PRODUCT OWNER ROUNDTABLE

TRACI WALKER// U.S. DIGITAL SERVICE // JUNE 2019

GOVERNMENT PRODUCT OWNER

PROBLEM: Government program/IT offices lack a holistic approach to product thinking as demonstrated through commercial industry best practices in software development. This causes problems in contracts for software dev/customization services as the government team may not solicit & execute them with the proper focus on delivery & improvement of working solutions to meet end user/citizen satisfaction.

HYPOTHESIS: While there are many approaches to re-skilling a workforce, creating a cost-effective "low lift" training strategy to rapidly train CORs/Project Managers how to be Product Owners will improve contract administration and consequently product delivery for government solutions.

PRESIDENT'S MANAGEMENT AGENDA

STRATEGIC WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

Actively Manage the Workforce
Improve Employee Performance Management & Engagement

Develop Agile Operations
Reskill & Redeploy Human Capital Resources

Acquire Top Talent
Simple & Strategic Hiring

CONTINUOUS LEARNING: INNOVATIONS, RESEARCH & PILOT PROJECTS

IT Modernization

MISSION SERVICE STEWARDSHIP

Data, Accountability and Transparency

People – Workforce of the Future

WHAT IS THE LONGER TERM VISION? DEVELOP A FAC- PRODUCT

Elements:

- Competencies for Product Owner & Product Management
- Levels established for basic, intermediate, advanced training

Potential Solutions

- Custom vs Industry available training
- Hybrid of training
- Online vs. Classroom
- Integrated Project Team (IPT) Training
- Can cover multiple roles: legal, IT COR, IT/PM, management

ROUNDTABLE ACTIVITY

**DISCUSS THE DEFINITION
OF THE GOVERNMENT PRODUCT OWNER**

ADD, REMOVE, OR REFINE ELEMENTS

PRODUCT OWNER PILOT

How do we test the hypothesis?

ACTION: Conduct a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT)

Plan to test whether custom government Product Owner curriculum is more effective than existing commercial Product Owner training. How much of a delta

Use results to inform decision making specific to creating a FAC –Product Owner series to present to OFPP, OCIOs, Program Offices as a way to quickly start educating and executing.

Iterative Approach to Test

What we plan	What we learn

Challenge.gov: Launch a challenge, similar to DITAP, to get custom government training developed to achieve Product Owner outcomes

A phased approach will allow for concept, design, and development of the custom training through a pilot

Industry Training: Identify various Product Owner training available to industry and send participants

Select the highest esteemed training courses as recognized by industry.

Custom Training: Send equal/controlled number of participants to training developed under challenge

Validate different elements of custom vs industry training

Test Evaluation: Participants are evaluated for a time period (4-6 weeks) at home agency following training to determine effectiveness

If there are equal or different challenges to taking industry Product Owner training vs. needing customized government specific training

What does the pilot training look like *(DRAFT)*?

Elements:

- Introduction to Agile Basics + Product Owner specific training
- 2-5 days of classroom training (16-40hrs)
- Does not have to be consecutive
- Following training, participants will implement skills for 4-6 weeks and report on how effective training was.
- Testing timeframe June – Nov 2019

Participant Profile

- Current Federal Employees who have direct control or management of digital service/agile software development projects.

- People who approve the work/contract delivery: assigned as the COR or the Project Manager. May be identified as the Product Owner currently, but not required.

- Various expertise levels with agile from novice to expert

- Variety of backgrounds/agencies

- Commitment/approval from management to participate

- Ability to implement training learnings directly in agency following training

- Sample size large enough to meaningfully test the different approaches

TRAINING ASSESSMENT

Prior to the training…

What do the Product Owners understand about their ability to fulfil the role prior to the training; and

After the training…

What do Product Owners now understand…have they exhibited any demonstrable changes after taking the training?

How do we test this specifically?

RCT Testing will require the outcome data to be collected in the same way from the two groups.

ROUNDTABLE ACTIVITY

**DISCUSS THE FEASABILITY OF THE TEST PILOT APPRAOCH
FOR PRODUCT OWNERS**

**WILL IT WORK?
WHAT ARE WE MISSING?
WHAT ELSE COULD WE DO?**