LEVERAGING BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

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2019 Project Management Symposium
Why do we need best practices?

• Achieve successful delivery → value
• How do we learn? Share knowledge?
• Consistency, policy/procedure, compliance
• What happens if all the experts and ringers leave?
Locating and identifying best practices

• How do you know if you have a good, better, or best practice?

• Look local → talk to SMEs and maximize assets you already have; secure interest and buy-in across the organization

• Market research → how are other organizations doing it? What works well in private/public sector?

• Aligning practices to success criteria, strategic goals, vision
Implementing Best Practices

- Look local → “level up”
- Look at the best of the best practices - use them as a model and embed within the enterprise (quick wins)
- Practice over process → skill competency is more important than developing guidelines
- Challenge teams to identify a best practice and/or an area where a best practice is needed → empower them to find one and make it valuable for the enterprise
- Best practices should be dynamic; practitioners should have a large toolbox of diverse strategies, tools, techniques
Cultures that embrace best practices

- Validate, explore, and experiment
- Foster best practice development internally → recognize your superstars and show off what they can do
- Share across teams, offices, and programs
- Seek continuous improvement
- Benchmark with other organizations
- Daily expectation → own it, live it!
Lessons are experienced whether we learn from them or not...

• Use repositories, libraries, collaboration tools to share best practices and lessons learned
• Commit to a practice of discussing and incorporating lessons learned
• Acknowledge positive lessons learned also
• Share amongst peers → office colleagues, industry partners, Federal PM CoP
**EIA Application**

- PMO serves as a “hub” of best practices and lessons learned
- Lessons learned repository highlighting the processes and impacts across projects/programs
- PM Community Group – monthly forum to share lessons learned and/or best practices within the context of live projects
- Development team uses a weekly tag up to specifically discuss lessons learned and how to incorporate change
- Best practices can be easily associated with similar projects that require same/similar core competencies or environmental elements
- Acknowledge positive lessons learned! Best practices should be celebrated. What gets rewarded gets repeated…
LEVERAGING BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED IN PROGRAM AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT AT NASA

Robert Spector
2019 Project Management Symposium
Lessons Learned at NASA

• Strong policy and procedures: NPR 7120.7 – IT Program and Project Management Requirements
• Governance structure reinforces Lessons Learned
• Interventions (e.g., “Pause & Learn”)
• The NASA culture
Governing Principles in Lessons Learned

- Knowledge that may be converted into useful organizational improvements must flow freely
- Promote an environment that fosters continuous learning
- Build, develop and support the organization’s culture with respect to knowledge management:
  - Create a shared vision for reuse of lessons learned
  - Define Lessons Learned behaviors for managers and employees
  - Reinforce LL behaviors through perf plans and awards