

City of Fayetteville, NC, USA

The City:

Fayetteville is one of the largest cities in the US State of North Carolina, with a population of 208,373. Governed by a Mayor and City Council, elected by its citizens, Fayetteville, is well known as the home of Fort Bragg, the largest US Army installation, with America's rapid response contingency force. Fayetteville is a highly diverse area, representing more than 80 different cultures and has won three All-America City awards for collaborative community initiatives.

In 2014, Fayetteville officials began designing a performance management system, called TRACStat, Transparent Reporting and Analytics for Citizens, to track the efficiency and quality of its programs as a means of providing the best municipal services possible to its citizens and visitors, while also maintaining transparency in its operations. TRACStat was part of the city's transition to a process of program-based budgeting with performance management.

"This effort elevates the City of Fayetteville to a position of leadership among municipalities developing a data-driven culture for local government, continuous improvement and effective community engagement strategies," said Interim City Manager Doug Hewett.

"Commitment to strategic planning and performance management strengthens the City of Fayetteville, ensuring excellent services and a high quality of life for residents, explained Fayetteville's Director of Strategy and Performance Analytics Office, Rebecca Rogers Carter. "It allows for long range planning at the organizational level with alignment to departmental operations and performance expectations. With this system in place, the City is able to allocate resources appropriately and build strategies for continuous improvement. Performance Management garners valuable input and analysis, all of which flow into Council's annual strategic planning and budgeting processes."

The Challenge:

Initially, Fayetteville's performance measurement and analyses were maintained via a series of Excel spreadsheets, but the City soon realized that such a platform was overly labor intensive, highly subject to error, and unsustainable over the long-term for maintaining historical data. In addition, the City needed an automated work flow process through which performance data could be efficiently moved through

the required levels of reviews and approvals, with documentation of when changes to data were made and when and by whom approvals were given.

For optimum transparency to voters, the City also desired an interactive, web-accessed vehicle through which it could share performance data, including strategic planning and financial data, with the public. This data had previously only been available semi-annually in printed format, or as a static document posted on a website with limited opportunity for the public to truly gauge organizational performance or return on investment of tax dollars.

Ms. Rogers Carter, sought a comprehensive software platform for the City's TRACStat program that would allow City administrators to launch and manage TRACStat applications without the assistance of IT professionals.

"Spreadsheets are not conducive to maintaining and analyzing historical data over long periods of time," explained Ms. Rogers Carter. "Versioning is difficult. Moving data from spreadsheets to a format suitable for creating an annual budget presentation was also very labor intensive and inexact. The City also had no way to present performance or financial data to residents in a timely, web-enabled, interactive format. More than 87% of citizens attending a City Café Conversation said that they think it is important to have access to performance data online."

A unique aspect of the City of Fayetteville's performance management framework is the City Council's commitment to incorporate resident input through Café Conversation events and resident surveys. In 2015, a five part series of Café Conversations with citizens took place throughout the City to delve deeper into which performance measures residents wanted to see reported for each Goal area. Feedback received from the series drove the development of the TRACStat Scorecard. "We believe incorporating resident input builds a transparent performance measurement framework and promotes greater accountability for results," added Ms. Rogers Carter.

The Solution:

Following a comprehensive year-long search for a suitable software platform, which included products from such companies as IBM and Oracle, the City's Steering Committee chose the integrated Corporate Performance Management (CPM)/analytics/Business Intelligence platform from BOARD International as the best all-in-one solution for the Fayetteville TRACStat program. System Integrator Nuebrain, LLC, of Rockville, MD was instrumental in the selection and deployment of the BOARD platform for Fayetteville.

"BOARD offered a highly configurable, multi-dimensional database solution at a very competitive price," said Ms. Rogers Carter. "BOARD did not just offer an application,

but a development platform which provided the opportunity for the City to customize its solution to its specific needs. The BOARD solution not only included a server-based development opportunity, but also a web-based one that would allow the City an opportunity to more easily and effectively present performance information to elected officials and the public at large.

“One major aspect of the BOARD Platform that the City found most attractive was the fact that it was purchasing a development platform, not just a single application. The configurability, ease of screen design, and opportunities for further application development were also attractive. Finally, the price for the environment was within our budget for such a purchase,” said Ms. Rogers Carter.

The Results:

Fayetteville has launched TRACStat using the BOARD platform to collect, analyze, and report the City’s performance data. The City is also uploading budget data into the system to blend with the performance data and using the combined data to automatically create the City’s annual budget presentation.

The City developed a citywide “Data Analytics Team” to provide support and guidance development of performance management metrics, recommend standards, benchmarks, and best practices to be used in the development of performance management metrics for purposes of uniformity in reporting and to perform periodic audits of performance management metrics for completeness and accuracy.

Internally, TRACStat allows Fayetteville to collect actual performance data from all departments on a schedule that aligns with creation of the data, whether it be monthly, quarterly or annually. The TRACStat application on BOARD also allows managers to deliver valuable context with their data updates, such as explanations of why a measure is important or is trending in a particular direction, the variance to targeted levels of performance and the measure’s impact on other programs and measures. Historical data is maintained, allowing department heads to identify trends and take appropriate action based on them and optimize operational performance.

Externally, the TRACStat portal gives residents and elected officials varying levels of detail on the City’s organizational performance. Citizens can see high-level snapshots of how Fayetteville is meeting strategic goals and of the City’s budget and can drill down to examine detailed data on specific measures, all via an easily navigated web portal that draws data from the TRACStat applications developed and running on the BOARD Platform.

“Ultimately, the City of Fayetteville is working to incorporate Board into an overall PerformanceStat methodology to ensure quality programs and services for our citizens. The City’s performance management program fosters a data-driven culture for our organization and continues to raise the bar in for excellence in customer

service,” said Ms. Rogers Carter. “Future applications on the platform may include the City’s process for capturing and vetting capital improvement projects, technology improvement projects, and budgeting and financial analytic tools.”

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