Enhancing Organizational Culture Through Performance-Based Metrics

JTA’s Enterprise Metrics Management System (JEMMS) becomes Adaptive Measurements for Enterprise Level Insight and Optimization (AMELIO)

CASE STUDY

JACKSONVILLE TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

viewpoint

opinion

JTA Vision Video

The Florida Times-Union

Wheels turn on a transport center

JTA is making improving
towards a better future

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Our Core Values

Professional excellence

→ A safe work environment

Personal integrity

→ Transparency to the public

Fiscal responsibility

→ Continuous improvement

Accountability

“JTA Vision Video” 1st Place

Pan American

Executive Expo
Enhancing Organizational Culture

CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Changing the Culture

When Nathaniel P. Ford Sr. became Chief Executive Officer of the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) in 2012, he inherited low morale among company employees and an opaque data-gathering system. From the onset, Ford’s goal was to turn the agency around by enhancing customer satisfaction and strengthening stakeholder confidence in the 60-year-old system. The tools he brought with him that would turn the mid-sized agency into one of the best in the United States in less than five years, was a wealth of experience gained from serving at the helm of two of the 10 largest transportation systems in North America – the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency and the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority.

Ford was also knowledgeable about every aspect of transit operations from working his way up from train conductor to the management level at the country’s largest organization, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority in New York.

For Ford, known throughout the industry as a change agent and visionary leader, the mission to transform the JTA was an irresistible challenge that he immediately went to work on. He brought with him 12 “Characteristics of Leadership” for each employee to strive to exhibit. In 2013, JTA issued its first scorecard, titled “JTA On Track,” designed to get the Authority on mission. The scorecard was based on five goal areas that everyone in the Authority needed to focus on for the common good. They were:

- Financial Stability
- Customer Satisfaction
- Mobility
- Safety and Security
- Employee Success

Ford’s vision resulted in restructuring the JTA’s leadership team, breaking down silos between departments to foster a culture of collaboration and shared responsibility, enhancing employee morale and boosting customer satisfaction.

“Improving the Authority’s performance begins with constant evaluation, holding each other accountable, working together as a team, ensuring everyone has access to accurate data, analyzing it, and then pushing ourselves to deliver the best in class service possible for our customers and the community.

- Nathaniel P. Ford Sr., CEO

From left: Cleveland Ferguson III, Senior Vice President for Administration/CAO, Chuong To, Maintenance Employee of the Year; Nathaniel P. Ford Sr., CEO; Michele Lewis, Bus Operator of the Year; Chad Starling, Don Chapman Safety Award winner; and Rita Hutton, Administrative Employee of the Year.
Introducing the JTA Enterprise Metrics Management System (JEMMS) to Enhance Culture

In July 2015, JTA upped the ante, increasing its use of technology and data management to improve operational efficiencies by providing every employee a stake in the Authority’s success. One year later, the JTA Enterprise Metrics Management System, or JEMMS®, was born.

Designed to drive strategy and efficiency, provide greater transparency to the public and front-line employees, and drive alignment in all functional areas and employee behavior, JEMMS links JTA’s organizational goals by tying departmental scorecards to shared metrics and then assigning a small number of these metrics to each employee. Success in employee metrics was tied to departmental success, which greatly benefited the organization by focusing the staff’s workflow and significantly improving the likelihood of the Authority achieving its annual goals. Employees could see how their efforts drove the success of the business which subsequently impacted mid-year reviews and annual merit-based increases.

Tying the organizational scorecard and making it the CEO’s scorecard by having the Board of Directors annually approve the goals, metrics and targets within it, each member of the Executive Leadership Team would be responsible for his or her division scorecard which comprised the functional metrics in the organizational scorecard. This was followed by managers of each department owning a discreet set of metrics from the division scorecard. Finally, employees would be assigned between two and six metrics of their respective departmental scorecard.

Technology makes it possible to track progress monthly and in a way that rolls up to a dashboard.

“The more employees can understand how their work inures to the benefit of the agency’s mission, vision, core values, goals and objectives, the more likely organizational culture will identify the weakpoints and be able to solve for and present solutions to ensure annual measures will be met.”

- Cleveland Ferguson III SVP/CAO

Figure 2: Examples of Dashboards and JEMMS Scorecards and Work Flow
The dashboard is accessible to the JTA Board and the public, who in turn can evaluate and assess staff’s progress. Process improvements, costs saved and other efficiencies gained that are not tracked on the dashboard are readily accessible in tracking containers: software programming that allows users to document operational and financial efficiencies that are later verified by business intelligence personnel before an employee receives credit for the process improvement.

Technology enhances the ability of staff to make more informed decisions and shift resources where needed without a large lag between cause of the issue and its discovery.

In 2017, upon staff recommendation, the Board revised the JTA’s Vision and Mission statements and Core Values, and reprioritized and/or elaborated on the goal areas that include:

- Safety and Security
- Customer Satisfaction
- Employee Success
- Financial Stability
- Organizational Efficiency & Effectiveness
- Transformative Mobility Solutions
- Sustainability

At the same time, Ford established a Business Intelligence and Data Analysis department to analyze data in support of initiatives within core departments and to create a single source of data truth. Armed with three years’ worth of JEMMS data, staff began to identify areas for improvement, determined that certain goals had been met and identified new ones, making the JEMMS process a tool for constant refinement and improvement.

However, JEMMS was missing one key area: employees in the bargaining units representing the majority of JTA employees. With both International Association of Machinists (IAM) and Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) contracts expiring in 2017, the situation had to change.

Employees have calculated millions in costs avoided across all divisions, saved hundreds of thousands of dollars in securing goods and services below budget, realized tens of thousands in non-farebox revenue and improved hundreds of processes throughout the JTA since 2016 as a result of measuring performance.

I often say that when you can measure what you are speaking about, and express it in numbers, you know something about it; but when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meagre [sic] and unsatisfactory kind; it may be the beginning of knowledge, but you have scarcely, in your thoughts, advanced to the stage of science, whatever the matter may be.

- Lord Kelvin, physicist, May 3, 1883

JTA’s Labor Unions Buy Into Cultural Shift

The mandate from the JTA Board and CEO was to include performance metrics in both union contracts and to do so on the first contract ratification vote. Aside from being members of the bargaining unit, these were JTA employees with as much of a stake in the success of the Authority as administrative employees. Ridership was trending down. Any increases in pay had to be tied to measurable results. How else could pay increases be justified to customers if the Authority was not turning on all cylinders?

The JTA negotiating team decided first to tackle negotiations with IAM, the smaller of the two unions. The key element for the team was to use technology to turn big data into smart data. What were the facts with respect to absenteeism, safety and performance? The JTA needed to get beyond the anecdotes typically expressed across the bargaining table.

In negotiating with the two locals, the JTA used technology to automate more than 350,000 data points, including those on wage rates, benefits, deductions, turnover percentages and years of service. That was important because Union members first and foremost are JTA employees. The Authority needed to put the negotiating team in the best position to meet the requests of union leadership while maintaining firm control of the budgetary limits within which the team was operating. Balancing those along with JTA’s non-financial operational needs was essential.

JTA was able to cut weeks of analysis into days, running multiple models in real time under the tense back-and-forth circumstances that come with the negotiations territory. The real-time use of technology kept both sides at the bargaining table and considerably shortened the length of time it took to achieve a viable collective bargaining agreement for negotiations.

On the first vote, the locals of both the IAM and ATU agreed to metrics in the areas of performance, safety and attendance, placing a percentage of their earnings at risk. Management obtained effective measures that can be adjusted as the needs of the Authority change, while the represented employees have the opportunity to maximize their wages—all within budget.

Both administrative employees and represented employees are now being held accountable for the JTA’s annual goals. Technology enabled this win-win for the Authority and should represent a reliable path forward for bargaining in the public transportation industry.

Examples of recognition inspired by JTA’s performance management-focused culture
MOVING TO NEAR REAL-TIME ANALYSIS TO PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS AS JEMMS® BECOMES AMELIO®

Any agency can start a similar performance management system by turning its big data into spreadsheets with pivot tables. Eventually, all relevant systems can be tied together, with external-facing user interfaces, to suit the audience, such as the Board and public.

While administrators and technologists are concerned about back-of-house functions, everyone cares that the data remains automated, accurate, accessible and capable of being audited. Once staff puts in the time to stand up the process, the ability to analyze the data becomes limited only by individual queries.

JEMMS Becomes AMELIO

In FY 2019, JTA launched AMELIO: Adaptive Measurements for Enterprise Level Insight and Optimization. AMELIO is JTA’s single source of analytics. Built by JTA staff, the system is designed to scale from the smallest transit systems to the largest transportation companies.

Employees are still able to monitor the shared metrics and are incentivized to remain innovative in being efficient with their budgets. For example, every employee is required to track costs saved, costs avoided, and process improvements implemented. This is a core of JTA’s enterprise metrics management system process as it promotes the most efficient delivery of services.

To ensure accuracy and accountability for all measures, AMELIO includes an approval workflow for all tracking containers and scorecards.

All reports are centralized and searchable in AMELIO’s desktop and mobile applications to allow information to be readily available for decision making.

However, with AMELIO, the JTA will transition from viewing its progress on KPIs and milestones on a monthly basis to near real-time analysis. AMELIO will gradually allow for direct feeds of all JTA’s systems into these single dashboards. For example, JTA’s technology department can monitor all totems across its Bus Rapid Transit network, already the largest in the Southeast, minimizing any downtime in customer information.

AMELIO combined with other predictive tools, arm JTA employees with the ability to assure customer satisfaction in the safest way possible.

All of this serves to strengthen an organizational culture that is accountable for JTA’s Vision, Mission and Core Values with increased transparency. It also helps ensure the adaptability of the workforce by putting them in the position to be a productive part of, if not leading, the transformation of the industry.

The JTA now offers these tools and services through Jax Transit Innovation, Corp. (JTI), JTA’s public benefit corporation to maximize taxpayer investment. Staff from JTA have also held briefings and trainings with other transit agencies to assist in the quality of data analytics for small, mid-size and large agencies. To learn more about any of these tools and their availability to your agency, please contact Cleveland Ferguson at cferguson@jtafla.com.

In FY 2019, the JTA launched AMELIO: Adaptive Measurements for Enterprise Level Insight and Optimization as the Authority’s single source of analytics. JTA is linking all of its primary systems into this software platform that will allow near real-time analysis of all of its major functions. This technology is scalable for small, mid-size and large transit agencies.

Figure 4: 2019 AMELIO Analytic User Interfaces
Since 2013, the Jacksonville Transportation Authority has worked to refine its processes to maximize productivity in achieving its annual goals. This chart represents JTA’s approach to deploying the workforce in a systematic way to drive operational efficiency and effectiveness across all lines of the business.

Accountable for our work at every level, regular oversight and insight into operations, awareness and management of enterprise risks that are keyed to organizational success are hallmarks for how the Authority delivers on its Transformational Initiatives. The Blueprint for Transportation Excellence (BTE) sets forth the Program Areas the JTA will use through 2022. The Transformational Initiatives focus on annual progress in the respective Program Areas. AMELIO keeps track of this integrated process in a near real-time manner.
BOARD COMMITTEE ALIGNMENT

Goal Areas are keyed to Transformative Initiative Milestones. The JTA Board of Directors exercise oversight through board committees. Board committee work and policy guidance generally fall along the lines of the Goal Areas below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAFETY AND SECURITY (SaS)</th>
<th>CUSTOMER SATISFACTION (CS)</th>
<th>EMPLOYEE SUCCESS (ES)</th>
<th>FINANCIAL STABILITY (FS)</th>
<th>ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS (OEE)</th>
<th>TRANSFORMATIVE MOBILITY SOLUTIONS (TMS)</th>
<th>SUSTAINABILITY (S)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure safety and security throughout the transportation system and in the Authority work environment</td>
<td>Deliver a superior and reliable customer experience</td>
<td>Strengthen workforce through professional development opportunities that enhance knowledge, skills and leadership abilities</td>
<td>Ensure long-term financial sustainability</td>
<td>Attain the highest level of agency performance</td>
<td>Deliver innovative transportation choices providing accessible mobility throughout the community</td>
<td>Advance transportation solutions that support environmental goals and are mindful of the context of our community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Safety, Audit and Compliance Committee
Service Delivery Committee
Finance and Administration Committee
Finance and Administration Committee
Investment Committee
Long Range Planning and System Development Committee
Long Range Planning and System Development Committee

TRANSFORMATIVE INITIATIVES

The Blueprint for Transportation Excellence (BTE) includes the five Program Areas that have been identified along with the specific Transformative Initiatives in those program areas. Each year, milestones are developed to advance and track these efforts within the Transformative Initiatives. Also, as the plan is implemented, additional Transformational Initiatives may be added to the plan, but the Program Areas will remain constant until there is a comprehensive update of the BTE. The Program Areas and associated Transformative Initiatives are shown in the chart below. The AMELIO metrics support the completion of these Transformative Initiatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAM AREAS</th>
<th>TRANSFORMATIVE INITIATIVES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION | • JACKSONVILLE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION CENTER  
• REGIONAL TRANSIT NETWORK |
| TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION | • ULTIMATE URBAN CIRCULATOR (U²C)  
• ALTERNATIVE AND INNOVATIVE SERVICE DELIVERY  
• STRATEGIC TECHNOLOGY PLAN |
| TRANSIT SYSTEM ENHANCEMENT | • FIRST COAST FLYER BUS RAPID TRANSIT  
• JOINT USE AND TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT |
| TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE | • JTAMOBILITYWORKS  
• CUSTOMER AMENITIES |
| ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT | • WORKFORCE OF TOMORROW |
The JTA has enjoyed a series of annual successes due to a constant focus on enhancing organizational culture.

**JEMMS BECOMES AMELIO: ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ENHANCED MISSION ACCOMPLISHED**

The JTA Enterprise Metrics Management System (JEMMS) provided the methodology for how the organization connected employee performance with Authority-wide objectives approved by the JTA Board of Directors. Conceived in 2016, the JTA implemented the concept of shared metrics cascading from the Board’s annual workplan for the CEO and the Authority to each employee through their employee performance management system. With the assistance of Perforata, LLC, JEMMS also developed tracking containers so that employees across sectors could also share in the development of agency efficiencies. The containers allowed for tracking of costs saved, costs avoided, processes improved, processes innovated and any unbudgeted projects were also tracked.

With the in-house development of Adaptive Measurement for Enterprise Level Insight and Optimization (AMELIO) launched in 2019, JTA is accelerating its analytics with near real-time analytics. This helps the JTA to remain best in class and deliver some of the most high-profile projects in the country for the benefit of Northeast Florida’s economy and quality of life. AMELIO can scale to fit small, mid-sized and large agencies to help them enhance a performance-based culture.
Any agency can start a similar performance management system by turning its big data into spreadsheets with pivot tables. Eventually, all relevant systems can be tied together, with external-facing skins, to suit the audience, such as the Board and public.

1. Employees can monitor the shared metrics and are incentivized to remain innovative and budget savvy.
2. This core enterprise metrics management system process promotes the most efficient delivery of services.

Jax Transit Innovation, Corp. (JTIC)

JTA now offers these tools and services through JTIC’s public benefit corporation to maximize taxpayer investment. Staff from JTA have also held seminars and trainings of other transit agencies to assist in the quality of data analytics for small, mid-size and large agencies.
Change starts from the top.

- Buy-in from the top is essential if a performance measurement system is to impact the culture of the organization.

Goal-setting should be informed by those responsible for achieving them.

- Teams and managers should have mid-year and annual retreats to propose the annual goals for the succeeding year.
- Employees have to know the direction being charted to buy in.

Incentives are key motivators, but they must be tied to attainable goals.

- Establishing a minimum, target and a stretch goal (a maximum) better ensures cultural focus on achieving the metric over a single target. Missing a single target by tenths or hundredths of a point can be demoralizing, particularly when any merit-based compensation is at stake.
- Goals need to be attainable to have the cultural change desired. Keep the distance between percentages used to assess the measures (minimum, target and maximums) consistent.

Establish a baseline, but when the target is set stick with it until the end of the reporting period.

- Do not be afraid to establish baselines based on Year 1 of trying it out. Once the baseline is established, that becomes the target for Year 2. Managers should be focused on achieving the maximum goal, such that if a unit (or an employee) only makes the target, success is still achieved.
- Moving the goalposts during the evaluation period will undermine confidence in the entire performance management system.
- Similarly awarding incentives even when the minimum goals are not met could result in the targets not being taken seriously.

Make Big Data Smart Data.

- Agencies are overwhelmed with data. Verify the data, its sources and agree on how and whether it should be used based on the credibility of the sources.
- Automate as many of the processes that transmit the data from the source to the scorecard or dashboard. This increases the confidence in the reliability of the data.
- Integrate the analysis of the data into other key processes of the organization.
- Balance the timeline for determining targets with the budget approval process and personnel decisions to achieve them. If a target is consistently not being met, this is not a cause for alarm. It is a cause for analysis that should help decision-makers determine whether budgetary and/or personnel adjustments need to be made, not merely writing off the target as unattainable and deleting it from the scorecard. Analytics should help inform budgetary decisions beyond financial considerations.
AMELIO: JTA’s Single Source for Analytics

Tracking Department Performance

- JTA On-Track-Scorecard first introduced in 2013.
- JTA Enterprise Metrics Management System introduced in 2015.
- Amelio, released in 2019, is the next evolutionary step in metrics management.

Detailed Data for Informed Analysis

- Amelio serves as a repository for data across the agency.
- Users can access reports prepared by departments agency wide.
- Data is collected across departments and platforms for efficient data analysis.

Data Visualization

- Data visualization is the key to making data informed business decisions.
- Interactive visual comparison of cross-department data.
- Highlight potential trends and relationships affecting the agency.

Scorecard: JTA - FY19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer Satisfaction</th>
<th>Potential Points 185</th>
<th>Actual Points 127</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On-Time Performance (Total Route)</td>
<td>15.05%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Flights Between Terminals</td>
<td>99.00%</td>
<td>99.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Passengers per Flights</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Satisfaction</td>
<td>90.90%</td>
<td>80.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Passengers per Flight</td>
<td>95.00%</td>
<td>85.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Satisfaction</td>
<td>90.00%</td>
<td>80.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MISSION STATEMENT

“To improve Northeast Florida’s economy, environment and quality of life by providing safe, reliable, efficient and sustainable multimodal transportation services and facilities.”