Experiences in Government-Embedded Contractor Teams: Challenges and Opportunities for Process Excellence

Wendy Irion-Talbot
CSC

EXPERIENCE. RESULTS.

EXPERIENCE. RESULTS.

CSC Experiences with Joint Process Initiatives

- Three case study scenarios
- Top challenges
- Challenge Questions:
  - Strategies for selecting processes
  - Ensuring the Team stays the course
  - Enabling team-wide continuous improvement
- Factors for Success
  - Tip-toe around the pitfalls

CSC
EXPERIENCE. RESULTS.

Case Study 1

CSC/government team jointly develop and test software that is deployed for operational military use

- Focus has been operational process excellence vice benchmarking (Team jointly achieved SW-CMM L2 in 1998)
- Joint SEPG populated with client, CSC and other subcontractors
- Sister CSC organization has achieved Level 5, is transitioning to CMMI (source of best practices)
- Program-wide standard processes include:
  - Design
  - Coding / Construction
  - All inspections

CSC
EXPERIENCE. RESULTS.

Case Study 2

CSC/government team jointly develop and test software that is deployed for operational military use

- Process focus a clear strategic goal for the client (Team jointly achieved SW-CMM L3 in 2000)
- This client competes for program work against other government teams
- Joint SEPG populated with client, CSC
- Program-wide processes include:
  - Design
  - Coding / construction
  - All inspections
  - Integration and deployment

CSC
EXPERIENCE. RESULTS.

Case Study 3

CSC/government team jointly share common Enterprise Lifecycle Processes, asset library, Integrated Master Schedule, Risk Management process

- Concurrent efforts with many points of collaboration and synergy
- Process focus a clear strategic goal for both the client and CSC
- CSC achieved SA Level 3 in 2002; client achieved Level 2 in 2002
- Separate but cross-pollinated process groups effective
- Multi-tiered IPT structure provides opportunities for collaboration

CSC
EXPERIENCE. RESULTS.

Panel Challenge #1: Strategies for Selecting Processes

- Ensure everyone is an equal partner
- Enable best practices to be brought to the table for consideration
- Don’t let relative maturity be a primary driver per se
  - Do encourage best practices
  - Consider all equally (Higher maturity processes generally emerge as best foundation – but not always)
  - Processes always (jointly) tailored for the context

CSC
EXPERIENCE. RESULTS.

Panel Challenge #2: Ensuring Consistent Team Execution of Processes

- Joint process group clearly owns and manages processes
  - Joint development
  - Sustained commitment from all partner leadership
- Joint process group receives appropriate process training
- Team is (without discrimination)
  - Audited for process compliance
  - Participates in benchmarking evaluations / appraisals
  - Recognized for implementation results

CSC
EXPERIENCE. RESULTS.

Panel Challenge #3: Enabling Team-wide Continuous Improvement

- Change (improvement) mechanism is badge-blind, universally, easily accessible
- Joint process team must be a key player / owner
- Can become mired in bureaucracy if this isn't managed

CSC
EXPERIENCE. RESULTS.

Top Three Challenges We Saw

1. Ensuring equivalent commitment to the goal
   - Universal understanding and buy-in
   - Overcoming organizational inertia (contractor and government)
   - Common tendency to view process as separate from ‘real work’
2. Ensuring equal acceptance in the joint context
   - Ego-less (badge-less) collaboration
3. Ensuring appropriate resourcing is maintained
   - All resources receive appropriate training (tough to get contract dollars for support function training, e.g., process, QA)
   - Maintaining resource commitment
   - Keeping pace with technology insertions (hw / methodologies / etc.)

CSC
EXPERIENCE. RESULTS.

Pitfalls and Recovery

- Everyone at the table – but the chairs are different heights
  - Inability to view everyone as equal partners
  - May take time to ‘earn your stripes’
- Lopsided training investment
  - Contract dollars don’t always provide for contractor training in support functions (like process and QA)
  - Can cause uneven knowledge/skill base in team that may develop into schism
- Keeping process investment paced with program-wide needs / technology insertion
  - Ensure sustained sufficient commitment to maintain what is put in place
  - Prepare for the ‘continuous’ in ‘continuous process improvement’

CSC
EXPERIENCE. RESULTS.

Making Joint Process Efforts Effective: Factors for Success

- When there is a benchmark evaluation, <u>everyone</u> is assessed
- Upon achievement, <u>everyone</u> is recognized
- <u>Everyone</u> undergoes the same product and process audits
- Joint process team populated with client and contractor members
  - True egoless collaboration
  - Badges left at the door
  - Recognition of where the skills and thought leadership reside
  - Best practices brought to the table, jointly examined and adapted for program-wide use
    - Joint development builds understanding, acceptance
  - Team receives appropriate process-focused training - together
  - Process Team supports process deployment and training to joint team

CSC
EXPERIENCE. RESULTS.

Making Joint Process Efforts Effective

- Clear communication of goals
- Program leadership takes ownership, sustains commitment, visibly leads efforts
- Many opportunities for joint collaboration
  - Management steering committee (IPTs)
  - SQA team, joint composition, audits everyone
  - SEPG has joint membership, very active
  - SEPG meets with leadership of all parties regularly
  - Easy mechanisms to initiate change

Experience. Results.

Wendy Irion-Talbot
Director, Business Process Engineering and Management
CSC's Federal Sector
856.252.2940 wirionta@csc.com