

Ten Things Utility Leaders Should Do Now

Bill Gaffi, general manager of Clean Water Services and Mark Knudson, general manager of the Tualatin Valley Water District joined the discussion to outline their ‘top 10’ actions water utilities should be undertaking. These two national and state utility leaders outlined priority utility actions in a ‘David Letterman’ reverse top 10 style.

| | <i>Bill Gaffi</i> <i>Clean Water Services</i> | <i>Mark Knudson</i> <i>Tualatin Valley Water District</i> |
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| #10 | <p>Throw Away The Old Roadmap and Get A New Crystal Ball</p> <p><i>It is risky driving into fog looking through the rear view mirror</i></p> | <p>Know Your Customers</p> <p><i>Our customers want Nordstrom service at Wal-Mart prices...</i></p> |
| #9 | <p>Resilience, Adaptability & Innovation</p> <p><i>Be innovative in technology, regulatory and policy arenas. Test programs and projects routinely to understand underlying assumptions</i></p> | <p>Make Sure Your Customers Know You</p> <p><i>Develop relationships with your customers so they know and understand the service you provide to them</i></p> |
| #8 | <p>Build a Culture and Brand for the Future</p> <p><i>Clean Water Services’ reengineering reduced the ratio of employees to customers by 58%, while increasing service and treatment plant performance</i></p> | <p>Build Partnerships</p> <p><i>There are opportunities between all water and wastewater utilities to build both capital project and operating partnerships</i></p> |
| #7 | <p>Start Saving Now – You Are Going To Need The Money...</p> <p><i>Need to save money in addition to finding additional capital</i></p> <p><i>Consider a serious, serious reengineering of your business practices; use pride, not fear, to motivate</i></p> | <p>Embrace Sustainability As a Way of Business</p> <p><i>A triple bottom line review must be incorporated into all decisions and initiatives</i></p> |
| #6 | <p>Beware of Computer Priests...</p> <p><i>Be extremely careful of</i></p> | <p>Update your Asset Management Plan</p> <p><i>What is your utility already doing</i></p> |

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| | <p><i>information management projects – one of the leading causes of senior management termination</i></p> | <p><i>around capital planning that can incorporate asset management principles? Remember, you don't have to do it all at once...</i></p> |
| #5 | <p>Don't be the employer of last resort</p> <p><i>Pay employees more where possible; find smart, capable, change-hungry people to hire</i></p> <p><i>It is a poor bureaucrat that can't frustrate the best ideas</i></p> | <p>Update your Information Technology Plan</p> <p><i>Technology offers an opportunity for innovation; find the right balance of innovation and providing good services</i></p> |
| #4 | <p>Harness the Power of Working Together</p> <p><i>Tree planting programs, watershed restoration, and water conservation efforts should be aggregated across the watershed</i></p> | <p>Have a Resiliency Preparedness Plan</p> <p><i>The plan must include the infrastructure part, along with communication for employees and customers - - think about the planning and training needed</i></p> <p><i>This will morph into an 'all hazards' response plan</i></p> |
| #3 | <p>Let Mother Nature Give you a Helping Hand</p> <p><i>Use wetlands, recycled water, tree plantations, and other natural systems to treat wastewater. Build public amenities into treatment systems. Take advantage of water quality trading opportunities.</i></p> | <p>Focus on Work Force Development</p> <p><i>The water industry is aging; invest in work force development. 67% of organizations lack a development plan for their staff. Maintain your staff as well as your equipment</i></p> |
| #2 | <p>Invest for the future</p> <p><i>Recover water, energy, and nutrients for a sustainable future.</i></p> <p><i>Consider PERS obligations, get better returns for your savings, start funding earthquake and emergency readiness</i></p> | <p>Rethink Your Financial Plan</p> <p><i>A 5-year financial plan doesn't serve a 50-year infrastructure investment</i></p> <p><i>Develop multi-year rate strategies</i></p> <p><i>Affordability must be addressed</i></p> |
| #1 MOST | <p>Find partnerships</p> | <p>Recommit to quality</p> |

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| IMPOR TANT TIP FOR WATER UTILITI ES | <p><i>Consider the role of the water utility in resource conservation and community public health</i></p> <p><i>Understand the nexus of human health, environmental health, and public health. What are the options for partnering with health care agencies?</i></p> | <p><i>Public confidence in water service is critical. Consider Flint, Michigan or Portland toxic air quality issues.</i></p> |
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