PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE
A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department

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

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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

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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

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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