



AM communication would be far easier if we all looked at the world the same way, but AM itself would be the poorer! We need the different views, ideas, and **perspectives**.

In this issue, **Leo Gohier, Canada**, presents his map of Asset Management and explains why he had so much trouble with mine! See this latest chapter in the “**Mapping of the Asset Management Genome!**”

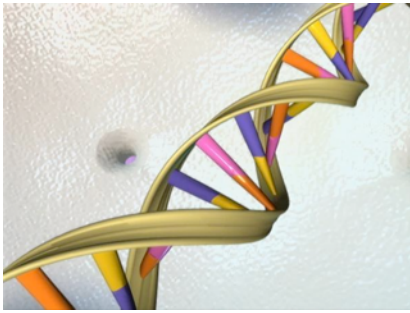
Is this the way you see AM? Or perhaps you have another view? All perspectives needed!

And **Hugh Blake-Manson, New Zealand**, suggests that we need to broaden our scope when looking at information needs and different organisational cultures. His map, simplified here for ease of reference, and our subsequent email exchange, inspired the article on “**Communication Pain Points**”

Listening is an important part of communication. So please help me to listen - tell me your ideas, comments, criticisms, and suggestions.

And as always, consider and enjoy! Penny

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Mapping the AM Genome

The Human Genome project was about examining the component genes of the human body and how they relate to each other. That is basically what I am suggesting we need to do for a better understanding of the highly complex interdisciplinary field that is asset management.

Leo Gohier writes:

I have finally done an AM map. It took me a while because I was struggling with your own map and I did not know why. It was actually quite simple: the map would be different if you are talking about a proposed new asset vs. an existing one.

**Note: As you read Leo's account, ask yourself:
Is this the way YOU see asset management? If not, how would YOU
map the components and the way that they interact?
Please contribute your viewpoint - Help us all to see
NEW PERSPECTIVES!**

Here is Leo's representation - and his explanation

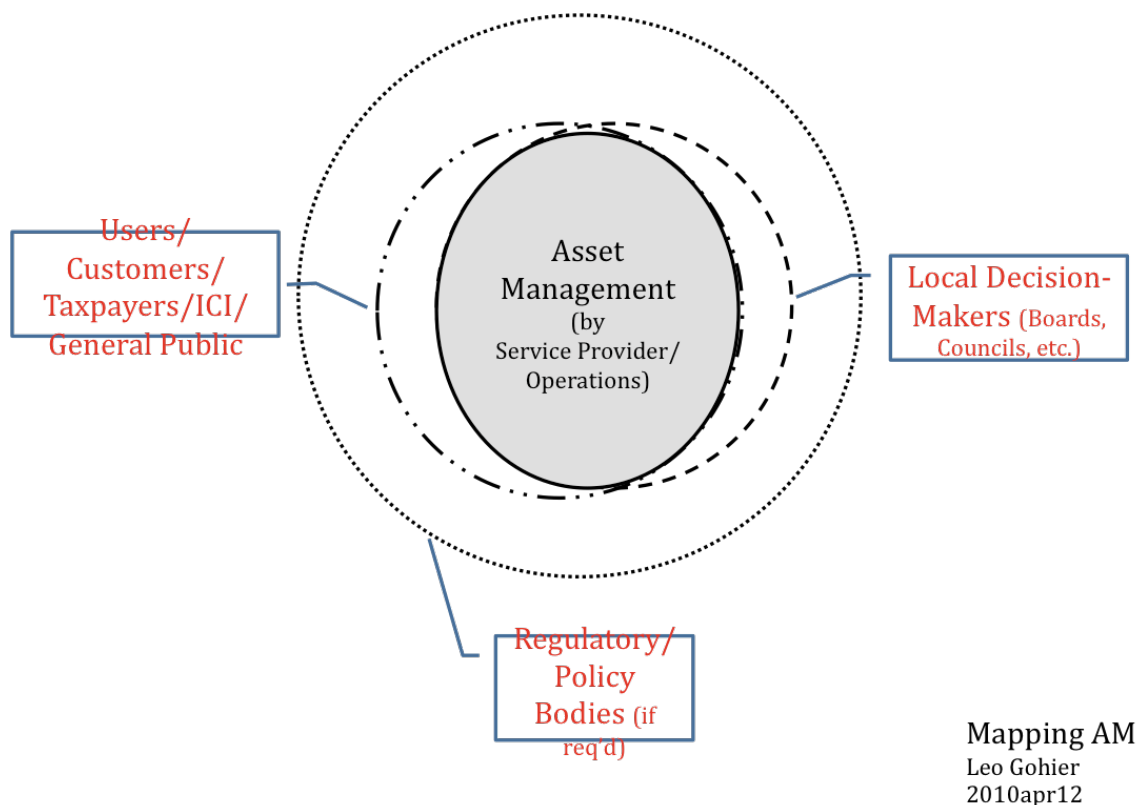
Notes for AM Mapping (by Leo Gohier 2010apr12)

- Diagram is customer/service centric
- The outer layer for regulatory/policy bodies is there only for those instances where it is required.

The next two outside layers that intersect are: general public/users, local decision-makers (“local” implying the appropriate decision-makers for the service/asset, i.e. municipal, state or federal/national). Where these two intersect is where AM should happen. The very large intersection between these two illustrates the need for asset managers/service providers to communicate with both the community at large as well as the decision-makers.

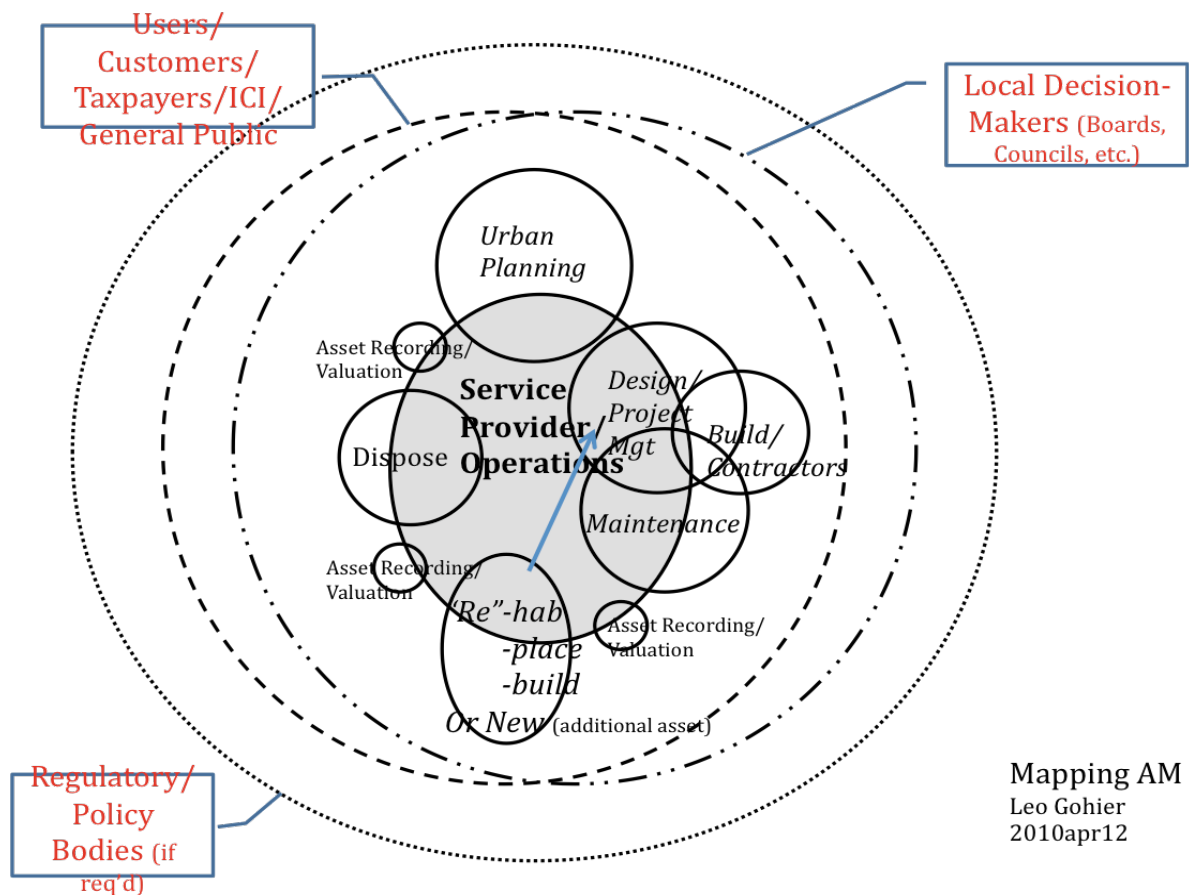
- ICI = industrial, commercial and institutional sectors. Important part of the community in terms of economic activity and source of revenues, but not necessarily a recipient of the specific service being assessed (ex. public housing or recreational facility)

THE BUBBLES WILL ACTUALLY BE DIFFERENT IF WE ARE DEALING WITH NEW V. EXISTING ASSETS



With existing assets, there would be no design and build bubbles, unless we are at the “re-“ stage of the asset and we then link back to design and build.

- **First-line function: service provider/operations.** They are the core, the heart, the internal focal point (or at least should be, but that is usually not the case). I separated operations from maintenance since managers for soft services (ex. Health, public and seniors housing, culture and recreation, etc.) are usually experts at service delivery but not asset management. They offer programmes/services and in some cases operate the facilities but usually don't directly manage and maintain assets (often buildings) as that is done through another department responsible for hard services (ex. Public Works). Hard services on the other hand are usually run by engineering/technical types who are experts in their hard asset (i.e. roads, water, wastewater, etc.) but not necessarily experts at dealing with people (i.e. clients/customers).
- **Primary support functions:** urban planning, design and build, maintenance and “re-“ initiatives or dispose option – these four + the service providers make up the five main circles as per your rules.
 - o Required level of interface is reflected graphically in the amount of overlap between the primary support providers and the service provider/operations group. It allows for a good balance between professional independence (engineers, architects, etc.) and the need to meet service levels with hopefully the lowest lifecycle costs. More on that later.
 - o Urban Planning: starts the process off by defining what the community will look like and what services will be offered thus requiring assets to be built
 - o Design and construction: critical for sustainability, cost-effectiveness and lowest life-cycle costs through proper specifications, proper implementation and proper inspection. Operations and maintenance managers need to be part of that process and should be able to exert authority as needed in the decision-making process.
 - o Maintenance: critical for lowest life-cycle costs within an envelope of risk management
 - o “Re” decisions: links back to the design and build process
 - o Disposal starts the process again with urban planning: how the community is evolving, what type of community do we now want and what services will be offered in the next stage of evolution



- o Ironically, bureaucratic silos often have competing corporate objectives that result in higher life-cycle costs: design and construction engineers are pressured to keep construction costs down through capital budget restrictions, while maintenance has pressures to keep costs down through annual budget allocations. Lower cost designs cost less initially but often lead to higher operating and maintenance costs over the long-run. Purchasing policies often result in higher installation and maintenance costs since they are based on a low-bid approach.
- **Secondary support functions:** asset recording and valuation at every step. This is critical to ensure proper evaluation and decision-making: business case and strategic funding analysis including long-term sustainability and replacement funding. ■

Communication Pain Points

In SAM 288 I argued that the informational needs for strategic and technical decision making were critically different - not just different in degree, but different in kind, for whereas technical decision making relies on a sound understanding of organisational asset data (in-house information), strategic decision making is based on a sound understanding of what is happening *outside* the organisation, in terms of community or customer demand trends, early signs of technological change that may change the way both customers and suppliers act, and environmental/political/regulatory trends.

This needs to be matched with a big picture understanding of the organisation's asset portfolio but it doesn't need - *and can't use* - detailed asset information. Real time detailed asset information is not relevant for this level of decision making, but it is critical for technical decision making.

Hugh Blake-Manson responded to SAM 288 by sending me a diagram showing that there were not 2 but 3 decision levels - and for each of them the informational needs were different. At the intersection of each of the three there was what he called a 'communication pain point'. This is a much simplified version of his diagram.



☆ = Organisational Pain Point; Communication Required!

Why the communication pain?

Quite simply, we all speak different languages! And these languages have little to do with the actual words that we use. (the communication problem, in other words, will not be overcome by setting down a common terminology, desirable as this may be.)

PAIN POINT 1

Here we have the operational decision makers interacting with technical decision makers, and communication pain is created by the clash of objectives.

At the operational level the important thing is action, *getting something done*. At the technical decision level, the important thing is efficiency and effectiveness, brought about by having the *right process*. These don't have to conflict, but they often do.

The Operating Decision Makers' needs

Ideally, operators would like to have the decisions of the technical decision makers handed to them in the form of a set of clearly defined, self-contained, tasks and with sufficient resources to do the job. Unclear or vague directions, or insufficient resources, means that they have to guess at the underlying principles and undertake technical decisions themselves. This isn't really part of their job and they may not be equipped to do it. (e.g. they may not have a clear understanding of the overall service strategies) Their job is to get things done.

The Technical Decision Makers' needs

If technical decision makers focuss on the abstract processes involved in achieving the asset delivery goals and do not see delineating the individual action steps necessary within this process as part of their communication challenge, then both the operator and the technical decision maker may fail to achieve their ends. For example, being practical, action-oriented, people, operators may prefer to do something now and get it over and done with than keep coming back to 'monitor' in order to get it 'done at the right time'. The idea of doing something 'at the right time' to avoid wastage of resources may be too much of a planning game to have much appeal to most operators. Better to do something and tick it off the list.

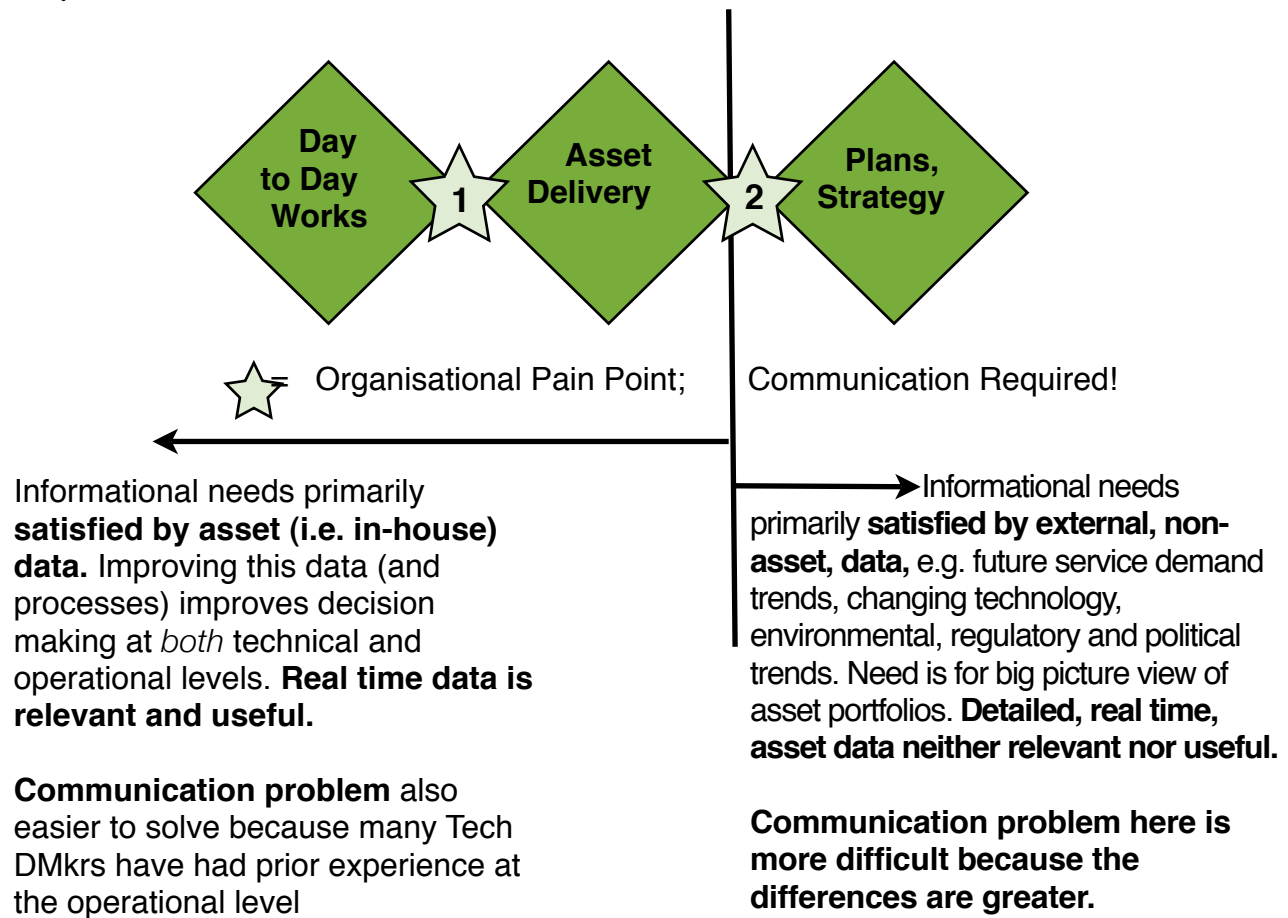
So our first pain point in communication is between a 'task orientated' OPERATIONAL DECISION MAKING culture and a 'process orientated' TECHNICAL DECISION MAKING culture.

PAIN POINT 2

This exists between the technical decision makers and the strategic decision makers. *The gulf here is even wider.* At least the operators and the technical decision makers were dealing with a common data set - the condition of the asset and information about intervention. The Strategic decision makers bring in a completely new range of data from outside of the organisation; a different, longer, time perspective; different attitudes and different objectives. If the decisions of the technical decision maker can seem frustratingly unclear to the operator, the decision making at the strategic level can seem to be completely 'off the planet' to the technical decision maker.

This makes our second pain point in communication between the 'process oriented' TECHNICAL DECISION MAKING culture and the 'service outcome oriented' STRATEGIC DECISION MAKING culture.

Why PAIN POINT 2 IS MORE PAINFUL!



AND WHAT WE NEED TO DO TO REDUCE THE PAIN!



STEP 1. We need a Rosetta Stone! You will recall the original Rosetta Stone consisted of the same passage written in 3 different scripts, two hieroglyphic scripts and classical Greek, so that by knowing one, scholars could work out the others. Well, we need to do the same. Translate the same idea into 3 languages - strategic, technical and operational. The way to do this is for Strategic DM to sit down with Technical DM and jointly work out the translation. Similarly for Technical DM and Operational DM.

STEP 2. WE HAVE TO GRASP THE NETTLE. Communication pain is increased when we fail to tackle it head on. We think we can avoid the pain of argument, the need to justify ourselves, the need to explain - and especially the need to *LISTEN* by simply sending a memo. But we can't. *Face to face* genuine exchange really works and it is quicker in the longer term. So grasp the nettle! (You will also recall that this was what Rod Smith attributed his success to in his story of the development of an AM culture in Energy Australia. (SAM 282))

