

 **TODAY'S "SHORT TOPIC"**
**GOVERNMENT DOESN'T
WORK LIKE BUSINESS!
MOSTLY TRUE, BUT
THERE'S ONE THING
THAT WOULD HELP!**



By Stephen L. Bakke  March 7, 2015

Here's what provoked me:

A guest opinion appeared which pointed out how different business and government and how foolish it is to expect government to be more businesslike. Most of his points were very true. But I think he misses the point if he doesn't think accountability is one characteristic of successful businesses that would help government.

Here's my response:

**Government Doesn't Work Like Business!
Mostly True, but There's One Thing That Would Help!**

Bill Cotterell's guest opinion (Government doesn't work like business, 3-7) states and expands on the following: "Whenever you hear people say we need to run government more like a business, you may safely assume they either know nothing about government or they must be in a really weird business." Yet he acknowledges that he personally knows nothing about commerce.

Cotterell enumerates obvious differences that simply reflect realities of business and government. But there's one thing he ignores: a system of accountability.

Too often in government, having good intentions all that's required to gain praise from political friends and associates. By contrast, businesses are way more results oriented than that, and accountability is one business characteristic that would improve government.

Cotterell seems to be critical of limited terms and the regular election process. I'm sure he feels that gets in the way of "building expertise" among government leaders. That's where he strays from objectivity. Since accountability and results orientation are not inherent characteristics of bureaucracies and government, our founders used the election/selection process to impose accountability where it wouldn't develop naturally.

Let's try to make government more like business by ignoring mere good intentions and pushing for results orientation and accountability.