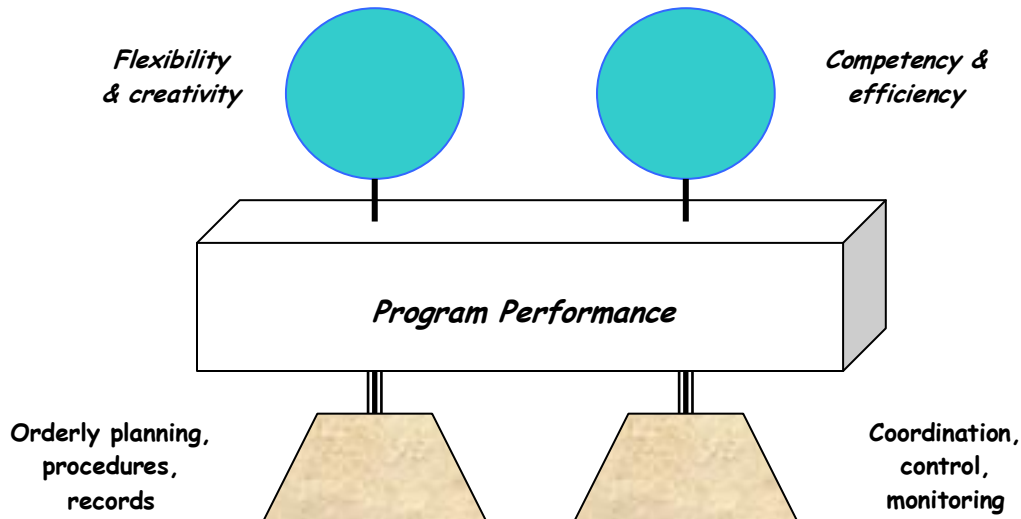


## *Balanced program management*

Effective program and project management needs to blend four pivotal ingredients:



Components 1 and 2 are like balloons. They enable programs to reach new heights. But if emphasized too much, a program may go adrift without sense of direction, priority, or stability. It and its leaders may have flashy moments and gain attention, but the stage may not be set for sustained progress.

Components 3 and 4 are like stabilizers. They enhance foresightedness, orderliness, consistency, and accountability. But if emphasized too much they will become bureaucratic weights that prevent programs from being innovative and productive.

It may make sense for new initiatives and pilot efforts to “balloon” for a while. This can be a way to test fresh ideas. But before long, leaders should take stock of how things are shaping up and where to head for the longer pull. Otherwise the so-called program is likely to wobble in all sorts of directions, without establishing solid roots.

As agencies, programs and personnel become older, they tend to be more “bureaucratic”. That is, they may emphasize 3 and 4. If a program is to achieve new breakthroughs and stay in tune with changing times, efforts must be made to prevent traditional procedures, documentation, and risk-aversion from becoming more dominant than need be.