# Building a Networked Organization Through the DoIT Daily

NASCIO Award Category
Business Process Innovations
State of Illinois

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Initiation Date: October 2017 (concept)
End Date: December 2017 (phase 1 complete)

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The transformation of an enterprise the size of the State of Illinois is a monumental task. With over 1,500 IT employees, 60 boards, agencies, and commissions to serve, over a billion dollars in annual spend, effective communication is necessary to bring together an enterprise in common cause. Prior to Governor Bruce Rauner's executive order 16-01 which directed the unification of all IT in the state under the Department of Innovation & Technology, each agency under the Governor operated their own IT departments. Decades of this cultural mindset were deeply engrained and large silos existed across the state.

Sharing the mission, values, and strategies of the new department across the enterprise was a critical element in unifying the enterprise. The challenge of communicating those principles in a consistent and widespread manner, while simultaneously addressing the many and varied needs of agencies along the way required a new operating model to reach our constituencies and stakeholders directly.

The DoIT Daily is the tool created for that purpose, providing a daily, virtual meeting space for DoIT senior leadership, critical management staff, Cluster CIOs, agency CIOs, and many other staff members. The program is dedicated to removing barriers, improving communication and increasing speed and transparency at the Illinois Department of Innovation & Technology (DoIT).

Phase One of the DoIT Daily was launched and completed in 2017, with great success and progress, as well as lessons learned to move forward with next steps. The new communication and collaboration tool resulted in way to optimize the way people, processes and technology work together to transform state government in Illinois.
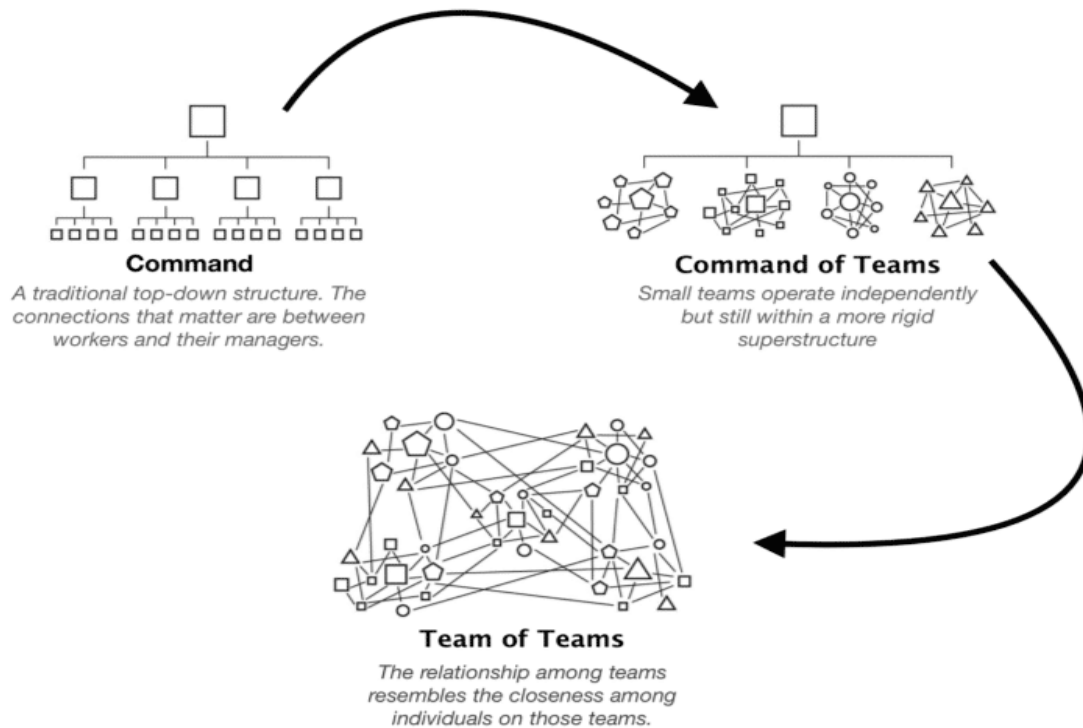
# CONCEPT

The digital transformation journey in Illinois began with an executive order from Governor Rauner directing all IT functions in the state to be centralized into one department. This resulted in a fast-moving, always evolving and dynamic process with communication critical to success.

It was soon realized that communication was not consistently flowing between internal divisions that were important for success. At the same time, meeting fatigue was being felt among many, particularly those whose roles intersected with several other areas of the agency. The search began for a new and more effective way to offer a streamlined and inclusive strategy for communication. DoIT leadership often looked to best practices in both the public and private sector to find methods working for others and the communication strategy of a retired four-star general quickly caught their attention.

At the NASCIO annual meeting in 2017, the State of Illinois and the State of Oklahoma connected and began sharing best practices. One of these was directing Illinois to the book *Team of Teams* by General Stanley McChrystal.

McChrystal came to realize that today's faster, more interdependent world had overwhelmed the conventional, top-down hierarchy of the US military. Al Qaeda had seen the future: a decentralized network that could move quickly and strike ruthlessly. To defeat such an enemy, Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) would have to discard a century of management wisdom, and pivot from a pursuit of mechanical efficiency to organic adaptability.

Under McChrystal's leadership, JSOC remade itself, in the midst of a grueling war, into something entirely new: a network that combined robust centralized communication with decentralized managerial authority. The communication structure evolved from a command structure to a command of teams to a team of teams (see diagram below).

**Command**
*A traditional top-down structure. The connections that matter are between workers and their managers.*

**Command of Teams**
*Small teams operate independently but still within a more rigid superstructure*

**Team of Teams**
*The relationship among teams resembles the closeness among individuals on those teams.*

(Source: Organizational Physics referencing Team of Teams, https://organizationalphysics.com/2016/10/13/top-down-vs-bottom-up-hierarchy-or-how-to-build-a-self-managed-organization/)

Drawing similar conclusions that DoIT was building a robust, centralized operation for the provisioning of IT services, it was also operating within a networked space that required agility and the ability to rapidly respond to issues being experienced on the ground.

The DoIT Daily was built to reach across boundaries and empower information sharing into the central core to immediately solve problems and provide a high-level touch to user agencies in order to resolve issues.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Digital transformation in Illinois was recognized by most as a process that was long overdue, but few wanted to step out of their own way of doing things and face the reality of having to change established practices. Leaders at Illinois DoIT knew that not only communicating the process was important, but that also continuing to focus on the mission and value proposition were essential. Keeping the goal of "serving the taxpayers of Illinois' at the focus of all efforts united the team toward a common goal.

The DoIT Daily serves as communication method for information sharing and collaboration. It is built around the following four concepts:

- **Trust**: It is assumed that every member of the DoIT organization is invested in the betterment and improvement of state government business and operations. As such, each member of the DoIT organization is entrusted with the information necessary to understand the enterprise as a whole and can be trusted to keep sensitive information protected.

- **Honesty**: Every DoIT team member should openly and honestly discuss the issues, impediments, and problems they face in a forthcoming manner. Every team member will be respectful of the honesty and work to take action to own issues and assist the enterprise in resolving those issues.

- **Transparency**: The open discussions of the operations of DoIT is key to the success of this program and ensures that the appropriate manager and staff members can take action on issues to ensure they are resolved. Insight into agencies and core operations is paramount into ensuring that the full scope of an issue can be understood.

- **Accountability**: Every team member will attend and will not schedule other meetings during this time. These are active, working meetings and require full and attentive participation to ensure they are utilized to their full extent. When another obligation arises, team members will ensure their subject matters are fully covered. Team members will do their best to attend in groups via video.

The DoIT Daily functions as a consistent and repeatable process, with the following requirements:

- Meets Monday to Thursday from 9:00 – 10:00; Friday's are used to complete open action items brought forward during the week that need closure.
- Mandatory participation is required of DoIT senior leadership, division leadership and lead managers, Cluster CIO's, and agency CIO's.

**How the DoIT Daily agenda functions:**

The key to the DoIT Daily agenda is active participation throughout and a desire to take action on issues brought up during the daily meeting.

- Each day has three standing topics:
    - an opening by the Secretary to discuss his vision for the strategy of the Department in order to consistently provide insight into leadership's decision-making processes.
    - Operational updates on core IT functions including data center availability, network status, security incidents, and governance processes with an opportunity to challenge any status.
    - Open discussion time to bring up any issues for assignment and resolution.
- Each day's agenda also rotates for updates from each business vertical and line of service across the enterprise.
- Each agenda item is allocated time for updates and discussion that moves in a rapid and controlled manner.
- Group chat during these updates is encouraged to tackle issues and schedule action for follow up by the appropriate owner of that action.

In order to maximize effective time usage and minimize issues, certain discussions are prohibited during the DoIT Daily. These include:

- Individual personnel items or any human resources discussion surrounding an employee.
- Discussion of a personal nature, outside of DoIT business.
- Blame of another DoIT team member for a problem in a hostile or inappropriate way.
- Presenting issues without clear paths for resolution, or without offering to find time to participate in the solution.

## IMPACT

The DoIT Daily is quickly resulting in improved efficiencies through improved use of time and rapid solutions to issues by having multiple decision makers together for quick decisions and collaboration. Some examples of improvements include:

The DoIT Daily invests 16 hours of staff time per employee, per month and replaces at least 32 hours of staff time in other, more siloed meetings.

The DoIT Daily minimizes the communication challenges of building an enterprise organization by bringing a networked communication structure, allowing for collaboration within and among divisions.

The DoIT Daily brings together the technology projects and goals of over 25 state agencies across the State of Illinois to set realistic timelines and quickly respond to issues.

As a management tool, the DoIT Daily is a type of scrum meeting that allows issues across a very large enterprise to quickly be resolved. This provides insight to the management team in what issues are being faced by individual client agencies and to validate that information in other arenas, such as quarterly business reviews with the business side of the agencies.

As a cultural tool, this is providing the most valuable resources of DoIT – its people – a direct link to the Secretary and senior leadership and ensuring their voices are part of the collective success of the agency.