From: Cummings Bob
To: Rocco Ken G; Ames Linda L
Sent: 7/2/2012 4:27:41 PM
Subject: FW: Reply

Ken/Linda:

I've been periodically touching bases with the QA vendor for HIX (corporate side) over the past couple of months. Jon Lemelin, vp for Maximus, is a highly experienced QA and should provide HIX (and us) with a solid report this next week or so. The report will cover the program side of HIX, but due to the tremendous overlap in work between the corporation and the IT (DHS/OHA), it will also cover many other "shared" connections (i.e. the business modeling, iterative development, etc.). Please see Jon's email below.

Apparently, they are finding the exact same problems that I have when grousing about for many months, with very little real improvement to date. This comes as no surprise to me. Were I running the show, we'd stop (or at least seriously slow things down), do a health check, assess the situation, develop a fix-it plan, get a SWAT team together to fix things, and basically get our act together before we charged forward with 150 folks (burning dollars at a phenomenal rate). I've had to do this dozens of times over the years, and these efforts can be fixed, if folks are willing to admit they have a problem (realize that putting your head down and really working hard is not an adequate "plan" for going forward), stopping and fixing the problem, and then moving forward. If we continue as we are, results will be expensive and unpredictable (we'll spend the first 2-3 years of the exchange, fixing the results of our poor planning - ala MMIS that is still having regular production problems).

This requires strong, confident leadership that realizes that stopping and fixing things is not only not dangerous (and is actually a good thing to do), but critical to your ability to execute properly.

When I used to fly jets for the USAF, when a "red" light (emeregency situation) came on in the cockpit, we were told to do the following:

1. Maintain control of the aircraft (you ain't dead till you and the plane hit the ground);
2. Analyze the situation (develop a plan); and
3. Take corrective action.

Project managers typically refuse to admit they have a problem, or even if they do, they don't want to "take the risk" of stopping everything, focusing all those 100's of resources on fixing the current situation, developing a plan, and then moving forward. Stopping, or even slowing down scares them to death. Yet, they have no problem running headlong down a road that they know little about, blind-folded and "hair on fire." They obviously have little experience, or don't care what the consequences are, or they've never been held accountable for doing stupid things.

Both the HIX corporation and IT staff are "out of control" charging down a road that may, or may not take them to where they'd like to be. they are currently building a system without first modeling/designing the business it has to support. This is incredibly stupid and dangerous. No engineer would build a $100M new building without a detailed set of blueprints (and a clearly defined methodology for utilizing that set of blueprints). Waterfall or agile, it makes no difference, you've got to know what you're building before you can build it right.

They might luck out and get something useful up (without Oregonian headlines), but I'm not optimistic. More likely, they'll spend far more than they need to spend, and their initial "products" will be of the same quality as the MMIS, DMV, and OR-Kids efforts.

I don't think we should take this chance.

DHS needs to get some seasoned leadership involved in this effort. Aaron is not that experienced on major efforts like this, and Carolyn/Steve are too busy working on dozens of equally important efforts that also must be done (some of which are critical to the HIX exchange - master data management, modernization, IAM security, transformation efforts, etc.).

See you next Monday.

Bob C.

_____

Bob,

I appreciate your messages.

This has been extremely frustrating from our side as well. Lots of
activity, but NO way to really assess progress toward the goal.

There is so much for them to do, including charter, business plan, WBS, and
schedule, as well as host of project and operational "foundational"
documents. And accurate reporting of status and progress. Etc etc.

My struggle is how to keep this report from being nothing more than a
(nother) long list of red risks and 30 pages of recommendations.

I'm in Providence RI at a family reunion this weekend, but I plan to finish
the ORHIX initial risk assessment report on Monday.

Unbelievable decision!

Jon C. Lemelin, PMP
Vice President, MAXIMUS Inc.
Program and System Integrity Services
jonlemelin@maximus.com
(518) 461-0717
sent from blackberry device