WORKING WITH STATE GOV MEDICAID, PUBLIC HEALTH AND DHR PROGRAMS
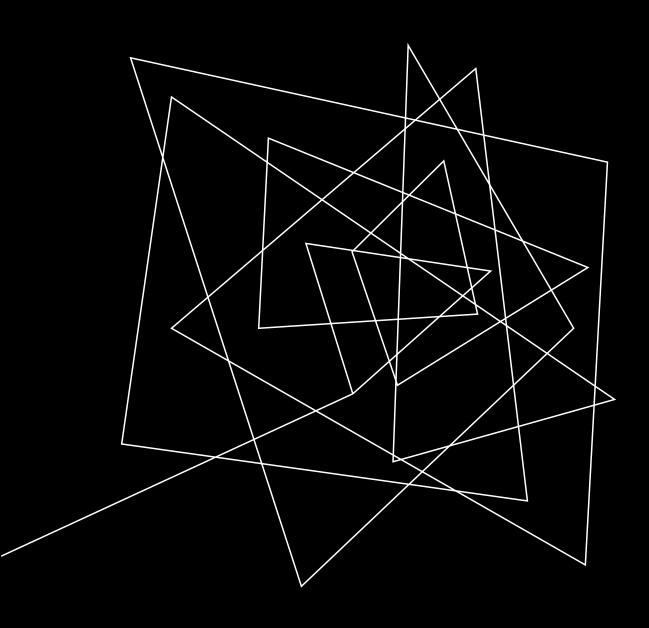
CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

A SUMMARY BY JAMES K SMITH

INTRODUCTION

All state governments offer a variety of public health programs crossing Medicaid, DHR, and DPH agencies. Typically, the technology for these programs is funded with federal dollars and require collaboration with Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V), along with substantial gate reviews. Typically, vendors are selected and contracted to deliver this technology.

Challenges to success for vendors include effectively engaging stakeholders, both at a personal and a process level, along with management of the technology toolchain the vendor offers to take advantage of a COTS business model.

CHALLENGES AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

CHALLENGES

THE APPLICATION BASELINE	THE DELIVERY TIMELINE	MANAGING THE CUSTOMER	OPERATIONAL	CHANGE MANAGEMENT	IV&V
*Source code is often not available or lacking in documentation. *No backlog is available to be used in transferable technology (see CMS.gov MITA overview). *Extent of documentation(for current state) includes design documents, requirements, emails.	*Delivery roadmaps are typically too aggressive. *States deal with conflicting priorities regarding project completion and continuation of federal funding.	*Trust reciprocation is strained (evidence not meeting objectives). *Stakeholder review cadence is usually not frequent enough, leaving customer wondering what's going on. *Customer tends to run design sessions. *The customer doesn't understand contract between Definition of Ready and Definition of Done.	*The project delivery effort includes oversight roles and business analysis provided by vendor, along with subcontractors engaged by vendor. *Collaboration between state, contractors, and sub-vendors is inefficient. *Integrated effort for this approach is challenging, even with efforts to matrix the project organization.	*BA's and implementation director are challenged with explaining change requirements and cost of those changes to the customer. *Customer expresses concerns about being "nickeled and dimed" in the change negotiation process for transferable (re-usable) technology.	*IV&V plays an extensive role in the project, going so far as to provide QA testing post SIT testing. *Testing shifted this far right in the value stream creates an ineffective Definition of Done scenario for the customer.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

THE APPLICATION BASELINE	THE DELIVERY TIMELINE	MANAGING THE CUSTOMER	OPERATIONAL	CHANGE MANAGEMENT	IV&V
*Even if source code is not available or poorly documented, a substantive backlog should be created from the existing baseline system, as well as for the customized system being developed for the customer. This effort would be championed by James. *The backlog will track cycle and lead time data to provide better forecasting for release dates for current and future customers. (See note 1)	*Given customer change requests, the data typically does not support the initially proposed roadmap. *To ameliorate above, customer needs to be informed of progress on cadences as short as possible. To achieve this, James will work internally and with vendors to move to a shorter sprint approach. Iteration length to be determined.	*To improve trust reciprocation with customer, a "slow down to speed up" approach can be employed. James will work with delivery teams to determine baseline of certainty and stability that is repeatable. *A shortened review cadence will greatly improve customer expectations. *Customer solutioning must be redirected to "what" instead of "how." (See note 2)	*Standing up a well-designed value stream (team) will help vendor and sub-contractors work together more efficiently to deliver customer value. James will design and implement value stream and teams. *As part of value stream team, an integration team should be formed. This integration team will specialize in portfolio management just above delivery teams. (See note 3)	*Suggest change management be moved to a more "inspect and adapt" approach executed in much smaller bites. Better forecasting data (from the backlog) will facilitate building in more change management costs as part of an emerging solution for each customer. This is a portfolio management issue that James can address. (See note 4)	*Legacy testing regimes attenuate the Definition of Done (as in done, done done, ad nauseum). *Testing needs to be shifted as far left as possible. While adherence to governance and IVV wanting a cut of this effort may be fixed requirements, vendor should adopt an effort to implicitly deprecate these fixed requirements as much as possible. James can implement a behavior driven development that will improve the current testing regime. (See note 5)

NOTES

Challenge not covered: Scaling out the training plan to cover all agency application users TBD.

Note 1: In addition to healthy backlog, a theory of operation document covering test cases needs to be provided. This provides many benefits, from sustainability for customer in the form of assisting customer prodops support after vendor is no longer engaged. Additionally, these artifacts will greatly facilitate a transferable technology platform from customer to customer.

Note 2: In design sessions, vendor needs to keep customer focused on what value needs to be delivered, instead of where to place a button on a dialog. Engaging customer in solutioning at this detail is a recipe for missing promised release dates. A more efficient approach includes greatly shortening iterations, with rigorous review at the end of each iteration. This approach helps customer to understand that design is meant to be emergent, thus better managing customer expectations.

Note 3: Value stream integration teams coordinate down stream work by setting priority, as well as identifying and limiting duplicated work. They are also good for identifying healthy dependencies across teams and shifting left bad dependencies to be addressed in the stream. This maintains flow.

Note 4: Opinion from James: Change management for transferable E&E systems is inefficient, probably because the intent of the application platform to be a transferable technology has not been met. The app doesn't meet **DoR** for the expected business model. This may require some development effort from vendor to rectify, but for a transferable technology to be successful, it needs to support intentional architecture that fosters emergent customization for each customer as needed with the least amount of friction (change requests) as possible. This could include approaches like more easily scripted and testable UX, as well as a more loosely coupled, but tightly cohesive architecture.

Note 5: Given requirements for SIT, UAT, and wherever IV&V is engaged in that effort, as much testing as possible needs to be done at the time of development. The goal is to simplify **DoD** and to make redundant testing to the right of development. James can work with the teams and BA's to implement BDD/TDD.

DoR – Definition of Ready

DoD – Definition of Done.

PROPOSAL FROM JAMES

To enhance success of the vendor E&E transferable application, suggest two Implementation Director positions, one internal to vendor, while the other is a field implementation director facing the client.

The internal implementation director's role is to maintain a Definition of Ready for the E&E system as a transferable technology given market demands.

The field implementation director's role is see that the emerging requirements by the customer are met with more realistic timeframes, given the platform the internal implementation director has prepared.

An automated product intended for repeated sale includes reusable implementation templates, processes, common baseline backlog, unified customer engagement best practices.

These two roles collaborate to automate as much as possible the delivery of transferable technology to each customer, with the intent being to increase residual revenue from an existing product.