



Focus on the Future

Guest Predictions: Fernando P. Tirado

Guest Predictions is a regular feature in which we ask leaders in a number of professions questions that affect us all.

FERNANDO P. TIRADO

Since 2008, Fernando has served as the District Manager for Bronx Community Board 7, one of 59 Boards in the city of New York whose mission is to advise and confer with government agencies, on matters affecting the social and economic welfare of the district. Prior to coming to the community board, he was with the NYC Department of Health for 13 years in various capacities, first as a health inspector in the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, then as project manager, a program coordinator, and finally as a director in the Bureau of Food Safety and Community Sanitation.

Additionally, Tirado is the owner of a small marketing company he started in college in 1993 and managed for 10 years. He has a BA in Political Science.

Q: What changes in your professional environment in the past 3-5 years have you found to be the most beneficial?

A: The ability to treat constituents/residents as “clients” and set policies that improve service delivery and customer service. It hasn’t always been easy to convince government agency heads of the necessity of improving customer service, but today’s technology makes it not only possible, but prudent, as more and more people become connected and demand greater accountability.

Q: What changes have been the most troubling to you?

A: I see a growing disconnect and lack of confidence on the community level in government and the subsequent polarization of these communities. Frustrations with the economy, politics, service delivery, and issues are taking their toll on the confidence level of constituents and play out in their perception of all government activities, including community advocacy and local governance.

Q: How will globalization affect your professional area in the near term?

A: Getting constituents to focus on obtaining the skills necessary and reducing barriers to participate in a global marketplace are the areas of greatest concern. We need to invest in technology like some countries in Asia (i.e. South Korea) have to foster economic development. There are too many missed opportunities when large segments of the population are not connected to the internet and cannot partake in internet-based businesses and the benefits of online social networking, and are therefore left out of the global marketplace.

Q: What significant challenges might be anticipated in your professional area in the next few years?

A: Getting something as nebulous as the relationship between bureaucracies to be flexible and intuitive as more constituents become connected to the internet and demand more in the form of information and responsiveness from local government.

Q: What are the greatest challenges confronting young professionals in Western culture today?

A: Complacency and unpreparedness. Too many believe that they are still entitled to a predetermined outcome and therefore do not understand why the choices they are making are not working. They are not prepared to think independently, adapt to their surroundings, or redefine themselves to become competitive in this economy.