Transforming the Client Experience:

A Strategic Technology Solutions Transformative Service Journey

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SUMMARY

In the spring of 2023, under the leadership of the Commissioner of Finance and Administration, the State's centralized IT department, Strategic Technology Services (STS) embarked on a journey to elevate client satisfaction. The STS mission is to always be a valued and trusted partner in providing outstanding, comprehensive IT solutions and services that support our customers' mission to improve the quality of life of Tennesseans. We aim to deliver business-driven technology solutions and services to support the State Departments in providing value for our citizens. Collecting customer feedback is crucial for IT service delivery and solutions to continuously improve and meet customer needs. To this end, through an annual client satisfaction survey distributed to the State Departments and Commissions, STS sought to gather and better understand the client's desires, objectives, and pain points. The survey focused on 11 key areas of the STS service delivery model.
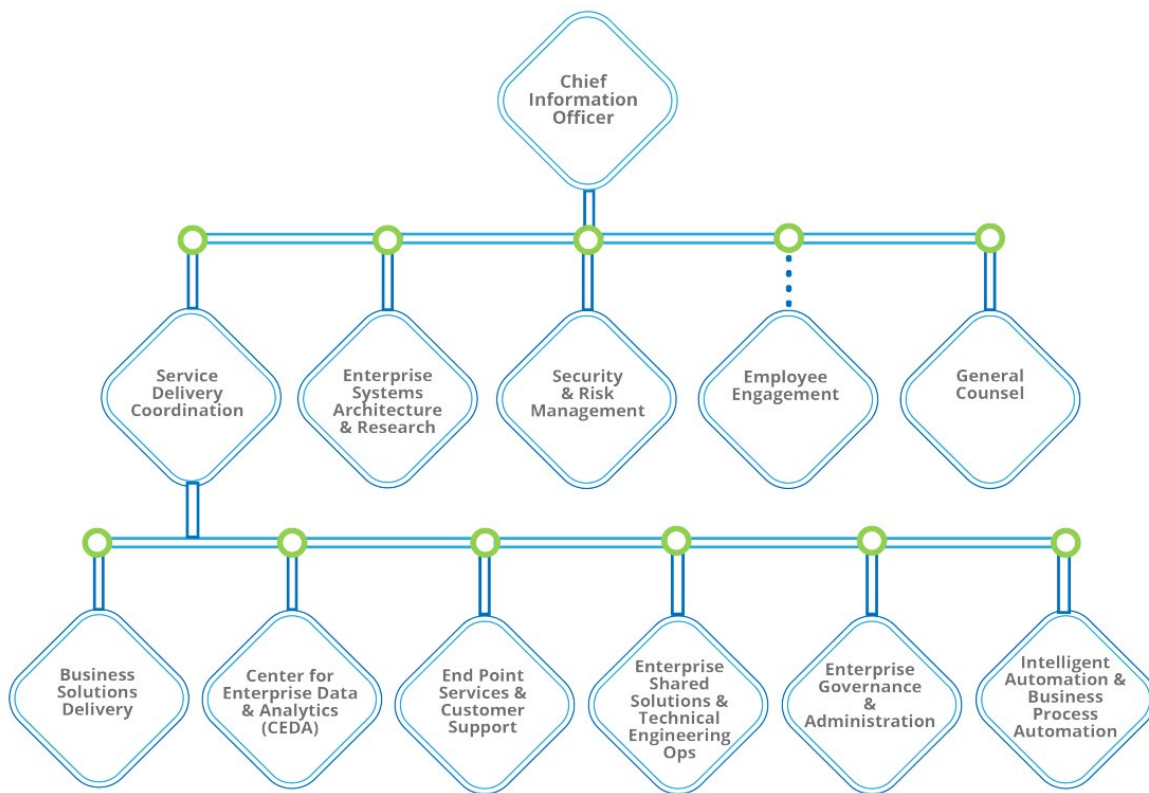
Subsequently, collaborative client conferences were held with each Department, with Commissioners and Leaders engaging in candid discussions to unravel pivotal insights from the survey feedback and chart the course for transformative change.

Emerging from these client conferences were nine distinct themes, each representing distinct opportunities for improvement: Software Procurement, Edison (the State's Enterprise Resource Planning system), Communication, Asset Management, Billing, Onboarding, Solution Delivery, Video Conferencing, and Department-specific requests. The STS Executive Leadership Team (ELT) assigned each theme to dedicated members, catalyzing the formation of client-focused workgroups tasked with dissecting challenges and architecting innovative solutions. As a testament to STS's commitment to excellence, the resulting recommendations underwent rigorous scrutiny before being entrusted to adept Project Managers for seamless execution. The unique approach with the STS customer satisfaction survey and client conferences have proven priceless to STS, enabling us to significantly impact positive change for our customers while fostering a culture of continuous improvement amongst our organization.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

As the workgroups began their work, client representatives and STS subject matter experts analyzed comments from the survey and conferences and explored processes and possibilities. Rapid wins were celebrated, while complex challenges were met with determination, prompting evaluations to unearth strategies poised for maximum impact. Workgroups were established for each of the themes to propose resolutions. The workgroups were a blend of customer representatives and STS subject matter experts. Over two months of collaboration, workgroups developed recommendations to improve processes. Following vetting by the STS Executive team, these recommendations were reviewed by Commissioner and became the roadmap for process improvement within STS. This roadmap was named the STS Client Action Plan (CAP).

Software Procurement

The Software Procurement team collaborated with the Customer Focused Government (CFG) team, marking a significant shift in procurement dynamics. They streamlined processes through a LEAN Event Engagement, improving efficiency and transparency. There were noteworthy changes to the communication around software procurement. A Tableau dashboard was created that offers real-time procurement insights. The exception process is often tightly coupled with software procurement so that process was reviewed as well. The results are a fully automated process designed to reduce bottlenecks. Additionally, a software procurement center was created on the State's intranet with a user guide, interactive procurement guide and links to make it easier to procure software.

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System

The client conference feedback was that the State's ERP (Edison) user interface needed to be more user friendly. The Edison ERP team partnered with Gideon Taylor to enhance user experiences. Initiatives like simplifying travel and expense processes and improving HR transactions demonstrate STS's commitment to innovation. Plans are also underway to enhance inclusivity through foreign language translations and deaf/hard-of-hearing services reflect STS's accessibility ethos.

Communication

Most of the workgroups had a communication component, but standardizing communication roles and responsibilities, informing stakeholders on project scope changes, and utilizing Emma to gather statistics were implemented by this team for the enterprise. The team identified key stakeholders across the Departments and created an STS Communications Advisory Board, which meets quarterly, to allow for an open dialogue on how well we are communicating, or shortcomings in communication to the customers. A quarterly newsletter was created to communicate with customers and teammates on important information. An STS Contact card was added to TeamTN to allow a single place for customers to look for someone to reach out to if they have a problem. The team worked to implement the Coveo solution to provide for better search functionality on the TeamTN site when looking for frequently asked questions.

Asset Management

The Asset Management team had the most recommendations of all the workgroups. There was a communication component to provide documentation on the processes and flows of Asset Management, create a frequently asked questions on how asset management works within the State and how assets are sent to surplus when they reach their end-of-life. Working with the Service NOW (SNOW) and Adobe eSign teams, the chain of custody form was implemented along with the ability to provide a history of asset assignments and whether an asset had been returned to stock or remained in the custody of the manager. To better track assets that have 4g/5g capabilities, changes are in progress to add fields to collect needed information to turn on/off capabilities and billing more efficiently for services. To assist with inventory control, the team is working with the SNOW team to review the use of scanner guns or an iOS application to speed up inventory of stock rooms across the State.

Billing

The Billing team increased the understandability of STS billing by revising long descriptions used in tracing billing from source systems to the Edison system which are then exported to the Billing Center dashboard for Departments to review their monthly billing. As part of the billing description changes, the Billing team met with Fiscal teams across the State to communicate those changes as well as provide education regarding Edison reporting. The Billing Center dashboard is being enhanced to track billing from Resource Planning thru to the billing. Micro-learning training videos and a quick reference guide are being created to aid new and seasoned Fiscal team members with navigating their bills.

Onboarding

The Onboarding team, after listening to customers in the General Government Domain, began work on streamlining the Onboarding process, using a standardized eForm, to ensure IT equipment was ready on day-one with the new hire's required software applications set up and configured. This, in the past, has caused delays in equipment availability. To mitigate the delays, a new set of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) have been implemented so approvals and provisioning may be processed efficiently. Through a partnership

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with the State's Department of Human Resources (DoHR), a hiring manager toolkit is being created which will outline the pre-boarding and onboarding activities. The team is working to implement the new eForm with the ability to review assets available so the hiring manager can pre-select a class of laptop to be provisioned for the new hire.

Solution Delivery

The Solution Delivery team has created a Software as a Service (SaaS) checklist document that teams may utilize to guide them in the understanding of critical success factors for a SaaS implementation. The checklist has been reviewed by teams that either implemented or are in the process of implementing a SaaS solution to validate the usefulness of the checklist. The team set up a bi-monthly forum to encourage collaboration on researching enterprise solutions, involving stakeholders early in the process of project management, and tools to help identify the total cost of ownership of a project. The team created resources to assist teams, during the Resource Planning process, to better define projects for year-two and year-three.

Video Conferencing

The Unified Communications and SNOW teams worked to create standardized Video Conferencing solution offerings to better align with the State's need for user-friendly hybrid meeting video conferencing solutions for small, medium, and large conference rooms. This allows the Unified Communications team to provide a streamlined approach to conference room upgrades, having hardware on-hand, which allows for a quicker deployment and consistent user experience for all new rooms.

IMPACT

The teams implementing these recommendations followed the STS Guiding Principles closely:

1. *Value and Respect Each Other –* we listened to our customers and created open dialogue to understand their issues and concerns with how our services were being consumed.
2. *Put the Customer First –* by listening to our customers, we ensured we were focused on making their jobs easier.
3. *Evaluate, Prioritize, and Plan –* we evaluated the issues, prioritized the recommendations, and planned their execution.
4. *Hold Ourselves Accountable –* we provided updates to the ELT, Commissioner, and customers through communications and reviews.
5. *Listen to Understand –* our teams listened to our customers to better understand their issues.
6. *Provide Leadership –* by collaborating with service teams and customers, we led teams to provide enhanced services for our customers.
7. *Encourage Communication –* as previously stated, each workgroup had a communication component. We provide transparency in our progress and create working aids that will assist our customers going forward.
8. *Demonstrate Integrity –* our teams were honest with our customers and team members throughout the process.

Because of the successful Client Action Plan lifecycle, STS is now able to provide better service to our customers because we now better understand customer needs and expectations. By listening to understand, demonstrating transparency and accountably, and then taking measurable action to improve our service quality and reliability, we have increased the trust and loyalty of our customers. STS intends to continue the Client Action Plan process each year as we move forward in the future, hand-in-hand with our Departmental customers.