

Should Government Be Run Like A Business?

This debate has gone on for decades. Many look at what they perceive as government waste and demand tighter accountability. While others look at the greed of some in private enterprise and think government should be held to a higher standard. Businesses have customers, governments have citizens. Should citizens be partners, not customers, in running government? Should government really be run like a business?

Public comments as of October 27, 2011, 1:59 AM

All Participants around Montgomery



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As of October 27, 2011, 1:59 AM, this forum had:

Attendees:	44
Participants around Montgomery:	4
Minutes of Public Comment:	12

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Joerg Zuend inside Montgomery

October 9, 2011, 10:25 AM

Categorically no. Businesses are run democratically, but every dollar represents a vote (e.g. electing board of directors in public companies). In government every person counts as a vote. Thus the government is responsible to maximize its value contribution to citizens equally while a company is responsible to maximize its return to shareholders. This does not mean that some operational principles of running a business may not apply to government (e.g. fiduciary responsibility), but it clearly demonstrates that its services should benefit equally be citizen. That is indeed very different to businesses where individuals can accommodate a large portion of the shares and thus receive benefits in proportion to their share ownership.

The dreaded word "distribution of wealth" is inherent in our democratic form of society, whether we like it or not - that is true for both government and business. In business the organizing structure is such that wealth is more heavily distributed to the ones who own the business while in democratic states and nations it is more heavily distributed to the ones that are members of the of the state or nation.

Michiko Kissinger inside Montgomery

September 27, 2011, 8:46 AM

Government is more like running a household. The importance is in the health, growth and harmony of its members. Each member's needs are different and they are at different phases of life. The members also take responsibility for the success of the family. As the member becomes more mature, then they take on more responsibility. Financial management is not much different in a household than in a government. When there are more expenses than the money you have, you have to make choices and re-evaluate your priorities or make life style changes. And you save for a big expense in the future. Humanity is about service and partnership. I don't think you have to be a business person to be financially responsible, but the business knowledge seems to help with managing money and partnering with other businesses, which in turn helps us. The question, "should government really be run like a business?"--you'll have to explain, what is the practice of running a business, so we are in agreement of what that means. When you think about it, business owners and customers are in a partnership as well.....

Name not shown inside Montgomery

September 23, 2011, 5:08 PM

Good businesses provide good products or services to their customers at a fair value and make a good profit to maintain and grow the business by operating efficiently and effectively.

Good governments provide needed services and facilities for their citizens in the most effective and efficient way.

Business should seek to grow and profit. Government should seek to serve certain citizens' needs, but should not seek to grow beyond what is needed.

Both should be run in an effective and efficient way to meet their missions.

Ed Daniel inside Montgomery

September 23, 2011, 11:53 AM

Government exists to serve the taxpayer rather than generate a profit. However, the responsibilities

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of those entrusted to its operation require a business approach in managing its assets. This approach should include maintaining adequate reserves for continued operation and evaluation of services provided similar to a return on investment (ROI) in private business, although not necessarily financially based.

Evaluating the value of services can be somewhat subjective, especially in the case of governments who serve financially diverse populations with different needs. Similarly, one's view of investing in growth may not be the same as another's.

The community survey and our strategic plan are crucial pieces in arriving at the Annual City Budget which manages our assets and expenditures.
