

A- Utah

People who do performance measurement in any jurisdiction will tell you that the key to success is getting the legislature interested. Managers in Utah, perhaps the nation's most information-driven state, have worked harder at this task than their counterparts almost anywhere. They may even have worked a little too hard. In the past few years, there have been complaints from legislators about a glut of data on government programs. But legislators from information-starved states might not mind being in that situation.

Even so, agencies in Utah are launching an effort to deal with information overload, going to great lengths to make their plans and reports more approachable. The state's well-developed IT plan has been reduced from a 52-page document to a six-page

The benefits of Utah's obsession with data were clear during the past couple of fiscally challenging years.

paper, to make it "more readable and more precise," in the words of Chief Information Officer W. Val Oveson. The Transportation Department has prioritized its goals into what it calls the "final four," a brief checklist of easy-to-remember strategies that any employee can rattle off: Take care of what we have; make it work better; improve safety; increase capacity. Simplistic as it may be, it serves as testimony to Utah's near-obsession with goals and planning.

If Utah's planning process has suffered a minor case of overkill, however, the benefits of its overall approach have never been clearer than during the past couple of fiscally challenging years. Compared with budget debates in other places, those in Utah have been laced with hard statistics, not just anecdotes. Spending reductions have been painful, but they have been made with the help of a precise program-by-program analysis that is simply unavailable to many legislatures. Utah did not have to resort to clumsy across-the-board reductions to reach the numbers it needed.

Utah's statewide strategic planning document, known as Utah Tomorrow, is

the most significant effort the state makes to create a clear overall direction for its managers and workforce. It is built around a vision statement that includes refined performance measures, but leaves specific strategies to be developed by agencies. Its priorities are nearly always well understood throughout the layers of state government. "Ask 104 legislators, and they will all tell you that well-maintained roads cost less," says Carlos Braceras, the deputy transportation director.

In a further expansion of its efforts to inform the public—and to command legislative buy-in—the Budget Office publishes a newsletter, *Fiscal Focus*, that is circulated online and through local newspapers. A condensed overview of Utah's financial, economic, and demographic environment, it is filled with graphs and clear measures of results.

The Department of Transportation, similarly eager to communicate with the public anywhere it can, made use of a panel truck that roamed the highway corridors around Salt Lake City and asked for comments and ideas. The truck displayed large, colorful signs asking questions such as, "How will the Mountain View Corridor impact you?" When transportation employees parked the truck in high-traffic areas, they often were surrounded by hundreds of interested citizens full of questions and suggestions. UDOT also allows the public to rate transportation contractors based on their service to the community surrounding the project area.

Human resources management in Utah exhibits all the state's qualities of governmental aggressiveness. Efforts are made to get hard-to-fill positions classified and licensed more readily, and there are special training initiatives for nurses and emergency response teams. Utah Job Match, an online recruiting system launched last year, has further improved the hiring effort. The one modest weakness seems to be in employee appraisal. Individual agencies are given discretion to do these assessments according to their own methods, and many simply grade their workers on a pass-fail basis, avoiding the hard choices of a more detailed and subtle system.

For additional information and data, go to:
<http://results.gpponline.org/utah>

● Strength ○ Mid-level ● Weakness

Money A

Long-Term Outlook	●
Budget Process	●
Structural Balance	●
Contracting/Purchasing	●
Financial Controls/Reporting	●

People B+

Strategic Workforce Planning	○
Hiring	●
Retaining Employees	●
Training and Development	○
Managing Employee Performance	○

Infrastructure A

Capital Planning	●
Project Monitoring	●
Maintenance	●
Internal Coordination	●
Intergovernmental Coordination	●

Information A-

Strategic Direction	●
Budgeting for Performance	●
Managing for Performance	●
Program Evaluation	○
Electronic Government	●

Population (rank): 2,233,169 (34)

Average per capita income (rank):
\$24,977 (47)

Total state spending (rank):
\$10,107,055,000 (34)

Spending per capita (rank):
\$4,358 (27)

Governor: Jon Huntsman Jr. (R)

First elected: 11/2004

Senate: 29 members: 8 D, 21 R

Term limits: None

House: 75 members: 19 D, 56 R

Term limits: None