

Abhi Nemani

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Summary: Abhi has spent his career in government technology — building, leading, and growing some of the most influential GovTech institutions, including Code for America, Mayor of Los Angeles' Office of Data & Analytics, and Sacramento's Office of Entrepreneurship. As a consultant, he has helped companies grow from a handful of government clients to hundreds. Part investor, part operator, Abhi has over 12 years of experience in leadership roles, and he holds an eMBA from Stanford and has studied history at Oxford, public administration at the USC Price School, and advanced finance at the Wharton School.

EXPERIENCE

Founder & Managing Director

February 2017 - Present

EthosLabs.us

- Built and manage a portfolio of government technology (GovTech) startups with a focus on sales, product, and marketing. Ethos companies now cover over 10,000 local governments internationally, including ZenCity, POLCO, SPIDRTech, Camino, CityGrows, and others.
- Drive mergers & acquisition strategy for Private Equity firms (ONEX Partners and Welsh, Carson, Anderson & Stowe - WCAS), as well as consult large firms on enterprise growth (Granicus/GovDelivery)
- Advise senior government officials (e.g., New Jersey Attorney General & Governor of California) to create and implement innovation strategies for economic development, IT modernization, and transparency.
- Rebuilt an typically in-person social services organization's digital strategy and systems when COVID began, expanding its reach from roughly 30,000/month to ~1.2M/month.

Civic Technology Lecturer

January 2019 - September 2019

University of Chicago

- Developed and taught the first course and curriculum on Civic Technology for masters students in the Computer Science and Public Policy
- Published lectures and lecture notes have been used by dozens of universities, NGOs, and companies in their government and civic technology training programs.

Chief Innovation Officer

January 2016 - February 2017

City of Sacramento

- Developed and launched the city's landmark \$10M Innovation and Growth Fund (IGF) to promote entrepreneurship and innovation, which was approved by the city council unanimously.
- Created and administered a \$1M grant program—Rapid Acceleration, Innovation, and Leadership in Sacramento (RAILS)—to support local startups enablers, receiving 140 applications, totaling over \$17M in grant requests.
- Led first-of-its-kind investment from a municipal government in a national venture capital fund and program (500 Startups), making the city an LP and encouraging startup relocation to Sacramento.
- Built the Mayor's Office for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, recruited permanent staff (including permanent CIO) and the Mayor's Tech Council of local leaders, and codified policies and budget through City Council.

Chief Data Officer

September 2014 - October 2015

City of Los Angeles

- Led Los Angeles to #1 ranking for US Open Data cities in under one year, by publishing over 400 datasets; earned the Platinum Open Data Certification from international data consortium, WCCD.

- Built Mayoral Dashboard, which is used regularly by the Mayor and Senior Staff to increase performance and accountability; the dashboard has saved the city over \$180K, and has been freely reused by other cities.
- Set up first-of-its-kind city data GeoHub (GIS) to share over 1,000 geospatial datasets more easily internally and externally, and deployed various critical applications atop this platform.
- Mobilized the local volunteer community to include 10K+ members that host monthly events and app competitions focused on sustainable innovation; ran the largest civic hackathon in the country.
- Supported multiple departments—e.g. Personnel and Fire—in digital transformations through training and consultations to enhance citizen experience and reduce costs; earned LA the ranking of #1 Digital City.

Co-Executive Director

May 2010 - March 2014

Code for America

Previously: Chief of Staff, Director of Strategy & Communications

- Built, launched, and ran an award-winning non-profit designed to transform local governments through technology, leading product, growth, and assessment, which grew work with hundreds of cities and became a model for the White House's digital strategy.
- Created groundbreaking technology fellowship program for local governments in 2011, recruiting over 360 applicants for the inaugural class, selecting top 20 for three teams that created over 20 civic applications in partnership with 3 cities. Over the next three years, the fellowship expanded to 10 cities per year with 30-35 fellows, building hundreds of civic tools.
- Implemented fundraising strategy for a \$15M+ budget, including foundation engagement, corporate sponsorship, and individual philanthropy. Managed and grew multi-million dollar grant relationships with Omidyar Network, Google.org, and other major national foundations, and paired charitable contributions with sales revenue from contracts with dozens of governments.
- Spearheaded development of growth programs: the first-of-its-kind civic startup accelerator, leading to dramatic growth in activity in the space and the CfA Brigade, a now 50,000+ member community of volunteer civic technologists.
- Launched internationalization strategy by building sister NGO, "Code for All" with various partners including the World Bank.
- Chaired Code for America Summit, the premier gathering of ~1,000 civic innovators from around the world, leading strategy, editorial, and design, growing attendance 275% and revenue 150%.

Manager

September 2006 - April 2010

Rose Institute of State and Local Government

- Oversaw 30 student researchers, supervised project work, handled personnel, and coordinated budget of over \$50,000 with senior staff, focused on government innovation and transparency research agenda.
- Led National Ballot Initiative open data project, researching and cataloging over 900 measures for public access, which led to the publication of a scholarly book, "Direct Democracy and the Courts," published by Cambridge University.
- Led the Digital Archiving project of 20 student employees to publish hundreds of political documents online, becoming the first digital political library for the State of California.

Product Marketing

June 2009 - August 2009

Google

- Led creation of digital strategy for "Gone Google" marketing campaign, conducting marketing research, designing digital assets, and developing reusable online tools, which was featured by AdWeek, Mashable, and VentureBeat; campaign reached over 1M in under 10 days
- Developed B2B social media marketing strategy for Google Apps, driving adoption of new social media techniques within Google's enterprise marketing team

COMMUNITY & INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT

Board of Directors Leading Cities (GovTech Accelerator / NGO)	<i>July 2022 - Present</i>
University Challenge Selection Committee Public Interest Technology University Network (PIT-UN)	<i>May 2022 - Present</i>
Advisor CivicPulse (Public Policy NGO)	<i>May 2021 - Present</i>
Mentor & Speaker Coding it Forward (GovTech NGO)	<i>Jan 2020 - Present</i>
Leadership Circle SmartCityX (GovTech Accelerator)	<i>May 2019 - Present</i>
Chair, Tech and Innovation Policy Committee Newsom for California (Governor)	<i>August 2017 - November 2018</i>
Board Member / Vice-Chair OpenGov Foundation (GovTech NGO)	<i>May 2014 - May 2017</i>

HONORS & RECOGNITIONS

- University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy Mentor of the Year
- GovTech 100 (for various startups), Government Technology Magazine
- Blair Award for State and Local Government
- Partner, Truman National Security Project
- Top 10 CDOs to Watch, Technical.ly
- Member, Future of Urban Development Initiative of the World Economic Forum
- National Fellow, Young Democrats of America
- Edward J. Sexton Fellow; Philosophy, Politics, and Economics
- Harrison Fellow, Salvatori Center for the Study of Individual Freedom in the Modern World
- Berger Award for Top Student, Claremont McKenna College
- All-American Attorney, American College Mock Trial Association
- Breakthrough Publication of the Year: Claremont Port Side (Editor-in-Chief), Center for American Progress

Recognition & Honors for Code for America

- White House Champions of Change
- Government Technology Magazine: Change-makers
- 2012 MDC Partners & Wired Humanitarian Award
- MIT Lynch Award for Urban Affairs
- 2012 Oxford Internet and Society Award

Recognition & Honors for City of Los Angeles

- #1 Open Data City, US Open Data Census
- Platinum Open Data Certification, World Council on City Data (WCCD)
- #1 Digital City, Government Technology Magazine

PUBLICATIONS

Articles

- Dashboards: The Underbelly of the Smart City | University of Missouri Kansas City Law Review (Spring 2017)
- Engines of Civic Entrepreneurship | Hacker Noon (Feb 2016)
- Small (City) Pieces, Loosely Joined | Medium (July 2014)
- 7 Tactics for 21st Century Government | Government Magazine (Oct 2013)
- Here's what we need for civic tech to flourish in government | Apolitical (December 2018)
- GIS Hub Vision | ArcNews (April 2015)
- Towards a Code for Africa | World Bank Symposium (Jan 2014)
- Restoring Cities as Engines for Opportunity | CityMinded (Sept 2013)
- Turning Civic Interest into Action | Government Executive (Aug 2014)
- Beyond Transparency (Book / Editor & Publisher) | Code for America Press (June 2012)
- What's Next? | Code for America Press (June 2012)
- Government as a Platform | TechCrunch (June 2012)
- Accelerating San Francisco | Huffington Post (Jan 2013)

Presentations

- TEDxSacramento, "Hack of the Century: Cities"
- Federal Communications Summit (Washington DC), "Government is What We Do Together"
- Leading Cities, "GovTech Tailwinds"
- Fabric of the City (Paris), "Building an Open Data Community"
- National Association of Government Webmasters Annual Conference, "Let's Move Beyond Open Data Portals"
- Coding it Forward "Building a Civic Tech Career"
- SXSW (Austin, TX), "Hacking for Sustainable Cities"
- University of Virginia, "The Politics, Philosophy, and Economics of Civic Tech"
- Anchorage Economic Development Annual Summit, "Moneyballing Innovation"
- Big Kansas City, "Disruption as a Public Service"
- MAD (Hong Kong), "Civic Startups"
- PDF (NYC), "Digital Inclusion & OpenGov"
- Digital Cities (Buenos Aires), "A Tale of Two Cities"
- Agile Alliance (Nashville, TN), "The Principles of Agile and of Government"
- World Bank (DC), "Spreading Innovation"

EDUCATION

USC Price School of Public Policy

December 2020 - Present

Masters of Science in Public Administration (MPA)

The Wharton School

September 2021 - Present

Advanced Finance Program (AFP)

Stanford Graduate School of Business

August 2020 - August 2021

Executive Masters of Business Administration (eMBA)

Oxford University

August 2008 - December 2008

Philosophy, Politics & Economics (First Class)

Claremont McKenna College

August 2006 - May 2010

B.A. in Philosophy, Politics & Economics (Honors); Magna Cum Laude