

The four tenets of Stat:

1. Timely, accurate information shared by all
2. Rapid deployment of resources
3. Effective tactics and strategies
4. Relentless follow-up and assessment

Introduction

Whether it is fighting crime, filling in potholes, or ensuring the trash gets picked up on time, these and a thousand other tasks are the day-to-day operations that make up the work of any city government. Now, thanks to new technologies—primarily, geographic information systems (GIS) and the Internet of Things (IoT)—these issues can all be mapped, managed, and measured with greater speed and accuracy than ever before. Government services can be delivered with greater openness and transparency than ever before. Our governments can operate with greater efficiency and effectiveness than ever before.

“Stat” refers to a performance measurement and management system invented by Jack Maple of the New York City Police Department (NYPD) in 1994, and later implemented at citywide and statewide scales and beyond.

The four tenets of any performance management regimen or Stat system—such as CompStat, CitiStat, StateStat, and others—are:

1. Timely, accurate information shared by all
2. Rapid deployment of resources
3. Effective tactics and strategies
4. Relentless follow-up and assessment

These four tenets are not endpoints. They are the beginning and the way. They are the constant framework of an ongoing search for better and more effective ways of collaborating and getting things done. The pursuit requires constant thought, intellectual curiosity, and leadership that is open to bringing forward the right questions—wherever they might lead.

In any Stat system, the GIS map plays a central, organizing role. It is not just a nice picture or another layer. The map—the geographic information map—becomes not only the integrator of once-separate silos of data, but also the field of action on which effective collaborations and winning plays can be run.

—Martin O’Malley, March 2020



Setting up your system

Setting up your system

In Silicon Valley, people who keep trying new things—even though they sometimes fail—are called innovators and entrepreneurs. In government, people who try new things and fail are fired or voted out of office. Therefore, public administration has developed a very slow, cautious, and risk-averse approach to embracing new technologies. Over the course of time, this approach has created a tyranny of “the way we have always done it” in public service.

In most big cities across America today, call centers and customer service guarantees have become the new normal. In some places, cities are combining historical data with predictive analytics to predeploy tow trucks to the places where minor accidents most frequently happen at rush hour, or deploying police patrol cars to locations represented by tiny squares on the map where crime most frequently happened during the same eight-hour shift over the previous 10 years.

This is the promise of starting Stat.

Getting started

For a successful beginning, there are primarily five trains that need to move down their respective tracks to converge by the time of your first Stat meeting. Each of them is important. They are mutually dependent upon each other. Those actions fall under the categories of **leadership commitment**, **team buy-in**, **performance data submissions**, **building the room**, and **assembling staff**.

We start, and we do not stop.

Week 1

- The **leader** instructs **senior staff** to start setting up the Stat system so the first meeting can be held in Week 11. The difference between a dream and a goal is a deadline.
- The **leader** designates one person—the **Stat director**—to be responsible for setting up and running the Stat operation and office.
- The **leader** directs every member of the **command staff** (such as the deputy mayor, finance director, city solicitor, director of IT, labor commissioner, director of human resources, etc.) to submit year-end reports of any length they choose laying out whatever key performance measures they use internally—in their own **departments'** operations—to know whether they are making progress toward their key objectives, goals, or standards of service delivery. Reports are due by Week 4.
- Together, the **senior staff** select and agree upon the appropriate space for the **Stat Room**. Proximity to the leader's office is important.
- The **leader** and **senior staff** agree on a name for the new system (e.g., CitiStat, ChicagoStat, PerformanceStat).
- One person, designated the Stat Room coordinator, takes responsibility for on-time delivery of the finished **Stat Room**.

Identify key personnel

Leader:

Stat director:

Command staff:

.....

.....

.....

Senior staff:

.....

.....

.....

**Stat Room
coordinator:**

Other personnel:

.....

.....

.....

Stat starts with leadership

The National Governors Association once asked me to share with an incoming group of Republican and Democratic governors the 10 most practical pieces of wisdom that have served me best in governing. Almost all of them were collected from other servant-leader practitioners, most who were experienced executives. Leaders can apply these pieces of wisdom across the span of government. They are important to remember when setting up your Stat system.

1. The things that get measured are the things that get done.
2. Goals and deadlines are the x-axis and y-axis of all human endeavors.
3. Small things done well make bigger things possible.
4. A graph moving in the right direction is the most beautiful achievement in self-governance. The pace of progress is variable and it's negotiable, but the direction of progress is not.
5. Effective leaders make themselves vulnerable. Own the goals of the government you run and the people you lead—no one else will.
6. Whether a large human organization moves forward to achieve meaningful goals depends in large part on whether its leaders and achievers at every level are recognized by the chief executive and by their peers.
7. Everyone must share timely, accurate information about performance and outputs—most importantly, it must be shared with the citizens you serve.
8. Communication, coordination, and collaboration are unnatural acts between nonconsenting adults. Effective leaders create and enforce data-based routines of communication, coordination, and collaboration throughout their government. These routines are the cadences of accountability that only you can set.
9. People make progress; common platforms make it possible. The geographic map of your community, city, or state is your common platform. You must base all your information systems on the map.
10. We are not here to make excuses; we are here to make progress. Repeat this mantra over and over—especially to yourself.