HOW SAO USED CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT ON ITS OWN OPERATIONS

Spotlight: Staff Tracking and Resources (STAR)

Identifying the problem

In 2015, the Office's Continuous Improvement program launched a system to collect and manage staff's improvement ideas. Anyone in the Office can review and comment on ideas posted on the SharePoint site.

Many ideas targeted ensuring new employees are assigned the right tools, resources, equipment and system access when they are hired, are maintained throughout their employment and are removed from office systems when they leave. These ideas came together as the Staff Tracking and Resources (STAR) project. Staff from seven departments participated, including Human Resources (HR), Information Services (IS), Audit Management, Financial Audit, Single Audit, STAT, and Administrative Management.

> *"Lean helps educate others on what all the other lines of business do."*
> *– Katie Bennett, HR*

The Office chose to break the STAR project into six major sub-projects

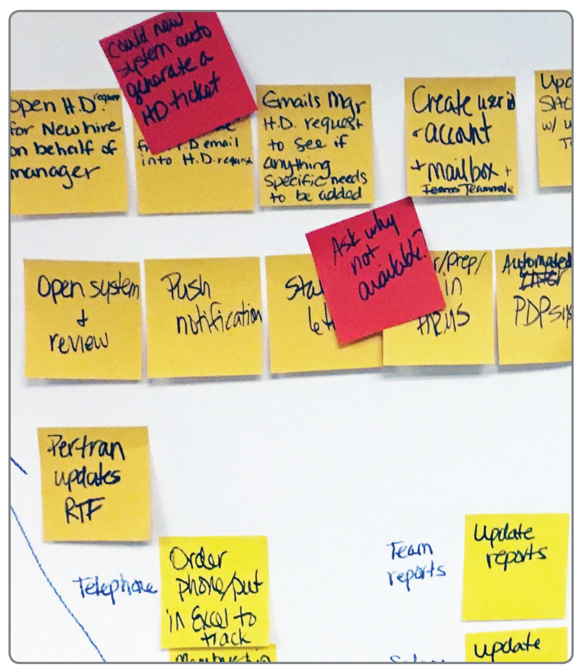
Because continuous improvement project charters need to be carefully defined to prevent scope creep, projects were scoped to address specific blocks within the overall process.

Project 1: Request to fill staff position process

The project team examined internal processes from the time a manager learns of a need to hire staff through getting an approved Request to Fill. The team gathered feedback and noted opportunities for increasing efficiency.

Project 2: Hiring process

The boundaries established for this project started with an approved Request to Fill and ended with an acceptance of a job offer. The team found ways to standardize and streamline the current process, and make additional improvements requested by managers.



Project 3: Processing personnel notifications

The scope for this project was much smaller than for the last two projects. The key stakeholders were able to wrap everything up in a couple of quick meetings. The team looked at the work steps from creating of a hiring notification to the personnel notification email sent out to the distribution group. End-users provided comments and suggestions; the team reviewed them and acted on those with feasible solutions.

Project 4: Access to applications, software and systems

The fourth project looked at the relationships between personnel notifications and HelpDesk requests for employees' new or revised access to applications, hardware, software and system rights. We learned what the PerTran personnel notification triggers; created an application inventory; developed a new-hire resources flow chart; and identified categories of access and permissions by position and team. The project team mapped current process and identified improvement opportunities. For example, IS and the hiring manager were both creating HelpDesk tickets for new hires. Now, IS has sole responsibility for new-hire tickets.

Projects 5 & 6: Streamlining team transfers and updating management guidance

The last two projects – streamlining the process for team transfers and updating guidance to managers – were combined because they turned out to be small projects. Project work included a review of who has access to what external systems and the creation of an inventory of small and attractive assets.

Overarching STAR project goals focused on efficiency, roles and security

The project team brainstormed ideas for improvement and drafted a future-state process that captures short-term, intermediate and long-term improvements we want to make.

The Objectives for overall project

- Identify roles and responsibilities by job classification and for each team, and determine appropriate system access and the correct groups for staff and team
- Determine the system owners for each team
- Develop written instructions for PerTran/IS HelpDesk so staff know what is expected of them
- Devise a way to make visible and track progress of PerTrans and HelpDesk tickets to completion
- Uncover all the points where process responsibility changes hands
- Create department/team-level expectations for each of basic IS resource needed upon employee hire, transfer, or leaving employment.
- Document the information to create transparency about the process and the effects

To address these objectives, we:

- Met with staff and surveyed all the hiring managers
- Determined which managers are the systems owners for each team
- Asked why the hiring manager created HelpDesk tickets for new hires. We learned that IS was also doing the same work.
- We developed a cross-functional work flow to document all the touch points in this very complex process

Cross-functional workflow

Suppliers		Inputs		Process	Outcomes		Outputs	
Exec Team	Employee	Employee application	Budget/ Audit inventory	ID need to hire RTF	Predictability	Improved security	Employee data	Required training
Department of Enterprise Services	Washington State Patrol	Software inventory	Form templates	Hiring process	Decreased downtime	Decreased risk	Facilities access	TAS system access
Office of Financial Management	Hiring team	Hardware inventory	Permission inventory	PerTran	Improved accountability	Accurate forms	Fiscal access	Mainframe access
Department of Information Services	Washington State Legislature	Facilities	Approval authorities	Initiate/revise/ terminate /tools and resources	Documented process	Improved efficiency	HR systems access	IS systems access
Department of Licensing	Audit client	Employee information	Policy /laws/ regulations	Prep for new transfer employee	Accurate information	IS software and system descriptions	Team Page access	Equipment access
Health Care Authority	Department of Retirement Services	Completed forms	Training instruction	Employee separates	Consolidated process	Improved morale	Needed IS software	Needed IS hardware
					Consistency	System documentation		
					Increased satisfaction	Less manual tracking		
					Equipment access when needed	Tool/System access when needed		

Customers

New employee	Deputy directors	Fiscal	Local Government Support
Audit Manager designee	Human Resources	Information Systems	Team Audit Support
Transfer employee	Administrative Assistant	Confidential Secretary	Statewide Technology Audit Team

Notable results

By achieving these short-term goals, the STAR project is now well positioned to reduce duplication and rework, save time and streamline efforts. To some degree, all of the desired outcomes were achieved or addressed.
Define roles for each job class
Develop a list of internal applications and who has and needs access
IS can take over giving staff TeamMate access
The personnel notification now initiates the HelpDesk ticket and IS starts the process for the manager. If the manager wants to see where things are in the process, she or he can go to the HelpDesk and review what's happening
HR sends the personnel notification to IS and Fiscal after entering employee information
IS provides local teams with passwords
Remove former employees from subscription services
Create descriptions for all available software
Define how we assign hardware and how Fiscal sends to IS a report of current employee classifications and head count by team
The network system now looks at a database, based on team code, assigned to security groups, and that gets an employee the resources they need. Also, we now use team codes instead of team names

Project work in progress as of May 1, 2018

Intermediate-term goals:

#1

Map out dependencies on fields in Team Tables system

#2

Create descriptions of all approved equipment

#3

Experiment with processes for managing team changes

#4

Determine what field in IS can use so employees do not fall out of originating team when temporarily transferred

#5

Start compiling list of access/inventory items

Long-term goals:

#1

Evaluate a tool for automating actions and entries to systems in order to provide access and security permissions to staff. This tool should provide visibility, status and history to team managers and staff.

#2

Develop or invest in a tracking system. The system should provide an accurate representation of all inventory associated with an employee.

Continuing the journey

The entire process is complex. We have a good handle on a new hire, we can explain the flow of the process, we've implemented role-based security, but there is still work to be done. For example, the second long-term goal can help ensure that assets and access are recovered with employee separation or transfer.

> *We're never done. It's not the end of the journey. We will continue to look at this area.*
>
> *– Mike Marty, CIO*