



## Episode 7: "The Challenges and Rewards of Using BI in Local Government"

*with Tobin Postma, Director of Intergovernmental Relations and Strategic Partnerships at the City of Vancouver*

*Thanks to Tobin Postma's championing of BI, the City of Vancouver was one of the first, if not the first, city in Canada to test using Behavioural Insights. Tobin gives a firsthand account of the unique challenges of using BI in a local government setting. There are useful takeaways for everyone, but this episode will be particularly interesting to capstone project teams working with local governments!*

### *Transcript:*

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KIRSTIN APPELT, HOST: Welcome to this edition of Calling DIBS. I'm your host, Kirstin Appelt, Research Director with UBC Decision Insights for Business and Society, or DIBS for short. Today, we're calling DIBS on Tobin Postma, the Director of Intergovernmental Relations and Strategic Partnerships at the City of Vancouver.

I'm really excited for you to listen to Tobin because he really brings a unique perspective to the table. He's been a key part of building our regional BI community of practice. He helped us co-host the very first BIG Difference BC conference. He's been a key partner on several of our grant proposals, and then for me personally, it's always nice to connect and hear about the fascinating work that Tobin is tackling. So, Tobin, welcome to the podcast.

TOBIN POSTMA, GUEST: Hi Kirstin! Happy to be here.

APPELT: Can you begin by telling us a little bit about yourself and your current role?

POSTMA: Yes. So, I've worked at the City of Vancouver now for six years and prior to that worked in the UK for nearly six years for a large steel and mining company doing corporate social responsibility. But my current role as Director of Intergovernmental Relations is largely dealing with others level government, provincial, regional, federal and First Nations trying to advance sort of shared priorities.

However, what's probably more relevant for this podcast is my role prior to that, where I was Director of Strategic Initiatives for the City of Vancouver, and that was a pretty unique role where I was sort of given the bandwidth to just go and explore and look for problems and challenges that were really gnarly and gritty that no one wanted to take on.

They were sort of orphan projects, if you will. And so, it was things from lack of bathroom facilities in the city to discarded needles, to issues related to homelessness, and mental health challenges. But also, I was looking at how I could drive innovation within the city, with city staff and within city policies. And one of the things that really appealed to me was this idea of behavioural insights, and I had a strong suspicion that this was something that would meld quite, quite well with city operations and government bureaucracy. And so, I set off to test my theory.

APPELT: And that's a great segue. So how did you initially get exposed to behavioural insights? How did you learn about the practice of behavioural insights?

POSTMA: Like so many things these days, I read about it on the Internet. I read an article, probably in the Financial Times, I think, where they were talking about David Cameron, the former Prime Minister of the UK's Nudge Unit, which was essentially the first behavioural insights work done in government. And the idea of, you know, A/B testing and the Theory of Marginal Gains were things that as soon as I read it was a short, you know, two column news story, but it resonated, you know, incredibly strongly within me. And then I just knew that this was what government needed in order to sort of bridge between this idea of, at the time we were looking at, you know, human-centered design, you know, innovative processes. And there was just, it was almost like a step too far for most bureaucrats.

As soon as I read about behavioural insights, I'd sort of thought I'd struck gold in the sense that here's a process that kind of in some ways is quite innovative and forward thinking. But at the same time, it's sort of in many ways quite safe, because it's not too wild and too out there like it's really built and it has strong foundations and evidence and best practices. And it's about sort of small changes and small experiments before going big.

And so, I figure that this was something that from what I had, my experience in the city, for the past five years, was something that really I felt would resonate with senior management, would resonate with staff, and would produce results and sort of move us a little step closer to being more comfortable with experimenting and iterating on the fly and trialing ideas and innovate and just generally looking for change, looking how we can improve processes and make things better for the people who we're supposed to be serving which are residents and businesses.

APPELT: And that's yet another great segue. So as far as I know, the City of Vancouver is one of the first cities, if not the first city in British Columbia, to trial using behavioural insights. So how would you describe the value? And I think you've started to do that, but maybe you could dig in a little more about what you've seen the value of behavioural insights be for the City of Vancouver.

POSTMA: You're letting me pump my own tires up a bit. Yeah, we were the first. I think we were the first municipality in Canada to actually successfully run a behavioural insights trial. Not that anyone's counting, but yeah, I think, I think what was helpful for people was, we weren't coming to them with a brand-new idea and a brand-new concept. There's a wealth of best practice that's already been available, that's been produced in the US, in the UK, Australia.

And so, we're able to come to staff, you know, with ideas that have already been tested and trialed and proven. And so, we weren't coming with a brand-new idea trying to sort of, you know, reinvent their processes. We were taking processes that were already in existence that had run for quite a long time and people were comfortable with how they were running.

However, the results were uncomfortable. Maybe let's put it that way, like, you know, for a lot of our trials, it was around payment rates, and processes where people had to sign up for, or pay for, or renew a license or a permit or pay a fine. And those payment rates, to be frank, if we were working in a private business, those payment rates would be unacceptable. And yet, we were sort of accepting them because we just developed the process that took into account poor payment rates.

We sort of would assume that 80 percent of people would pay on time and those remaining 20 percent wouldn't. And so, we would build a process that, you know, a month later we'd send a reminder letter. And

then we know that, you know, maybe five percent of those people would pay and then we'd send another. It was just-- we created a process that just didn't require us to do anything different to improve those payment rates or repayment rates.

I think being able to go to these individuals, and it was certainly was important to find internal champions that that would support this, but go to them and say, "Hey, look, we know you've got the process here. We know it's working, but it's not great. We think we can make it better, here's some examples of what other people have done, and empirically proven that it does work. Are you willing to let us work with you to create a trial, a very quick trial that we can launch? We can take on, you know, we can look at the results and then we can, and I'm confident, that we can improve your results with very little impact to your process, to your business, and to your staff."

I mean, I was able to sweeten the pot a little bit, because I had a bit of funding to bring on a consultant who was able to, like, develop the trials, who was able to take the data, and I had support from the Provincial Government of BC, to have data scientists, because that's a skill set that we don't really have in municipal government are data scientists. And so, they were able to take that data and sift through it, and determine whether or not the changes we had made were, in fact, causing the results we were seeing. And so, I think it was like it was kind of a win-win situation.

It was like we made it as easy as possible for people to participate. We looked for the people who wanted to participate, and then we sort of made that participation so frictionless, which is, you know, it's a behavioural insights idea. Like we were running our own behavioural insights trial. I'm getting very meta now, but that's what we were doing. It's like we were running our own trials, testing our theory, and making it as frictionless as possible for people within the city to participate. And so, I think that enabled us to run four trials within two years.

And the only reason we weren't able to do more was largely because our sample sizes were a little bit smaller than perhaps if we were able to do things that are provincial or federal scale. We had to run our trials, our randomized controlled trials, for five or six months in order to get the right data set possible so that we could end up with the result that we were empirically satisfied with.

APPELT: And so, if you're able to share, did you have successful trials, did you find that BI did, in fact help with your challenges you were facing?

POSTMA: I mean, I think every trial's a success just for the fact that you launch a trial. And when you have failures, you learn about those failures, and you gain some better insight. And I think where, you know, a lot of the value is, let me rephrase that.

I think a lot of the barriers to innovation, particularly within government, is this idea of failing and of realizing that what we're doing and have been doing for a long time isn't working. And there's a bit of fear around that, around well, what will the taxpayer think that we've actually been doing something that's not effective with the resources we've been charged with. I think, there is some nervousness and hesitation around that. And I think that's one of the barriers to innovation.

But in this case, you know, our first trial, we ran around business license renewals. Again, we're not, we weren't reinventing the wheel. This was something that many other jurisdictions across America and the UK have done. And what we learned was actually one of the biggest barriers to doing these sorts of trials was our own technology systems. And so, a lot of the information we wanted just wasn't available.

And the systems we had in place, which are often in government, their legacy systems been around for years, were very inflexible in terms of what type of trials we could run. Could we actually randomize? And so, we weren't able to randomize. We were able to do sort of like a cluster randomization. We still tested out some ideas and we got really positive results. We just empirically couldn't say whether or not those results were due to the changes we made because we couldn't do a perfect randomization.

The other three trials were around dog license renewals, which is like abysmally poor in most jurisdictions, the amount of people, there's like a very poor correlation between the number of dogs in the city, and the number of dog license holders in the city. Many cities have really tried to crack down on that and failed. But we were able to run a trial that was quite successful based on a couple of changes, and then we used up what we learned from that trial to inform another trial and so on and so forth.

So each trial was a little bit better based on what we'd learned from the previous trials and every trial bar from the business license trial, our first trial, saw really strong, positive results, you know, significant increases in repayments or renewals on things like adding in a stamp, like printing a coloured stamp and so, this is a bit of a, maybe a microcosm of an example of some of the challenges we have, our staff traditionally were hesitant to pay for colour printing on notices because there's a small increase in cost on printing in color, so to speak.

And so, we wanted to run a trial because we knew in best practice and other trials that having a red "Renew Now" stamp at the top right of a letter significantly increased people's payment rates. And so, we were able to, because we ran a small trial, we were able to show actually the small cost that the city would incur to print in colour actually was incredibly offset by the increase in payment rates. And so, we were able to empirically challenge that misconception by city staff to say, "Actually, you know what, the small, you know, the two or three hundred dollars it's going to cost you to print in colour, you're actually saving and your return on investment on that is significant". And we were able to point to evidence and data that reinforced that belief.

And that's where I think some of the successes are because we were able to push back on traditional sort of thoughts, because that's usually a very easy thing for people to say, "Oh, you know, colour printing is too expensive". It's like, "Compared to what?", right? Like, what are you comparing that against? And in this case, we were able to show hard evidence and said, "Actually, it's not too much. And it is actually a worthwhile investment". And so that was some of the larger success we had overall. But in general, all of our trials resulted in positive change. And we saw results that we wanted. In that case, they were all very successful.

APPELT: That's great. I love everything you brought up. And I especially love how you brought up that even if you do have something where the project, you know, in some ways might be considered a failure because you weren't able to run an RCT or because the results weren't testable, it's actually still a win and still a success because you're still learning and you're still getting that BI experience and it's helping to do future trials better and that it's also just proof of concept and just continual learning. And it feels insurmountable to tackle one of these, but just getting the ball rolling and starting and learning is hugely important.

I think you brought up some of the unique challenges from the local government perspective of having the smaller sample size, the potential to need to have assistance with things like data analysis. Are there any other challenges specific to trying to do BI in the local government context?

POSTMA: Yeah, I think it's tough to get on people's radars. I think we're all so focused on our projects and focused on our processes and focused on our policies that it's hard. We don't give ourselves the time to sort of step back and maybe ask why and challenge sort of our assumptions.

You know, we probably don't give ourselves enough time to do a lot of that upfront, like field research, and we rely probably often, due to the resource and time constraints, on really traditional methods of gaining feedback. You know, it's through a survey or through an open house. And so, we're not, there's so many different methods of qualitative research that can go into better understanding how people are engaging and interacting and using the programs and policies and procedures that we put into place.

And I think, as I said previously, it's scary for a lot of people. I think this idea of experimenting and pulling back the curtain, if you will, to our processes is challenging for a lot of people who, you know, their career is sort of reliant on those processes being effective and to sort of challenge that assumption and to challenge the status quo and to ask "Why?", is not something that a lot of people are willing to do proactively. I think, you have to find the champions within the city who are willing to sort of ask "Why?", and who are willing to, sort of, test and experiment, and so on.

And I think from what I've seen, you know, once people are involved in the process, they really get behind it and they get excited by the results. They get excited by testing ideas, and they get excited by seeing the payment rates coming in and being able to understand that "Holy smokes, we're trying to create this, like, incredibly large engagement campaign to improve payment rates. Actually, all we needed to do was put a stamp on a piece of paper, and the results are pretty much the same for a fraction of the cost".

And so, I think that's challenging a lot of the traditional assumptions for government employees that we tend to have this, and I read about it recently and I think it works in this sense, it's like this idea of proportionality bias that large events and large actions need to have large causes. And it's not necessarily true. It's like, you don't need a big effort to make a big change, right? You can actually make a big change through really small efforts. And sometimes a series of small efforts results in quite a significant change. And I think that's a little bit of a reframe for many people at the City [of Vancouver].

I think also, you know, there are budget constraints, there are technology constraints. And some of this stuff is, you know, is sort of seen as perhaps on a nice to have or not a high priority, because it's an upfront cost that maybe has a long-term result. And the way government budgets are designed, it's very much not, it doesn't value a return on investment in the same way that a private business may.

So, these are some challenges that you have to deal with. But like I said, like I think backing this all up with evidence, and it's not this sort of "Wholly do good for good", "Do good for the value of doing good", and, you know, "Let's ideate" and things like that. That's hard in government when you have to justify every dollar that you're spending. And I think when you can justify the dollar you're spending through evidence and data, then it becomes a much easier conversation to have. And I really think this, for me and for the city, is like a great Trojan horse, if you will. Like, it's for a long time I've been trying to figure out, like, how do you get people in government to take more risks, to experiment more, to iterate better, and to innovate more.

And I think behavioral insights is that Trojan horse because it's kind of like a safe way of doing all that, and once people start experimenting and iterating, they realize like actually this is cool. Like, it works. It produces results. And so, I think that's the value of it, like it speaks the language that governments are comfortable using.

APPELT: Yeah, I think you brought up some really great points, and I love how you brought up that's something we've talked about in the program is status quo bias and how we kind of just get used to the status quo. And it's not just the citizens doing that. It's, you know, all of us too, the choice architects, whether we're designing forms or we're creating processes, we too get caught by a status quo bias and just getting comfortable with the status quo and challenging the status quo is hard. But I love the idea of BI as the Trojan horse.

POSTMA: Yeah, I know. I told you the status quo is so comfortable. People have built their careers off of the status quo. And I think, you know, it's very hard to break that because the government has built these incredible systems that are so complex and so hard to shift and move.

We think about, you know, there's a lot of analogies that line up well with corporate social responsibility and how you change like a large organization. It's like, these are freighter ships, right? And the freighter ship doesn't all of a sudden take a 90-degree turn. It takes two degrees, three degrees, four degrees, five degrees. And slowly over time, it's able to make that ninety-degree turn. And I think that's the way we need to look at innovation with the government.

It's like, you can't just all of a sudden wake up one day and be like "Alright, cool, like we're throwing everything out the window, and we're going to ideate and we're going to challenge everything." It's like, no you have to unfortunately slowly work within the system and start to challenge the status quo, in ways that are comfortable and safe and allow people the opportunity to sort of ask and wonder why. But you have to provide that space. And I think we don't in government, we aren't good at providing ourselves with that space. Just take a step back and research and look what other people are doing, and ask why.

But yeah, I agree. Status quo, it is super comfortable, and it's like a very safe space for a lot of people. And you can hide a lot in the status quo. There's a lot of, you know, trees and bookshelves and things to hide behind. So, you know, we've got to try and figure out how to shake those trees out a little more absolute.

APPELT: Absolutely, and I think you've already started talking a bit about this, but something else we've talked about in the program is that the behavioral insights is part of a larger policy toolkit to change behavior. And as someone who worked deeply in innovation, I was hoping you could tell us a bit about how you see it combining with these other innovative methods.

POSTMA: Yeah, I mean, it's, you know, there's no one size fits all solution. And I think where I've always envisioned behavioral insights in local government at least is, you know, it's part of a policy toolkit. You know, I've always thought that there is certainly a lot of room for improvement in terms of how we develop policy and procedures and programs.

And I think, you know, there are a lot of great methods that can be used from other tools, and what's interesting is that the people internally who were most interested and got most excited about behavioral insights were those that were sort of Six Sigma experts that worked on continuous improvement, sorry, continuous process improvement group because I think they saw that some of, their tools could get you so far.

And there are some cases where some new types of thinking, some new research methodologies, some new approaches would actually be very helpful, like it's almost that sort of last mile sort of thing. You can get them so far, but it's like, how do you make that last push, right? You need that something different, right? And I think that's where I think behavioral insights can be quite valuable.

I've always struggled with, you know, I think one of the challenges with behavioral insights is that it's very easy to use for low hanging fruit like, you know, process improvement, changing letters, changing websites and things like that. Like when you start getting into some of these bigger systemic challenges and complex systems, you know, you can't rely solely on behavioral insights, but behavioral insights can be, can complement these other tools that we use quite well. And I think in some ways it gives you a blueprint for how to begin to test your assumptions and how to begin to sort of test whether or not what you think is the end goal that you want to reach. If that is actually, in fact, the angle, that's going to be of most value.

I think we go through these big process improvements and change management plans and we're like, "Okay, we're going to go from A to B", and we know B, and we assume B is the place to be. There's no testing as to whether or not B is actually where we want to be, right? And so, before we get all the way to B, we need some sort of system, some tool, some methodology, some inspiration on how to test our assumption that actually B is what we want to be and then begin to think, "Ok, let's test A+1, see how that goes". And if that works and we think, "Okay, maybe this is where we want to be", then we can sort of put all our efforts into going a full-fledged change to B. And I think all too often we jump that middle step, that testing step, and we go from, you know, zero to one hundred without realizing or understanding if 100 is actually the speed we want to be at, and if it's the most beneficial speed for us.

So, behavioural insights give us a bit of a framework to test our assumptions, and to test our ideas before launching these all-encompassing policies and programs across the entire city. And so, I think that's where it has a lot of value is this idea of, you know, do a small test first, see if that's where we want to be, see if that works, if that's effective. And then we can launch it across the whole city or we can change it and adapt it as we need.

I see it as a complement to a lot of the other processes that organizations and governments use rather than sort of the be all end all solution to all of our problems and challenges. I don't think there's one solution for everything. But I think if you combine solutions and gain inspiration and you can take pieces and create a hybrid, but behavioural insights, I think, is a really important tool to understanding how people interact with the processes and policies that we're trying to design and implement.

APPELT: Yeah, that's really well said, and I like how you pulled apart that there's the true behavioural insight part, where it's understanding human decision-making and human behaviour, but there's also the evaluation part. And so, some projects you want to focus more on the evaluation piece and some you bring in both of those pieces. And in all cases, you're combining it with other tools and approaches. And so, it is this like, additional tool and additional knife in your Swiss Army knife that you use in combination with the other tools.

POSTMA: It should and could act as a constant reminder to those people who are creating policies and programs and anything really that like, you need to understand who you are designing this program and policy for, like, "How are they going to interact?", "What do they need?", "How do they use it?".

And many people don't do that because they sort of see themselves as, "Oh, I'm an expert in recycling", or "I'm an expert in subject matter expert in planning" or "I'm a subject matter expert in transportation and so, I know how to design streets that will be the most effective for people". It's like, well, actually, let's take a step back and understand, like, how does the average citizen actually use the streets or actually use our parks, what are the barriers that they see that you may not just not see because it's not based in theory, it's actually based on sort of real-world experience and interaction?

And I think behavioural insights should and could be that tool that constantly challenges these subject matter experts to actually put themselves in someone else's shoes and walk through the system, go to their house, go observe people in parks, and understand like how they use our public spaces or what, you know, why don't they use a bathroom, or why did they throw the cup on the ground rather than the garbage bin that might be five feet away?

And I think we need to do more of that when designing policies and programs, particularly in local government, because that's really where a lot of the rubber hits the road. And that's where businesses and residents will engage most closely with the policies and procedures that we're designing.

APPELT: Yeah, I love how you talked about, that's another thing we've been talking a lot about in the program, is this idea of getting inside the mind of the user, whether it's, like you said, a person recycling, a person not renewing their dog license. So as someone who's been so involved in our regional BI community of practice since its inception, how have you seen BI growing and evolving in BC over the last years?

POSTMA: Yeah, I mean, I've seen a growing interest, I mean, I think it's fair to say, like every annual conference that we've had, like the number of participants grows and grows and grows. And I think that speaks a lot to people's desire to innovate and try something different. And they're looking for inspiration to improve, you know, what they're doing at their office and their workspace. And, you know, I think it's partly good. It's good awareness raising. I mean, that's a huge part of it, is there's actually resources that people can go to and there's more inspiration, there's more "best practices" that they can sort of pull from.

I think it's exciting to see, you know, even within the city, you know, we run, you know, one or two behavioural insights sort of intro sessions a year. And we're like, it's like max participation right off the bat, like we're never short of spaces. We always have a full house. And people get really excited by it because they can like, within two hours, they can immediately think of, like, examples of how they can implement that in their office, right?

And so, the challenge is then how do you harness that and actually take that excitement and actually transfer that into actual work and results and trials and things. And I think that's something that, working at the city like, I haven't quite figured out a way to do that, apart from making it a full-time role for myself, which it just isn't. It was always sort of five or 10 percent of my total role. I can only ever do it off the side of my desk. But I think that speaks volumes to like, you just need to sit for an hour and listen to someone talk about this like, "Oh my God, this will be so good here", "Oh my God, we could do this for parking", and people get like super jazzed.

And it doesn't matter what department in the city. Every single person that comes into these training sessions, within an hour have come up with trials that are actually like really good trials. And it's like "This makes total sense", like "We should do this". And I think it's not, you know, this huge gargantuan experiment that you're trying to trial, it's like "We know these parking signs don't work, how can we make them better?", "How do we know if we've made them better?", right?

And these are really seemingly small things. But like, think of how pissed off everyone gets when you get a parking ticket. Like I can't tell you how many text messages I get from my friends over the years who get parking tickets and blame me as a city employee for them getting a parking ticket. It's like, "No, it's your fault you didn't read the parking sign" or "You didn't pay for parking".

But that is like a constant source of friction between people and the city. It's like, "Well, maybe we can paint lines on the streets so people know where the two meter or wherever it is from the curb they need to park" or like "Maybe the signs on parking meters aren't designed well enough. Let's do something about that", right? Because whatever we're doing now doesn't seem to work because people are always getting parking tickets and they're always challenging them, saying, well, "I didn't know about this or it wasn't clear". And so, anytime I hear that, I think immediately a light bulb goes on in my head and says, "Okay, then we've obviously done something wrong and we need to improve our messaging, our signage, or where it's put, or let's look for something".

And I think, that is where behavioural insights has a really strong toehold from a lot of other design or innovation processes that take months to come up with ideas. It's like, no, there's a ton of really good things



that don't work in the city right now, and we all know it because we all live in the city and we all walk past and see things and get pissed off about certain things. And so, I think there's no shortage of potential trials that that any city could implement or any level of government, but particularly city, because, you know, the provincial and federal governments aren't designing garbage cans. Cities are designing garbage cans. We're installing garbage cans. They're not creating parking signs or parking rules. We're doing that. I think there's no shortage of examples of city processes that could be improved. We just don't really, up until now, we haven't had a system for testing out how do we know what is the improvement we need to make, and whether or not that actually has any positive impact.

So, behavioural insights give you a framework for that. And so, I think it's really exciting to see my colleagues, you know, after an hour and a half writing emails, after, you know, after a half day of training, I should say, write an e-mail saying, "Oh, my god, we could do this here. We do this there. We can do this for that". And then, as I said, the next step is just figuring out how to create an environment that enables them and gives them space to actually do that, right?

APPELT: Absolutely. And so, I think that is a good segue to my last question, which is given that we have some people who are BI practitioners in training, do you have any messages for them, whether it's advice or any other kind of message?

POSTMA: Yeah, I would say, you know, I love the term "steal like an artist". Don't try and create something new. Like there's so many best practices case studies out there that are so easy to implement and give you all the arguments you need to say, "Hey, guys like this works here and it's proven to work. Why don't we try it here?" And so, I would say, look for that low hanging fruit as your, you know, so to speak, your Trojan horse of getting in.

And find your champions. I think that the internal champion that I missed, that I should have gone to first was our Head of Digital and IT, because so many of these trials rely on digital and IT systems that really like getting them on board at the start, would have really opened the door, I think, to a lot more opportunities and the willingness to participate. And now it's only after I have lots of trials that our Head of Digital's like, "Oh, my god, this stuff's amazing. We got to do more of this." And so, I think I wish I would have engaged them at an earlier stage.

But I think you do have to find your champions, find that one or two departments. And I think for us at the City, you know, our colleagues in solid waste and garbage are really supportive of this because recycling and garbage is such a behavioural thing that, you know, it's so easy to create just a little bit of friction that is too much for people to participate. I think I would say, solid waste and recycling can be really good chaps. Parking is a huge one. That's so easy to do as well. And our sort of business licensing and permitting office like those, I think are the three, if you're working in municipal government level, those are the three departments that I would go to first to find your champions.

And then from there you can build out but definitely use the best practice. There are tons of great reports out there that you can rely on, and there's a wealth of examples that you can use and point to when you're trying to convince your boss or your boss's boss to provide a little bit of investment, a little bit of seed money in this to get it done. And some patience too because you know, this does take time, you know, the trials will take four to five months to run. You will need to find support for data analysis. And hopefully you can look to your colleagues and counterparts at the province and UBC and places like that where you can partner with them.

But there's so much out there, like you don't feel like you need to start something new. Just, I would say honestly, copying still with what's already out there. That's what I did. And it resulted in some pretty successful trials and some great opportunities here at the municipal level.

APPELT: Yeah. I love too that you brought up that it is always a matter of partnership. No BI project is ever run by a single person. It's always the people who have the behavioural insights, the people who have the data, the people who have the process. You always have to work within that existing framework and make sure everyone's on board or it doesn't work.

POSTMA: Yeah. I mean, you know, you have to convince people why this is in their best interest to participate and to give up their time. You know, it's not a significant amount of time, but it's still their time that they have to give up to work with you on this. But then also, you can sort of elevate them within the organization and provide them with more exposure, because often, you know, the people who are actually making these things are usually at a level that they don't get much exposure to senior management and they don't get sort of recognized for their work because a lot of it is on unsung work and it's unheralded.

And so, I think, being able to sort of boost them within the organization and sort of recognize and highlight their sort of willingness to participate and experiment is also a very attractive thing as well. It's a good carrot you can offer to people because, yeah, this isn't a one-person job. You need several people within the organization to support you, and enable you, in order for any sort of trial to be run successfully.

And so, I think looking for partnership and looking for inspiration elsewhere is huge. And it makes it a lot easier and safer for people to begin to sort of dip their toe in the BI water, so to speak, and begin to get accustomed to experimenting and trialling and iterating and things of that nature.

APPELT: Absolutely. Well, this has been extremely interesting for me. I feel like I've learned a lot about some of, I've known about some of these trials, but learned new nuances about them. I hope our listeners learned as much as I did. And thank you, Tobin, for joining us today.

POSTMA: It was my pleasure thank you for having me.

APPELT: And thanks for listening to Calling DIBS.

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