SANTA CLARA COUNTY'S CALWIN AGENCY TRANSFORMATION PROJECT: IMPLEMENTATION OF A UNIFORM PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Cindy A. Cassinelli*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This case study presents my recommendations based on my observations of the Santa Clara County's CalWIN Agency Transformation Project.

BACKGROUND

Chapter 303 of the California Budget Act of 1995 mandated four county consortia to develop automated systems for the provision of assistance benefits to its eligible residents. Santa Clara County officially adopted the CalWIN (Cal Works Information Network) system on December 7, 1999. When it is completed, the CalWIN system will automate eligibility determination, benefit calculation and case management functions for the Santa Clara County Social Services Agency's (SSA) Department of Employment and Benefit Services.

CalWIN AGENCY TRANSFORMATION PROJECT (ATP)

The SSA will undergo a major system, business and organizational transformation through the CalWIN implementation. The SSA is proactively taking steps to overcome the barriers to a successful implementation by focusing not only on the CalWIN system, but also on the people, processes and infrastructure in which it will operate. To achieve this, a complete redesign of the SSA's processes must take place prior to the system's "go-live" date of May 2003.

Santa Clara County's Board of Supervisors recognized the monumental undertaking that such a transformation would entail. They approved the formation of a CalWIN implementation team, including over 60 unclassified positions, to dedicate full-time work to the project. The team is organized into five project tracks:
- Project Management
- Change Leadership.
- CalWIN and Information Technology Infrastructure
- Human Resources and Training
- Agency Process Transformation

Each of the five tracks has an assigned CalWIN planning and implementation manger (CPIM) who has the primary responsibility for the project management within their areas.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Project Management is defined as the ability to effectively plan and organize resources, tasks, and deliverables to meet specific time and product goals. The SSA recognized the need for a uniform project management process to ensure project leadership and successful completion of the CalWIN deliverables. A contract was entered into with a private firm, the Center for Project Management (CPM), to provide training to SSA staff. The CPM has trained the CalWIN Team in standardized project management methodologies and provided them with the tools necessary to organize their activities and provide successful leadership.

*Cindy Cassinelli is a Management Analyst III for Monterey County's Department of Social Services

PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE (PMO)

As part of the CalWIN ATP, the SSA established a two-person Project Management Office (PMO). The PMO staff report directly to the project sponsor and is responsible for developing a process to assist with the creation, revision and tracking of the CalWIN ATP project plans for each track. The PMO also reports on overall project status and health to the sponsor. Future plans include the expansion of the CPM training to all agency staff and the provision of on-going support from the PMO for projects agency-wide.

SUMMARY

During my visit, it was clear that all of the CalWIN ATP staff have embraced the project management methodology and are utilizing the tools they have been provided. The PMO has become a vital part of the process and their support and leadership will ensure completion of all deliverables on schedule.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MONTEREY COUNTY

Santa Clara County's CalWIN ATP project provides an excellent example of how a uniform project management process can be utilized to ensure project success. Specific recommendations for implementing a similar project management strategy in Monterey County are:

- That project management training is included in any curriculum that is developed for management analysts and that it be made available to all staff who wish to attend.
- That Monterey County review the possibility of partnering with Santa Clara County to share the on-going costs for provision of the training offered by the CPM and that this training be offered to MCDSS management analysts.
- That Monterey County explore the project management classes currently offered by the UC Davis Extension Program as another training alternative.
- That if a uniform project management process is deemed as a desirable goal for MCDSS, the MCDSS look at establishing a project management position. This new project manager could then assist the training manager with development and implementation of the management analyst continuing education program, support and encourage the use of a uniform project management process within the MCDSS and provide continued project support to managers throughout the department.

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BACKGROUND

Chapter 303 of the California Budget Act of 1995 mandated four county consortia to develop automated systems for the provision of assistance benefits to its eligible residents. The four Consortiums are:

- *Interim Statewide Automated Welfare System (ISAWS)* – This system was developed in the late 1990's in Napa County and is currently in production in 35 of the 58 California Counties.
- *Los Angeles Eligibility, Automated Determination, Evaluation and Reporting System (LEADER)* – This system was developed exclusively for use in Los Angeles County. It is currently completing rollout within LA County.
- *Cal Works Information Network (CalWIN)* – This system is currently in development and will operate in 18 California Counties.
- *Consortium IV (C-IV)* – This system is currently in design and will operate in 4 California Counties.

Monterey County is a member of the ISAWS Consortium and began using the system in July 1997. As new technology has become available, the ISAWS consortium has retained the services of a private firm to provide a Gap Analysis and recommendations for the next generation of the ISAWS system. The consortium will be reviewing both the LEADER and CalWIN systems for potential transfer to the ISAWS Counties. As the Project Manager for the original roll-out of the ISAWS system in Monterey County, I was intrigued by Santa Clara County's offer to have BASSC participants visit their county to learn about how they are approaching the development, planning and implementation of the CalWIN system there.

HISTORY

Santa Clara County officially adopted the CalWIN system on December 7, 1999 when its Board of Supervisors signed a $484 million contract with Electronic Data Systems (EDS) and the Health and Human Services Data Center (HHSDC) for its portion of the development costs. When completed, the CalWIN system will automate eligibility determination, benefit calculation and case management functions for the SSA's Department of Employment and Benefit Services (DEBS). It will be utilized by over 2,000 Santa Clara County Social Services Agency (SSA) staff and will serve about 80,000 of its residents. It will also be one of the largest systems of its kind in the country.

The SSA recognized the impact that the implementation of such a system will have on its agency and their customers. They have designed a planning approach that they term the "CalWIN Agency Transformation Process" or CalWIN ATP.

CALWIN AGENCY TRANSFORMATION PROJECT (ATP)

The SSA will undergo a major system, business, and organizational transformation through the CalWIN implementation. The SSA is proactively taking steps to overcome the barriers to a successful implementation by focusing not only on the CalWIN system, but also on the people, processes and infrastructure in which it will operate. The goal is to improve client outcomes and the SSA's success in meeting its performance based outcome goals. It is the SSA's expectation that the CalWIN system

will have the technology infrastructure necessary to support its desired performance outcomes. To achieve this, a complete redesign of the SSA's processes must take place prior to the system's "go-live" date of May 2003.

Santa Clara County's Board of Supervisors recognized the monumental undertaking that such a transformation and redesign would entail, in both scope and magnitude. In August, 2000, they approved the formation of a CalWIN implementation team, including over 60 unclassified or time-limited positions, to dedicate full-time work to the CalWIN design, planning, and implementation.

The CalWIN team is organized into five tracks and primary tasks:
- *Project Management* – Develop common project management methodology across the SSA and track the CalWIN implementation deliverables.
- *Change Leadership* – Utilize an eight-step model for leading organizational change and providing communication on the CalWIN ATP to staff and clients.
- *CalWIN and Information Technology Infrastructure* – Provide input on the CalWIN development and develop county specific applications.
- *Human Resources and Training* – Recommend new classifications, staff training and other strategies to meet the challenges and opportunities of the new CalWIN system
- *Agency Process Transformation* – Conduct an as-is assessment and redesign of nine major business processes to improve client service and outcomes.

Each of the five tracks has a CalWIN Planning and Implementation Manager (CPIM) who has primary responsibility for the project management within

their areas. Each CPIM has staff who assist in the planning and completion of the project deliverables. Given the short time that I had to spend with SSA staff, I chose to focus my attention on the newly formed Project Management Office.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Project Management is defined as the ability to effectively plan and organize resources, tasks, and deliverables to meet specific time and product goals. Key elements of successful project management include defining, managing and measuring project scope, schedule, cost and quality.

The SSA recognized the need for a uniform project management process to ensure project leadership and successful completion of the CalWIN deliverables. A contract was entered into with a private firm, the Center for Project Management (CPM), to provide training to SSA staff. The CPM designed a curriculum to train the CalWIN Team in standardized project management methodologies and provide them with the tools needed to organize their activities.

The SSA staff who complete all of the required modules would receive the necessary knowledge, tools and processes to:
- Conduct a thorough assessment and write a charter prior to launching a project.
- Develop a comprehensive project plan showing dependencies, timelines, and resource use.
- Identify project issues, needs, risks and conflicts.
- Increase project communication and efficiency.
- Create and track projects using MS Project 2000 software.
- Develop Master Projects and Project Portfolios.
- Become a certified project manager expert.

PROJECT PLANNING ARCHITECTURE (PPA)

The CPM has developed a Project Planning Architecture (PPA) which is being utilized by the CalWIN teams. The PPA is a 4 stage, 24 step model. The 4 stages are outlined briefly below.

1. *Pre-Launch* – This is the most labor intensive of the four processes. It is in this step that the project is defined and the scope determined. The objectives of the project are defined and they must be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound). The outcome is the completed project charter with the sponsor. The approved charter than becomes the business plan for the project.

2. *Launch* – Once the charter is signed, the project team will create comprehensive plans and detailed estimates. A Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) will be completed. The WBS is a chart used to break a project into phases, deliverables, tasks and sub-tasks. All key components of the project will be identified and time estimates made for their completion. Necessary resource estimates will also be defined. Well defined criteria for evaluating and accepting or rejecting scope changes will be set. A project notebook will be created which will include all tasks that need to be completed prior to implementation. Finally, project organization structure and reporting lines, primary project responsibilities and an issue escalation process will be defined.

3. *Execute* – During this stage, the teams develop schedules for completion of the project deliverables and milestones. This includes the method by which completion will be tracked and project health kept in check. Specific resources are assigned to tasks

in relation to a specific project calendar. From this, the critical path is determined which establishes the expected project duration. Staff is provided with instructions on how to complete project reviews and keep the project under control.

4. *Implement* – This stage includes project completion and closure. The final product is handed off of to the customers. This final step includes a process assessment and overall evaluation of how the project went.

Sample courses provided by CPM and currently offered by the SSA include:
- *Project Planning for Teams (1 Day)* – The course is designed to provide staff members with a basic introduction to the tools, techniques and skills to manage projects.
- *Managing Projects to Success (3 Days)* – The course is designed to provide participants a thorough grounding in essential skills for planning, organizing, general estimating, scheduling and tracking projects of varying sizes and complexities.
- *Estimating, Tracking and Controlling Projects (3 Days)* – The course is designed to provide participants with a strong foundation in estimating, progress tracking, and timely completion of projects, while maintaining budget, schedule, scope and quality variables.

Each CPIM and their staff are completing the course work described above. It is the expectation of the project sponsor that each will utilize the Project Management techniques, tools and methodology as prescribed in the CPM's 4 stage process. Additionally, each CPIM must create project plans utilizing MS Project 2000 software and report on the status of project deliverables each week. By

having a standard methodology, the SSA expects that all tracks will successfully complete their project goals within budget and on schedule.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE (PMO)

As part of the CalWIN ATP, the SSA established a two-person Project Management Office (PMO). It is the responsibility of the PMO to create and support repeatable Project Management processes within the CalWIN teams, the Information Systems (IS) Division and eventually, the entire agency. The PMO staff reports directly to the project sponsor and are responsible for:

- Developing a process to assist with the creation, revision and tracking of the CalWIN ATP project plans for each track.
- Implementing and managing Project Management training within the SSA.
- Providing technical assistance and other support for project managers.
- Training project managers to facilitate project planning and implementation.
- Developing processes to track, manage and implement projects within CalWIN and the IS Departments.
- Creating templates that aid and encourage project management and documentation.
- Developing a project portfolio maintenance plan and generating reports.
- Reporting project status and overall health to the sponsor.

The PMO staff is not dedicated entirely to CalWIN and Information Systems projects. They are available to support staff within any of the SSA Divisions who require assistance with project planning, tracking and completion. The most impressive aspect of the PMO is that they are utilizing the four stage process as trained by the CPM in everything

they do. This commitment is then transferred to each of the CPIMs so that each track is also following the standard methodology. During my visit, it was clear that all of the CalWIN ATP staff have embraced the project management methodology and are utilizing the tools they have been provided. As the CalWIN ATP is a 2 year project ending in May, 2003, the final performance outcome measurement for the methodology developed by the CPM and the new PMO office is yet to be determined. However, the outlook is strong.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MONTEREY COUNTY

Monterey County Department of Social Services (MCDSS) utilized Project Management fundamentals in both its ISAWS and Welfare to Work system implementations. This lead to successful implementations that came in on schedule and within budget. However, formalized project management training has been offered only on a limited basis to management staff outside of those involved in Information Technology projects. The three day *Managing Projects to Success* course that I attended while in Santa Clara County emphasized that the Project Management stages developed by the CPM are applicable to a wide variety of projects and need not be limited to those that involve implementation of automated systems.

Recent conversations with MCDSS Management Analysts indicate that there is a strong desire for on-going management training, particularly in the area of Project Management. I have spoken with the MCDSS training manager who already has plans to explore the development of a continuing education program for Management Analysts. She is very interested in including Project Management training as part of the recommended curriculum.

Therefore, I recommend the following:
- That project management training is included in any curriculum that is developed for management analysts and that it be made available to all staff who wish to attend.
- That Monterey County review the possibility of partnering with Santa Clara County to share the on-going costs for provision of the training offered by the CPM and that this training be offered to MCDSS management analysts.
- That Monterey County explore the project management classes currently offered by the UC Davis Extension Program as another training alternative.
- That if a uniform project management process is deemed as a desirable goal for MCDSS, the MCDSS look at establishing a project management position. This new project manager could then assist the training manager with development and implementation of the management analyst continuing education program, support and encourage the use of a uniform project management process within the MCDSS and provide continued project support to managers throughout the department.