EXPERIMENTS, MEASUREMENTS, & PARTNERSHIPS

HOW LARGE FEDERAL PROJECTS CAN SUCCEED

2019
Administers the nation’s lawful immigration system
- 19,000 employees across 200+ offices
- Funded from application fees
- Processes ~8M filings annually
WHY MODERNIZE

Looking for Something?
WHERE WE STARTED

"A robust digital environment is key to optimizing our adjudication processes."

TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM

Agency-wide digital modernization program to transition USCIS away from decentralized paper-based processes to a fully integrated electronic operating environment.
“Successful digital modernization initiatives require an operating model where IT and business are partners, and are focused on business outcomes that align to a unified business/technology strategy.”
AN ARRANGED MARRIAGE
AN ARRANGED MARRIAGE

Technology Delivery Perspective
• Lots of hand-offs
• Waiting for requirements
• Schedule driven releases
• False confidence
• No User-Centered Design

Business Operations Perspective
• Low trust; power struggles
• Lack of clear vision
• Little visibility of what was coming
• Important requirements de-scoped to meet schedule
• System not intuitive
MANAGING FAILURE

Technology Delivery Perspective
- Digital processing of Naturalization applications
- Low confidence of success
- Unmanaged technical debt
- Unreliable system and infrastructure

Business Operations Perspective
- Knew product wasn’t ready
- Widespread frustration
- Applicants left hanging
- 85+ field offices affected
SYNCHRONIZED VISION
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<th>SYNCHRONIZED VISION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technology Delivery Perspective</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Re-organized to support business operations</td>
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<td>• See the real-world impacts; return re-energized</td>
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<td>• Show, don’t tell</td>
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<td>• Build trust through delivery</td>
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<td><strong>Business Operations Perspective</strong></td>
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<td>• Field visits reset relationships</td>
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<td>• Reshuffled organization to support technical delivery</td>
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<td>• Proof that voices are heard</td>
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...AND RESTORED PARTNERSHIPS
“The simplest and most meaningful experience comes from **going out to the field**, seeing **how digital products are used**, and having the **capability to deliver improvements** quickly.”
MODERNIZING THE APPROACH
# NEW TOOLS AND DISCIPLINES

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Technology Delivery Perspective</th>
<th>Business Operations Perspective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Zero downtime deployment</td>
<td>• Product discovery; user research</td>
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<td>• Feature toggles</td>
<td>• Two-way communication</td>
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<td>• Test and deployment automation</td>
<td>• Frontline staff influencing product vision</td>
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<td>• Design and usability testing</td>
<td>• Code changes on the spot</td>
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TEST THE WATER VIA FEATURE TOGGLES
CULTURE OF EXPERIMENTATION

Technology Delivery Perspective

• Beta testing protected by feature toggles
• Culture of running small experiments

Business Operations Perspective

• Learning new ways of working (streamlined processing)
• Control over field experiments (types and locations)
Until Fall 2016, nearly every deployment occurred outside normal work hours.
REDEFINING AND EVOLVING ROLES
Until Fall 2016, deployments occurred once or twice a week on average
KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Make deployments safe (feature toggles, CI/CD)
- Get out in the field and listen to your users
  - Deliver an immediate change, see the impact, and ask, “what’s next?”
- Create a shared culture where IT and business are equal partners
  - Align to a unified vision, strategy, and business objectives
“We are **not** trying to recreate paper-based processes, or simply digitize forms… The goal is to **enhance enterprise agility** by achieving **transformational outcomes** that result in true **business value**.”