From: Patrick Conant <patrick@prcapps.com>
Sent: 9/21/2017 11:55:26 PM
To: sbarnwell@ashevillenc.gov
Cc: mayors-challenge@ashevillenc.gov
Subject: Re: [#85309] Re: People-centered metrics

Scott,

I really like the wide you described the concept in your second paragraph.

Here's what I'm trying to unpack about the broad idea - in Eric's initial email, he described specifically measuring "people" - collecting new data about individuals in our community.

I'm wondering if this concept can also be "reversed" - rather than collecting data about the community, the City could work with the community to develop collaborative data-collection and data-driven decision-making processes - that build upon existing efforts across City departments.

So, in this concept, I'm talking about discussing which metrics the City collects and uses in decision making, rather than focusing solely on gathering new metrics from the community. That could alleviate some challenges I see with measuring "people" - it could be labor intensive and people may be reluctant to participate.

By working "with" not "for" the community in evolving the City data collection and decision making process, the community perspective could be "reflected" in the data collected - which then in turn directly influences a data-driven decision making process.

Thank you,

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> On Thu, 21 Sep at 11:04 PM , Scott Barnwell <SBarnwell@ashevillenc.gov> wrote:
> I too am really intrigued by this concept of people-centered metrics and how we could intersect that with other issues of concern to the community. It reminds me of how we first got started on this Bloomberg opportunity... they reached out to the city and asked us to apply through Code for America (we literally got a phone call from a CfA staffer who was in contact with Bloomberg) having seen some of the interesting community engagement work that was happening through the Code for Asheville Brigade.
>
> All of that makes me think that the concept of people-centered metrics might be very appealing and a source for innovation in cities across the country. It also naturally allows us to use equity as a central lens through which we can identify target populations for generating metrics with (not for) those target populations. Those folks would ultimately help steer us towards the issues to be addressed... housing, transportation, walkability, jobs, etc.
>
> On Thursday, September 21, 2017 at 6:30:50 AM UTC-4, Eric Jackson wrote:
> In the spirit of brainstorming, and as a bit of a counter to my last email, I wanted to share a half-formed thought that occurred to me re: use of data in decision-making.
>
> When we think about data and data-driven decision-making, we tend to converge on measures that reflect what we already do and how we already think about problems. They reflect the silos in which we operate and the assumptions we've already made.
>
> For me this echoes an analogous problem in software product development. Traditional methods generally led to products that reflected developers' view of the world rather than users' and hence failed to effectively address the users' needs. Over the last 10-15 years user-centered design techniques have been developed to counteract this. More recently, as we heard at the workshop last week, the same ideas are being applied to non-technical problem-solving and policy-making.
>
> I wonder if there is a way to apply these ideas directly to the data we use to make decisions and seek solutions.

Specifically, what if we were to start from metrics selected based on the lived experience of a particular segment of our community. The idea is that if we built a "dashboard" around those metrics, it would be recognizable to people in that segment as directly reflecting their experience. Thus we might measure days between running out of money and the next paycheck, or hours spent getting to and from work, or number of visits to the emergency room. Such measures naturally bridge our normal silos and keep us focused on solutions that make a concrete difference in peoples' lives. We would likely bring in additional, more traditional kinds of data as well, but in ways that continue to tie them directly to lived experience.

My instinct is that such people-centered metrics are more likely to spur innovative thinking about solutions by illuminating the connections between different domains. They also provide a way to engage with folks in our community in terms that are more likely to make sense to them.

The idea here is still fairly raw and perhaps over-simple, but I wonder if it might be one way to combine deeper engagement with the community and data-driven decision-making.

Eric

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