

QAT ENGAGEMENT PROFILE

Client: State Government

Project Duration: 3 months

Client Overview/The Situation

The client is the designated information technology applications and services development and support division for a state agency.

Through partnering with their customers, this team develops and supports information technology applications and services to help meet agency needs in order to achieve the mission of the department.

The Business Challenge

The division is mandated with the following:

- Leverage Technology - Develop and implement appropriate technologies to support department operations and ensure transportation efficiencies in the state.
- Improve Department Business Practices - Improve internal and external business relationships and processes through teamwork and partnering.
- Develop the Workforce - Provide a workplace that allows employees to grow in their careers, by providing appropriate training and mentoring. Recruit, hire, and retain the best talent available.

The Solution

QA Technologies was selected to evaluate the client's software application areas to assess the current status and future readiness of the resources being utilized to maintain the applications. The assessment was focused on the goals of the organization to optimize the utilization of resources through iterative improvement of resource allocation, tools and methods. The assessment included notable observations regarding application platforms as well as management and development methodologies and tools being used to support the agency applications.

The assessment of today's technical and staffing facts provided a snapshot of the current environment, revealed challenges, and provided a set of recommendations for future activities. This assessment provided both long and short term recommendations. These recommendations were developed based upon on-site interviews, written questionnaires, application profiles, competency ratings, and experience and skill set profiles of the managers, team members and contractors.

The assessment identified ten current issues.

- Customer requirements are becoming increasingly complex. The increasing complexity of tasks and volume of workloads impact the quality of customer service.
- There is valuable data and business logic in systems that have been developed under tight budget and scheduling constraints that needs to be available to other systems/applications.
- Many functional and technical channels.
- Custom applications and software packages need to be integrated/accessed.
- Response times for user requests need to be guaranteed.
- Transactional integrity in long-running workflow scenarios needs to be ensured.

Questions Answered. Solutions Provided.



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- There are multiple technology stacks, stovepipe architectures, and convoluted interfaces.
- The technology is constantly changing; requirements, technology, environment dynamics.
- The division faces the issue of staff retention.
- The division faces the challenge of a workforce population that is near term retirement eligible.

The Business Impact/Result

In overview, there are six overarching recommendations to address the current issues and gaps identified by the assessment.

- Implementation of standards, procedures, and processes for all IT activity as drafted by QAT Assessment Team.
- Implementation of the Federal Enterprise Architecture (FEA).
- The division must implement processes to ensure that the accumulated knowledge and expertise of employees nearing retirement is not lost. Both formal and informal training of newer employees will be needed to close this gap and prepare for succession planning.
- Advancement opportunities must be evaluated and developed in order to retain qualified employees.
- Workload management training opportunities to be implemented and encouraged.
- Updated and creative methods of recruitment should be implemented in order to attract the preferred workforce.

These recommendations were made and are being implemented during a time of decreased resources and significant environmental changes. A different perspective on recruitment and retention initiatives will be needed to reflect the anticipated demographic changes in the workforce population as employees retire. Manager and department planners will need to work collaboratively to meet the challenges with new and fresh approaches. Continuous monitoring of the plan is essential and necessary to ensure the agency is prepared for the issues defined here.

The Environment

Multiple platforms and languages for applications, mainframe applications, mainframe COBOL, use of the IBM product Host Access Transformation Services – HATS – to create a web front end that calls the existing CICS screens with minimal changes to the current code, mainframe CICS applications, both DB2 and SQL Server are utilized across various applications.

Skillset

Workforce planning, technology assessments, GAP Analysis, Environmental Scans, Supply and Demand Analysis, GAP Analysis, Closing Strategies, Interview skills, data analysis, information technology strategy, SWOT Analysis, Core Competencies, staffing strategies.