for details of our methodology and the special pricing program for MISA/ASIM members at MISA.member.offer@digitalboundary.net

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Visit us at [www.digitalboundary.net](http://www.digitalboundary.net) or Call us at 1.800.747.3557 Ext. 248 or 265
That focus reflected an evolution in municipal IT goals and values. Up to now, the application of municipal information and communications technologies might be thought of as having Olympian goals – swifter, higher, stronger. Those goals were inspired by the values of the municipal corporation such as service excellence and operating efficiency. But the conference at Craigleith revealed a shift in IT toward meeting the changing values of society.

The previous values and goals remain, but now the greening of technology has come to the fore. That is a value generated outside of the municipal enterprise, and the same could be said at least in part for teamwork, collaboration, inclusiveness and equal opportunities for communities of all sizes. Those were the values underlying much of the content of this conference.

Custodians of Public Resources

An entire stream of sessions was devoted to green issues. Speakers emphasized how IT plays a critical role in taking municipalities green and meeting their responsibilities as custodians of public resources. As speaker Deborah Hannah of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and Local Authority Services noted, municipal power consumption is greater than all other economic sectors except pulp and paper.

Rob Dowler, chief corporate strategist for the Province of Ontario, also pointed out that IT is a significant contributor to emissions and power consumption. One-and-a-half per cent of all power consumed in North America comes from data centres – and this is predicted to double by 2010.

Monday keynote speaker John Weigelt, national technology officer of Microsoft Canada, emphasized that it is critical in devising green IT strategies to start by measuring and developing a baseline. Determine things like:

• How much power you are using for the assets under your control
• Where the power is being used
• How much power consumption is involved in your data centre, air-conditioning system and other processes.

The green sessions clearly galvanized the delegates.
“I’ve never really understood the impact of what the accumulated power consumption of technology is doing,” commented Garry Bezruki, director of information systems for the City of Waterloo. “When I start to relate it back to lost productivity in terms of people, hours, gas, the amount of CO2 that is being produced – it’s phenomenal.

“The presentations showed how, just by doing little things like turning your monitor off overnight, you can save financially as well as producing environmental benefits. I was really impressed by that side of the conference.”

Scott Bradford, manager of information services for the City of North Bay, added, “I think Weigelt’s keynote speech as well as the sessions have emphasized that, no matter what the size of your municipality or staff complement, there is always something you can do, however small, that cumulatively helps.”

Small Municipality Stream
The spirit of the green sessions dovetailed with that of another stream of sessions, Small Municipalities. Presenters from the Township of Scugog, the Township of Springwater and other smaller centres, as well as vendors and provincial officials, discussed the unique challenges of small municipalities in finding enough people and funds to implement solutions to keep their communities competitive.

Collaboration is often at the heart of successful solutions. An illuminating example came from Stéphane Gallant, director of operations for NEOnet Inc., who described how the not-for-profit company is spearheading public-private sector partnerships to bring connectivity to remote communities.

“By November 2009, almost every community in north-eastern Ontario will have broadband,” Gallant said proudly.

Elsewhere, many sessions in the Large Municipalities and Hot Issues streams as well as the forum discussions dealt with themes that touched on teamwork and collaboration, especially in building relationships between IT departments and their clients in municipal enterprises.

Ralph Blauel, president of MISA Ontario and director of technology services for Halton Region, commented, “The theme of teamwork has been prominent here probably because municipalities are being put through some challenges now that absolutely require us to exercise good teamwork.

“An example is PSAB 3150 legislation, which creates a requirement for the accountants to talk to the program managers and the IT folks to gain a common understanding of the rules because we’ve got a critical timeline and we have scarce resources. We have to understand each other and work as a team to reach our common goals.”

Praise For ‘Heroes’
Keynote speaker Michael “Pinball” Clemons, CEO of the Toronto Argonauts, gave an inspirational speech on the final morning of the conference. He praised MISA delegates for providing under-appreciated but vital services that enable communities to function.

“I ran with a piece of leather and they call me a hero,” said Clemons, one of Canada’s most successful football coaches and players, who set a pro-football record for most combined yards during his 12-year career as a running back. “And you are the greatest support of the foundation of your communities.

“Our communities don’t thrive without you. You are the glue. You could be considered the most important parts of our community. You are more than heroes.”

Municipal Comments
“The networking alone makes it worthwhile. When you go to these sessions, you realize we are all basically leading identical lives.”
— Bruce Irwin, Region of Niagara

“This is my first MISA conference and I’m enjoying it very much – very rewarding and informative. I’d like the sessions to be a bit more in-depth.”
— Robyn Scott, City of Elliot Lake

“MISA is going in a good direction. The big fear was that it served big-municipality interests only. So it’s nice to come in and listen to the smaller municipalities tell how they create and learn and come up with solutions.”
— Ron Ray, City of Stratford

Vendor Comments
“Part of the advantage of coming here for five years in a row is that you start knowing a lot of people. This is where we meet the gatekeepers and quality controllers of our systems that are purchased by Works or Finance.”
— Ian Woodbury, RIVA Online

“By talking to the municipal people and listening to the presentations, we can judge what our market position is and whether we’re ahead. That’s of great value, like benchmarking on a high level.”
— John Fagg, PacketWorks

“We’ve had 15 sales of our spam firewall here. We will definitely do the show again next year.”
— Fiaaz Walji, Websense Canada
Taking part in the Amazing Race/Geocaching Event on Sunday, June 8, are, from left: Rakesh Mascarenhas, Octo-Canada; Andrew Ford, Nexient Learning; Lori Hawkins, ctc TrainCanada; Ken Williamson, Region of Durham.

Above, Geoff Hogan, conference chair, and Clare Atkinson of Oracle Corporation Canada enjoy a light moment before their joint session on electronic document management.

Western Canadian delegates meet at breakfast. From left: Steve Jeffery, City of Regina; Colin Redwood, Corporation of Delta, BC; Georganne Dupont, City of Airdrie, Alberta.

Above left, Pete Zedlacker from Yuk Yuk’s entertains after the banquet with his “Canada goose attack” routine. Right, keynote speaker Dan Needles delivers Leacock-like humour.

Above, a young troupe of highland dancers, reflecting Grey County’s Scottish heritage, performs before the annual banquet.

Above, a busy scene at the 72-booth trade show in the Blue Mountain Resorts’ tennis bubble.

Delegates mingle in the Blue Mountain Conference Centre foyer before the annual banquet on Tuesday, June 10.

Left, members of the conference organizing committee acknowledge delegates’ applause at the annual banquet.

Wendy Hough of the Town of Burlington, right, and Shannon McKay of Halton Region greet Brian Graham and Sam Vergiris at the award-winning exhibit booth of D-Link Canada Inc.
Leaders Honoured With Service Awards

TWO MISA ONTARIO EXECUTIVES who have worked for many years to advance municipal-government service delivery and efficiency received major awards at the 2008 annual conference in Grey County.

Kathryn Bulko received the Regena Lerke Distinguished Service Award, and Bruno Mangiardi won the John Cushing Award of Merit.

Bulko, manager of contracted services for the City of Toronto, is a past president of MISA Ontario and remains an Executive member. She has served as host for the annual conference and has acted as the liaison with the vendor community for many other conferences.

At the national level, Bulko is a director of MISA/ASIM Canada and is one of the leaders of a project to establish a standard set of terms and conditions for IT procurement contracts.

“The Regina Lerke Distinguished Service award is a special award, and it is my pleasure to present it to a very special person,” past president Harry Turnbull of the City of Windsor said in announcing the award for Bulko at the annual banquet June 10.

Mangiardi, chief information officer of the City of Greater Sudbury, received the John Cushing Award of Merit for outstanding and dedicated service to MISA over many years.

A longstanding member of the Ontario Executive as a regional director and director at large, he was instrumental in ensuring that municipal interests were maintained when licensing agreements were signed between the Province of Ontario and Oracle Corporation Canada, a move that has produced large savings for municipalities.

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Clemons urged the delegates to find and maintain the “sweet spot” in their lives by valuing their relationships, enjoying their work, and committing themselves to the best interests of their municipal teammates.

“The sweet spot as it relates to teamwork is living so that your actions say, ‘I play this game for you,’” said Clemons, who received a standing ovation.

“Wouldn’t it be great if your colleagues felt that way. And your customers, the people of your town – ‘They play this game for me.’

The conference delivered another form of inspiration for the 72 exhibitors in the trade show located in the Monterra Dome tennis bubble beside the Blue Mountain Conference Centre. They reported a high level of activity at their booths, and observers could sense their appreciation for the conference organizers’ attention to business.

“Everything I have heard from the vendors is that they are happy with the trade show and the extra time given to delegates to visit the booths,” said Ron Blakey, director of technology services for the Region of Durham. “And all the delegates from Durham have found it very valuable.”

The Durham team will make use of their lessons from Craigleith to organize the next annual conference, May 31 to June 3, 2009, at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology/Durham College in Oshawa.

Leaders Honoured With Service Awards

TWO MISA ONTARIO EXECUTIVES who have worked for many years to advance municipal-government service delivery and efficiency received major awards at the 2008 annual conference in Grey County.

Kathryn Bulko received the Regena Lerke Distinguished Service Award, and Bruno Mangiardi won the John Cushing Award of Merit.

Bulko, manager of contracted services for the City of Toronto, is a past president of MISA Ontario and remains an Executive member. She has served as host for the annual conference and has acted as the liaison with the vendor community for many other conferences.

At the national level, Bulko is a director of MISA/ASIM Canada and is one of the leaders of a project to establish a standard set of terms and conditions for IT procurement contracts.

“The Regina Lerke Distinguished Service award is a special award, and it is my pleasure to present it to a very special person,” past president Harry Turnbull of the City of Windsor said in announcing the award for Bulko at the annual banquet June 10.

Mangiardi, chief information officer of the City of Greater Sudbury, received the John Cushing Award of Merit for outstanding and dedicated service to MISA over many years.

A longstanding member of the Ontario Executive as a regional director and director at large, he was instrumental in ensuring that municipal interests were maintained when licensing agreements were signed between the Province of Ontario and Oracle Corporation Canada, a move that has produced large savings for municipalities.

Clemons urged the delegates to find and maintain the “sweet spot” in their lives by valuing their relationships, enjoying their work, and committing themselves to the best interests of their municipal teammates.

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Municipalities Up For GTEC Awards

THE CITY OF OTTAWA leads a group of municipalities nominated for Distinction Awards at the annual GTEC Gala in October.

Ottawa, with four nominations, joins the Alberta cities of Airdrie and Medicine Hat and the Ontario cities of Brampton and Windsor as finalists in the municipal-awards group for a variety of IT solutions and initiatives. Ottawa also has two nominations in the national awards group for business-transformation projects.

“This year’s process saw a particular increase in provincial and municipal nominations, demonstrating that innovation and excellence is happening across the country within governments of all sizes,” Kevin d’Entremont, executive director of GTEC 2008, said in a release.

The GTEC Distinction Awards Gala ceremony will take place October 27 at the Museum of Civilization in Gatineau, Quebec. The GTEC 2008 conference will be held October 27-30 across the Ottawa River at the Westin Hotel in Ottawa.

The theme for this year’s event will be “Make the Shift to Government 2.0.” Speakers will address the emergence of Web 2.0 technologies and also citizen-centred service delivery and government service transformation.

The conference will also include a Professional Development Forum and the GTEC Exhibition. Registration is available at www.gtec.ca

Showcase Ontario to Feature New Courses, MISA Exhibit

MISA ONTARIO IS encouraging IT employees of member municipalities to register for Showcase Ontario, which will feature new education and training opportunities.

Showcase Ontario (www.showcaseontario.com), the largest information and IT education conference in Canada, will be held September 8-10 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, South Building. Registration for all public servants is free, courtesy of the Ontario government.

The conference is celebrating its 10th anniversary and will present a variety of new educational sessions and workshops. A new certification program, Advancing I & IT, will be offered to give participants broad knowledge of industry developments from a government perspective.

MISA Ontario is organizing a municipal presentation on the exhibit floor. In addition to describing MISA regionally and nationally, volunteers led by Cindy Ravenscroft of Halton Region will be available to discuss initiatives including the Municipal Reference Model, the ERP Roadmap and services to address IT issues of small municipalities.
GTEC is the main event for program managers, IT/IM professionals and public sector executives looking for solutions for today’s service delivery challenges.

Mark these dates on your calendar:

**OCT 27**

**GTEC ➞ CIO BOOT CAMP**
Presented by TELUS
Executive Roundtables
Board of Governors & Advisory Committee Meetings

**OCT 28**

**OFFICIAL CONFERENCE OPENING**
Welcome Keynote Address
Concurrent Sessions
Focused Sessions

**OCT 29**

Keynote Panel
Concurrent Sessions
Focused Sessions

**OCT 30**

Executive Keynote Program & Conference Wrap-up Session

» A Distinction Awards Gala recognizing Excellence in Government Service Delivery

» High profile keynotes and practical workshops & seminars

» An exciting 2-day showcase

REGISTER TODAY ➞ gtec.ca
IN MY PREVIOUS COLUMN, I described the Region of Peel’s efforts and lessons learned as we strive to improve the practice of how we manage projects – “doing projects right.” I also noted that we are increasingly turning our attention to portfolio management – “doing the right projects.”

Why Portfolio Management?
Our interest in portfolio management derives from three related concerns:

• Are we doing the right projects – projects that will best contribute to achieving our strategic priorities? This suggests needed improvements in the way that projects are identified, evaluated, prioritized, and approved.
• Do we have the capacity to do the projects that we select? Are we allocating our resources effectively? This suggests needed improvements in our ability to schedule our resources and view existing commitments of resources to projects.
• Do we understand the status of the projects that we have undertaken? Do we have early warning systems that identify when projects are getting off track and enable us to initiate corrective action?

Our quick answer to the above three concerns is that we lack the formal systems, processes and supporting software to address any of these issues as well as we would like.

This is not to say that there are no processes in place. I suspect that all of us have some process to say that we will proceed with project A and hold off on project B. Similarly, we have some sense of which of our resources might be free to work on a new project that may come up. Finally, we are probably getting some type of status reports from managers and project managers to indicate the status of key projects.

But as the number and importance of our projects increases, these relatively informal processes may no longer be sufficient, both within the IT organization and more broadly in the municipality.

Project Inventory
In 2007, our Project Management Office undertook to conduct an inventory of the project work currently under way at the Region of Peel. Perhaps the most important finding from this effort was to document that as an organization we simply don’t know what projects we are doing.

None of our departments or divisions (including I&T Services) could quickly produce a single list of their projects. At best, they could produce lists of “key” projects, while acknowledging that many other projects under way were not on the list.

Even in those departments that were able to provide a list of key projects, things broke down when we asked for a few additional pieces of information about their projects: Who is the project manager and project sponsor? When did the project start? When is it scheduled to end? What is the project budget? What is the size of the project team?

While such information was available for large capital projects (such as infrastructure projects in Public Works), departments were unable to provide, for example, a budget for many of their remaining projects.

Understanding the Costs
In this regard, a project budget can seem like an abstract concept for smaller projects where most of the costs are for staff time.

Nevertheless, a good process for evaluating and justifying a project means understanding the real costs – including staff time, which is essentially an opportunity cost. Perhaps they could be working on something else of higher value to the organization.

Notwithstanding the above limitations, our project inventory identified 929 projects under way at the time with a total budget of $2.5 billion and representing approximately 1,000 person years of staff (including contracted staff) time.

To put this in context, the Region’s combined operating and capital budget is slightly more than $2 billion. Having said this, many projects in our inventory have durations of several years. On the other hand, we know that the 929 identified projects are by no means a complete list, although it is reasonable to assume that most or all large projects are included.

In other words, while these numbers do not allow us to accurately estimate – in dollars or staff time – the percentage of our overall resources allocated to project work, they do indicate that the percentage is substantial.
Governance Issues

What’s Next?

At this point, I expect that providers of project portfolio-management software are salivating at the potential opportunity that I am describing! And there is no doubt that automated solutions can help.

Before we get to automated solutions, however, three simple steps may address many of the issues:

- All parts of the organization should have formal processes by which projects are identified, evaluated, and approved. This includes criteria for evaluating projects against factors such as:
  - Alignment to corporate priorities (including strategic plan, Council priorities, legislated requirements).
  - Specific and measurable improvements to client service (which align to documented client needs or expectations rather than simply reflecting the views of the service provider on what is needed).
  - Return on investment. Within a municipal environment, this generally translates into measurable savings in staff time, which may or may not result in bottom-line savings to the operating budget.
  - Maintaining “state of good repair.” Just like resurfacing roads, many IT projects fall into this category, upgrading to the most current version of software so that support can be maintained or to reflect current technology standards.

- All approved projects should be formally logged, including key information such as the items noted above. The resulting list of open projects should be readily available to and reviewed by management in all divisions.

- A process should be in place to regularly update and report on the status of all projects in relation to budget, schedule and completion of key deliverables. Ideally, each project would be shown in a red, yellow or green status against each of these three factors – which assumes that there is an up-to-date project plan against which the project can be measured.

Process First, Tools Second

While several municipalities (as presented at recent MISA conferences) have implemented automated tools to assist in these areas, we can get started using nothing more than a spreadsheet. What is important is the process. The tool without the process will provide little value.

On the other hand, once a good process is in place, the organization is in a better position to get maximum value from any tool that it selects (and will also be able to better articulate what capabilities the tool should provide).

Having said this, an automated solution may be required if your needs relate to scheduling resources over many projects, including being able to see which resources are available to undertake a new project some months in the future.

And with these simple steps, we should be able to say with more confidence that:

- We are doing the right projects.
- We have the capacity to do the projects that we undertake within the time frames that we establish.
- We understand the status of our projects and are able to initiate corrective action in a timely manner for projects that get off track.

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