Solutions for the public sector need to be more than just smart—they require *agility* if you want to keep pace with new demands, legislation, and the increased scale of public sector projects. By definition, "agility" is the capacity to think and act quickly. Iterative development infuses agencies with the ability to "turn on a dime," a necessary skill in an environment that is constantly evolving.

What if new legislation forces change on an organization? What if funding is cut and the organization is scrambling to stay on track? Solutions need to be highly adaptable, but organizations themselves also need the ability to change and adapt as quickly as their technology does. Surprisingly, it is often not the technology that is the biggest obstacle. It is how effectively change is managed within an organization that dictates which projects will be successful.

Diving right into the training aspect and the "end" of development is a mistake. It increases the likelihood of the three major risks of inadequate change management: lack of employee knowledge retention, business disruption, and poor application utilization. New technologies require serious investment and when a newly offered process or system is not properly utilized, that investment will become a loss. Instead, it is important to fuse together the agile development process with proven change management techniques. "Our team realized that since development is agile first, we need to do change management in an agile world," says Saurabh Verma, managing director, public sector at Acumen Solutions. "Encouraging change at the organizational level begins with individual people. You can implement organizational change alongside

agile development with a systematic approach," says Verma, as many in the public sector have come to realize that managing internal change requires a steadfast approach which ties in directly with an agile development method.

Develop More than Buy-In, Create Ownership

Agility and change management go hand-in-hand, starting with the Sprint "0" discovery process. Enterprise projects sometimes fail because people do not understand the need for change. Discovery means that the people involved in the project are providing input on why the project is happening, how it should work to be successful, and what the ideal outcomes are. This helps stakeholders understand the need for change and become invested in the project.

Taking this a step further, the agile process of backlog grooming, stand-ups, sprint planning, demos, and retrospectives lend themselves to developing a sense of ownership on behalf of all individuals involved. Clearly detailing the benefits to both the employees and the organization is key. What are the employees going to get out of these changes that will directly benefit them? It is likely clear, but might not always be relayed well. For example, it is likely that these new technologies will allow employees to work more efficiently. There may be a slight learning curve, but ultimately it will make their jobs easier with less double-work or risk of making a mistake. Outlining ownership addresses how agencies can ensure that their employees want to engage with the change and be a part of it.

Additionally, when all stakeholders are aware of the reason for the change, this can decrease the risks often associated with changing a person's typical work or job description. Risk will always be a factor but can be lessened with well-planned, iterative change management techniques.

Sprint Training Maximizes Adoption

The agile scrum model is founded in transparency and complete clarity about what is being done, who is doing it, and when it will be delivered. This helps to ensure that employees stay proficient and productive while encouraging them to take advantage of new technology and systems quickly. This transparency in the change management process leads to increased engagement from stakeholders who are empowered to collaborate and learn throughout the process.

Most importantly, adequate change management during agile development equips stakeholders with the ability to fully utilize systems and apply new processes. During any agile digital transformation, users interact with the system throughout the development cycle, and an iterative training program optimizes an employee's ability to use the system well. When product delivery happens regularly, users are trained in sprints. This agile approach to training has many advantages to simply training at the culmination of a project.

"As a solution develops, users are trained in parallel," says Courtney Tandeciarz, director at Acumen Solutions, "This is extremely efficient from a time and cost standpoint as skills are reinforced through continuous training and usability issues are identified early enough upstream that they can be addressed prior to full-scale roll-out."

Change Management Must Be Agile

Everyone knows that change is constant. It is still a struggle for many organizations to actually manage the organizational changes to maximize productivity, particularly as more federal agencies are choosing to fund value streams in lieu of specific projects.

"By funding value streams instead of specific projects, federal agencies are giving themselves the flexibility to react to changing priorities," says Jake Gmerek, subject matter expert, public sector at Acumen Solutions. "This flexibility means that solutions are being delivered faster than ever before and the change management practices must adapt to meet the pace of innovation," Gmerek further states. As the pace of new legislation quickens and digital transformations in the public sector increase in scale, agile development and change management are critical to success. By developing and managing change iteratively with complete transparency, organizations can maximize the benefits of new technologies while also mitigating the risk of employee churn, operational disruption, and poor user adoption.

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