

TO: MTC Strategic Planning Steering Committee
DATE: March 19, 2012
FROM: Elizabeth Harchenko, consultant
SUBJECT: Report from Engagement Team teleconference

Below are the MTC Strategic Planning Engagement Team discussion notes: This material went to the team members before the meeting. All material in RED indicates the content of the conversation with the team during the conference call.

MTC Engagement Team members: Joe Huddleston, MTC; Len Lucchi, Patuxent Consulting; Alana Barragan-Scott, MO; Julie Magee, AL; Matt Massman, MN – all attending, including EH; Steve Cordi; Amy Hamilton, State Tax Notes; David Langhorst, ID; Jim Rosapepe (missing – Alana)

Thank you for serving on the MTC Strategic Planning Engagement Team. This memo will provide you with background information for our meeting on Monday, March 12. During that meeting, you will add depth and detail to the engagement goal, and you will help the Steering Committee develop objectives, strategies, and measures for the goal. As a reminder, our teleconference begins at **2:00 pm EDT**. The **dial-in number:** 1-866-381-9862, conference code 8917135. I look forward to working with you!

Background

The MTC Strategic Planning Steering Committee has adopted the following Mission and Vision statements:

MISSION

The Multistate Tax Commission is an intergovernmental state tax agency. Its mission is to:

- Achieve fairness by promoting compliance and consistent tax policy and practice; and to
- Preserve the sovereignty of state and local governments over their tax systems.

VISION

By 2019, MTC will be recognized as:

- The “gold standard” for tax policy process development
- The primary authority for the public and public officials on issues of state and local tax uniformity and fairness
- The leading resource for ensuring equitable tax compliance

The Steering Committee has also identified four goal areas in which to focus the MTC’s efforts so that it can achieve its vision. Those four goal areas are: Vitality and reputation of the commission; engagement of states and other stakeholders; uniformity; and compliance programs.

The engagement goal and high level outcomes for that goal are currently described as follows --

Engagement of states and other stakeholders – Our goal is to Increase the level of institutional knowledge within the states about MTC. Greater engagement of the states and other stakeholders in the MTC will be reflected by:

- A high level of participation by states and local jurisdictions in the activities of the MTC.
- A significant number of top tax administrators will be directly involved in leadership of the MTC.

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- Significant public participation in commission activities. (our public is corporations; business associations; professional associations ; government organizations that touch what we do)(We get focused public participation in uniformity projects) (These comments were in response to a question from one of the participants)
- Significant public use of MTC services such as voluntary disclosure and alternative dispute resolution.
- Strong relationships and strategic partnerships that help the MTC achieve its mission and vision.

Are there other outcomes that could be considered as indicators that we are achieving this goal?

- High level of engagement with other policy makers in federal, state and local government (outside state tax agencies)

The Steering Committee has also identified some measures that will allow us to define “progress” in achieving this goal:

- Level of state and local participation in MTC activities
- Level of involvement of top tax administrators in MTC leadership
- Level of public participation in MTC activities
- Level of use by taxpayers of MTC services
- Quality and value of relationships with strategic partners

Are there other measures that we could consider to help us gauge progress toward achievement of this goal?

- Level of engagement with policy makers at the state, federal and local levels (identifiable relationships with organizations like IRS, Joint Tax Committee, etc.)
- ROI on educational opportunities that comes to the state tax agencies from training.

How might we approach developing baselines for these measures against which to chart our progress in the future? [We didn't get to this question, will need to have another conversation to define baseline measures]

The Steering Committee has identified some ways to approach achieving this goal:

- Pursue outreach and communication within the states and local jurisdictions. (Project underway)
- Evaluate how committee work is communicated in the states.
- Consider who participates from the states.
- Clarify and enhance the value of the public participation policy as a tool for achieving the commission's purpose and goals.
- Manage access to commission materials more effectively.
- Adapt commission processes to increase state engagement.
- Look for ways to enhance the value of strategic relationships with other organizations. Evaluate use of communication tools to enhance engagement.
- Consider how technology or educational tools can help promote engagement.

What are some other strategies we might use to achieve this goal?

- (Expand training – reach a broader audience, increase awareness and availability; using technology so that cost can be kept low; make them closer to home; recognize that there is a lot of turn over within the states, need for greater skill and passing on institutional knowledge to new staff)**
- Recognize the current outreach project, it seems to be working
- Clarify differences between FTA and MTC – easy way to share this with tax administrators and others (document; hand out)
- Support quality relationships between top tax administrators and the key tax policy makers within their states – this will enable greater opportunity for adoption of uniformity proposals
- We can reach out more beyond the tax press to private sector stakeholders about their ability to participate in MTC activities – provide articles to industry publications about what we are doing and how their members could engage. A majority of industry people don't monitor MTC activities. Financial press connections would also provide an opportunity to connect at a different place in the taxpayer community. (Blogs; web sites; publications) Right now only tax "insiders" know what the MTC is doing. This reasoning could be extended to other areas as well.