MAINE’S
UI MODERNIZATION PROJECT

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2019 NASWA WORKFORCE SUMMIT
& UI DIRECTORS CONFERENCE
ReEmployME is part of the ReEmployUSA consortium

Consortium members:
• Maine
• Rhode Island
• Mississippi
• Connecticut
• Oklahoma – Onboarding status
MAINE’S NEED FOR MODERNIZATION

• Aging systems with limited ability to respond timely to national program needs without considerable effort and expense i.e. EUC, Integrity efforts

• Increased IT system maintenance costs

• Knowledgeable IT support staff leaving state service due to retirement or other opportunities
LEGACY SYSTEMS IN UI INFRASTRUCTURE

2012

Benefits

- DB Vendor and Version
  - Oracle 11g RAC
- Operating System;
  - Solaris Unix
- User Interface –
  - Oracle Forms
  - Oracle Reports

Age 30+ years

NonMon

- DB Vendor and Version
  - Progress Version 11
- Operating System;
  - RedHat Linux
- User Interface –
  - TinyTerm Terminal (character based) screens

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Wage

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MAINE NEEDED A MODERNIZATION PLAN

What’s the plan?
CONSORTIUM CREATED 2012

• Maine, Rhode Island and Mississippi submitted SBR request for consortia funding in fall of 2012

• MRM Consortium later renamed to

• Used MDES’ contract with Tata Consulting Services as Consortium vendor through contractual amendment between MDES and vendor

Unemployment System Alliance
OVERVIEW OF PROJECT

TWO PHASED SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION

✓ Benefits go live December 2017 – 1100 initial claims and 5500 weekly claims

✓ Tax initial go live for public facing November 2018 – Maine UI has 44K employers that needed to create portal accounts in the new system

Integrated UI Benefits and Tax system

✓ Iterative development process based on functional modules

✓ 18 modules
OVERVIEW OF PROJECT – CONT’D

REQUIREMENTS PHASE

• Requirements process included “Gap Analysis” between MS ES law and ME ES law as well as review of rules and business process
OVERVIEW OF PROJECT – CONT’D

Data Migration

✓ Migrated 172 Million data records over two phases

✓ Contracted with retired IT staff to cleanse legacy system data and build bridging between legacy Tax system and ReEmployME Benefits system

✓ Current IT staff did not have the database and system knowledge to perform this work
Software as a Service (SaaS)

• Centrally hosted with a cloud hosting vendor
• Accessed via a browser
• Application support is handled by a vendor
• Infrastructure support is handled by a vendor
LESSONS LEARNED – ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Engaged a vendor for Organizational Change Management

✓ Project sponsor misidentified senior and middle managers as “Change Champions”

✓ Should have identified new staff without long standing ownership of the “As Is” and long term staff that wanted organizational and system improvements

✓ Don’t assume your managers are fully supportive of a successful implementation
LESSONS LEARNED – ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

Identify Necessary Organizational Changes

• Created a Training Support Unit that is a dedicated team to deliver training for implementation and bureau going forward
  • Incorporated "how to do your job" training in conjunction with system based training
• Created an Application Help Desk to support new system
• Restructured Tax Division with positions correlating to new work
LESSONS LEARNED – PLANNING

Create Adequate Technical Environments for Concurrent Project Activities

• Have adequate, dedicated environments for the following:
  • Training
    ✓ Ongoing need for continual staff development and legislative changes
    ✓ Consistent with production environment with current data set
  • Development
  • Migration
  • Performance testing
  • UAT
LESSONS LEARNED – PLANNING

Communications

Communications to internal and external stakeholders is a sub-project to your modernization project

• Maine had a separate project manager handling communications for each phase

Selection of Communications Project manager is critical

✓ UI knowledge and state government experience is key
✓ Tax implementation went more smoothly because communications project manager had UI knowledge and high level senior management experience
LESSONS LEARNED – PLANNING

• Communications through multiple channels is necessary

  ✓ Email blasts
  ✓ Custom mailings
  ✓ Outgoing calls
  ✓ Web conference forums
  ✓ Newsletters to staff and internal stakeholders

• Social media impact is real

  ✓ Communication plan should include a social media strategy that is approved by the most senior executives in the department i.e. Commissioner’s office
LESSONS LEARNED – PLANNING

Data Partner Communication is Critical

• External stakeholder data requirement sessions consumed a lot of project staff time.

• Internal department data users (outside the bureau) had unreasonable data requests and expectations

• Despite detailed technical specifications, interface specifications were subject to interpretation by different development teams.
**LESSONS LEARNED – PLANNING**

Data Partner Communications – continued

**Things to Consider**

- No MOU, no data.
- Meet early in the project and provide a complete data definition/dictionary of data collected and not collected in the new system.
- Elaborate and confirm testing processes: who, when and how.
LESSONS LEARNED – PLANNING

Data Partner Communications – continued

• Gauge the IT testing experience of your data partners
  ✓ Request detailed interface test plans from internal data partners.

• Interface specifications should be reviewed by both teams prior to sending test files to confirm data layout, data definitions, successful outcomes etc.

• Get formal sign offs on interface specifications.
LESSONS LEARNED – PLANNING

Business Process Review

• Create a comprehensive process to capture business processes that either go away, need revision or need creation with the new system

• Start the “As Is”/ “To Be” analysis as early as possible

• The trigger should be Requirements Phase

  ✓ Draft should be created as requirements are finalized and then refined later, if necessary.

  ✓ You won’t have bandwidth to do this as you get closer to system Go Live
LESSONS LEARNED – PLANNING

Create a Comprehensive Training Delivery Plan

• Provide staff with detailed training materials that includes screen shots, SOP details, and instructions for manual processes that will remain or be revised by system implementation.

• Require structured sandbox time for users.

• Provide simulated end to end scenarios to work unit managers that reflect ‘real life’ as much as possible.

• If possible, use training staff to support work unit managers during sandbox training time.
LESSONS LEARNED – DEPLOYMENT

• Key decision metrics
  • Identify your key decision metrics early that will let managers know “how are we doing?” and define report templates.

• Perform Multiple Dry Runs on Implementation/Cutover dry runs
  • More business scenario and soft launch validation cycles would have been beneficial (ME did two)
  • These resulted in a solid implementation plan with resources, baseline state/end and very complete task list for actual deployment and cutover
  • Engage the program staff and managers in as many Go Live Dry Run, Smoke test and Soft Launch activities as possible
    ✓ Provides opportunity for staff to practice new work processes in new system leverages their training, ask questions and build confidence in the system
LESSONS LEARNED – DEPLOYMENT

Public “pain points”

Determine risk tolerance for appointees and political figures and plan accordingly

• Legislative Labor Committee was not engaged by administration adequately regarding the new system implementation
  ✓ Initiate and continue dialogue with pertinent legislative committees regarding system implementation

Anticipate customer service need will increase disproportionately to claims volume

• Plan for increased call volume if you have call centers

Your system deployment will be an excuse for all claimant bad behaviors to surface.
Be prepared!
LESSONS LEARNED – CONSORTIUM SPECIFIC

Advantages of Consortium Partnership

• Onsite MS support from their staff during first few weeks after go live was extremely helpful

• MS staff’s operational knowledge instrumental both in the development phase of project and during deployment was critical to our success