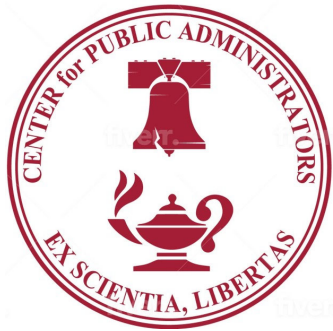


Teaching the Independent Demonstration Project Strategy

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The standard teaching about how to innovate in government is:
First make sure you have the support of agency officials.

That's like teaching soldiers:
First make sure the enemy has run out of ammunition.

It would be great, but if you wait for it to happen then you may never act.

Independent Demonstration Projects

A strategy to innovate in government without prior approval of officials. It has two steps:

1. Innovator implements their idea as a *minimum viable product*, independent of the government.
2. Once the innovation is implemented, it creates pressure on officials to sustain and expand it using government resources.

Step 1 – Minimum Viable Product

- Limited Features – Only needs to be good enough to be useful to some actual users.
- Temporary – Only intended to operate until it convinces government to adopt the innovation.

So it can be implemented with limited resources.

Step 2 – Creates Pressure on Government to Adopt the Innovation

- Shows the innovation is feasible. -- Disproves any claims by officials that it cannot be done, or would be prohibitively expensive, or would have catastrophic consequences.
- Builds constituency of users. -- When users have a chance to benefit from the innovation, they will want the government to keep it going on a permanent basis.
- Undermines the government's monopoly. – When officials can no longer prevent the innovation, they have incentive to participate in providing it, to gain control over how it is implemented.

Why teach Independent Demonstration Projects as part of Social Equity?

- A proven strategy to drive change in government. (As shown on next slide.)
- Suited to use by members of marginalized groups:
 - Does not depend on the innovators being viewed as persuasive by government officials.
 - The demonstration project ***creates*** credibility.



Photo source: DICE Leadership Group

A Teachable Case: Forest Service Diversity & Inclusion Coalition for Empowerment (DICE)

Three Forest Service employees decide to create a Diversity & Inclusion program



Photo source: USDA Forest Service

- Met while travelling to training in 2014.
- None had job responsibilities for Diversity & Inclusion, but they found they had a “mutual passion” for it.
- At the time, every agency had an EEO office to handle complaints, but Diversity & Inclusion programs were very rare.

Instead of asking management to create the program, they started it themselves.

- “convened a discussion with colleagues across the Washington Office about the meaning of Diversity and Inclusion...the challenges, the opportunities, and bold steps the agency might take.”
- “recruited three individuals from each previous conversation to facilitate the next.”

After it attracted large participation, management adopted it as an official program.

**DICE:
Diversity & Inclusion
Coalition for Empowerment**

KRISTIN MERONY
AMBER WATSON
BRYAN RICE
USDA FOREST SERVICE



Director of Forest
Management
(Senior Executive
Service)

Government started publicizing the program as an agency accomplishment.

Forest Service Diversity & Inclusion Coalition for Empowement (DICE)

By Amber Watson, US Forest Service

US Forest Service employees Kristin Merony, Amber Watson, and Michelle Tamez were complete strangers until they met on a road trip while attending training.

During the ride they discussed their mutual passion around topics of Diversity and Inclusion, and employee recruitment and retention.

They convened a discussion with colleagues across the Washington Office about the meaning of Diversity and Inclusion, and they talked about the challenges, the opportunities, and bold steps the agency might take.

Since that initial conversation in November of 2014, they have engaged over 200 employees in the Yates building.

A photograph showing a group of people, mostly women, sitting around a long table in a meeting room. They appear to be engaged in a discussion or collaborative work. The room has large windows, exposed pipes on the ceiling, and various items on the table like papers, markers, and a small figurine.

Source: U.S. Government publication
Center for Public Administrators

Slide 11

We've Been Busy...



- Hosted 15+ Employee Engagement Sessions
- Convened over 300+ Employees
- Train-the-Trainer Model of Facilitation
- Topics: Diversity & Inclusion at the USFS, Generational Diversity in the Workplace
- IdeaLabs: Harnessing the Power of Many
- Lunch & Learns: What Motivates You?
- Virtual World Café: Connecting with the Field

After officials adopted the program:

- More resources
- Expanded activities



If they don't give you a seat
at the table, bring a folding
chair.

- Shirley Chisholm

For teaching materials about additional examples of Independent Demonstration Projects, contact me.

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