



Miami-Dade County: Becoming a Results-Oriented Government with ActiveStrategy Enterprise™

A Case Study | 2007

301 E. Germantown Pike • East Norriton, PA 19401 • 484.690.0700 • www.activestrategy.com

Executive Summary

Miami-Dade County, located in Southern Florida, is home to an extremely diverse population of 2.3 million residents. Because many areas of the sprawling county are unincorporated, its government must provide a wider range of services to many of its residents than most counties do. With budgets in excess of \$4 billion and 30,000 employees in almost 60 departments and offices, managing and governing this diverse and changing county is no small proposition.

In 2004, Miami-Dade County's leadership recognized that it needed a way to more efficiently communicate its most important objectives and to effectively review and manage performance across the breadth and depth of the organization. To address the need for improved alignment, visibility, and scalability, Miami-Dade County began searching for a powerful, connected solution.

"There were two important reasons why we chose to work with ActiveStrategy. The first was how quickly we became comfortable with the expertise and experience of the ActiveStrategy team and the second was that the look and feel of their product was extremely consistent with our strategic management framework. It seemed like it had been built to do exactly what we needed it to do," commented Ray Scher, the Assistant Director for Miami-Dade County's Office of Strategic Business Management.

Since implementing ActiveStrategy Enterprise™ (ASE) and working closely with the ActiveStrategy strategic management consulting team, the county has achieved tremendous alignment to their strategic plan, improved visibility into performance, and better overall business outcomes. In fact, Miami-Dade County was named the Overall Performance Management award winner by The Performance Institute and The Council for Excellence in Government in 2007.

Balanced Scorecard-Based Business Reviews

Once initial training efforts were well underway, the county institutionalized the use of its strategy execution system with Balanced Scorecard-based business reviews – meaningful performance discussions that allow participants to examine underlying problems and indicators of future success. A countywide mandate for regular business reviews ensured that departments were using this new performance framework along with the enabling software effectively. Business reviews were now being conducted by clicking through the actual ASE software, which allowed teams to spot performance gaps in key strategic areas, then click to reveal underlying causes, and easily check up on progress of improvement efforts – all during a single meeting. These proved to be much more productive than previous county business reviews, during which discussions tended to be more superficial, since access to deeper information was not at hand.

To gain an even greater benefit from these ASE-enabled meetings, the county devised a two-tiered business review structure: tier one consists of monthly reviews at the department level, conducted by the department director; tier two is the quarterly business review conducted by the Assistant County Managers in the County Manager's Office, which generally focuses on a single strategic area (e.g. Public Safety, Recreation and Culture, Transportation, etc). Data validity, measure relevance, and alignment are the main topics of discussion, along with initiatives to correct underperforming measures.

To overcome the obstacle of scheduling these reviews within such a large and complex organization, Mr. Burgess created "Strategic Meeting Days" – to be held on the third Friday of each month. Designating a specific, pre-determined day for these reviews not only emphasized their importance, but has also placed them as regular, recurring meetings on county executives' calendars. The first of these business reviews was conducted on January 27, 2006.

On Strategic Meeting Day, each department holds its business review, and on the Strategic Meeting Day that falls at the end of a fiscal quarter, Assistant County Managers conduct a business review with all of their reporting departments in attendance. Assistant County Managers and their staffs also rotate among the various department-level business reviews in between the higher-level quarterly reviews.

Thanks to these Strategic Meeting Days, which are facilitated by ASE software, the county has been able to conduct deeper and more beneficial reviews of performance, allowing key managers to focus not only on how they have been performing to date, but much more importantly on where performance levels need to be and how they will get there.

Mr. Burgess remarked, "ActiveStrategy Enterprise software enables business review meetings to be conducted in a format where all the information is easy to share for consideration and feedback."

The Benefits

By working with ActiveStrategy and deploying ASE software, Miami-Dade County has been able to become more focused, on track, and aligned with its strategic goals and performance objectives, all the way down and across the 30,000-employee organization. Through the process of cascading and reviewing the Balanced Scorecards through the many departments and areas, individual employees have gained a much greater understanding of their own roles in driving the organization's performance.

Another important benefit has been that the county has become less silo-oriented, because the system helps shed light on the cross-functional issues that contribute toward higher-level performance. By making these visible, the county's operating units can more clearly understand priorities and see how their focused efforts are impacting critical outcomes. "It's absolutely essential to get multiple departments working together in order to actually execute strategy, and this is now much more achievable," explained Corinne Brody, the Special Assistant, Strategic Management Initiatives for Miami-Dade County.

The use of ASE has also significantly improved performance data collection and reporting, as individual departments are inputting data in a systematic, standardized fashion, and have retained historical performance measurements in a centralized database. The executive staff is now able to query information at various levels of detail within specific strategic areas or by individual departments. ASE has also enabled more comprehensive analysis of data collected by strategic areas and by individual county departments. This capability has enhanced performance improvement through the implementation of an "initiative process" that can more quickly address performance gaps of underperforming measures.

The county is currently cascading Balanced Scorecards within ASE down to all applicable business units within the organization. Additionally, Miami-Dade is working with the ActiveStrategy strategic management consulting team to strengthen the understanding of performance management concepts to all levels of management. Mr. Burgess explained, "Overall, I am very pleased with the progress we are making. I realize that this is not an overnight process given the sheer size and scope of the county. But with continued effort and commitment from all of us, I am confident that a culture of results-driven government will prevail."

The look and feel of their product was extremely consistent with our strategic management framework. It seemed like it had been built to do exactly what we needed it to do.

All trademarks are properties of their respective owners. ActiveStrategy reserves the right to modify any information herein without notification. This document may not be reproduced without express permission from ActiveStrategy. Copyright 2007 ActiveStrategy, Inc. All rights reserved.