

Effective Citizen Relationship Management: Hurricane Wilma and Miami-Dade County 311



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Abstract:

As recent events have shown, effective knowledge sharing has become important at all political levels, especially when disasters occur. We present the case of Miami-Dade County, which implemented a multi-jurisdictional, multi-channel environment (311/portal) and successfully utilized it during Hurricane Wilma. Drawing from our research on citizen relationship management (CiRM) and literature on absorptive capacity (ACAP), we argue that this setting increases an organization's ability to acquire, assimilate, transform, and exploit information and knowledge regarding citizen's needs

Absorptive Capacity (ACAP)

- Effective knowledge sharing and learning is an important source of organizational performance
- Scholars used it to explain why organizations vary in their ability to either profit from or exploit novel knowledge.
- High degree of potential ACAP = helps PA understand what the citizens think, want, and need.
- High degree of realized ACAP = helps PA to identify strategies and organizational means to optimize operations with respect to a quality of citizen relations.
- The four key dimensions of ACAP are, knowledge...



Emergency Management

- Hurricane Katrina shows that administrators have to review emergency plans regarding:
 - Internal and external situational awareness
 - External communication
 - Multi-jurisdictional, Cross-boundary collaboration
- Phases of Emergency Management are:



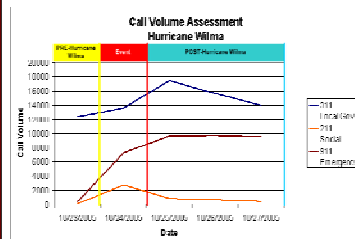
Citizen Relationship Management (CiRM)

- Citizens are a valuable source for PA in terms of planning, providing and performance management
- CiRM draws from private sector CRM, and is a cluster of management practices, communication channels and technological solutions to handle issues, problems, concerns, and demands of citizens.
- Currently CiRM is mostly technology driven through the use of CRM software in (311) call centers.
- Early research data analysis indicates that CiRM/311 (the citizen data) has broader implications
 - CiRM fosters information exchange, organisational innovation, change and accountability

Case Study: Miami-Dade County

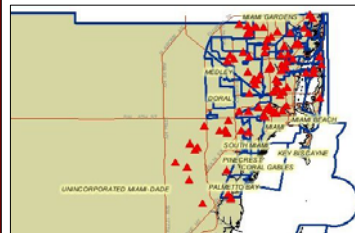
- 2.3 million residents, unincorporated area of +1 Mill. people and 35 cities
- 311 Answer Center is single point of contact for all non-emergency public services, including information and service requests since mid 2005
- Very mature portal, GIS system and knowledge base connected to CRM
- Performance Management tool ("Servicestat") about to be rolled out
- Online services and 311 staff provides 24h services in emergency situations and communicates directly between EOC and 311. One of the first multi-jurisdictional CiRM case in the US.
- Hurricane Wilma (Level 2) landfall at 06:30 a.m., October 24th
- 957.000 homes without electricity and other damages inflicted on a broad area

Case Study: 311 data



Pre- Hurricane Requests	#
School closures (Any level)	3442
Evacuations and evacuation routes	1197
Shelter openings and locations	1195
Hints for individual preparation	1042
Availability/ distribution of sand for sandbags	984
Government office closures	923

- 311 received significantly more calls than 911. Sometimes true emergency calls as people were not able to get through to 911.



Post- Hurricane Requests	#
Status of closures (schools, bridges, government offices, transit systems)	14048
Curfews	11001
Power outage / power line down	9018
Distribution of water, food, ice	7571
FEMA related	4609
Locations of opened gas stations	2772
Blue Roof program	2594

- Roof damage reported by 311. House damage can also be reported through the web-portal.
- Based on 311 data MDC setup strategic supply points and routed people to functioning gas stations

Acquisition

- Acquisition** refers to firm's capability to identify and acquire external knowledge that is critical to its operations.
- Pre-311 analysis creates a broad range of knowledge on internal processes, costs and other issues.
 - Better external knowledge acquisition:
 - 311 improves accessibility to information and government services (311+Webportal)
 - Reduces complexity of government (900 (County) + 35 cities phone numbers vs. One)
 - Bridges the digital divide (Average landline/cell phone penetration = 95% vs. average internet penetration of 68% in the US)
 - 80% of calls come from lower 20% socio-economic status group area
 - Information is centralized and integrated seamlessly throughout the channels and levels
 - Scalability (important during emergencies)
 - Uncovers latent demand and even creates more demand

Assimilation

- Assimilation** refers to firm's routines and processes which allow it to analyze, process, interpret and understand the information obtained from external sources.
- 311 citizen data and general contact center data (call volume) can and is analyzed. Future versions of CRM tool will have more sophisticated analytics
 - 311 citizen data is added to web portal, agency data, EOC for decision making
 - Customer Service Advocates (CSA's) and web services help disseminate information
 - Webportal implementation prepared agencies and leadership for increased collaboration

Transformation

- Transformation** indicates firm's ability to develop and refine the routines that help combine the existing knowledge with newly acquired and assimilated knowledge.
- Information or Service realignment / Organizational routine and process improvement
 - Cross-boundary, multi-jurisdictional collaborations (Interlocal Agreement)
 - Reformulation of agency specific knowledge for Knowledge Base + Web channel
 - Service level agreements
 - Organization wide software implementation / seamless knowledge integration

Exploitation

- Exploitation** refers to the firm's ability to incorporate new knowledge into its operations
- 311 organization (new competencies, role, CSA's)
 - Performance Management ("Servicestat" within "Active Strategy" Initiative)
 - For greater Accountability
 - Emergency Management and every day operations (Employees and citizens as "eyes and ears on the ground")
 - Agency budget bargaining process.
 - Outreach - Educating the public (i.e. expectations).
 - Elected officials (better understanding of citizens, holding PA accountable)

Conclusion

- 311/CiRM increases public administrations ACAP.
- 311/CiRM is only successful in increasing ACAP if the back-end process and organization undergoes change.
- 311/CiRM data is powerful factor for increasing PA's ACAP but only as powerful as the vision and leadership behind it.
- Managing external and internal expectations is essential for building a sound and sustainable 311/CiRM environment and realizing true ACAP

In general:

- 311/CiRM reintegrates the citizen back into Public Administration in comparison to many eGovernment and former NPM initiatives.

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