Re-engineering Governance

Business Process Innovations

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Executive Summary

Virginia's current information technology (IT) project portfolio include 57 IT projects valued at $776,201,520. To best guide those projects to success and maximize the commonwealth's IT investments, both IT service delivery and IT governance are centralized in Virginia.

The Code of Virginia assigns these responsibilities to the Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA) and the chief information officer (CIO). Seven categories of IT oversight now are codified, including: strategic planning procurement of IT goods and services; IT investment management; security; enterprise architecture; program; and project management.

A request from a Virginia executive branch agency for IT service delivery also generates compliance activities for 13 specific IT governance functions, including critical cybersecurity business requirements. Multiple divisions within VITA execute these responsibilities.

Over time, each division developed its own compliance processes. There was no connection between processes, which often overlapped. Security was not integrated with governance. Cross-functional and leadership reviews were difficult.

Staff had no knowledge of the impact of their decisions and processes on others or customers. Each year, the General Assembly might add new requirements. The various governance processes often required 30-60 days to complete. As siloes developed, agility was impeded.

To modernize the process and create a collaborative customer-centric view of governance, VITA developed and now uses an effective cross-functional approach to fulfill its codified requirements to review projects and programs.

VITA management reviewed the governance cycle, identifying touchpoints. Adoption of a customer-centric view led an agile new process. It improved time to service delivery and produced a single, unified and informed voice from VITA to its agency customers. In-house tools and staff time were the only costs accrued by the project. It produced a major improvement in service delivery and multiple benefits to the operation of government.

The project directly aligns with the governor's published goals, CIO's priorities, VITA strategic plan and Virginia's Technology Business Plan. It directly benefits VITA customers and their customers, the citizens and businesses of the state.

CONCEPT

Code of Virginia directives for VITA management of IT service delivery have been developed iteratively by the General Assembly over the past decade. Each impacted governance division developed its own compliance processes.

Teams worked independently of other teams, with limited visibility into others' work or status. Processes could take 30-60 days. Activity could not be queried or audited; there was no single source of documentation or compliance. Performance metrics were unavailable. Security was required operationally, but those requirements were not integrated with governance.

A particularly troubling use case concerned urgent customer agency business needs. There was no management vehicle at VITA to assist the agency in accomplishing an unexpected but critical task.

VITA leaders recognized potential customer service tangles. Organizational change management was required. The change management effort resulted in a project with a clearly stated goal to significantly improve service delivery through creation of a fluid, transparent view of IT governance.

To implement the change, a work group was established to:

- Manage VITA's IT Investment Management (ITIM) governance activity offerings (not service delivery or operations) in accordance with the governance lifecycle management framework/process.
- Manage VITA's ITIM governance activity processes to include working with the service management support team to:
  o Clarify, integrate and rationalize the process workflows from each of the governance-related activity offerings.
  o Draft a high-level process workflow that defines "how" each of VITA's governance categories interacts/communicates, works/should work with one another.
  o "Champion" VITA ITIM governance activity leads.

At least one representative of each of the five VITA governance activity categories (supply chain, IT architecture, ITIM, IT project/program management, commonwealth security and risk management) was engaged.

The team first identified, then de-conflicted, existing process. An ITIM governance group responsibility assignment matrix (specifically, a RACI: responsible, accountable, consulted and informed), and process flow documentation were created for VITA's 13 existing governance activities. Clear roles were created, agreed upon and shared.

No budget was allocated to the project. Instead, existing tools including SharePoint and the VITA Customer Account Support Tool, or VCAST, were chosen as the platform. A transparent view and a collaborative workspace with common access to content according to assigned roles were created.

SIGNIFICANCE

Representatives of each ITIM governance activity worked collaboratively on the integration of individual, discrete processes into a more comprehensive, VITA-wide process. The team set and achieved the goal of improving efficiency and effectiveness, formalizing documentation and enhancing communications for all VITA governance processes and/or activities.

The primary stakeholders to realize benefits through the initiative are VITA agency customers. Executive leadership now can easily obtain a global view of the portfolio and the status of individual projects. Also positively impacted are VITA staffers, who now work more efficiently and with better awareness of/alignment with other VITA divisions.

The project was achieved with no direct cost; it took advantage of staff time and in-house tools to solve a business problem. Ongoing operational costs are limited to staff time.

The project provides direct and indirect alignment with stated priorities of the CIO, governor and NASCIO. It specifically and directly achieves furtherance of VITA's mission: to deliver agile technology services at the speed of business.

This initiative aligns closely with VITA Strategy 2018-2020, particularly in the strategic priority area of IT governance. The project is now producing results toward the goal of ensuring VITA's processes, organization and decision making are effective and efficient, and perhaps more importantly, that agency customers find it easy to do business with VITA.

VITA objectives achieved through the project include: continuous and constant improvement in customer satisfaction; improved effectiveness and efficiency of IT processes; implementation of a 15-workday completion objective; and, completion of 100 percent of commonwealth major IT projects on time and on budget against managed project baselines.

The project illustrates some of VITA and Virginia's alignment with NASCIO's State CIO Top Ten Priorities for 2018, including: security and risk management; cloud services; governance; enterprise thinking and identifying and dealing with barriers in pursuit of consolidation/optimization; budget and financial constraints; data governance, data architecture and strategy.

This VITA enterprise initiative also utilizes NASCIO top ten technologies, applications and tools including enterprise resource planning, security enhancement tools, and legacy application modernization/renovation and data management, in a cloud solution.

IMPACT

This internal VITA collaboration and process re-engineering project has guided needed organizational change management. It aligns with and delivers benefits toward the agency's significant customer service goals.

The benefits realized allow VITA staff to produce outcomes that more closely align with the CIO's strategic priorities in focus areas of cybersecurity, IT services, and IT governance.

Specific objectives for VITA's financial framework, workforce planning and workflow are addressed by the program.

In particular, the project has enabled the CIO and VITA's achievement of a goal critical to agency customers' relationship management and usability:

● Ensure that VITA's processes, organization and decision-making are effective and efficient and customers find it easy to do business with VITA.

Organizational change management has been enabled:

● All customer touch points now have been clearly identified.
● All 13 VITA governance processes now follow a clear workflow.
● All governance processes now are visible and transparent to agency customers and all other stakeholders
● Standardized approval processes have been developed and vetted by the VITA process review board.

Risk mitigation is significantly advanced:

● Holistic governance view allows staff to identify potential problems sooner between agency customers and VITA
● Commonwealth security and risk management business requirements now are operationally embedded into governance processes
● Safeguards for personal information are standardized

Customers, including both VITA's agency customers and their customers, benefit:

● Streamlined process for governance related to service delivery
● Clear expectations for information and time to complete governance
● Visibility into process, interventions enabled when needed
● New mechanisms now provide means to respond quickly to urgent agency business needs

VITA staff benefits include:

- Development of new respect and awareness between VITA divisions
- Agreed functionality, clear time expectations
- Awareness of work pipeline early in the ITIM lifecycle
- New tools to provide improved customer service
- Reduced meeting time for seven executive level VITA staff
- New governance processes, such as for cloud services, are easily inserted

The customer-centric viewpoint reflected in the project's business requirements also helped deliver an agile new process and transparent view to multiple stakeholders. It improved time to service delivery and produced a single, unified and informed voice from VITA to its agency customers.

The modernization undertaken by the agency has created an effective cross-functional approach to review projects and programs. In-house tools and staff time were the only costs accrued by a project, which produced a major improvement in service delivery and multiple benefits to the operation of government.