

Executive Brief: Government Executive/Dun & Bradstreet Event

Achieving Improved Performance Through Efficiency and Innovation

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Decide with Confidence

Discussions of transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, and innovation within the government have taken place throughout Congress, federal agencies, and even the private sector for years—yet these discussions have become far more prominent in post-Great Recession years. In the time of budgetary constraints, and the need to both increase performance and decrease costs, it has become a government standard to do more with less. Given the importance of these issues, Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) sponsored a Government Executive event in Washington, D.C. entitled *Achieving Improved Performance through Efficiency and Innovation*. Executives from across an array of federal agencies gathered to hear perspectives on accountability, transparency, and mission value from top OMB officials and a panel of speakers with different perspectives on this relevant topic.

Focus on Efficiency – OMB

The keynote presentation focused on Office of Budget and Management’s key initiatives on efficiency and effectiveness. It addressed OMB’s efforts to achieve optimum performance and value for citizens, and the administration’s effort to reorganize trade and business-related functions within the federal government. The keynote was presented by **Lisa Brown**, the Executive Director, Government Reform for Competitiveness and Innovation Initiative at OMB and **Danny Werfel**, Controller of the Office of Federal Financial Management at OMB.

Werfel began the keynote by discussing the ongoing program to cut waste in government in order to improve efficiency. Throughout his long career within the government, he has spent a great portion of it tackling government performance and management, and is currently responsible for coordinating OMB’s efforts to initiate government-wide improvements in all areas of financial management. There are a number of initiatives present within the federal government to improve efficiency and effectiveness, reduce costs, and increase accountability. His examples included the Improper Payments Initiative—in which the government was able to prevent twenty billion dollars in error over the last two years—and the importance of technology and data in tracking error and risk management. Danny also used the government real estate inventory as another example of how they have enabled \$1.5 billion in savings across government.

Brown presented the second half of the keynote and focused on the recent presidential initiative to reorganize government functions. As President Obama has recently stated the need to bring the government into the 21st century, Lisa also highlighted the need of all government agencies to operate effectively, and efficiently, and in a way that enables innovation. Another key topic was the ability to navigate the complex system of the federal government. For small businesses, Lisa stated “the structure of government ...is just a maze.” There is a considerable amount of overlap among agencies, and although they have an unparalleled level of cooperation and coordination, there are redundancies and areas for cost reduction.

Keynote Presentation - “Focus on Efficiency - OMB”

Lisa Brown, Executive Director, Government Reform for Competitiveness and Innovation Initiative, OMB
Danny Werfel, Controller of the Office of Federal Financial Management, OMB

Panel Discussion - “Focus on Innovation - Agency Solutions”

John Gardner, Senior Technical Advisor (Medical Informatics), Office of Information Management, FDA
Patrick Kelley, Senior Advisor to the Associate Administrator, Office of Capital Access, SBA
Mike Mayhew, Chief Special Operation of Verification Division, USCIS
Don Salo, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Export Enforcement, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce

“We’re doing things with more frugality and austerity, and that is not only about having the accountability to do it, but also the tools within your agencies, the internal controls, the data, the governance to be able to deploy these types of culture changes.”

Danny Werfel

“In the last thirty, forty years reorganizations absent of crisis have become extraordinarily difficult to do.”

Lisa Brown

The administration has decided to propose an initiative to gain consolidation authority to reorganize the trade and competitive government agencies. The President, for the first time, will actually require that every legislative proposal reduce the number of agencies or save costs. This initiative will help businesses create jobs, support innovation, and ensure government agencies are working to expand exports through the consolidation of major trade and business agencies. This new agency will have a trade and investment arm, small business arm, innovation and technology arm, and a statistics arm—all focused on helping businesses and driving economic growth. In essence, this creates a one stop shop for businesses—decreasing overhead while increasing efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability.

"This new agency would enhance the President's ability to meet his export goals, considerably enhance our services for businesses and encourage job growth in this country. None of this is easy. Reorganizations are not easy, but this is a time when given the fiscal constraints we're under, it seems that it is yet another mechanism that the governments need to be able to take advantage of if we're going to operate as effectively and efficiently as we can."

Lisa Brown

Focus on Innovation – Agency Solutions

The panel discussion brought together speakers from four government agencies to share effective, innovative tools they use to provide accountability, transparency, and mission value. **John Gardner** is currently Senior Technical Advisor to the CIO in the Office of Information Management at FDA; **Patrick Kelley** is the Senior Advisor to the Associate Administrator of SBA's Office of Capital Access; **Michael Mayhew** is the Chief of Special Operations for Verification Division within USCIS, and **Don Salo** is currently the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Export Enforcement at Department of Commerce.

Each panelist brought a unique perspective to efficiency and innovation. One commonality among the agencies was the need to deal with data on a massive scale—data with high levels of scrutiny and high levels of risk. Each agency utilizes this data differently, through the use of business identifiers, scorecards and reporting mechanisms. For example, Don Salo, who served as Assistant Director for the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board, highlighted partnering with D&B to develop scorecards to analyze elements such as bankruptcies, high risk, shell companies, and connections between entities, as well as utilizing scoring and heat maps. Dashboards can be effective tools for communication with both citizens and other agencies. Michael Mayhew also stated the importance of data analytics, but for employees or employers who are registering with the e-Verify system, and the need to track both activity and people.

The panelists also discussed the continual need for transparency. Don Salo's experience at the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board has become a model for other agencies in terms of transparency, and currently stresses how technology such as the iPad and iPhone has enabled further transparency in government. Patrick Kelley shared how the SBA has taken proactive steps towards managing its loan programs, and how the biggest challenge to the SBA is managing to zero subsidy in a risk management environment—and this requires deep data analytics. John Gardner, and the FDA in its entirety, has viewed transparency as imperative—from the ability to search for drugs on the FDA website to the availability of drug manufacturing site information. John also stated the need of companies to be transparent with the FDA, and the need for a unique identifier in order to sort through and accurately identify the millions of business entities that handle FDA related products.

Throughout the discussion, the speakers shared examples as to how they have implemented systems that have led to more strenuous oversight within their program areas. In addition, they provided best practices for increasing accountability, transparency, and efficiencies, as well as utilizing innovative data driven approaches to solving their agency challenges.