BUILDING AN AGILE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

CALL TO ACTION
BRIEFING TO THE SHARED SERVICES FORUM
FOR AGENCY IMPLEMENTATION LEADERS

February 11, 2020

The Agile Government Center

- ❖ Established in November 2019 when the Grand Challenges in Public Administration were announced
- ❖ Joint Academy-IBM Center for the Business of Government Effort
- ❖ Intended to serve as the hub of a network bringing together governments, non-profits, foundations, academic institutions and private sector partners to assist in:
  - – Developing and disseminating agile government principles
  - – Developing and disseminating case studies of agile in government settings
  - – Providing assistance to those who want to adopt and implement agile to provide public goods and services that fully meet customer needs and build public trust
- ❖ Network was tapped to provide input on this project's key research questions

Federal Agile Project

With sponsorship from the Samuel Freeman Charitable Trust and the Project Management Institute, the Academy:

❖ Conducted thought leadership on how the federal government can become more agile

❖ Developed a white paper that is an agenda-setting document and practical guide for policymakers, including:

  – Identification of issues and challenges with agile

  – Development of innovative solutions and recommendations

  – Laying the groundwork for any needed legislative and administrative changes

  – Providing input into to the Administration in 2021 as it develops the President's Management Agenda

Key Questions

❖ How would an agile federal government differ from current management practices?

❖ What are the issues and impediments to an agile federal government?

❖ Under what circumstances is it most appropriate for the federal government to become more agile? Are there circumstances when it would be inappropriate for the federal government to become more agile? If so, when?

❖ How should an agile federal government be promoted by central management agencies such as the Office of Management and Budget, the Office of Personnel Management, and the General Services Administration?

❖ How should the President's Management Agenda be used to promote an agile federal government?

❖ What specific implementation actions should federal departments and agencies undertake to make their organizations more agile?

A New Management Paradigm

- Top priority is **"customer"** or end-user satisfaction

- Staff members are **empowered**.

- A critical focus is on **iterating** and learning.

- **Small teams** do work in multiple short periods of time.

- Individuals operate within a focused **set of networks**.

- Innovative tools and working approaches that **facilitate innovation** and support problem solving are used.

- **Risk is identified** and addressed early.

A New Paradigm (Cont'd)

U.S. Air Force Kessel Run

- Delivered useful combat capabilities to the military while managing and updating the Air Force software acquisition process.
- The first project (Jigsaw) saved approximately **$12 million** a month in fuel costs.
- KR claims to save over **$13 million and 1,100 man-hours per month** using agile methods.

United States Digital Service

- **166 successful projects** using agile over the past 6 years
- Collaborated with VA, CMS, DHS, HUD, DOJ among others
- USDS collaborated across different VA offices and collected input from service members to **increase customer satisfaction by 30%** on VA.gov

The World Bank

- **Africa/transportation pilot**: saved 27,000 hours of work producing a project appraisal document
- **South Asia/health pilot**: Reported more efficient work streams among team members
- **Europe and Central Asia pilot**: optimized time and effort of senior executives during the loan review process

Mid-Point Questions

❖ If you are doing agile, what does that look like for you in your organization?

❖ What challenges do you see when attempting agile?

Issues and Challenges

- Lack of Knowledge/Understanding of Agile
- Cultural and Behavioral Barriers to Agile Implementation
  - Lack of experience with empowered, cross-functional teams
  - Risk aversion and lack of tolerance for changes in course
- Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Agility
  - Contracting/procurement
  - Hiring
  - Oversight
  - Budgeting

Recommendations

Recommendation	Action Steps
To the maximum extent feasible, agile should become the preferred operating model across the federal government.	• Agile should be a cornerstone of the President's Management Agenda. • Agile should be incorporated into existing Cross Agency Priority (CAP) Goals to ensure that agile management is used whenever appropriate for organizations, programs, and projects. • GSA OGP should assign or establish an organizational unit designed to assist federal departments and agencies with their agile management journey. • PMC should coordinate across its member agencies to develop and facilitate the implementation of strategies for accomplishing agile-related goals.

Recommendations (Cont'd)

Recommendation	Action Steps

Agile methods of management and operations should be championed inside federal departments and agencies and incorporated into as many of their activities as possible.	• Department and agency leaders seek out, support, and publicize agile programs, projects, and management approaches already existing within the agency.
	• Leaders and managers assess their organization's agile readiness & take steps to increase it.
	• Leaders and managers ensure that staff members assess their individual readiness for participating in an agile endeavor & take steps to increase their individual readiness.
	• Leaders and managers encourage and support agile management practices throughout their organizations:
	   • Empower team members;
	   • Encourage collaboration and discouraging siloed behavior;
	   • Provide support as leaders, managers, and staff members start down the agile management path;
	   • Actively participate in the agile management process
	   • Reinforce the idea that agency actions, processes, and procedures should enhance the experience of customers/end users.

Recommendations (Cont'd)

Recommendation	Action Steps
Key barriers to agile functioning within the federal government should be identified and appropriately addressed within the nation's checks-and-balances political system and legal framework.	• OMB, GSA, and OPM work together to identify the most significant government-wide statutory and regulatory barriers to making agile management an expected way of doing business at the agency and program levels, not just IT projects. • Departments and agencies identify the most significant organizational-specific statutory and regulatory barriers to agile functioning. • Departments and agencies take steps to remove or mitigate unnecessary non-statutory regulatory impediments to agile functioning. • President work with Congress in 1st 2 years on needed legislative reforms. • Federal leaders engage the auditing community to get as much buy-in from them as possible on new agile approaches.

Recommendations (Cont'd)

Recommendation	Action Steps
Agile approaches, successes, and challenges should be highlighted across the federal government.	- The federal management councils—with support from GSA OGP and USDS—establish agile communities of practice to support adoption, provide platforms for knowledge sharing, identify lessons learned, and publicize progress. - GSA OGP agile unit creates playbooks for departments and agencies in a variety of situations to move forward on their agile journey. - Federal leaders and managers build relationships with federal councils, including the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency and others, to encourage and help facilitate the movement toward use of agile principles. - Federal leaders and managers coordinate with "good government" organizations as resources and allies in promoting agile management, identifying lessons learned, and developing proposed solutions to issues and challenges.

Recommendations (Cont'd)

Recommendation	Action Steps
Department and agency leaders should ensure that readily-accessible training opportunities about agile principles and approaches, especially including management skills, are available.	• Agile management incorporated into federal training programs and agency/department working frameworks across the federal government. • Hands-on opportunities for leaders and employees to use these new ways of working together should be provided. • Utilize existing platforms for agile training and instruction & adapt existing IT agile training for broader audiences. • Connections should be made with universities to encourage them to incorporate agile into their curricula and practical learning experiences.

14 Questions/Comments

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Appendix A: Study Team Biographies

Joseph P. Mitchell, III. Director of Strategic Initiatives, Project Director

As the Director of Strategic Initiatives at the Academy, Joe leads the organization's Grand Challenges in Public Administration initiative, which currently is identifying and developing ways to address the most challenging issues facing government today. He also advances cutting edge thought leadership and develops partnerships with other good government groups, American universities, and universities in other countries. Over the course of his career, he has worked with a wide range of federal cabinet departments and agencies to develop higher-performing organizations, implement organizational change, and strengthen human capital and teams.

Previously, Joe led and managed the Academy's organizational studies program, overseeing all of its congressionally-directed and agency-requested reviews and consulting engagements. He has served as project director of Academy studies for the Government Publishing Office, the U.S. Senate Sergeant at Arms, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the National Park Service's Natural Resource Stewardship and Science Directorate, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He holds a Ph.D. from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, a Master of International Public Policy from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, a Master of Public Administration from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and a B.A. in History from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. He serves on the National Science Foundation's Business and Operations Advisory Committee. He is a member of Phi Kappa Phi, the national academic honor society; Pi Alpha Alpha, the national honor society for public affairs and administration; and the American Society for Public Administration.

Sally Jaggar, Senior Advisor

Sarah (Sally) Jaggar is a Project Director and Fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration. She is Project Director on the Congressionally-mandated, 4 1/2-year long assessment of governance and management improvements at the National Nuclear Security Administration, a semi-autonomous agency within the Department of Energy. Also at NAPA, she was Senior Advisor on No Time to Wait: Building a Public Service for the 21st Century (Reports 1 and 2); on human-capital related projects at the Centers for Disease Control; and on the FEMA Flood Mapping project. She is also Senior Advisor for the Academy on its Agile Government initiatives. Prior to joining the Academy, Ms. Jaggar was a Senior Strategic Advisor at the Partnership for Public Service where she lead numerous projects leading to reports on cybersecurity, Civil Service reform, innovation, performance management and improvement, and especially on successful recruiting, hiring, and retention for federal agencies. Her career at the US Government Accountability Office included roles as Managing Director for Mission Support in the Human Capital Office; Managing Director for Health Financing and Public Health Issues; and Director of Operations in the Accounting and Information Management Division, among others. She holds a Masters degree from The American University and a Bachelors degree from Duke University.

Scott Ambler, Senior Advisor

Scott is the Vice President, Chief Scientist of Disciplined Agile at Project Management Institute. Scott leads the evolution of the Disciplined Agile (DA) toolkit. Scott is the (co-)creator of the Disciplined Agile (DA) toolkit as well as the Agile Modeling (AM) and Agile Data (AD) methodologies. He is the (co-)author of several books, including Choose Your WoW!, An Executive's Guide to Disciplined Agile, Refactoring Databases, Agile Modeling, Agile Database Techniques, and The Object Primer 3rd Edition.

Appendix B: Study Team Biographies

Dave Summers, Senior Advisor

Dave is a government affairs leader with over 15 years of experience launching and driving high-profile projects, innovating at the intersection of politics and technology, and building deep relationships with clients, partners, and communities. He presently leads the Government Relations group at the Project Management Institute. Prior to that he held several leadership roles in the Koch's nonprofit network. He has also founded technology companies, consulted for state agencies and Fortune 200 firms, managed federal and statewide campaigns, and implemented electronic medical record solutions for the world's largest healthcare systems.

Jill Diffendal, Senior Advisor

Jill is the Academics Program Administrator at the Project Management Institute. Prior to that position she was an Administrative Coordinator at WDWNT LLC and Senior Communications Service Specialist at Trion Group. She is an accomplished, dedicated communicator specializing in internal communications with broad skills in content development and production for print and digital channels, client/stakeholder service, project management, consultation and strategic planning, marketing, and social media. She is well-versed in translating complex content into engaging messages for a variety of audiences across a wide range of delivery platforms.

James Higgins, Research Associate

James joins the Academy as a Research Associate, he is happy that his various internships have given him the opportunity to refine and develop his research, analytical and leadership skills. While interning for the Cohen Group, to support his clients, he researched and analyzed security threats and political issues in various global regions such as east Asia and eastern Europe. As an Extern at the US Patent and Trademark Office James was a writer for the Inventors Eye articles. While there he co-authored an article published in the Journal of the National Academy of Inventors titled "Taking Aim at Cancer." James had the opportunity to intern with the U.S. Army War College. He later participated in the War College and Mellon Foundation's Crisis Simulation. In the simulation James led the DoD team in a simulated crisis in the South China Sea. James graduated from Dickinson College, earning a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies with a focus on Asia; Minor in Economics, and University of Maine, earning a Master of Arts in Global Policy with a focus on Security and Foreign Policy.

Peiyao Jia, Intern

Peiyao is a Ph.D. student in Policy Studies at the University of Maryland School of Public Policy. She holds a BA in Economics from Fordham University and a MA in Economics from New York University. Peiyao is completing her dissertation and expects to graduate next year. Peiyao's dissertation is focused on human trafficking of women and children in southeast Asian countries, the education and health level of victims of human trafficking and education policies for children. Peiyao is very interested in experience beyond the classroom. During her internship she hopes to learn more about how public policy informs public administration and ultimately how policy and administration impact individuals. She will be working with the Academy's Grand Challenges effort.

Kate Kellen, Intern

Kate is a junior at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington. Kate is majoring in Political Science, International Relations and Spanish. Following undergraduate, Kate would like to attend law school. While attending Gonzaga Kate has been very active with campus and community service. Most recently she served as a Volunteer Mentor for SMILE. As a mentor she taught students from underprivileged neighborhoods and helped them to develop better study skills. Kate is looking forward to her internship with the Academy and the opportunity to learn more about how government works.