

Innovations in Effective Governance

Callahan, Kathe. *Elements of Effective Governance: Measurement, Accountability, and Participation*. Florida: CRC Press, 2006. 360 pp. \$89.95 hardcover. ISBN-13: 978-0849370965.

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The concepts associated with moving toward a more responsive and cooperative government are anything but new. As public sector practices continue to shift toward enhancing government responsibility, Kathe Callahan, in *Elements of Effective Governance*, challenges public administrators to reorganize traditional bureaucratic ways of thinking into new collaborative processes of connecting performance management, accountability, and citizen participation. Callahan presents these concepts to spark public managers to think differently (i.e., more progressively and proactively).

Callahan questions the status quo of current performance measurement practices that do not take into account the realistic challenges that public managers face. Throughout *Elements of Effective Governance*, Callahan emphasizes the cyclical relationship of three important concepts in government organizations: performance, accountability, and citizen participation. She notes that increasing accountability leads to increased performance, and, as citizen involvement grows, the standards of performance become more significant and lead to increased accountability. The book presents these concepts practically and can serve as a guide for both public managers and students. The text consists of five key sections in which Callahan challenges public managers to depart from the common, monotonous, “going through the motions” activities associated with evaluation and performance measurement. Instead, she suggests that managers foster innovative and proactive approaches to thinking about and welcoming performance management to improve the practical functionality and execution of government services. She also gives a realistic view of performance measurement by pointing out significant limitations and insurmountable obstacles to measurement in public organizations. Callahan provides public managers a step-by-step framework to designing a performance

measurement system, walking the reader through the initial steps of thinking about designing an effective performance measurement system, on to what to include, how to locate and use models, and finally reporting. From beginning to end, Callahan stresses the importance of collaborative government.

Calls for greater accountability in government decision making have continued to dominate the national government's agenda, yet Callahan is candid when explaining how the term "accountability" has become so overused that its meaning has been lost. Her discussion of new approaches to accountability frameworks and the move from a traditional view to more comprehensive models is valuable for readers interested in modern approaches to performance management.

Callahan strips away the idealistic concept of citizen participation and outlines both sides of the debate surrounding citizen involvement in government processes. She also demonstrates the dilemmas associated with the deliberative process and how they have shaped current public managers' ambivalence regarding citizen participation. Along with providing examples of citizen participation models, *Elements of Effective Governance* explains different frameworks of participation and outlines how the levels of deliberative and collaborative government systems both change the administrative makeup of an organization and affect measurement and accountability. Here, Callahan further examines how public managers and citizens' roles are changing because government decision making is in transition, moving from hierarchical structures to more modern and complicated ones which focus on cooperation and collaboration.

While *Elements of Effective Governance* suggests improvements for overall performance, public administrators are also challenged to initiate, design, and implement new models and systems by following the book's principles. Callahan includes an entire section of case studies of people or organizations that have attempted and/or succeeded in implementing effective concepts, models, and systems.

Callahan acknowledges that *Elements* does not introduce any ideas or views that have not already been presented in previous scholarship. Accordingly, *Elements* is a well-referenced text which includes the ideas of renowned scholars such as Box, Cohen, Denhardt, Epstein, Frederickson, Kearns, Nalbandian, Osborne, Rosen, Rosenbloom, and Weber, just to name a few. Callahan does, however, offer useful insights into the complexities of thinking outside the box and has uniquely added to the administrative reform literature by bringing together the three key concepts of performance measurement, accountability, and citizen participation to emphasize the critical importance of their relationship. As the roles of public managers continue to change, *Elements of Effective Governance* provides an excellent framework for analysis and serves as a guide for all administrators focused on creating innovative ways to increase performance while maintaining the standards of accountability and deliberative processes of government.

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