

Abhi Nemani

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Summary: Entrepreneur, scholar, and public servant, Abhi Nemani has over 14 years of experience in government technology leadership, with expertise in go-to-market, product, talent, and M&A. Abhi built Code for America, Los Angeles' Office of Data, and Sacramento's Office of Entrepreneurship. He led product development for various GovTech startups, including SPIDRTech and ZenCity, resulting in outsized impact. Abhi holds graduate credentials in business from Stanford (eMBA), public administration from USC Price (MPA), and advanced finance from The Wharton School (AFP).

Skills: Research-driven product & marketing, partnerships, due diligence, PE/VC & philanthropic fundraising, financial strategy, government relations, evangelism, full-stack development (Ruby, JS, PHP, CSS), and data science (Python, Tableau).

EXPERIENCE

EthosLabs.us

Founder & Managing Director

February 2017 - Present

- Built and manage a portfolio of government technology (GovTech) startups to develop their sales, product, and marketing. Ethos companies now cover over 5,000 local governments internationally serving over 200M people with a focus on citizen engagement, AI, workflow automation, and economic development. Portfolio companies include SPIDRTech (acquired), CityGrows (acquired), GovDelivery (acquired), ZenCity, POLCO, HeyGov, and Camino.
- Drive mergers & acquisition strategy for Private Equity firms (ONEX Partners and Welsh, Carson, Anderson & Stowe), advise philanthropy (Knight Foundation & Arnold Foundation) on grantmaking and metrics/analytics, and consult corporates on enterprise growth (Granicus) on deals ranging from \$5M to \$2B.
- Advise senior government officials (e.g., New Jersey Attorney General & Governor of California) and non-profits to create and implement innovation strategies for economic development, talent recruitment, and IT modernization.
- Built, maintain, and grow an online community of over 550 technologists working in or interested in the public sector —GovGeek.club—to promote GovTech job opportunities and news.
- During COVID lockdown, rebuilt a critical NGO's digital strategy and systems from in-person to online, expanding its reach from roughly 30,000/month to ~1.2M/month.

University of Chicago

Civic Technology Lecturer

January 2019 - September 2019

- Developed and taught new course on Civic Technology — including best practices, opportunities and challenges specific to the industry — for flagship Masters in Computational Analysis and Public Policy (MS-CAPP) program.

City of Sacramento

Chief Innovation Officer

January 2016 - February 2017

- Developed and launched the city's landmark \$10M Innovation and Growth Fund (IGF) to promote entrepreneurship and innovation, which was approved by 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.

City of Los Angeles

Chief Data Officer

September 2014 - October 2015

- 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.

Code for America

Co-Executive Director

May 2010 - March 2014

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 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.
- Led communications, press relations, and marketing, generating coverage in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *WIRED*, and more, and driving hundreds of applicants for every CfA program, ranging from fellows and startups to government partners. CfA marketing and products were recognized by AdWeek and Interaction Design Awards.
- 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 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%.

Rose Institute of State and Local Government

Manager

September 2006 - April 2010

- 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.

COMMUNITY & INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT

Leading Cities (GovTech Accelerator / NGO)

Board of Directors

July 2022 - Present

Public Interest Technology University Network (PIT-UN)

University Challenge Selection Committee

May 2022 - Present

Innovations in Justice Tech (GovTech Accelerator)

Mentor / Judge

May 2022 - Present

Coding it Forward (GovTech NGO)

Mentor & Speaker

Jan 2020 - Present

SmartCityX (GovTech Accelerator)

Leadership Circle

May 2019 - Present

Newsom for California (Governor)

Chair, Tech and Innovation Policy Committee

August 2017 - November 2018

OpenGov Foundation (GovTech NGO)

Board Member / Vice-Chair

May 2014 - May 2017

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
- 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

- How Cities Can Compete in the Future of Work | USC Price School of Public Policy (Fall 2022)
- Dashboards: The Underbelly of the Smart City | University of Missouri Kansas City Law Review (Spring 2017)
- Engines of Civic Entrepreneurship | Hacker Noon (Feb 2016)
- 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"
- Texas Association of State Systems for Computing and Communications, "How the Smart City Failed"
- 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"
- Big Kansas City, "Disruption as a Public Service"
- MAD (Hong Kong), "Civic Startups"
- Agile Alliance (Nashville, TN), "The Principles of Agile and of Government"
- World Bank (DC), "Spreading Innovation"

EDUCATION

The Wharton School

September 2021 - February 2023

Advanced Finance Program (AFP)

USC Price School of Public Policy

January 2021 - December 2022

Masters in Public Administration (MPA) | Capstone: Talent Recruitment for Cities

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