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The Learning Administration - Shaping Change and Taking Off Into the Future

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Abstract **- E-services will change the future of business as well as private relationships. The rearrangement of value chains, new competitive arenas and the growing necessity and interest in overtaking public responsibility by citizens and private enterprises will lead us to new challenges in creating learning organisations and knowledge infrastructures. Precondition for a sustainable model of learning administration is to establish a dynamic environment for creating, sharing and using knowledge. The Knowledge Community Concept can be used as a framework for enabling the learning administration.**

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS IN A STATE OF TRANSFORMATION

The public administration is in a state of transformation. When, for example, we talk about administrations as "virtual" or „lean" or „e" organisations (s. Mintzberg 1996), this is only a small developmental step on the way to a new division of labour between the public side, private business and private households; yet simultaneously it is a big step for the actual practice in many administrative bodies. The public administration will have to face a process of re-distribution of tasks in the light of empty cashdesks, but also under the pressure for a more effective and efficient use of resources and of citizens' needs for more service quality and it will certainly have to continue to face these challenges in the foreseeable future. Thus, public administration will have to re-think its organisational forms, but also its tasks without diminishing fundamental functions such as safeguarding order and safety or securing adequate living conditions.

In other words: Under the assumption that cost reduction, improvement of service quality and a more democratic administration continue to be the aim of public administrations, the question of a re-distribution of labour between the public and the private sector must not be confused with a privatisation for privatisation's sake. Against the background of comprehensive normative objectives such as

- strategic control (efficiency of impacts and outcomes),
- qualitative control (quality of the output),
- political control (e.g. local content),

the performance depth in the public sector must be re-adjusted (s. Naschold et al. 1996). The public sector's model must change towards a stronger service supply without giving up its regulating and balancing functions. Citizens' needs and - interests must be regularly registered, analysed and taken as the basis for administrative decisions (citizen-related market research). Also, citizens' demand position is extended: citizens must be given a choice with regard to public service supply ("consumer choice). Yet, the debate about outsourcing and performance depth seems insufficient to us when it comes to grasping the scope of transformation accelerated by the information society. In his work on "communitarism" as a radical form of a taking on of societal responsibilities by citizens and enterprises, Etzoni (1995) has provided an analysis which re-states the restrictions of public regulating power in a programmatic way: The frontier between public and private sector, between economy as well as self-organisation and self-work are vanishing - also and increasingly in the internet by new forms of interaction. Private "communities of interest" provide professional discussion and information up to the exchange of services and the participation in political processes. There is hardly any municipal administration in the Internet, which does not seek alliance with private providers in the electronic market places. On the way "from the administration of offices to a service organisation" one or the other community turns into an Internet and service provider and competes and co-operates in the role of leadership for regional information systems.

THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC E-SERVICES

Public institutions regularly subject themselves to comparison and exchange in the national and, in the course of comparative achievement associations, increasingly in the international context. Moreover, they establish co-operation networks among themselves in order to jointly use expensive resources such as information technologies and staff. In the context of their achievement relations, public institutions cooperate intensively with private-commercial and private beneficial organisations. By doing so, they develop different models of partnerships in the service as well as the financing sector ("public-private-partnership"). Thus, when referring to public-private-partnerships in the area of communal services, we not only talk about "traditional" areas such as janitor services, the maintenance of buildings, management of green areas or parking lots but also, rather, open up a full spectrum of alternatives, for example through ICTS (s. Pröhl 1997):

- New services through operating models for "electronic villages", offered by regional administrative bodies and private suppliers as, for example, in the case of the European co-operation program TeleRegions (www.teleregions.org) or that of Blacksburg, Virginia (www.bev.net).
- Distance maintenance of communal information systems by contracting-out ICT-related services. For example, Telepolis Antwerpen takes over as a public contribution the complete "life-cycle-management" of the ICT infrastructure. The municipal administration is only responsible for defining service requirements and for public content.
- Communal "information warehouses" facilitates a decentralisation of citizen services or of the social system in partnership with other service providers ("one-stop-shop").
- Commercialisation of communal ICT-services and geographic data (www.fgdc.gov), electronic land registers etc. to enterprises and private households.
- Distance control by private providers as communal contractors, for example through quality safeguarding (e.g. "transparent sewerage installations").
- Computer-supported participation procedures in major plannings with representatives of public interests on to private citizens (for example, in the context of „City 21-Projects" in Germany" or the "electronic neighbourhoods" in Phoenix, Arizona).

- Information partnerships between police and private security services in the case of calamity protection, emergency and alarm systems (mindful that this implies a borderline to the intervention administration).
- Computer-supported management systems for full-capacity use in private and public infrastructural installations, e.g. in the area of large-scale facilities (e.g. the transportation, storage and processing of waste).

Especially municipal administrations are challenged with these developments. Based on an investigation to identify „BestPractices in ServiceEngineering" we have analysed major municipal strategies for developing information society. In our point of view there are two main dimensions to characterise these strategies (s. Figure 1):

- The *ServiceEngineeringProcess* can be described by two different options: Inside-Out means, using internal knowledge and capabilities will lead to a more administration centred, transparent and efficient organisation; creating demand driven Outside-In orientated services will give more emphasis to Public-Private-Partnerships or, what we use to call it Citizen centred Administration.
- The *ServiceEngineeringApproach* makes a fundamental difference between InfoSociety and InfoElite-Strategies. InfoSociety means that there is a strong orientation on a broad usage and a common access to services up to the use of new services for participation and democracy. The assumption of InfoElite is, that we will have a two-step-trigger-down-process in access and usage of e-services: if we are starting now with information and interactive services between municipal organisations and selected/advanced citizens/enterprises this will lead „automatically" to a broad usage later on (trigger-down).

It is obvious that in „living environments" of municipal administrations there are many options for selecting individual strategies within this portfolio, but it makes also clear, that choosing a specific strategy and approach will have specific implications to the overall outcomes and developmental conditions in every region.

Figure 1: E-service-strategies of municipal administrations

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS IN NEW COMPETITIVE ARENAS

According to these assumptions government and public administrations have a particular responsibility for shaping the developmental conditions for new services both by providing its own infrastructural services and by determining the basic conditions. Forms of regulation and deregulation therefore must be examined and further developed with regard to their workability and their contribution to securing the location. This implies the need to reflect upon an optimisation of public services' performance depth, also in the sense of a new definition of the relationship between co-operation and competition between societal self-organisation, public administration and the private economy. The development and shaping of service-orientation, efficiency and effectivity will provide the foundations for this reform process in the future. The above indicates only a restricted selection of possibilities of how one can change the border line between public service and private initiative. Apart from strategic aspects of control, a community's outsourcing-decision implies the necessity to address the following questions on the practical level:

- *Segmentability*: Is it possible to meaningfully separate a certain administrative procedure or process, for example in the shape of an independent "service product"?
- *Completeness*: Is the separated process closed in itself and endowed with few interfaces?
- *Transaction costs*: Have the costs for the outsourcing partner's control and co-ordination been accounted for?
- *Reversibility*: Is there the danger of the community's dependency on a private monopoly?
- *Competing out versus privatisation*: Have alternative options with regard to the public/private interface been examined? Have public suppliers received a chance for competition?
- *Attractivity as employer*: Does the public administration provide attractive and future-oriented prospects for employees? Can the transformation process be shaped in a consensus-oriented way?
- *Cultural* fitting: Do the organisational cultures of the public and private partners match and are both of them culturally and mentally prepared for the citizen-oriented change and the future of public services?

In many private and (still) public service areas, a major part of the clients cannot overlook neither the quality of consulting performances nor the selection mechanisms for new service suppliers due to lacking technical competencies. This produces a to-be-defined demand for public influence on the definition of quality features, for example through standardisation. Moreover, one can expect new forms of controlling access chances, at least to those services indispensable for modern societal exchange processes. Particularly the positive employment effects the designing of new services and outsourcing forms. This will be a gauge for acceptance in relation to the future-oriented public administration's clients and employees. In spite of more than 70 measures for "competing out" public tasks in Indianapolis, Stephen Fantauzo, president of the local union of public employees, expressed optimism with regard to shaping options: "We found a way to make this a win-win-situation" (Time, August 18, 1997).
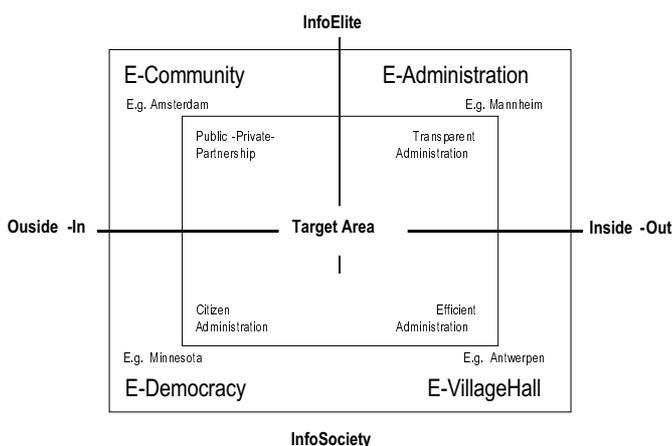
Today we are experiencing a transformation of the public administration into a *demand driven public service organisation*. Driving force is the citizen's or enterprise's need for information and services in their search for a better life or better economic conditions. From this point of view, the service offered today is often insufficient or difficult to access. In order to obtain the desired service, it is very common that several departments and institutions must be contacted, that the information required is not always available and that the process of collecting the information or requesting the service is very time-consuming. Today, at the forefront of applied research there is the development of demand driven e-services as a solution for the improvement of public services. Most important is the question of how to handle the dynamic aspects of demand driven e-services. The service offered as a response to specific questions are not static but operate within a dynamic growing service market. Newspapers, libraries, one-stop-shops and media companies are often engaged in different attempts to establish a portal or develop a general or regional search engine. One of the most challenging aspects of the growing e-market is that they cross the boundaries of all old separations of service areas. From the citizens perspective it is of no interest whether the information originates from the private or public sector in neither childcare nor education, cultural activities or tourist activities, sport activities or health care activities. The citizen is interested in a service that will help in the specific situation, where it is available and its cost.

Design, engineering and management of demand driven services needs a new understanding of resources and intellectual capital within administration and at their interfaces to clients and customers: knowledge and information, their finding, circulation and usage will be the most important success factor for sustainable improvement of service quality. A good example for showing several options to reach these objectives and for concrete steps to do for starting this overall process is the City of Stuttgart, which is close to our institute. In 1995 the City of Stuttgart has launched a program for decentralising citizen services in the metropolitan area as well as for providing services in co-operation with private partners or directly to the citizens at home. This initiative is part of the overall strategy **„*Intelligent City Stuttgart*"** and will provide new systems and services for a user-friendly information society (s. Vöhringer 1998). Part of this masterplan is major activities as follows

- *Interactive ServiceBox for Citizen Services.* The City of Stuttgart has launched a new program for decentralising citizen services in the metropolitan area as well as for providing services directly to the citizens at home. This initiative is part of the overall strategy „Intelligent City Stuttgart" and will provide new systems and services for a user-friendly information society. The aim of „BürgerService Stuttgart" is to provide a multichannel distribution platform for public services. This will include ServiceShops, CallCenterServices, AtHomeAccess and MobileServices using an integrated interactive platform. This common platform will be part of urban knowledge infrastructure encompassing knowledge management and training tools for the empowerment employees to create a user-friendly administration with a human touch.

- *Intelligent Services for Health & Social Service Networks in the City.* The City of Stuttgart is partner of the international WHO network „Healthy City". Its aim is to initiate sustainable processes to improve citizens health and health care processes, to strengthen health care resource management in a new partnerships between citizens and the public and private suppliers of health care services and to exchange experiences between cities and regions. E-services are used for the management of an integrated health & social welfare space concept.

- *E-Commerce in* Public-*Private-Partnerships*. The City of Stuttgart is promoting public-private-partnerships in different areas like health care and social services, mobility and environmental monitoring and ecological consulting. To improve the public/private supplier-consumer-relationships the bundling of public-private-services and their processes is becoming a critical success factor for the quality of services for the customers/citizen. The City of Stuttgart is interested to build up and offer enhanced systems as new mediation platform for the distribution of public-private-services, for commercial exchange and consultation with consumers/citizens.

- *Decentralised Content Management & Production.* The last years „Intelligent City Stuttgart" has built one of the largest Intranets of german cities. More than 5000 employees are able to access and to publish information using this platform. For generating in future more structured and multimedia-based information services the City of Stuttgart will launch some advanced technological projects for designing, publishing and pushing contents in the decentralised responsiveness of the employees (e.g. the InfoCenter Stuttgart, s. figure 2) as well as with the private partnerships.

Figure 2: City of Stuttgart's InfoCenter as an example for knowledge management and Intranet-Services

- *Public Knowledge-based Services in Intra-/Extranets of the city.* The City of Stuttgart is member of a german initiative to promote Business TV and advanced learning systems within cities and urban areas. Furthermore in 1997 the City of Stuttgart has launched an initiative called „SWISS" (Stuttgart Urban Area Intranet for Schools) for the establishment of an area-wide school intranet with more than 2500 Access Points for teachers and pupils. Therefore the City of Stuttgart plans

to implement a specific MediaCenter for providing advanced digital media and learning technologies especially for private and public schools within the urban area.

- *Essential Technologies and Infrastructures Citizen Networks.* Information Society and Media will change and restructure the living and working conditions in Europe. Public administrations are part of this change, but further more they have the duty to take part as promoter and development agent within this process. One of our initial steps in the framework of information society is to promote the participation of citizens within this global change by providing free and/or cheap access in our urban area. For this the City of Stuttgart is still giving selected free access points and is currently undertaking an examination of the technical and economic impacts of different technical possibilities like ADSL, Digital PowerLines, CableNetworks ... This will be the basis for our further decisions and investments into a step forward to information society - and we believe that Cities and Regions will have a chance to stimulate and mediate this process of integration of services on a common platform.

LIFE LONG LEARNING - PRECONDITIONS FOR LEARNING ORGANISATIONS

For taking off into the future of services also in public administrations new individual qualification requirements as well as job outlines and profiles will continue to change dramatically. This results in a new pressure for transformation and adaptation on the entire educational system. Regional and professional mobility results in a decreasing relevance of primary training. A continuous development of one's own competencies becomes necessary. In order to master their lives as well as their futures, increasing numbers of people endowed with earning capacities will have to pass several qualification and advanced-training processes, partly even parallel to each other. As the degree of relevance of stable and long-term defined special qualification decreases, there is increasing demand for key qualifications for services and for concepts for speeding-up traditional educational and job profiles in service-oriented job outlines. Opened-up learning paths and more dynamic job outlines inseparably belong to an extended, modular practice of further education. New ways of professional training and new connections between public education, individual and business-specific paths of further education must be brought into existence. In this respect, combined spaces for learning reflect the growing relevance of learning on the job (*combination of learning and working*) and of private engagement for education apart from learning in educational institutions. In order to meet these requirements, new institutional prior conditions must also be fulfilled.

In the service society, teaching and learning, work and life will be *increasingly (internationally) networked*. The realisation of concepts of lifelong learning in service organisations cannot rely on handed-down and widely solidified learning arrangements. In lifelong learning, the relationship between teacher and learner are reversed: not the knowing person mediates to the person learning what is already known. Rather, those who learn adopt learning objects according to their own demands. Service providers in the area

of learning are, thus, challenged to organise labour- and client-oriented learning arrangements where the person learning can effectively, and in a situation-adequate way acquire, change and extend competencies. This asks for a development and evaluation of technological-organisational solutions for the co-operation between public education, individual learning and vocational training and their testing in practice. In the past years, a great diversity of effective learning methods and approaches to competence development have been created and successfully tested. Their broader realisation and application in service organisations - supported by incentive systems and a motivation-oriented formation of work - is a demand of the future. To meet this demand will necessitate an extensive systematisation of the existing stock of knowledge, but it will also depend on the capabilities of professional/private users who must be enabled to competently cope with media services. Therefore, both the concepts for user-friendly learning media and for the extension of media competence must be developed further. Learning and competence development will, thus, turn into an integral part of a wider transformation process including aspects such as service mentality, client-orientation and entrepreneurship.

Reaching this target we have to redefine measures, methods and approaches for learning environments. "Encouraging users to build the virtual world also helps a community to adapt over time to the changing needs of its members. Themes and patterns emerge and evolve as the user community grows and changes. Users also have a greater sense of ownership in a community, which they have helped, build. These factors help to create a stronger community." (Bruckman 1997). In our companies and organisations knowledge is tied to the people working in their single business environments. The single collaborator turns, through his background of experiences and contacts, into a gatekeeper for a wide spectrum of experiences and knowledge about the company and the environment. Several companies and organisations are already implementing flexible learning concepts for teams and individuals across the levels of their organisational functions and hierarchies. These are innovative models that enhance the lifelong learning process of their employees and for promoting the collective intelligence of a company. On the other hand, the increasing degree of specialisation in some business fields turns employees to outsiders within their firms. In this case the learning community compensates the lack of partners for technical/knowledge exchange and helps the employee to cope with the requirements of lifelong learning.
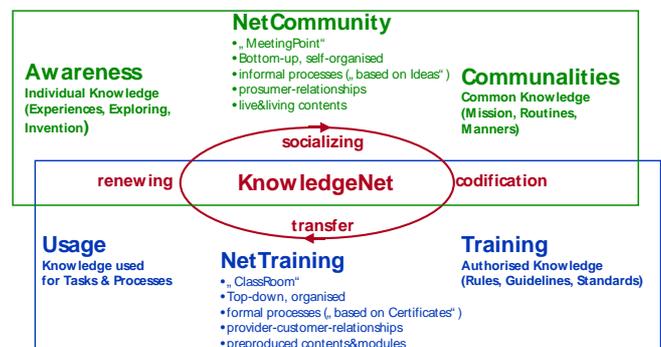

Figure 3: The Knowledge Community Concept for learning organisations

For the company to do good business also in the future it is of utmost importance to have personal that is capable to meet the challenges that the future will bring. For the employees it is important to be knowledgeable and skilful, to be capable to face future challenges in the company, or even acquire other positions later on in life. The *Knowledge Community Concept* has to build up as a professional environment that motivates and enables its members to share their knowledge and thereby supports the learning processes of each member (s. figure 3). This has to be accompanied by the development of personalised services for the users and in compliance with privacy and secrecy aspects. The knowledge community using intra group connections and a common service platform is part of the future knowledge infrastructure within learning organisations (Intranet/Extranet) but also between users of different companies (Extranet/Internet) and between knowledge supplier and user organisations (Internet). It is thus a completion of training processes. The knowledge community process using the technological platform will enable end users to get in touch with other learners/experts in self-organised teams,

- to *exchange* ideas and experiences (experimental community area),
- to *share* knowledge in co-operative learning environments (public community marketplace)
- to build continuous and organised knowledge spaces (project community area, "*communities of practice*") and
- to *enhance and empower* the individual "knowledge space" of the learner (personal knowledge assistant)
- to develop learning processes and tutoring services in a virtually communicating knowledge community.

LEARNING RELATIONSHIPS AS NEW FORMS OF PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS

"State service for citizens is a central element of the democratic and social state under the rule of law. The degree of satisfaction of our 'clients' and the quality of task accomplishment directly influence societal coexistence, individual fates, social harmony and also democratic participation, a fundamental moment of our constitution. Disturbances, deficiencies and client-remoteness of state services can threaten the foundations of societal and state coherence [...] Local authority districts are, by virtue of their closeness to 'real life' the specific state level which performs the concrete work of mediating between state/politics and society [...] The kinds of changes initiated across the federation in many local authority districts, but also in other administrations, really make for public service providers to perform in more goal-oriented, citizen-friendly and cost-aware ways. This could be illustrated by many examples. These changes have a high relevance for our society's future capability and demonstrate that in public service, the willingness to acknowledge as well as the capabilities to master the present and future tasks are increasing. However, we must not lose sight of the specificity of public administrations: they do not have a commercial, but a societal legitimisation. A local administration must not only function well, but must also solve the challenges of coexistence. Categories such as a short-term profit-orientation are inadequate for solving the tasks of a preventive youth politics in social focal points, of politics for the elderly

or of a sustainable development." (Beate Weber, Lord Major of Heidelberg).

Moreover, we are at the beginning of a principal debate about the relationship between the state and the individual. The discussion about communitarism, reaching us from the United States, has already affected many of our European neighbours. Under the slogan "if you want something from the community, you must also give something back to it" classical dividing lines between state and society are transcended in ways that are much more relevant than commercial public/private partnership. For example, in the Smart Valley initiative companies take on responsibility for regional development or citizens do the same thing with regard to local safety. To be sure, not all of these experiences are transferable and transfer may not always be desirable. Yet, in Europe we will also have to engage in a wider debate opened up by the churches under the aspect of the "*civil society*".

One of the great societal challenges will be to shape the change towards a service-oriented society. Political leadership means that the political forces in Europe gain the public's understanding for the importance of services through purposeful campaigns. The status and relevance of the service sector must be reflected in politics' actions and words. We have to perform the societal role of moderation between politics, industry and commerce, and society and sharpen its profile.

FIT FOR SERVICE

As an outcome of the joint public-private initiative „Services for the 21st Century" (www.dl2000.de, s. Bullinger 1998) together with representatives of public administrations, private enterprises, international RTD and governmental institutions we have established the slogan and brand "Fit for service" for describing a service nation capable to succeed in the following areas in a sustainable way: high growth in value addition, high employment growth with a high number of good jobs and high competitiveness in global markets. However, today we still know little about the emergence and development conditions of a growth-oriented service economy on the one hand and the combined effects of these adjusting screws on the other in order to be able to set sustainable impulses for enforcing service growth from the political side or that of private economy.

The goal must be to improve the European service economy's competitiveness by international comparison and to give incentives for an acceleration of the growth dynamics.

For that purpose, other countries' experience potentials in the future field of services should be taken up and evaluated in a systematic way. In this process, *benchmarking* is applied as a tool whose results provide the basis to develop and initiate long-term developmental models for politics and society as well as short-term action programs for all actors:

- *Improvement of the decisional foundations* for future political and economic decisions by a positioning in international comparison ("Where are we today?")
- *acceleration of the growth dynamics*, by taking up other service nations' learning knowledge and transpose them into concepts for action for the service economy ("what can we learn from international 'best practices' ?")

- *Initiation of a continual monitoring* in order to supervise our progress and to evaluate our own results according to the globally developing practices ("how can progress in services be continuously stimulated?")
- *enforcing the international exchange of experience* through establishment of international service networks.

eServices for Professional Networking

- **KnowledgeManagement** *(*KnowledgeWarehouse, ...)
- *CollaborationManagement* (One-to-One-Communications ...)
- *BuildingRelationships*(Events,WhoisWho?,PrivateAreas, MeetingHall, ClubHouse ...)
- *eServices for Clients & Clubs*
- *CustomerInformation* (News, Edition & Publishing ...)
- *CustomerCommunication* (MailCenter, One-to-One-/ One-to-Many-Communications, ServiceCounter, BB, Chats ...)
- *CustomerCommerce* (Advertisement, Shops, ContentPartnerships, MembershipFees …)

Figure 4: www.fit4service.com: eServices for learning relationships

Within this framework we have created a broad bench-marking network called „Fit for service" encompassing public administrations, industry, RTD and NGOs for exchanging experience, organising events and knowledge links and building up international learning relationships using our common *internet-community-platform* www.fit4service.com developed and provided by Fraunhofer IAO (s. Figure 4). We are sure that this approach will lead us to a better understanding of the dynamic process of searching, creating, distributing and last but not least using knowledge within and between learning organisations for the future of an idea-driven economy.

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