Identifying what should be changed
How public officials and military leaders can choose wisely

Public officials and military leaders are operating today in an environment of significant change in the mission, requirements, structure and work of their departments and agencies. Assessing what to change—and how—are such daunting and complex tasks that they have turned to a whole new generation of strategic frameworks and analytical tools useful in both public and private organizations. By using strategic frameworks and analytic tools, officials can provide decision makers with the rationale and justification for innovative and thoughtful changes to their organizations.

The need for change

Changes in national budgets, in conjunction with global business and technology trends, and emerging security threats are impacting governments across the world. Defense organizations are particularly being required to quickly shift priorities to meet these threats and to collaborate realtime across services and with allies.

At the same time, citizens are demanding their governments be ever more responsive to their needs. Officials are also facing the crisis of redesigning, downsizing or merging whole agencies and departments while large numbers of employees with crucial knowledge and experience become eligible to retire.

Facing substantial change, senior officials are renewing their focus on improving services, outcomes and performance by modernizing their organizations. However, they also know from prior experience that it does not always work to bring private sector practices into government without modification.

Although both private and public sector leaders understand the importance of formal planning and operating flexible enterprises, they approach innovation and change differently (see Figure 1).

How can leaders facilitate change?

Government leaders are now using modeling frameworks to look at their organizations in more detail and view them as collections of activities, skills, resources, and infrastructures. An example of this organizational decomposition process is what we call component business modeling (CBM) and involves creating a model of an organization’s parts, which can be used to understand the gaps between strategy and operations.
Building a component model, or business map, enables managers to frame decisions based on the broader perspective of the entire organization and helps them identify those areas that, if changed, offer the greatest opportunity for improvement or innovation.

**What can be gained from business mapping analysis?**

Leaders within departments or agencies can use a business mapping analysis to create an objective, high-level, prioritized view of what has to change in an organization. Participants can understand the implications and ripple effects of proposed changes – such as what should be changed sooner rather than later – and can identify which agencies would be affected.

Management accumulates empirical data useful for decision making that offers both transparency and traceability of information and thinking. Such data helps address crucial questions about how particular decisions were made. What were the criteria? And, why did initiatives not receive funding?

The decision making process is enhanced. For example, multiple layers of officials can participate in a structured way in decision making and learn how to reach key decisions. Leaders and managers can begin to tackle problems throughout the organization and address all the usual dependencies and handoffs that must be dealt with. Investments in people, systems and other assets can be driven by and aligned with the most compelling requirements of an agency or department.

**Formal techniques are enhancing collaboration**

Civilian and military leaders have long embraced formal managerial techniques to operate their complex organizations. In recent years, using techniques to describe their organizations as components of a large administrative ecosystem is proving useful in a broad range of circumstances. The move to such tools is evident globally.

When entire governments have to collaborate at operational levels, commonly used techniques can be applied, as demonstrated by the experiences of members of the European Union, and by militaries and border management agencies that need to coordinate their daily activities within a nation, or around the world.

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**Authors**

James W. Cortada, Public Sector Leader, IBM Institute for Business Value

Molly Hamon, Senior Managing Consultant, Technology Strategy practice, IBM Global Business Services

Lisa Yarbrough, Associate Partner, Technology Strategy practice, IBM Global Business Services