By Michael J. Keegan

Michael J. Keegan is Managing Editor of *The Business of Government* magazine and Host/Producer of *The Business of Government Hour*. His e-mail: michael.j.keegan@ us.ibm.com.

With each edition, my goal is straightforward: to introduce readers to the works, insights, and advice from some of today's key government executives, who are tackling significant management challenges and seizing opportunities to lead. To complement these examples of leadership in action, I also highlight the practical, actionable research done by some of the most recognized and respected thought leaders in public management. It is the unique mission of this magazine, and the IBM Center for The Business of Government as a whole, to connect research to practice, merging real world experience with practical scholarship. The intent is to spark the imagination—crafting new ways of thinking about government by identifying trends, new ideas, and best practices in public management that can help government executives respond more effectively to their mission and management priorities.

For decades, significant efforts have been pursued to better measure the work of government, with a view to improving its performance and increasing its public value. In doing so, government executives have focused on such diverse, albeit interconnected pursuits as accountability, transparency, efficiency, innovation, technology, data analytics, and evidence-based management. Many of these endeavors involved the development of innovative approaches and tools coupled with an understanding of their impact on government performance and public service delivery. As underscored by the public servant leaders profiled in this edition, it is critical to find new and significantly improved ways of doing things, looking ahead without falling behind, and focusing on what works.

Conversations with Leaders

The four government executives featured herein exemplify a commitment to trying new and improved ways of doing things. Their respective missions force them to look ahead and although they come from a host of disciplines and federal agencies, they share a single constant—they are all focusing on finding what works.

- **Charles F. Bolden, Jr**., National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) administrator, leads an agency with the mission to reach for new heights and reveal the unknown. The United States stands at a pivotal moment in space exploration. There are plans to further extend our reach into the solar system, and NASA is leading the way. Bolden outlines his agency's strategic goals and discusses his agency's preparation for a challenging mission to capture and redirect an asteroid for human exploration—a stepping stone to the future human exploration of Mars.

- **Lieutenant General Douglas Robb, M.D**., director, Defense Health Agency (DHA), discusses the creation of DHA and its effort to transform the way the U.S. Department of Defense delivers health services. General Robb notes that DHA is the starting point for comprehensive enterprise-wide reform and a leading example of how the Department of Defense (DoD) seeks to modernize and integrate its system of care and, thereby, create a stronger, better and more resilient military health system.

- **Karen DeSalvo, M.D.,** national coordinator for Health Information Technology and acting assistant secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is charged with advancing the nationwide adoption and use of health IT to improve the delivery of health care. Information is the lifeblood of medicine and improving

the availability and usage of health care information is foundational for enhancing the modern health care systems' efficiency and effectiveness. DeSalvo details the evolving mission of her office, how health IT transforms the practice of medicine, the obstacles to achieving nationwide interoperability, and the crafting a federal health IT strategic plan.

- **Steven VanRoekel,** chief innovation officer, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), explains how he has sought to harness innovation and technology as a public servant leader. Steve reflects on his tenure as federal CIO; specifically, on the challenges faced, the opportunities seized, the innovations pursued, and the work to be done to facilitate innovation and advance the use of technology in public service. He also offers a snapshot in time about his work at USAID.

Insights from Leaders

During the year, I speak with leaders who are pushing limits, transforming the way things are done, and making a difference. Five government executives offer their insights into how they are do just this and changing the ways government does business.

- **Victor Gavin,** program executive officer for Enterprise Information Systems, U.S. Department of the Navy (DON), provides capable and cost-wise enterprise network, business, and fleet support information technology to the Navy. Gavin shares his insights on connecting people and information by ensuring that the Navy develops, acquires, fields, and sustains enterprise networks, business and fleet support information technology systems for the warfighters.

- **TJ Kennedy,** acting executive director, First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet), focuses on building the nationwide, next-generation public safety communication system. He offers his insights on how FirstNet will provide a single platform for daily public safety communications. When natural disasters, threats to our nation's security, or other emergencies occur, FirstNet will enable local, state, regional, and national emergency responders to communicate.

- **David Klaus,** deputy under secretary for Management and Performance, U.S. Department of Energy, outlines his insights into a better way of aligning mission support functions with delivery. He is finding the best alignment for realizing efficiencies while tackling operational and management challenges facing the department.

- **Dr. Johannes Kopf,** managing director, Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS), gives his insights into how the AMS seeks to prevent and reduce unemployment in Austria. Austria has a history of one of the lowest unemployment rates in Europe. Kopf elaborates on the factors that contribute to Austria's low unemployment rate, how Austria's dual educational system factors into it, and what others can learn from their efforts.

- **Tom Sharpe,** commissioner, Federal Acquisition Service (FAS), U.S. General Services Administration, provides his insights into creating the premier government acquisition marketplace. Sharpe outlines his strategic priorities, how FAS works to help federal agencies save time and money, the benefits of category management, and how FAS leverages the government's buying power to saves taxpayer dollars.

Forum on From Data to Decisions to Action—The Evolving Use of Data and Analytics in Government

From 2011 to 2014, the Partnership for Public Service and the IBM Center for The Business of Government collaborated on the Data to Decisions project, consisting of three reports and a series of podcasts on the use of data and analytics in government. The forum provides an overview of this effort, from illustrating the power of analytics to identifying the key ingredients for building an analytics culture. It offers a snapshot of lessons learned from early analytics programs and shares insights from government executives who are implementing key data-driven programs.

Its goal is to summarize this valuable collaboration between the Partnership and the IBM Center and help agencies continue to enhance their ability to leverage analytics in a way that improves mission results. In the end, we hope that these insights are instructive and ultimately helpful to today's government leaders and managers. For a more in-depth exploration of the reports and podcasts introduced in this forum can be found at www.businessofgovernment.org/brief/using-data-analytics-improve-mission-outcomes.

Perspective on the PerformanceStat Potential: A Leadership Strategy for Producing Results

Today governments at all levels employ PerformanceStat, a focused effort by government executives to exploit the power, purpose and motivation, responsibility and discretion, data and meetings, analysis and learning, feedback and follow-up, all to improve government's performance. What is PerformanceStat? How is PerformanceStat a leadership strategy for producing results? What are the core leadership principles and key operational components of this leadership strategy? Professor Bob Behn, author of *The PerformanceStat Potential: A Leadership Strategy for Producing Results*, shares his perspective on these questions and discusses his definitive book on this phenomenon.

Viewpoints

John Kamensky asks whether the U.S. government should undertake its own effort to create a governmentwide risk-responsive framework. Dan Chenok explores ways to make innovation integral to federal agencies' long-term success.

I close this edition with overviews of recent IBM Center reports. If you have not read these reports, we encourage you to do so by going to businessofgovernment.org. I hope you enjoy this edition of *The Business of Government* magazine. Please let us know what you think by contacting me at michael.j.keegan@us.ibm.com. ◻