

Bush CIG – Local Food Regulatory System Meeting to Learn about City of Minneapolis Development Review & 311 System

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Present:

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The 311 system and Development Review are linked systems.

<p>311:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Answers calls• Decision tree for operators to use to direct people• Not subject-matter experts; the role of this system is to just get people started down the right path.• The first and only entry point for people to interact with a City government agency• Referral system	<p>Development Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Takes referrals from 311 system• Development Coordinators (DCs) who guide applications through the whole process• Process management; not subject matter experts• DCs know when to call in subject matter experts• Coaching/ombudsperson/shepherding
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The 311 system requires constant updating of the “scripting” and the training that helps operators triage people correctly.

How this system got started

- McKinsey Report in around 2001 analyzed experiences of City of Mpls residents with city government
 - “Spaghetti diagram” of ways people made contact with the City government; at that time, there were hundreds of potential entry points.
 - It was very confusing for people.
 - Action often depended on knowing someone in an agency who could facilitate effort on the agency side.
- Initiative of Mayor R.T. Rybak when his mayoral term began in 2002.
 - Rybak pushed for a “one-stop shop”
- Five full-time consultants were hired sometime in 2002; they stayed until around 2005.
 - This hiring was possible because the City of Mpls allocated money to Human Resources for project management and process improvement training.
 - Mayor Rybak also kept up the pressure for process improvement; hired Steven Bosacker to manage this.
- Changes began in 2003.
 - Initially this was the “311” system. It was IT-driven, and didn’t work as well as hoped.
 - Things really changed when the system shifted to being process- and people-driven.
 - The process of pulling the customer service aspect out of IT took 2 years.
 - Consultants helped with finding the right balance between process people and subject matter experts.
- Major turning points:
 - The Public Service Center was built, which brought departments together in one location.
 - Full staffing of the team of Development Coordinators in 2005 (2 years from concept in 2003)
 - 6 cashiers handle intake and payment
 - 4 “Development Coordinator One” staff deal with routine applications
 - 3 “Development Coordinator Two” staff deal with more complex applications
 - 3 “Development Coordinator Three” staff are supervisory and deal with the largest projects.
 - There are also specialists for Sewer Access Charge, Records Management, Critical Parking, Reduced Pressure Zones, Public Works.
- The system really started functioning well in 2006-2007.

Features of the current system

- Anyone can use it without having to know someone on the inside.

- There's a customer queueing system called "Q-Matic" that lets customers check wait times on their smartphones.
- A Mpls Development Review Coordinator documents the process for each application.
 - All feedback goes into the permanent case database.
- A database tracks everything that happens at a physical address: plumbing, inspections, etc.
- Applications move between departments without the applicant having to make it move.
 - If an application gets hung up in a department, the MDR Coordinator checks on it. MDR Coordinators do weekly follow-up on their open cases.
 - The MDR Coordinator will expedite simultaneous review by departments if needed.
 - MDR Coordinators call applicants if they need to submit something to keep the process moving.
- Feedback is provided to departments. For example, if multiple customer complaints are received about delays in a particular department, that department is asked to review its procedures.
 - The process is separate from the subject matter expert (e.g. inspector)
 - In this system, you find out if there is a breakdown in the process. If the subject matter person and process person is the same, process breakdowns don't always come to light.
- Size/volume of the system:
 - About 10 to 15 food license applications per week
 - DCs have caseload of about 20 to 25 food licenses in various stages (in addition to other types of licenses)

Things that make this work

- Philosophical framework
 - Mapping of process; continually asking how we can make it better
 - Department heads "win" by being part of a good team that makes the process improve, not by protecting their department's turf
 - Teams are organized around issues.
- Support from the highest levels; atmosphere of inclusion and embrace of change
 - Political leadership
 - Administrative expertise
- Effort to include front-line staff in the training and development process
 - Front-line staff were already coming up with back-door solutions to problems in working across departments. Through this process, they were empowered to make those into front-door solutions.
 - Front-line staff are often the ones who come up with process improvements
- Constant investment in scripting and training in the 311 system
- Separation of process management from subject matter experts, and correct balance between those two aspects

Return on Investment

- Time for an application to get through the process has gone from an average of 45 days to average of 5 days
- Time for issuing permits from 1 month down to 2 days
- Time for a restaurant to open has gone from 2 to 3 months down to under 1 month
- Typical call volume per week to Minneapolis Development Review has gone from 500 to 10
 - Mainly due to improved 311 scripting, decision trees, and training
 - Also due to sharp drop in repeat calls from people checking on their applications

Continuing or upcoming challenges:

- It's difficult to deal with new business models that aren't really legal. For example, Airbnb.
 - Dan Huff -- Frustration for regulators – how far do we go in working with something new that doesn't fit? We try to compromise; when something looks problematic, we identify how far we're willing to go and see if we can work with the applicant.
 - Sometimes regulators have to set aside their biases. For example, there was resistance to new farmers' markets – until the regulators realized that the existence of farmers' markets wasn't a problem so long as food safety was maintained.
- Getting customers to provide the right information.
- "Business Made Simple" is a new challenge: looking at streamlining the applications so that the process works more smoothly for the 90% of people who have relatively straightforward needs, so that more attention can be paid to the 10% that are more complex and the "bad apples."

Key points:

- Process managers are separate from the subject matter experts/regulators, but the contributions of both are balanced.
- Development Coordinators who shepherd applications through the process are under Economic Development, not a regulatory agency.
- Continual training, updating, feedback, and process improvement