

# People Management Intelligence (PMI) in UAM - mission possible

**Linda Ann Northey**

People Management Intelligence in Urban Animal Management ... your mission starts now!

## ABSTRACT

**What is PMI?** People Management Intelligence is a necessity. It's about being smart when it comes to looking after people; it's about making positive choices in dealing with the public; and it's about working together ... developing an integrated approach to service delivery and supporting each other towards achievement of a common goal.

**Why do we need PMI in UAM?** Because Urban Animal Management (UAM) is not only about the care of animals. Caring for people, the human factor, is critical to the overall success of any program. People need to be trained, they need ongoing support and they need to be treated with compassion if they are to perform effectively in their job role. These needs become even more apparent when the job role is demanding, and when the successful management of that job is fundamental to the positive development and nourishment of our communities.

In UAM the people issues are sometimes forgotten. But it is possible to correct this. It is possible to turn things around, to look after our people. This is your mission — Mission Possible.

## INTRODUCTION

There is only one way to ensure success in UAM, and that is to 'get smart'. First, we need to know where we are going; then we need to support each other to get there. We need to know what people want and we need to manage the process effectively to ensure that they get it.

### **So, what is it in UAM that people want?**

Over the last fifteen years, research undertaken by Townsville City Council (which is highly likely to be reflected universally) strongly indicates that people in our communities want:

- registration compliance;
- restraint (on a lead);
- confinement (behind a fence);
- minimised nuisance (barking, straying, defecating, etc); and
- providing pet access (good governance — meeting community needs).

People in our organisations want:

- training;
- knowledge;
- strategies;
- consistency;
- support;
- empathy.

... in order to provide this. That's it. It's easy! If we can get these right, we've 'cracked it'.

So why don't we get it right? Perhaps because it doesn't seem quite that easy.

Deciding what we want is one thing but staying on track, providing resources, supporting our people and managing the process well, is quite another

Effective UAM cannot be achieved in isolation. It requires an integrated approach that sees everyone moving in the same direction. That means a team effort — a ‘people’ effort that is managed intelligently. Ahh ... People Management Intelligence!

## COMMITMENT TO PMI

A very smart training manager I know once said,

"You know, anyone could rebuild this factory ... there is a spare block of land right across the road ... they could recreate the same buildings, copy the process line, purchase the same equipment, and they could even make the same product, ... but they can't have the same people".

People are our most valuable resource. They need intelligent management to ensure they are productive, effective and happy. **Productive** and **effective** we know about; this happens when workers are properly trained, produce favourable goods and services, are competent, highly skilled and organised, achieve customer satisfaction, and get desired results; and, of course, they do this all on their own, right? **Wrong!** Productive and effective outcomes need to be properly facilitated. It is up to us to **manage** good workplace performance. It doesn't just happen.

**What about the ‘happy’ bit? Do we really care if people are happy?** Of course we do. Happy people do good work!

The ‘happiness factor’ can look different on the surface for different people but, deep down, people really need the same thing. They need to feel appreciated — to be valued as a human being. In the workplace, appreciation looks like **PMI**.

All too often organisations become attached to object-moulding rather than people-moulding

Intelligent People Managers know that:

- individuals need the ability and motivation to do their job;
- they need team members and customers that support and value their work; and
- they need an organisation with appropriate reward and recognition structures, together with effective technical supports and systems.

Each area is interrelated so it is imperative to get things right in all areas. Training staff who are not motivated to achieve is a waste of training effort. Highly skilled and motivated individuals will give up if team members or customers do not value their work. Motivation will not be maintained if personal achievement is not recognised and the best people become disheartened if the effectiveness of their work is obstructed by breakdowns in systems beyond their control.

## QUALITY SERVICE

While we are working directly in the field of animal management our ultimate goal is to provide a service to the community. This needs to be a **quality service**. Having a quality approach means we aim to ‘get it right first time’ and we care about our customers. Internally this means we support our people, set service standards, and provide appropriate training to help people achieve those standards. Externally this means we nourish our communities, focusing on achievement of customer satisfaction, and the delivery of quality service outcomes.

What is obvious in taking a quality approach is that everybody wins:

- customers win;
- employees win;
- enterprises win.

**What is the alternative?** If you are not delivering good quality service then you are delivering rubbish ... and we are not in the waste management game, are we?

You can't, however, deliver good quality service if you don't have good quality skills. In animal management this means effectively managing people and resources and having the back up and support of the people you work with in order to do that. It is a twofold operation — working with people on the streets and running the business in the background. We are therefore destined to be working with and managing people on all sides. We need to be People Management Intelligent.

## THE CHALLENGES IN UAM

If our ultimate goal is to provide a quality service to the community, then why don't we just do that? It should be easy really ... 'you guys like, just go and catch dogs, don't you?'

It's a tough job, but someone's got to do it!

UAM is a tough job. There are job stresses in most jobs, but few really compare with this one. Not only are the routine job tasks particularly demanding, they are further complicated by the complexity of the emotive issues surrounding people, and their pets.

Animal Management Officers (AMOs) don't just go and catch dogs. AMOs need to be really skilled at animal handling, working with barking, biting and predatory animals, wildlife, etc; they need to know legal and regulation processes; they need to provide public education and marketing; and they need to skilfully mediate and resolve conflicts. They also need to have a full understanding of policies, procedures and guidelines, parameters they work in and have to really know their business. They are asked to provide a 'quality of life' to people in the community where pet owners, pets themselves and the whole community come to depend on them for answers.

An AMO is also required to wear different hats ... at times changing to a psychologist, police officer, administrator, judge, counsellor, neighbour or friend. They have to be able to do this with a modicum of finesse, utilising positive and effective communication skills. They also need to have superb interpersonal skills — needing to be professional, keen, enthusiastic, innovative, creative, consistent and fair. **Not much to ask really?**

In addition, an AMO is often faced with the challenge of working in a very sensitive political environment, trying hard to meet the needs of everyone. In fact these needs are often being driven by the absolute minority — people who have broken the law and want to be rewarded for doing so. The problem is further exacerbated by:

- media manipulation (bad news sells);
- confrontation (coming between people and their pets);
- emotions (animals/pets sometimes thought more of than children);
- division (pet haters against pet lovers);
- time taken (it's not cost effective);
- thankless (caught between a rock and a hard place);
- everyone has an answer (pushed and pulled in all directions).

In fact, if your job title is Animal Management Officer, you might start to wonder if someone has actually stuck a 'Kick Me' sign to your back!

supporting our people to do their job. They need adequate training and knowledge, they need ample resources, they need practical management strategies and consistent service standards and they need intelligent, co-operative and empathetic workplace support.

## SUPPORTING OUR PEOPLE

### 1. Training and knowledge

I don't know about you, but I don't feel confident doing my job unless I know it! I can't even imagine what it would be like to work in such a challenging and demanding field as animal management and to be asked to perform successfully without receiving adequate training. Comprehensive and effective job training is fundamental to the success of any employee, in any role, but it is certainly fundamental in a job role like an AMO, where a high level of effective people management — often, in quite adverse conditions — is required.

Let's look back at the 'happiness factor', and what Intelligent People Managers know:

*individuals need the ability and motivation to do their job.*

Having the **ability** to do a job means:

- adequate technical expertise;
- appropriate job knowledge;
- effective business, management and people skills where required;
- performance measures and standards
- assessment of competency in all job tasks.

Having the **motivation** to do a job means:

- attachment to the ultimate goal;
- personal achievement is recognised;
- team support and appreciation;
- appreciative and satisfied customers;
- valued work role;
- technical support;
- adequate resources.

In animal management, people are all too often asked to do the job without adequate technical expertise or job knowledge; without training in business, management, or people skills; with few effective performance measures and standards; and without adequate assessment of competency in all job tasks. They may also be unsure about, or detached from, the ultimate goal. Their individual and personal achievements are unrecognised and unrewarded. They may have very little team support and appreciation, and even less customer support (in fact, customers are often quite dissatisfied and unappreciative). For the most part, their work role is not valued and there is a distinct lack of technical support and adequate resources.

**How are people realistically expected to function under such conditions?** Even the best people will lose heart in a job role that appears to be given very little importance and even less support.

UAM plays a **very** important role in our community and this needs to be met with an equal level of workplace support. Don't let people struggle through without training. A healthy sense of confidence, and knowing your job well, is critical to the achievement of quality service outcomes.

What if everybody just gave up?

The overall need to provide training, develop skills, and increase knowledge is clearly documented in all recent texts and articles on the subject. I'm not talking about ineffective or irrelevant, off-the-job, or outdated training. I'm talking about 'up-front' induction training, practical on-the-job skills, management supervision and mentoring, business, personal and management skills training, realistic technical training and support and ongoing staff development.

The message is clear: **PMI in UAM** means effective, ongoing training and support for your people!

## 2. Strategies and consistency

Animal Management Officers are working with councillors, directors, managers, supervisors, peers, work colleagues, administrators and people in the community. Sometimes we all seem to be going in opposite directions, but with the right infrastructure, planning and consistent standards, everyone can begin to work together ... developing an integrated approach to service delivery.

An integrated management strategy can yield substantial benefits

Vertical integration is simple. All of us just agree to head in the same direction and then we agree to do it consistently.

	Tick Yes
<b>Integrated Management Strategy</b>	
Strategy No 1: First we agree that we want effective UAM	
Strategy No 2: Then we agree to support the people who provide it	
Strategy No 3: We all agree to move in the same direction	
Strategy No 4: Then we apply strategies 1, 2 & 3 .... <b>consistently</b>	

Whether you are a direct service provider, an administrative support person, supervisor, manager, councillor, director, team member, or community customer — you can become an integral part of the strategy. No matter what role you play, you can offer more support to the community and to the overall success of urban animal management — by helping the people at the ‘frontline’ to succeed. That is, helping AMOs to get the job done!

## 3. Empathy and support

You may have heard the old saying:

*‘... imagine what it is like to be in someone else’s shoes.’*

To be empathetic — to be able to feel what life is like for someone else. Well, to feel what life is like for an AMO, and to give true empathy and support, we need to look way beyond this. We need to imagine what it’s like if the shoes don’t fit, if we are getting blisters, if there’s a hole in the bottom, if we can’t afford to buy new shoes, and if we have to run yet another marathon! Being able to give true empathy and support is real **People Management Intelligence**. All good ‘people management’ comes from the heart. It’s really the deeper issues of compassion, kindness, fairness, understanding and courage that set the basis for building positive relationships. Being open-minded and honest are also useful qualities when it comes to dealing with people in the animal management team, or the community. It’s the ‘human factor’, caring for people, that is critical to the success of any program

*... and for successful PMI in UAM, the human factor is what we want!*

**Of course, we want more money too!** Dogs (and therefore people working with dogs) seem to be at the lowest level for funding and financial support, despite the fact that the demand for services in our community is quite high. In fact research demonstrates that 66% of people in Australia keep pets and many others also access animal management services and supports.

It is altogether easier to spend money on things that 'feel good' and don't bite

We need more funding dollars to be able to provide the right types of services and supports to these people. We need to support the people on the inside, in order to support the people on the outside. We need to provide adequate resources, effective training and we need to manage the process effectively. Our support needs to be visible — **we actually need to see it happen** — both in working with people on the streets, and in running the business in the background.

## BUT WHAT CAN I DO?

The reason most people don't offer their help or support, is not because they don't want to — it's simply because they don't know what to do!

Achieving People Management Intelligence in Urban Animal Management requires a commitment to three underlying ideas:

1. keeping the goal in mind;
2. taking a long-term view; and
3. staying on track.

### 1. Keeping the goal in mind

First we need to be sure we know what our goal is. If we agree that our ultimate goal is to provide good quality animal management services to the community, we always need to keep that purpose in mind. Then our reason for doing whatever we do on a daily basis will reflect back to the ultimate achievement of that purpose. We are more likely to 'get there' if we aim to develop a true community spirit, always look at the broader perspective and aim to come from a place of integrity.

True community spirit comes out of a sense of **giving**: becoming part of the community, developing personal relationships, being a neighbour and friend and 'treating others the way we would like to be treated'. If we are willing to do this we are more likely to get an authentic sense of what we need to give at any particular point in time. We are more likely to 'just know what to do' and to be able to offer the right kind of support to our co-workers, the community and ourselves.

Subsequently, if we are also willing to look at the broader perspective, or to see the 'bigger picture', our decisions will be made from an integrated and collective thinking rather than from an individual or isolated one. Our hope, then, would be to ensure a more holistic approach toward the achievement of positive outcomes for the majority, rather than the minority of people — both for the people within our organisations and for our community customers.

'If you look objectively, you can see that the well-being of a group, or large number of individuals is more important than that of one single individual'. (His Holiness the Dalai Lama)

If we are coming from a place of integrity then we are more likely to (and will genuinely care about) 'doing the right thing'.

We are also more likely to think about what we can **give**, rather than what we can **get** and we will more naturally feel our own compassion, empathy and understanding for others. Managing from the heart, truly caring about people and working with integrity, will help us to achieve the ultimate goal of providing good quality service and support, which is fundamental to the positive development and nourishment of our communities.

### 2. Taking a long-term view

The distinction between a positive and a negative action is not whether it gives you an immediate feeling of satisfaction, but whether it ultimately results in positive or negative consequences.

In making a decision **today** we need to think about how this decision will affect the achievement of our ultimate goal further down the trail. We need to think more in the **long-term**. For example, many of the Native American Indians have already thought about the use of Integrated Management Strategies and People Management Intelligence. Of course, they don't call it that, but they are still smart enough to use it. As such, when a decision needs to be made that affects the whole tribe, the views and needs of everyone in the tribe are fully considered. They take the time to listen to each other with compassion and empathy and they aim to make a 'whole community' decision where they all agree to move in the same direction.

Not only that ... but they also make a real effort to take the long-term view. With any decision that is made, consideration is given to how this will affect their children seven generations from now.

I wonder how the decisions we make in UAM today, will affect **our** children seven generations from now?

### 3. Staying on track

Once we have set our goals and once we know what is needed in the long-term, we need to be able to stay on track. The temptation at times may be to ‘jump off’ because it’s too hard, or we might even be ‘dragged off’ by other people with different issues or agendas,. But we need to hang on, we need to **stay on track** if we are ever going to achieve our overall purpose.

So how do we do that?

Well ... imagine that I leave my office to go and get a drink of water. As soon as I walk into the hallway, someone else comes out of their office and they want to stop and have a chat.

While I am chatting, a colleague comes up and asks me to sign a letter straight away. I read and sign the letter and my assistant interrupts to say that I have to take an urgent phone call. While I am on the urgent call my mobile starts ringing. When I finish the urgent phone call the accountant drops in to ask for a funding approval. This needs some lengthy explanation before approval can be made. Some time later I check for messages on my mobile and then start to head back down the hallway for a drink of water. Someone comes out of their office and wants to have a chat ... I pass out from dehydration, and have to take the next day off to recuperate.

Staying on track means keeping the ultimate goal in mind, and not being distracted by other people’s issues or agendas, which may seem to be more important in the short-term. An effective management strategy needs to be a long-term plan, where decisions address the bigger picture, where we care about individual people and where the overall benefits are determined with consideration for yourself, your colleagues, and the well-being of the ‘whole’ group.

*All we need to do is to make the right decisions now, and then stick to 'em!*

### **YOUR MISSION STARTS NOW!**

The right decision now is People Management Intelligence in Urban Animal Management. If we are not doing it, if we are not ‘being smart’ and looking after our people, then we are in crisis. In a crisis, people need to join forces to achieve a positive outcome. We need a co-operative effort — a team effort to really make it happen. This is your mission. **It starts now.** Ask yourself:

- are you supporting your community?
- are you supporting Animal Management Officers?
- are you supporting animal management?

**If not, what can you do differently?** Not, what can you **try** to do differently ... but what can you actually **do** differently?

To make it happen, we all need to develop three things:

- a willingness to do it;
- great enthusiasm;
- a strong sense of urgency.

We need to ‘get smart’. We need **PMI** in **UAM**.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Linda Ann Northey, B. Ad. Voc. Teaching  
National On Site Training Pty Ltd  
Cleveland Qld 4163  
Ph. 07 3824 3073  
Fx. 07 3824 8077

Linda Ann has worked in adult and vocational education for the last ten years. As a Corporate Trainer she has travelled extensively throughout Queensland providing 'people management', training, and support to many people in various industries in the private sector, as well as educational institutions, councils, other government and non-government bodies, and a range of community and welfare organisations. Her particular areas of expertise include human resource management, training and assessment, group facilitation skills, teamwork, customer service, mediation, conflict resolution, interpersonal skills, and workplace communication. She has a particular interest in working with people from an authentic place of being, rather than out of a textbook, and her overall aim is to 'make a difference' — helping people to know what they already know.

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