

City Manager Highlights from Presentation Notes from 8/18/2015

For those of you unable to attend the all-employee meeting on Tuesday, I want to provide you with my notes on the last two sections of the presentation. In the interest of space, I have left out the sections on my background and also recent City history.

Change in Local Government

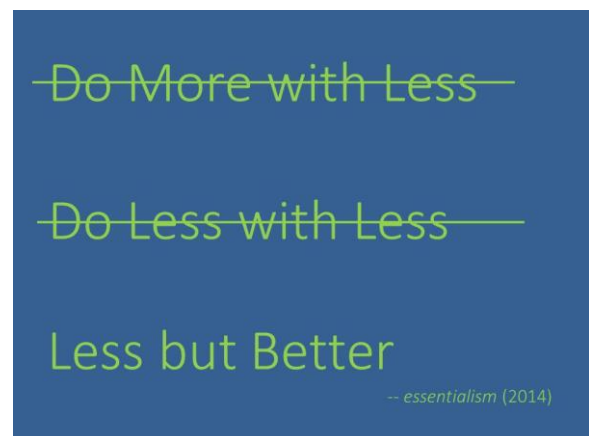
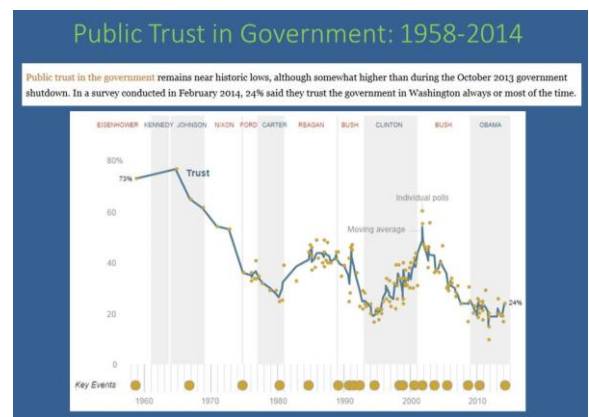
Many new things happening today are causing change at all levels of society and impacting government, for example, the Internet – especially companies like Google and Amazon. Words are entering our language like “on-demand,” “real time,” and “instant messaging.” Things are happening instantly and there’s an expectation of how fast things move in our society – like the idea of an Amazon.com drone dropping off your package within 30 minutes of you pressing the “Buy Now” button.

When we look at trust in government you can see this trend of trust declining over the decades and even though this graph is for the federal government, we’ve also seen trust decline at state and local levels. In general, people often see government as moving slowly, as bureaucratic, as not being innovative. When you compare government with the changes that have been taking place with the Internet-age you can see why some of those perceptions are held.

The good news is, even though there is an overall decreasing level of trust in government, our Resident Satisfaction Surveys show that in San Rafael our residents are satisfied with the sorts of services that they are getting from the City and they feel that they have a very high quality of life.

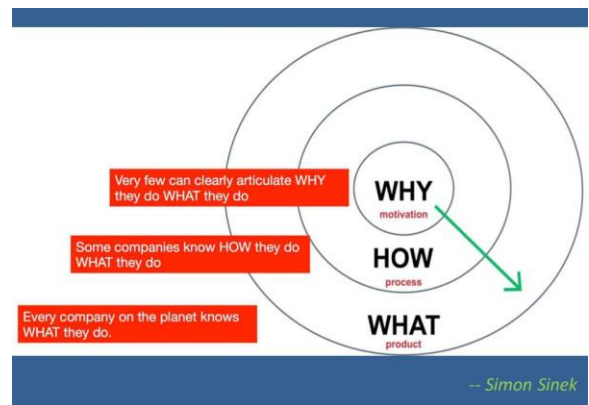
The Future of Our Organization

I’m sure you’ve heard the phrase: “Do More with Less.” You can do “more with less” for a period of time by becoming more efficient, but at some point you can’t do any more with less. “Do Less with Less” is something that we were saying to describe the City during the recession. We had fewer people, fewer resources and we were doing less with that. Not necessarily very inspirational or an on-going strategy. A more recent idea that’s come up is this idea of “**Less but Better**” which means we aren’t doing exactly what we were able to do when we had a much larger workforce but the things we are doing, we do very well. We can do them better, smarter; be more innovative and creative; and leverage technology. We don’t have to do the same things we did in 2007 in the same way. Instead, we need to determine what the things are that we can do, and that we can be very successful in doing, and provide that great service to our community. We can add staff and services very strategically around the greatest needs.

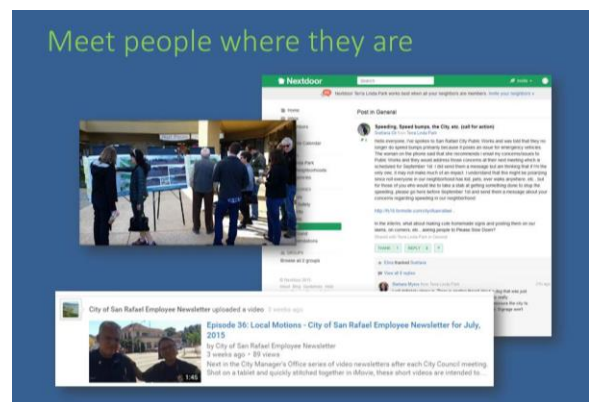


One example of this is Community Development's new customer service plan. Every department has been and needs to continue to look at the services they provide and ask "is this a service that needs to continue?" If it is, does it need to continue in the way that we are doing right now? Are there better ways to do this? Are there newer ways that we could do the service in a faster or more efficient way that will work better for the public?

It's not just important *what* we do, but also *how* we do it. How are we carrying out these services and what are people's perceptions of the services that we are providing? Do they feel that these services are valuable and that we are providing them in a way that works for the community? The diagram to the right also shows that understanding "why" we are providing them is important for the organization. Most organizations get the what, *maybe* they get the how, but very few get the why. **The "why" for us is: we're here because we're trying to make San Rafael a wonderful place.** We want to be the premier city in all of Marin. We want to be a great location for people of all ages; a place people think of as the best place to raise a family; a place that people think of as the best place to age in their community. Those are the "why" we do what we do as city employees and we do them through partnerships with the community to make San Rafael a wonderful place.



It's important to **meet people where they are**. The days of people coming to us, stating their concerns, and the city being in one place to receive these issues are over. People communicate in different ways. They are on social media tweeting and using NextDoor. The City will soon be using NextDoor and we are going out to the community where they are already at and showing them pictures and boards of things that we are going to be doing and that we want their input on.



Another important thing is **find solutions that we can say yes to**. There are things that come up all the time where we are being asked to do something or respond in some way by some portion of the community and we are not able to do what they are asking. I think what the challenge is now is to figure out what can we do, what can we say yes to and what's a way that we can work together so we can figure out a better solution.

We are a learning organization; we learn from our mistakes. It's okay to take some risks and be out in front on things. If we fail, we regroup, we learn from that failure and we put that information into the next time we try something. Not all of our ideas will work out exactly as we think they might but sometimes it's worth the risk. For example, one of these is Code for Marin. We collect a lot of data a city and working with Code for Marin we can **open our data**, share what's



appropriate to share, and the larger community can do things with it to improve the quality of life in San Rafael.

We also need to look to be innovative and creative as much as possible. There are all sorts of examples of ways that we are doing this now: from paperless and online bid sets in Public Works, to online business license renewals and building permits, to using goats for fire prevention instead of other more invasive ways. I encourage all of you to continue to look for the innovative solution moving forward.

I want to mention some of the exciting projects going on in San Rafael right now. The Essential Facilities program provides us the ability to renovate or completely rebuild our fire stations and a new public safety building. This has been a goal of the City for decades. These different locations have become less useful over time as firefighting and police personnel and operations have changed – their equipment and how they do things and what their needs are. It’s fantastic to work on these projects.

SMART is going to make a huge difference to our Downtown and many departments are working to prepare our community for its arrival. Soon you will see solar panels on our buildings and in some of our parking lots. The Downtown Streets Team has helped 50 people find permanent employment. The Library is developing a vision for a new facility. There’s also been new development interest in Downtown. There’s a lot going on to be excited about right now in San Rafael.

Lastly, I wanted to appreciate all of your hard work. The only way we get anything done is because of you and your dedication. You are the people that are making San Rafael the place that it is. You are very much appreciated for this work and your commitment to this City. We have a lot of work ahead of us and I look forward to working side-by-side with you as we march into the future. Thank you.

