

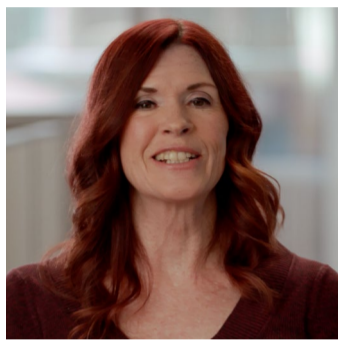


GovCon
DIFFERENT

Different Perspectives
Different Ideas
Different Solutions

AVOIDING THE MODERNIZATION GRAVEYARD

Former state program directors share their successful modernization journeys



JULIE GREEN

Former Program Director,
Nevada State Child Support



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THE GRAVEYARD

ERIC PROSTEJOVSKY

There's a graveyard of failed government programs across the US. As former state program directors, why do these projects fail?

JULIE GREEN

In my state, they took me out of my office and put me over a \$120 million project with really no experience in running a system implementation project. I was making decisions that I probably had no business making, but I had to make them. And I really had to make big girl decisions that nobody else wanted to make. Everybody was willing to let me make it because they could point to me if it went wrong.

ERIC PROSTEJOVSKY

Your experiences Ann and Premjeet?

PREMJEET

States know what they need. They know their pain points and what they're trying to fix. But it's making sure that requirement is documented in a way that it can be coded. Sometimes IT will come in and they'll build what they think it means. And a lot of times there's a difference in that understanding.

ANN

Between the tech and the program side, you're speaking two different languages. You've got program staff who are based in helping the children, focusing on their programs and delivering these. They're not in the tech world. So that in itself becomes really challenging for program staff and also tech staff to work on modernization projects.

BRIDGING THE DIVIDE

ERIC PROSTEJOVSKY

So how do you begin bridging those gaps between the two worlds of program and IT?

JULIE GREEN

If you look at these large scale implementations as an IT project you're going to fail because they're so heavy on the functional requirements. If you don't get the IT side on board, then you're constantly fighting a battle. And I think that's where a lot of states fail in making them part of that organizational change management. Your IT staff, they're terrified because they've been working on a system that was developed in the late nineties, early 2000, and now they're moving to something that's a little bit foreign to them.

ANN KNEFEL

Another one of the things that's critical, in any project is the ability to be flexible and to adjust because, the landscape changes on a project. People come, people go. You may think you have all the resources, you may think you have the budget and stuff happens.

When we first did our first scope of work with this particular client, they initially wanted to start work on some cross integration and data quality strategy. And it became very apparent that we needed to shelve that and pull up some of the other priorities, which is to work through their business requirements and modify that so that they could then produce their RFQ and then hire their vendor. You have to change courses to meet those needs.



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MEETING PROGRAM NEEDS

ERIC PROSTEJOVSKY

How do you go about that? How do you make sure the program gets what it needs?

PREMJEET

I actually played a role in a state where I was the functional manager, so I would have my JAD [Joint Application Development] sessions with the technical and the business staff. We would talk through all the different questions and answers. And then at night when everybody left, the technical team and I would stay back for about 2 to 3 hours, and we would whiteboard technically what that meant and how they would build it. And then the next morning when we met with the state for the recap, I would translate that back to the state, this is how it looks to the end user on the page and just trying to bridge that gap.

JULIE

Also, having a trusted advisor is so important. Being thrown into the deep end, every day you feel like I have no business being here. Having an advisor that's been through a modernization to say, "This is how I would advise you, but follow your instincts. If you need me to run coverage, I'll run coverage."

PREMJEET

A trusted advisor, someone who's walked in my shoes, maybe not a mile, but someone who's actually walked in my shoes. Someone that understands not only the technology but the program. And they know there's very significant impacts that our programs will have on the lives of the communities that they serve.

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BY GOVCON DIFFERENT

CONNECT

Julie, Premjeet, and Ann are available to answer questions regarding program modernization and tech implementation. They offer consulting services through the modernization lifecycle for Health and human service customers across the US.



PREMJEET KISUN



JULIE GREEN



ANN NEFEL

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