

Techno-centric Thinking

By Melissa Yates, CAPP



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SIMPLY PUT, IN 2019 PARKING AND MOBILITY program leaders will need to become even more “techno-centric,” or educated, regarding options offered by industry vendors as they relate to technology and data. To satisfy customer demand for parking, mobility, and access options in any system, industry leaders will need to understand the variety of supporting technologies and data, how they function, and how to match them in a complementary way to effect programmatic success. If not, program leaders will run the risk of quickly becoming a legacy program with a failed service model.

Matching program offerings is often the first hurdle to overcome, with integration directly following. As much as the newest technology sounds like the answer to a multi-faceted problem of parking, access, and data demand, the real question to ask is, “Will this company still be around in the near future?” Do they have a service track record in the industry, however brief, and are they willing to work with other vendors to achieve a cohesive integration?

Taking a chance on a dynamic new vendor can be extremely rewarding, not to mention tempting, or a huge risk for program managers. The carrot is most obviously a variety of promised data that is ardently sought after to help easily identify and make programmatic decisions from, such as dynamic price setting to balance access needs during business peaks, as well as how to best use the limited curbside more effectively.

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Shifting to New Platforms

As the industry shifts from heavy investments in physical program infrastructure such as gates, signage, wayfinding, and pay stations to more digital and application-based platforms, it's important to keep the vision of basic services germane to all parking programs running smoothly: efficient enforcement, infrastructure upkeep, and parking product sales. As the trusted ambassadors of access parking programs, our core work is to ensure that other departments, services, and businesses can be successful through best practices in access and mobility management.

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- What data are truly desired?
- Will the data identify who is using resources, when, and how often?
- Does this technology meet these needs, along with the triple-benefit rule (customer satisfaction, staff efficiencies, and assistance with program leadership decision-making)?

There are a multitude of technology platform offerings in the industry today. Having a clear vision of the information sets desired to make data-driven decisions is important, while being supported by solid program basics of parking access and mobility is critical to success. Established vendors are already adapting to a more app-driven digital platform and have identified a subset of industry metrics most requested and shifted to meet the need. Mining their experience and track record is key. The essentials of how they have shown up in the past is a nice starting place before joining with them, linked arm in arm, into the digital future of new offerings.

A continued model of success, showing commitment to contributing to a strong digital program with ease of integra-

tion, is important. Finally, before too many dollars are spent, find out who's willing to play in the pilot sandbox, and if sampling the product has the vendor pulling up to the table, or looking for a different program to work with. 



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