



SMAART

A Plan for Performance Management

Nineteenth Judicial Circuit
Circuit Court of Lake County, Illinois
By Patrice Evans, Robert Verborg & Bob Zastany

The Nineteenth Judicial Circuit Court of Illinois released its first version of the SMAART Performance Measurement Process in the spring of 2000.

The purpose of the SMAART process was to assist staff at all levels throughout the organization in determining whether the court, as an organization, was achieving its vision and meeting the standards and strategies outlined in its strategic plan. This performance measurement process was designed to increase the insight of both staff and stakeholders into the operations of the court, and to assist court managers in making judgments about the effectiveness of court programs, staff functions, and how to allocate resources throughout the organization.

Since its inception, the SMAART process has relied on the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data collected from throughout the court organization and the programs it facilitates. SMAART, itself, is an acronym, which indicates the type of information that the process should generate in order to evaluate the court's operations and assist in the planning any improvements, if necessary:

Specific:	Outcome-based goals, standards, or targets of success.
Measureable:	Demonstrated quantities or qualities that can be expressed as a calculation or comparison.
Aggressive:	Bold or assertive levels of organizational success.
Achievable:	Realistically able to be accomplished based on existing resources and staffing.
Relevant:	Directly related to the challenges at hand or reflected in the court's strategic plan.
Time-Sensitive:	As close to real-time as possible; reflective of closure and target dates.

The current version of SMAART has been updated to incorporate what the court organization has learned over the past decade regarding effective performance measurement and management systems. The basic components of the SMAART Program include elements that are part of Managing for Results, an outline for assessing and improving performance within public sector organizations. These components include:

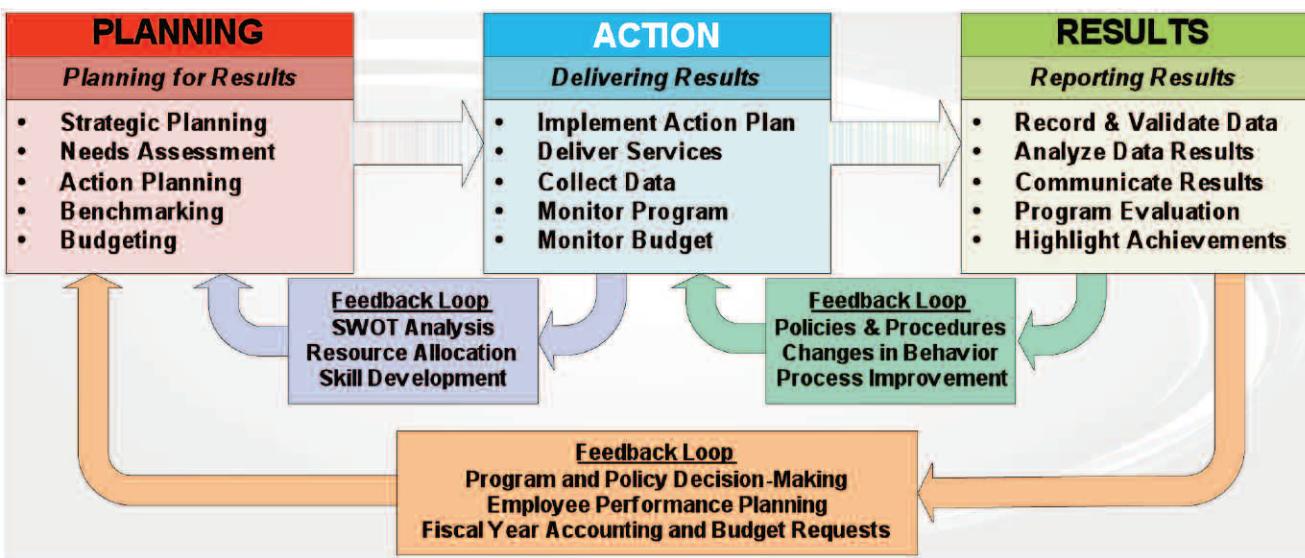
- Planning for Results
- Measuring for Results
- Budgeting for Results
- Delivering Results
- Analyzing & Reporting Results
- Evaluating & Improving Results

In this updated version, SMAART becomes a performance management program

rather than a performance measurement process. This update embraces organizational performance measures and continuous improvement efforts to ensure that court activities are aligned with the court's strategic plan and that they are being conducted in an effective and efficient manner. The court's strategic plan provides the vision of the judicial system, based on both service to the community and fostering public trust and confidence. The strategic plan also outlines goals, objectives, and system-wide initiatives for the court organization based on these values to guide staff in working to fulfill the mission of the court. The SMAART Program provides an Action Research framework for aligning court actions – services, programs, and support activities – with

Continued on the next page

The SMAART Action Research Framework



the strategic plan, measuring the impact of those actions using a balanced scorecard approach, and planning continuous improvements in order to enhance outcomes.

The consensus among judges, senior managers, and other court stakeholders is that better information regarding the delivery and quality of services and programming throughout the Nineteenth Judicial Circuit

leads to the ability to make better strategic decisions and continuous improvement. The quality of the information provided is enhanced through better linkage among the mission, goals, objectives, and performance indicators of the court, as well as a more balanced picture of performance using the Court's Balanced Scorecard.

For additional information, please visit our website at [19thcircuitcourt.state.il.us](http://19thcircircuitcourt.state.il.us) and click on the Performance Management section. Once there, you will be able to view a more detailed description of our SMAART Action Research Framework and search our Related Links. [NACM](#)

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FRIEND OR FOLLOW:

How can courts engage social media?

By Sandy Adkins

The use of social media is growing at a rapid pace and transforming the way we communicate, get and share news, and connect with others. But social media is not just a way for old college buddies to chat. Businesses, academia, nonprofits, and governmental agencies also are taking advantage of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and blogs.

What are the implications of tweeting jurors, facebooking judges, and blogging court employees? How can the courts effectively use social media as a way to communicate with the public and provide useful information to its stakeholders? The new

Social Media and the Courts Web module on the National Center's website, www.ncsc.org, which is being compiled by Knowledge and Information Services, provides resources that attempt to answer these questions.

Included in the module are articles discussing the implications of jurors, judges, and attorneys using social media; social media policy recommendations and examples; a document that links to numerous state courts on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube; and other general social media resources. [NACM](#)