Carolyn:

Thanks for the feedback. My email's purpose was not to criticize, but rather to better explain what Maximus and the LFO are trying to do (and what we need to perform our oversight roles). Apparently, I was not successful.

That said, it should not be necessary for the LFO or Maximus to tell DHS/OHA or ORHIX what is needed in order to run a project well, utilizing PMBOK and SDLC best practices (and associated artifacts). The fact that the LFO and Maximus both have repeatedly felt the need to express our concerns about missing (or incomplete foundational project management and/or lifecycle documents), merely indicates the fact that we are not seeing the basic things that we are used to seeing in a well-run complex IT project. In addition, we are not seeing the quality of foundational docs (project mgmt. and SDLC) that will allow us to do proper independent external oversight. We've been expressing these concerns over the past 14 months, and have even had to ask for legislative help to get satisfactory attention from both areas of the HIX effort (beginning in February 2012).

As neither Maximus or I have been very successful in communicating what both ORHIX and DHS/OHA should be providing in terms of "project management/PMBOK" documentation and "lifecycle" documentation, it might be best if you and Aaron clearly define for both the LFO and Maximus, what project management/oversight documentation and SDLC design artifacts will be provided over the next 8-12 months (for progress/performance monitory AND SDLC performance execution). As you are aware, these documents are typically identified in the project charter of most projects (or at least the charter refers to the planned project deliverables identified in the PMBOK and SDLC methodologies). Your project management plan should also provide a clear list of what artifacts would be used to manage your project, and possibly what the expected SDLC lifecycle deliverables would be. Your "governance, oversight, and accountability plan" would also be a good source for how you're going to provide oversight with the "tools" it needs to be successful. In addition, the "index" of Sharepoint documents that Amy just completed, might also be a helpful starting point in identifying what has already been developed and which could be used by HIX management and external oversight to oversee the HIX Program efforts.

I am attaching a "draft document" that attempts to clearly state on a single page some of the key basics project management and design documents that the LFO will be looking for and focusing upon at this time. The list is not new (nor is it onerous), and the items on it have been discussed verbally, and in the LFO reports to the legislature, numerous times. I've even provided dozens of examples of some of these documents to provide better guidance as to what a "quality" deliverable would look like and contain.   As a "starting point," this list would be a good place for you and Aaron to focus. As you move into your next four iterative cycles, there will obviously be

additional documents that would be of use to oversight including (i.e. test plans, UAT test plans, data conversion plans, interface plans, integration plans between ORHIX's efforts and DHS/OHA efforts, implementation plans, end-user documentation, maintenance/operational documentation, etc.).

I will leave it to you and Aaron to determine which "artifacts" will be developed and provided to oversight, and will focus entirely on evaluating HIX progress based upon the project management and SDLC products that are provided to Maximus and the LFO.

You should anticipate coming back into the JCLAIMT either in December or January to report project progress and also to report in detail on progress on dealing with Maximus and LFO concerns. Given the level of legislative concerns expressed over the past month or so, it is critical that you be able to show significant progress in all areas of oversight concerns (not just "project" performance progress).

Bob C.

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From: Lawson Carolyn [mailto:carolyn.lawson@state.or.us]
Sent: Friday, September 28, 2012 10:25 AM
To: Cummings Bob
Cc: KARJALA Aaron; GOLDBERG Bruce; LAWSON CAROLYN; JonLemelin@maximus.com; Ames Linda L; KING Rocky
Subject: Re: HIX Program - Artifact Development and Reviews

Thx Bob.

If we are in error that the goal posts are moving, it is because no single detailed document expressing what your expectations currently exists. If are to succeed in meeting your expectations we all need to be working from the same list and perspective.

Yes we have received many many email with attachments and several long lists however, the multitude of these has made it very difficult to clearly identify what specifically you expect. Make no mistake, we all are trying very hard to meet your expectations. There is no push back in that regard, our frustration is that for whatever reason we do not have a clear view into what you expect. If you will delineate that in a single deliverables expectation document (format of your liking) we will be happy to move as quickly as possible to execute against it.

Here is what we need from both the LFO and Maximus to be successful:

A complete and definitive list and of every artifact expected from the project(s) individually and collectively including an example (LFO and Maximus) believe contains the data and information you expect in a format which meets the delivery expectation you have of the HIX project(s) for layout, look and feel. This needs to be a single list that both LFO and Maximus agree upon.

A short written description of the intent of each artifact from your (LFO and Maximus collectively) perspective including what is in scope for that artifact and what is out of scope for that artifact

Any supporting documents you require to accompany each artifact including the detail listed above

Timelines or cycles for which you expect each of these artifacts to be updated

Yes, I know you may say that you (Bob) have given this information before, or that any project manager worth their salt would know what theses are. However, what we have received has been multiple email and multiple formats without the clear expectations as listed a above. Again, no definitive list and nor detailed descriptions have been requested of the project(s).

As you are well aware, there are several different styles and methodologies of information delivery in a project. One is not necessarily better than another, although each PM has a personal preference related to what is required and helpful and what is not. Clearly the style and methodology we are successfully working under does not meet your reporting expectations. We intend to make every effort to meet those expectations once we understand with clarity what they are. Without clear definitions and examples of what you expect we are set up to fail. I am sure that is not the outcome you are seeking, but continuing down the road we are on it is the outcome we will receive. Only you can change that by providing the clarity we are requesting.

What I am hoping is that we all take a step back and begin again from a point of clarity. Only you can provide that clarity. I am asking for the detailed level of clarification indicated above in writing so there is no misunderstanding in regard to your expectations of the project(s).

Bob, you know I am a delivery agent. If know what the delivery expectations are, I will deliver. Without that clarity we cannot succeed in meeting your reporting expectations even if the project itself succeeds. Lack of clarity regarding delivery expectations of the LFO and Maximus is position we find ourselves in right now. Detailed clarification of your expectations is required for us to succeed in meeting those expectations.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Respectfully,

Carolyn Lawson
Chief Information Officer

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On Sep 28, 2012, at 9:16 AM, Cummings Bob <bob.cummings@state.or.us> wrote:

> I'm off today and about ready to head off to the John Day for four days of deer hunting
> (and no HIX, eCourt, TaPR, DOJ, OWIN, OED, etc.). I'm indeed a happy man this a.m.
>
> On a more serious side, I'd like to say that the past week or 10 days has been very
> difficult for all of us. I want you to know that Linda and I really appreciate how each of
> you have handled these challenges, and your willingness to address real issues and move
> forward to correct them so that the HIX Program can be successful. If we all work
> together, we will get this thing done.
>
> I would like to "not so quickly" share with you my thoughts on our meetings with the
> corporation yesterday. There is nothing specifically to do related to what I'm about to
> share, but I wanted you to know what often comes out of these meetings when Linda and
> I hear the current status of your efforts. During our meeting with Aaron and his team, we
> were told that the project is now a 4-iteration effort and we saw an updated schedule that
> showed the shortness of the time that we have left (i.e. April 2013 - for having some
> version of a "working system"). There was also a January 17, 2013 date that indicated
> some level of federal signoff/certification. While all of this was not clear to Linda and I,
> the discussion and schedule did spark questions and concerns about the doability of all
> this. Frankly, that's a concerrn we've all had since the beginning when we set out to meet
> the federal government's October 2013 deadline.
>
> One of the things that fell out of all of this for me dealt with a recurring criticism that the
> LFO (and the QA's) typically receive on many projects about continually moving the "goal
> posts" on its expectations. We've heard this on every project we've worked on for the
> past 5 years. This criticism typically occurs for a number of reasons. Some agencies and
> their staff don't understand the SDLC and/or oversight all that well, others have typically
> never followed a robust SDLC, including the development of industry standard
> artifacts. In other cases, agencies don't always realize that as a project progresses, some
> PMBOK documents continue to be used throughout the life of the project, others become
> less important, and new documents/artifacts need to be built as we move through the
> different phases of the system development lifecycle.
>
> Project charters, schedules, workplans, financial expenditure plans, resource plans,
> requirements, etc. are typically developed early in the process and are used (and
> frequently updated) for the duration of the project. Other documents are developed later
> in the SDLC and often have a more limited "useful life." This is the pattern that we've
> followed over the years with the more traditional "waterfall SDLC." Another pattern is that
> project managers and IT'ers in general have traditionally tried to do as little
> documentation as possible. They view anything but coding, as unnecessary fluff. I've
> heard it for nearly 50 years. It never changes. Another thing that never changes, is that
> bad things happen when we don't document as we build, and then try to maintain the
> new systems with little or no documentation to tell us how.
>
> The iterative/agile/scrum/OUM type SDLC's further complicate this, because this lifecycle
> forces us to early on, do all the foundational project management documents early on and
> at least a subset of the analysis, design, construction, testing, and implementation

documents/artifacts that are typically "spread out more" in the "waterfall SDLC."

As you are aware, the LFO and Maximus has been pushing for the completion and use of 10-15 key project management and design documents since veebruary 2012. These documents are still not all complete and in place, though we've made progress. If you take a look at the Sharepoint Repository index of documents that Amy put together recently, you will see 50-100 other SDLC documents that typically are developed/used within a development effort. As we move through the lifecycle, more and more of these documents need to be built. They're spread out over the life of the project in the waterfall lifecycle, but the iterative lifcycle forces you to build "light versions" of many of them, right from the very first iteration (which is actually a light version execution of all the phases of the typical waterfall lifecycle). In short, agile SDLC's are much more resource intensive when it comes to documentation, it requries far more sooner, and it requires many versions of artifacts to be developed (i.e. often an update for every iteration that is conduted), rather than a single version (which is more the norm in the waterfall SDLC).

I've said all this to say, both Maximus and the LFO are looking for far more than the 10-15 key project management and design documents that are on the one-page list that I gave all of you this past week. Because you are going through development iterations as we speak, Maximus and the LFO could be pressing both DHS/OHA and ORHIX for many other docs (i.e. see Amy's list). We could be asking for a technical system design, first cuts of user manuals, test plans, user acceptance plans, data conversion plans, integration plans, interface plans, etc. etc. etc. The SDLC that you are following repetitively goes through the waterfall lifecycle at some level from iteration one. We know that you have some versions of some of these docs (some current, some dated), but we have not pressed for these docs for fear of overwhelming both teams as they try to build the initial absolutely key (10-15) project management and design docs. They are not the only critical docs, just where we've asked you to focus your limited resources for now.

The federal timeframes that we are trying to meet, and the SDLC that we have chosen (which is the right one - and only one that will give us a chance to meet October 2013 in an environment of incomplete requirements), force us to develop nearly everything (in some form) right from the beginning. The only way to deal with this is to either not do all the docs, do them poorly, or not do them at all. I believe there is another option and that is to overload a project with staff to develop an acceptable level of these documents. Most project managers are unwilling to take this aggressive step. They are either afraid to ask for the level of "support resources" that are needed or they really don't think that all of this documentation is all that important. There may be other reasons, but these are the two most common that I've seen over the years. The results of not hiring enough support resources are typically predictable, and the project ultimately falls back into one of the other three options, and the project is adversely affected not only during execution, but long-term in maintenance and operations.

This is why both Maximus and I have continuously pressed for both the corp and DHS/OHA to staff up in the support areas. This advice has not been fully embraced despite our repeated reminders. Given the briefing that we received yesterday by Aaron and his team, I think it is still important to acquire these resources. Whether you build and use these artifacts during development, or use them in maintenance and operations, it is a wise investment of resources and can serve not only our state, but others that choose to use our work.

Over the next months, you will find both Maximus and the LFO asking for more and more documents that are typically part of the normal systems planning, design, construction, testing, and implementation processes that have been followed for years. Agile/SCRUM/OUM/etc. are not immune from the development of these docs. In fact, this methodology requires even more effort to be put into documentation, because of its iterative nature. You need more people to develop and maintain the many iterations of typical SDLC artifacts. When Maximus and the LFO begin to look for, and ask for, more SDLC (beyond those that we are focusing on now), WE ARE NOT MOVING THE GOAL

POSTS. We are asking for what any oversight would expect to see next as we go through the SDLC. The fact that you are going through all phases of the waterfall SDLC right from iteration one, means, that oversight should be looking for evidence of planning, design, construction, testing, etc. artifacts right from the very beginning, NOT WELL DOWN STREAM AS IS MORE TYPICAL IN THE WATERFALL SDLC.

The bottom-line is that you don't have time to do everything perfectly, nor do you have time to build artifacts perfectly (or even timely), BUT YOU ARE NOT EXCUSED BY AGILE/SCRUM/OUM (OR TIME CONSTRAINTS) TO NOT DO THEM AT ALL. And Maximus and the LFO cannot stop asking for evidence of SDLC discipline, just because our schedule is ridiculously tight, and IT'ers would really rather not build any more documentation than is absolutely necessary. What you develop with, is ultimately what you end up having to maintain and operate with.

All this said, please continue to focus on the initial 10-15 docs that we've been talking about since day one. Our QC'ing of these docs will tell you how well we did.   However, don't be surprised when Maximus and the LFO begin to ask to see other traditional design/construction/testing artifacts (i.e. detailed test and user acceptance plans) as you go through the 3-4 iterations that you have identified for standing up a vast majority of your HIX IT supporting infrastructure.

These requests will not be "MOVING THE GOAL POSTS." As your project progresses, we are going to look for more and more evidence of how you are building the software and assuring its quality. This is what happens on every project that is overseen, period. HIX is not an exception. You don't typically skip steps in IT and get away with it. SDLC artifacts are not a place where you typically want to take shortcuts.

My apologies for making this so long, but this is an important and complicated subject. Many of you already know all of this, but I thought that it was important for you to understand that neither Maximus or the LFO is arbitrarily just asking for more and more. We're following industry standard practices for oversight and are doing exactly what we did with OJD-eCourt, OWIN, etc. Building computer systems requires a lot of documentation and artifacts. It's been that way since the 1960's when I first started in this business.

I hope this helps explain what the LFO and Maximus are trying to do.

Have a great weekend.

Bob C.