IT Project Management
Creating an Environment for More Successful Project Outcomes

CHALLENGE: After some difficulty achieving successful IT project outcomes, an IT workgroup comprised of agency commissioners and IT leaders was formed to focus on identifying and addressing IT challenges facing state agencies. **The workgroup identified several major trends:**

• **Shortage of project managers and business analysts**
• **Lack of formal training for PM and BA roles**

In an effort to meet this organisational challenge, the state reinvested in and expanded its IT Project Management Office — Business Solutions Delivery (BSD) — so they could provide standard methodology and tools for project management across all agencies, leading to more successful outcomes for larger, complex IT projects.

> **Multiple employees across the state's agencies are reporting significant improvement on their projects.**

SOLUTION: While BSD has grown from 25 employees to over 500 total staff, the organisation has also created formal positions for a number of critical IT roles, including project manager. The state also implemented a new project management tool, Planview, to further streamline project management efforts and resources. In addition to these critical steps, IT Academy has created a customised training curriculum to provide these IT project managers with best practices from A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge, (PMBOK® Guide), and additional material to educate their employees on the newly created Tennessee Business Solutions Model (TBSM). As part of this customised project management curriculum, employees work through a media-enhanced, simulated case study where they learn how to successfully plan, manage, and deliver projects using best practices in a five-step process, all focused on driving more successful project outcomes.

Employees also develop leadership skills, learn how to implement project management processes, and respond to real-world scenarios. **Additionally, these courses provide a standard methodology and tools for project management across all state agencies:**

• **Standard forms/templates**
• **Gathering requirements**
• **Establishing timelines**

Additional course content focuses on advanced aspects of these vital project management areas: integration, scope, stakeholder management, schedule, cost, earned value management, risk, quality, communications, and other advanced topics that senior-level project managers are required to handle. **The curriculum also focuses on advanced-level project management skills, including:**

• **Smarter front-end requirements gathering**
• **Selection of the right vendor**
• **Recognising when not to implement**

IT Academy supports the development of well-rounded project managers through the delivery of IT success skills courses, such as Essentials Communication Skills for an IT Environment, Optimising IT Solutions with Critical Thinking, and Creative Problem Solving Techniques.

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DELIVERABLES: As part of their statewide IT workforce development program, IT Academy delivered instructor-led project management fundamentals training to over 700 attendees. Furthermore, over 50 senior- and director-level project managers have attended advanced training courses. As BSD and large agencies within the State of Tennessee have begun adopting agile project management methodologies, IT Academy has started to integrate a sampling of agile courseware, including Agile Project Management with Scrum. In addition to the several thousand hours of instructor-led training for project managers, IT Academy has developed two self-paced webinars focused on the state's Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC) and an Introduction to Agile Concepts. These webinars were created to educate the entire IT community on basic topics in these technology areas and have provided the state's IT employees with several thousand hours of training they can complete at their own pace.

ON A 4.0 SCALE...

Average score of
COURSE CONTENT

Average score of
COURSE INSTRUCTORS

RESULTS: Course attendees evaluated the course content at a score of 3.67 on a 4.0 Likert scale, with IT Academy's course instructors averaging a score of 3.86 for their ability to facilitate these training classes. Most importantly, course attendees reported an average performance improvement of 32% when returning to the office and applying the skills they gained in class.

Feedback from BSD suggests that project managers are doing a much better job of gathering requirements and managing schedules. BSD has created a solutions review board to better assess and track agency solutions before a project begins, and they also report that this training provides their employees with the confidence and efficiency to better manage projects.

32% **PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT**
From Skills Learned in the Classroom
Results are an average of reported performance by attendees

Post-Course Accomplishments

" I have been able to apply the skills learned during this course in the following ways:

- The Integrated Master Plan (IMP) – was used for an upcoming project (Electronic Sign-In) and built with inputs of multiple requirements from various groups. In addition, a WBS and WBS dictionary were used to provide an event driven plan identifying significant events and allowing us the ability to evaluate vendors. The final IMP will be used to provide vendors with a plan to meet our requirements

- Activity on Arrow (AOA) diagram - during the upcoming planned Electronic Sign-In project will use this technique during the RFP process with a fresh perspective to identify and understand any risks in a vendor's plan (related to cost, scope, schedule, etc.).

- Quality Assurance - developed a customer survey back in February 2017 for the DHS PMO team and will be utilising it at the end of this month when I wrap up the Food Program project."

— C. Parker-Wood, Project Manager, Sr.
Department of Human Services

" I work on the Automated Case Judgment Project. We have migrated this program to the newest platform and are currently testing the migration in the user acceptance testing environment. I have applied estimating and communicating techniques taught in class. Estimating - comparing the estimated time/hours for a task to the actual time/hours the contractor spends on a task. This information is then listed along with the invoice when submitting the invoice for payment. Communicating - the team has always had a weekly meeting with the vendor but we now have daily team meeting called 'catch up' sessions. This is to identify what everyone is working on and to see if anyone needs assistance with their task."

— D.Stewart, Court Technology Assistant
Tennessee Court System

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