



# **Government Transformation & Innovation**

## *Executive Roundtable Whitepaper*

**A Leaders Role in Creating Space for Innovation  
through a Powerful discussion with Your Peers in Government**

**CA Executive Roundtable**  
**A Leaders Role in Creating Space for Innovation**  
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Government Transformation and Innovation 2017 Conference  
Public Sector Partners  
February 28, 2017

**Conference Vision**

*Provide current and emerging government leaders with tools and information that they will use to transform their services to better meet the needs of California's citizens.*

Public Sector Partners held an educational event designed to provide government leaders the inspiration, motivation and knowledge to utilize both transformative and innovative concepts and methods creating a citizen centric environment throughout California.

Prior to the conference, Public Sector Partners gathered a Planning Committee of government and private sector executives to provide direction and guidance for the CA Executive Roundtable to be held during the conference on February 28, 2017.

The Planning Committee looked at several areas and impediments that make it difficult for government to move quickly ahead with innovation and transformation. The conclusion of the discussion brought highest attention to three areas. The CA Executive Roundtable developed strategies focusing on the following key topics:

- Creating Cultural Change,
- Empowering Government and Innovation, and
- Redefining Risk.

Executives need to demonstrate leadership and develop strategies that will be successful in moving government forward. State and local government executives and private sector leaders engaged in a roundtable and developed action-oriented strategies to bring about innovation and transformation.

**Process**

Executives assembled into three small groups. They brainstormed on these topics, prioritized strategies and utilized a multi-voting technique to identify those strategies that were collectively agreed on and of the highest value.

## **Strategies Developed**

### **Creating Cultural Change**

- Demonstrate active and visible leadership
- Establish cultural norms and core values embedded in operations and behavior
- Support and promote employee engagement

Creating a cultural change requires leadership. Leadership needs to understand the current culture in order to establish effective relationships than will then be able to determine the changes need to occur in the workplace. The cultural change must be translated into documents that address vision, mission, and core values. It must be visible to employees, understood, and embraced. It needs to be a part of the daily work environment and incorporated in to how we think and how we provide better services to the public.

Establish cultural norms that reflect the operations and behavior of the organization is a careful and slow process. Leaders must understand the current working environment of an organization before new cultural norms and values can be introduced and implemented. The more a leader understands the current culture and norms, the more respect the organization will have of the leader and the more accepting of the new culture.

The critical piece of cultural change is the engagement of employees at all levels. This is best accomplished by allowing the staff to make the decision for themselves and therefore creating a sense of ownership. Leaders must support this bottom up approach and encourage the employees to work together to create a culture that is accepting of innovation and change.

### **Empowering Government and Innovation**

- Make investment in people development
- Move from Process Orientation to Outcome Orientation
- Identify and eliminate barriers to Innovation

To bring this environment of innovation to the forefront, leaders must invest in developing their staff. Technical and change management training are an integral part of the solution. The workplace needs to embrace a new communication style to encourage dialog and enable ideas to emerge.

Projects need to be outcome driven. Pilot projects are a method of testing the validity and viability of an innovative idea. The results of the pilot – whether success or failure should be construed positively and treated as a learning lesson, providing the opportunity to

change course. Successes should be shared to allow others to replicate innovative solutions.

Executives and management leaders need to focus on eliminating the barriers in using innovation in their organizations to improve the delivery of services and benefit employees. In implementation phase of visible statewide projects, the leadership team must own the issues that create barriers and protect the employees when a project does not accomplish all its objectives.

## **Redefining Risk**

- Develop risk mitigation strategies and acceptable tolerance levels
- Plan for success with course adjustment and corrections
- Communicate risks to stakeholders, legal, and elected officials

Developing risk mitigation strategies is a key element of successful projects. There needs to be mitigation measures to reduce the risk itself and provide a learning opportunity for the staff. When implementing small projects, create lessons learned sessions to assist staff in better understanding what worked and what did not. The lessons learned outcomes can become guidelines for future projects as well as identify areas where more training is needed. Taking large projects and breaking them into small chunks allows organizations to quickly evaluate if this new product provides measurable benefits. Incorporate “backup” plans at critical path steps in the event that a project does not move forward, a backup will assure that all the work is not lost.

Plan for success includes making course adjustments and corrections when necessary. The use of course adjustments and corrections needs to become a normal and usual practice in project planning. The concept **Fall Forward** allows the opportunity to learn from our mistakes in a positive way. Moving away from risk avoidance into a “lessons learned” approach is critical to bring about innovation. A change of philosophy and attitude is needed to learn from experiences that do not bring successes. This can be done by developing tolerance levels and increased and timely communication. Middle management and employees should not feel embarrassed or negative in bringing forward project steps or outcomes that are not completely successful. An effective organization governance structure will assist in creating the risk tolerance level for a project.

Communications is a key element in any change in an organization. Communication becomes a method to educate and keep others informed on risk and mitigation. In the planning, implementation and project conclusion, stakeholders, control agencies and media need understand how risk and course correction is the way to innovation. Though this is a difficult concept for government, early and often communication will assist in moving through an innovative project with support from key customers.

## **Moving Forward**

The executives have put together this strategic document. The document will be distributed to state and local government executives and their information technology leaders to consider incorporating in their planning and project process. It will serve as a resource for government agencies when looking at how to make the transformation and deploy innovative solutions.

## **CA Executive Roundtable Participants**

### **Strategy Session**

Kome Ajise, Chief Deputy Director, CA Department of Transportation  
Francesca Negri, Chief Deputy Director, CA Department of Toxic Substances Control  
Jeff McGuire, Chief Deputy Director, CA Department of General Services  
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Kari Morrow, Director, Administrative Services CA Department of Food and Agriculture  
Steve Kessler, Consultant, California Correctional Health Care Services  
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Barbara Lee, Director, CA Department of Toxics Substances Control  
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### **Editorial Board**

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