

Taking the Leap: Applying New Technologies to Audits and Evaluations

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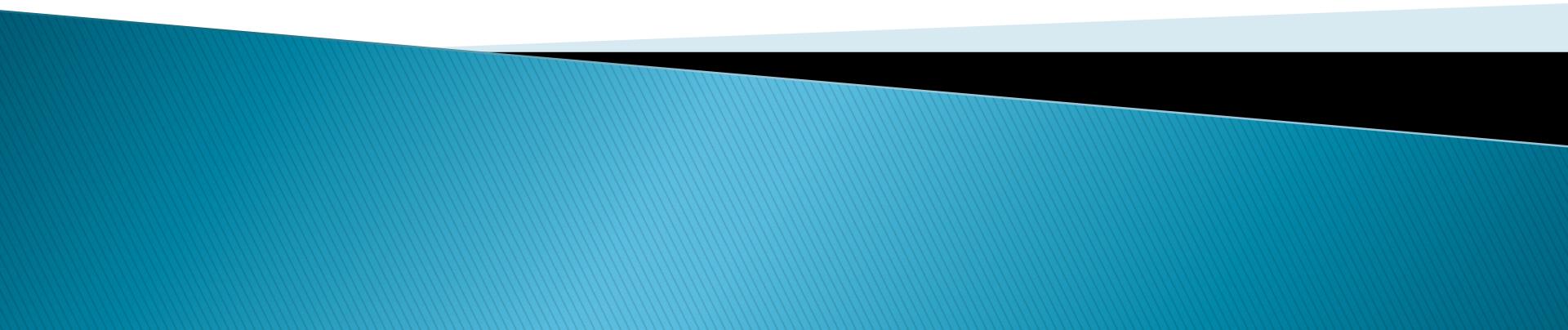
Presentation Outline

- ▶ Why we turned to tech solutions
- ▶ Examples of how we have been using technology
 - Online surveys
 - Data visualization
 - Interactive tools

Why We Turned to Tech Solutions

- ▶ Save time
- ▶ Improve ability to communicate findings
- ▶ Provide access to important information and data
- ▶ Increase evidence driven decision making
- ▶ Help policymakers and stakeholders further explore the information in our reports
- ▶ Clarify complex issues
- ▶ Gain greater access to stakeholder input
- ▶ Demonstrate objectivity
- ▶ Keep work relevant and up to date

Examples



Online Surveys Context

- ▶ Collect survey or questionnaire data from stakeholders
 - State Employee Compensation and Turnover
 - Reducing Barriers to Postsecondary Education
 - Workforce Issues Affecting Public School Teachers

Online Surveys Objectives

- ▶ Stakeholder outreach is vital
 - How can we include more input from stakeholders?
- ▶ Collect sensitive or hard-to-gather information
- ▶ Build stakeholder confidence

State Employee Compensation

- ▶ Surveyed more than 17,000 state employees
- ▶ Questions to determine employee satisfaction
 - What made you decide to work in state government?
 - What factors contributed to you leaving your last state agency?
 - Within the next two years, how likely are you to leave your current job for one in another organization?
 - Which factors would primarily contribute to your intention to continue employment with your current agency?

Barriers to Postsecondary Education

- ▶ Surveyed 100 school counselors
- ▶ Counselors perspectives on barriers to postsecondary education
 - Approximately how much of your time do you spend talking with your students about college readiness, college access, and career placement?
 - In your experience, which are the three most common barriers currently facing students in making decisions about postsecondary education?
 - Of these barriers, which do you think are the most difficult to overcome? Easiest?

Barriers to Postsecondary Education

- ▶ Surveyed over 700 high school students
- ▶ Students perspective on barriers to postsecondary education
 - Are you planning to attend school beyond high school? If no, what do you plan to do?
 - Where do you plan to attend college?
 - If you planning to attend school beyond high school, which type of school?
 - When thinking about education after high school, what are the top three challenges you face in making decisions?

Public School Teachers

- ▶ Sent survey to about 16,500 teachers and received responses from 2,826
- ▶ Asked questions to identify
 - what keeps Idaho teachers in the classroom
 - challenges and opportunities to attract new teachers and to retain current staff
 - class size variations in Idaho

Objectives of Data Visualization and Interactive Tools

- ▶ Can we present our data more effectively?
- ▶ Can we put more data into the hands of policymakers?
- ▶ Can we provide supplemental information in an interactive way?
- ▶ Can we leverage new technologies to do so?

Data Visualization Examples

- ▶ Tableau charts
 - [Interactive appendix](#)
 - [Supplemental information](#)

Liquor Model Context

- ▶ Asked to evaluate the merit of privatizing all or part of the operations of the division to maximize revenue generation
- ▶ Created simple models for policymakers to use when considering complete or partial privatization of Idaho's liquor system
 - Assumptions and Expectations matter



Microsoft Excel
Worksheet

Liquor Model Objective

- ▶ Help users see the significance of various factors that can influence the result of privatization
- ▶ Demonstrate objectivity
 - The models allow users to modify the values of our assumptions to further understand the implications of privatization

Tax Tool Context

- ▶ Legislators wanted to understand
 - How Idaho's business tax policies compares with those of other states
 - The significance of Idaho's position on multistate business tax rankings
 - Which tax policies could help with economic development
- ▶ [Tax Tool Link](#)

Tax Tool Objective

- ▶ Help legislators navigate through complex tax policy issues by asking the right kinds of questions early in policy considerations
- ▶ Make the report information easily accessible
- ▶ Add context to the concepts in the report
- ▶ Increase stakeholder access to report concepts
- ▶ Keep our work relevant and up to date

Results From Using Tech Tools

- ▶ The liquor division adapted the models for their use
- ▶ The Department of Commerce and the Tax Commission said that the tax tool will be a valuable resource for them when evaluating policy opportunities
- ▶ Results from our survey of teachers were featured in a front page article of the Idaho Statesman and have been used by a recently convened education taskforce
- ▶ Results from school counselor and student surveys helped to change state scholarship programs

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