Washington State Department of
Health

SURFING ON LAVA:

Joining an eWIC Project in Progress

2019 NWA WIC Technology, Program Integrity, and Vendor Management Conference

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Pronouns: He, him, his

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Health

SURFING ON LAVA:

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Learning objectives

- Identify systems, processes, collaborations, and structures that are necessary for a successful eWIC implementation.

- Recognize the difference between risks and issues, and the requirements for managing each.

- Identify two strategies for managing stress and chaos effectively in an eWIC implementation

Disclosure

- No conflicts of interest

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Session pathway

- Washington's eWIC experience
- My entry to the project
- Challenges we faced
- Organizational lessons learned
- Personal lessons learned
- Tools and strategies for managing the impossible

Washington WIC

60 WIC local agencies

- o 220 WIC clinics
- o Mix of local public health, non-profit, and tribes
- o Caseloads range from 50 - 5000

700 WIC vendors

275,000 unique participants

- o *48% of women and 50% of children at high nutritional risk*
- o *1.4 million referrals*
- o *637,000 nutrition education sessions*
- o *63,000 Registered Dietician appointments*

Two projects in one

From Crossroads to Cascades

History and Challenges

Selected for proof of concept: 2005

History and Challenges

Federal mandate: Proposed rule published Feb. 28, 2013 implementing the provisions in the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act enacted on Dec. 13, 2010.
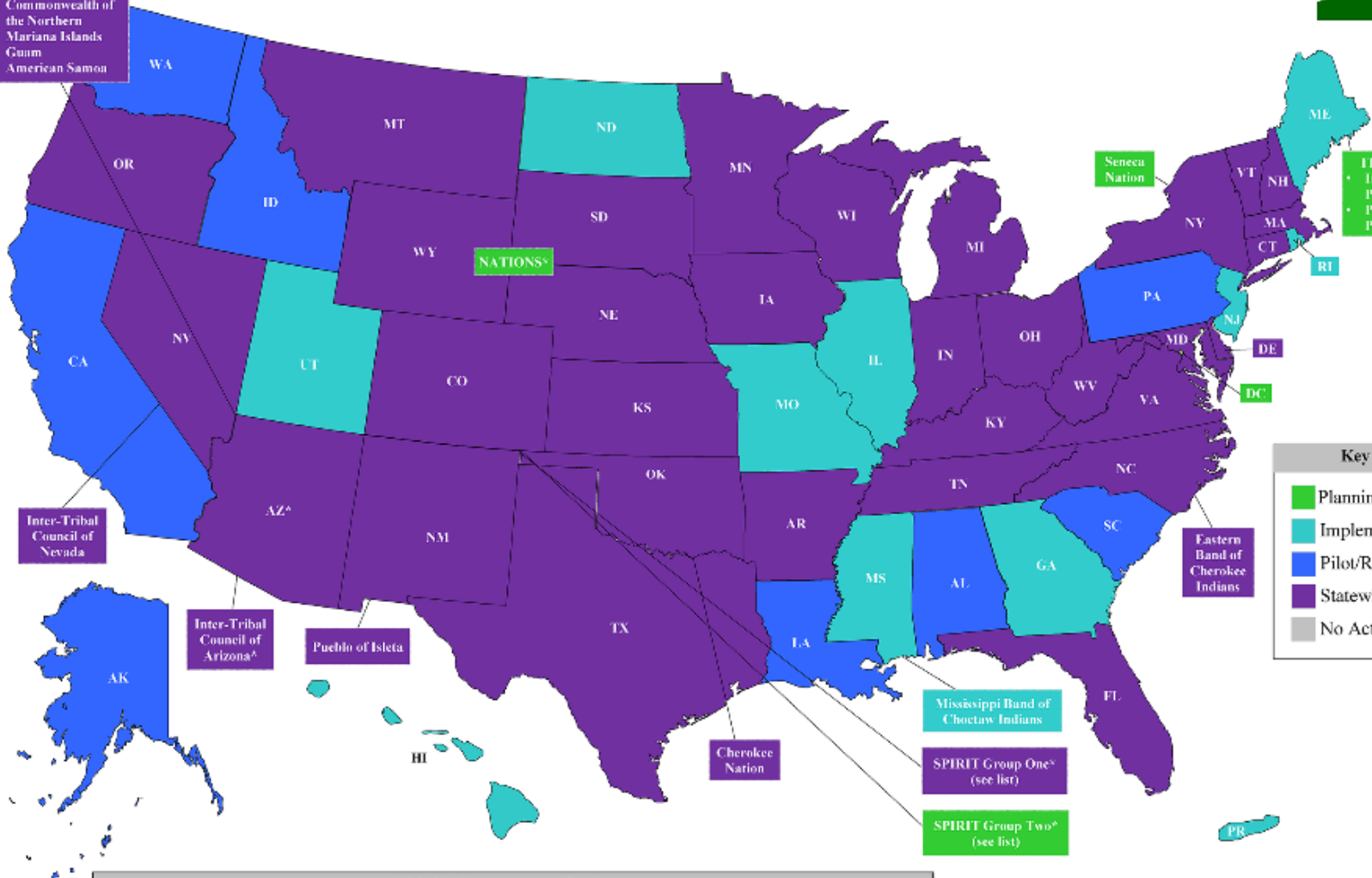
Included:
- A definition of EBT
- A mandate that all WIC State agencies implement EBT delivery method by Oct. 1, 2020

https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/fr-030116

WIC EBT Activity - August 2019

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Fissures in the project

Product A: 2012

Disruption!

Product B: 2015 new IAPD

Product B: contract 2016

State of the project in March, 2018

Pilot T-11 months

Funding shortfall

Technology failures

Staffing losses

Organizational change management not coordinated

My background

- Patient safety
- Social work
- Regulatory oversight
- Health care quality
- Renaissance painting
- India

My background

WIC ❌

Nutrition or dietetics ❌

Breastfeeding support ❌

Large IT projects ❌

Directing an office ❌

Project risks and issues

- Risk: something that has been identified that **could** impact the success of the project, but **has not happened**

- Issue: something that **has happened**, and **has a negative impact** on the project

- Risk: log, estimate likelihood of maturing into an issue, monitor, consider potential mitigation strategies

- Issue: log, create a **corrective action plan**, resource the plan, monitor for success

- "An issue is a risk that has matured"

Project Risk

Micr Printers   •••   Micr printers are required for WIC checks to be read by the banking system.

Issue → All WIC clinics have DOH provided Micr printers.

The brand and model configured for CIMS is out of production and past its life cycle.

Mitigation → DOH has some spares in storage.

Chance → The longer the project is delayed the higher the risk for these end-of-life printers to continue to meet the business need

Project Risk

Pilot stores unable to successful complete transactions. ...

Issue →

Chance & Mitigation →

The decision was made to keep the live buy testing schedule the same despite the delay to the pilot start. CDP typically completes live buy tests 2 weeks prior to Pilot start. This short timeframe mitigates 2 risks. [1] systems that sit idle may have upgrade that impacts eWIC functionality [2] store staff have extra time between time of training to when transactions will occur. It was determined that these risks while not desirable have low probability AND can be mitigated with communications and strategic planning.

Cascades issues

Cascades
Intermittently
errors out on
startup

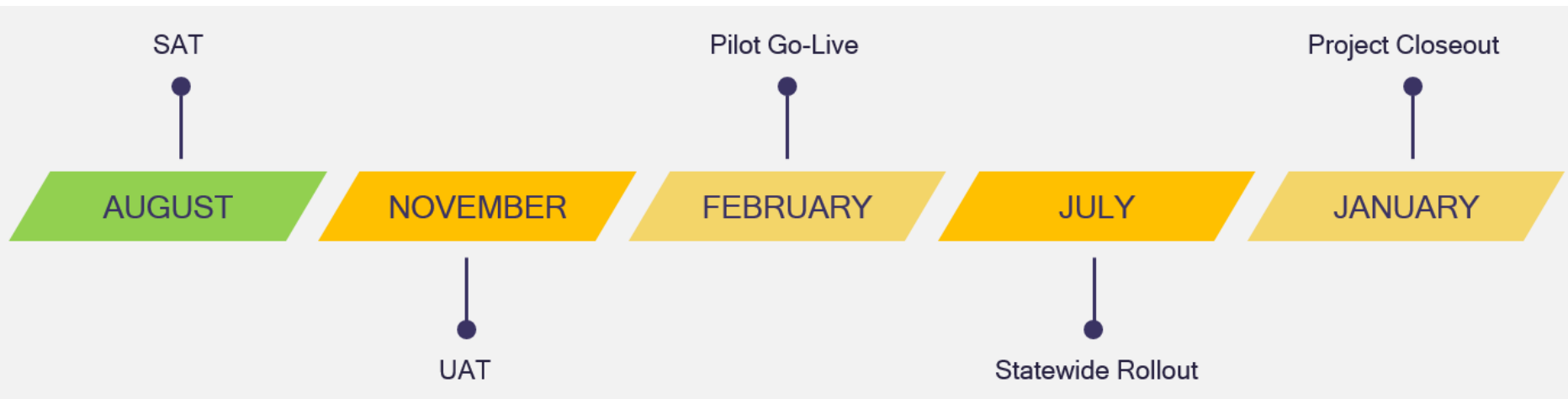**Issue**

Plans & Outcome

10/24/2018 MW The root cause has been found. A configuration change in the web services fixes the problem.

7/23/18 - The root cause is still unknown. However, all DOH testers and training room PC's can access the Cascades application/environments. Reducing priority from Critical to High. Next steps are: the root cause must be identified, lessons learned documented, and installation instructions developed for Internet Explorer and .NET for Windows 7 and 10 operating systems. The assignments are for Mark Walker and Lee Postier to provide the documentation to the PMT by 8/3.

DOH will work with DXC technical resources to find the root cause of the problem and find a set of starting instructions that avoids the problem.

2018-2019 Schedule

SAT

Pilot Go-Live

Project Closeout

AUGUST

NOVEMBER

FEBRUARY

JULY

JANUARY

UAT

Statewide Rollout

Fissures March 2018 – September 2019

- Organizational change growth

- Pilot delay

- Areas of confusion

- Areas of disruption

- Changes to rollout plan

Project strengths

- Systems
- Processes
- Collaborations
- Structures

Systems

People
- Existing staff
- New staff
- External partners

Issue management
- Identification
- Recording
- Monitoring
- Responding

Project infrastructure
- Financial
- Leadership
- Integration into program

Communication
- Roles
- Processes
- Patterns

Accountability
- Clear hierarchy
- Regular and frequent communication
- Reporting

Processes

▶ Established from the start
▶ Evaluated and adjusted

- Planning
- Budgeting
- Scheduling
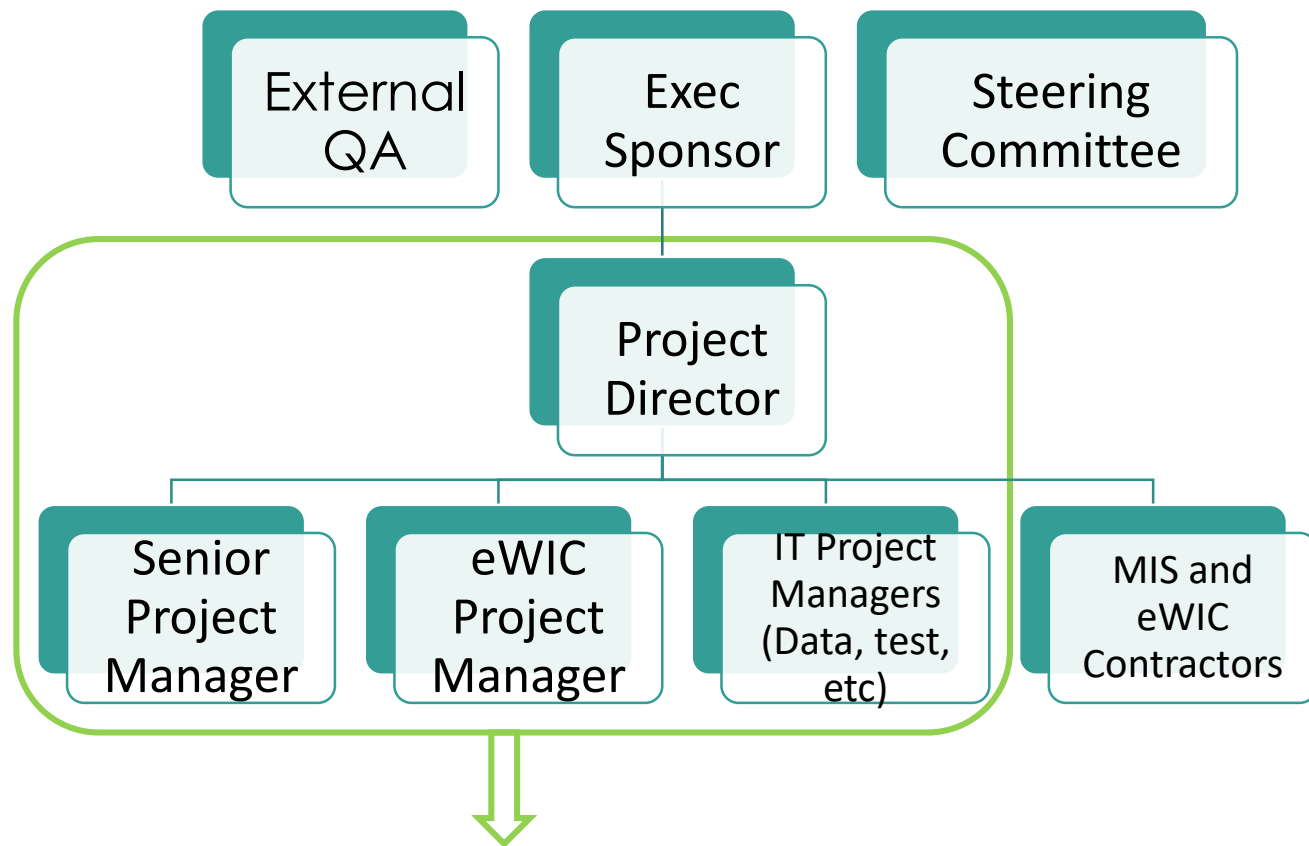- Decision-making
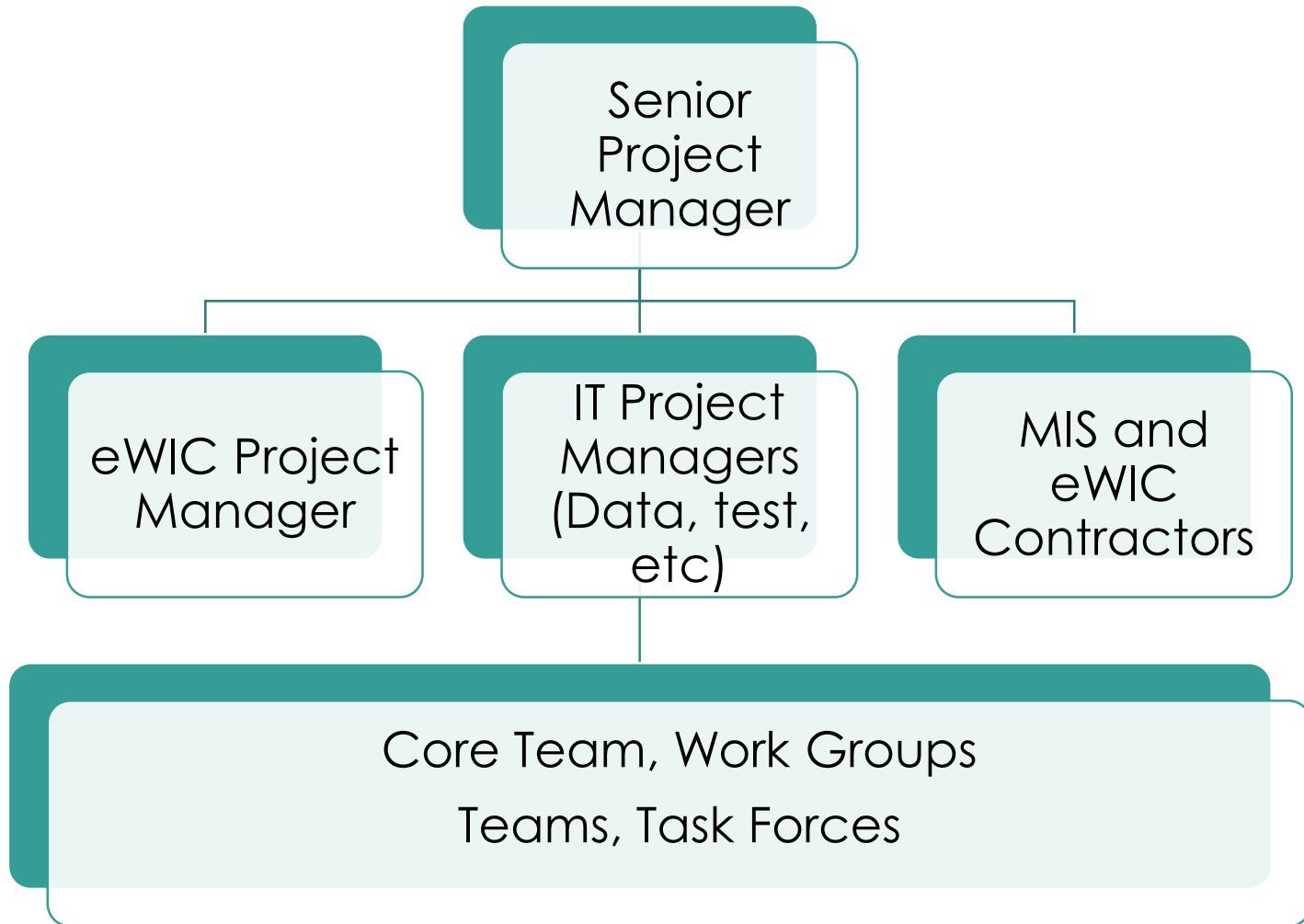- Escalating
- Communicating
- Leading up

Collaborations

- **Internal**
  - Program policy team
  - Agency and program communications
  - Agency and state IT management

- **External**
  - FNS
  - Clinics
  - Vendors
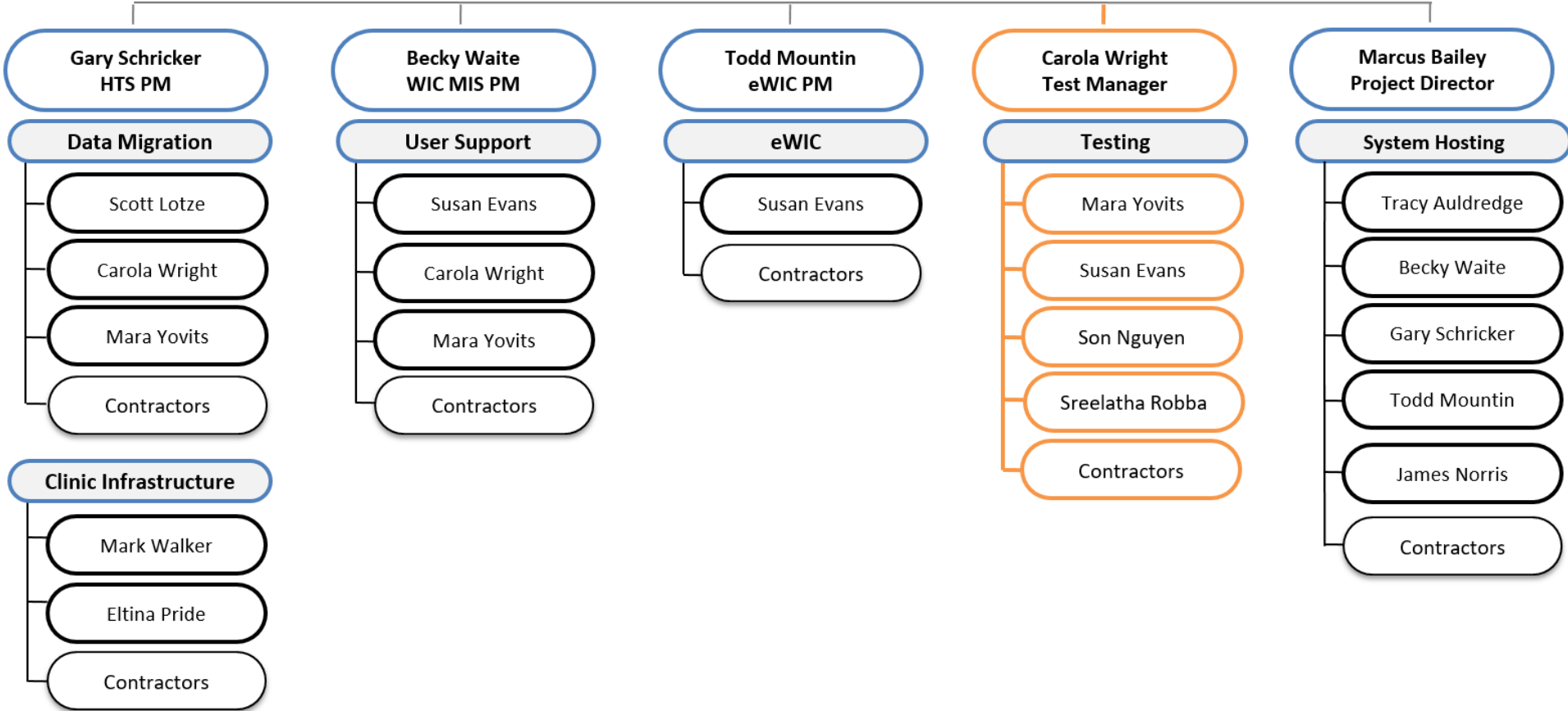 - Participants
  - Influencers

Leadership structure

External QA

Exec Sponsor

Steering Committee

Project Director

Senior Project Manager

eWIC Project Manager

IT Project Managers (Data, test, etc)

MIS and eWIC Contractors

Leadership structure

Senior Project Manager

eWIC Project Manager

IT Project Managers (Data, test, etc)

MIS and eWIC Contractors

Core Team, Work Groups
Teams, Task Forces

Workgroup structure

Big picture

Experienced People

Teamwork

Technology Products

Success

Executive Support

Project Management Processes and Structures

Detailed Planning

Organizational lessons learned

- Proper Prior Planning Prevents Pitifully Poor Performance
- Structures and processes are essential
- Some risk must be accepted
- We have many friends
- This can be painful and we should acknowledge that
- People are committed to the point of burnout
- If we lose focus, or lose talent, we lose the project

Celebrate!
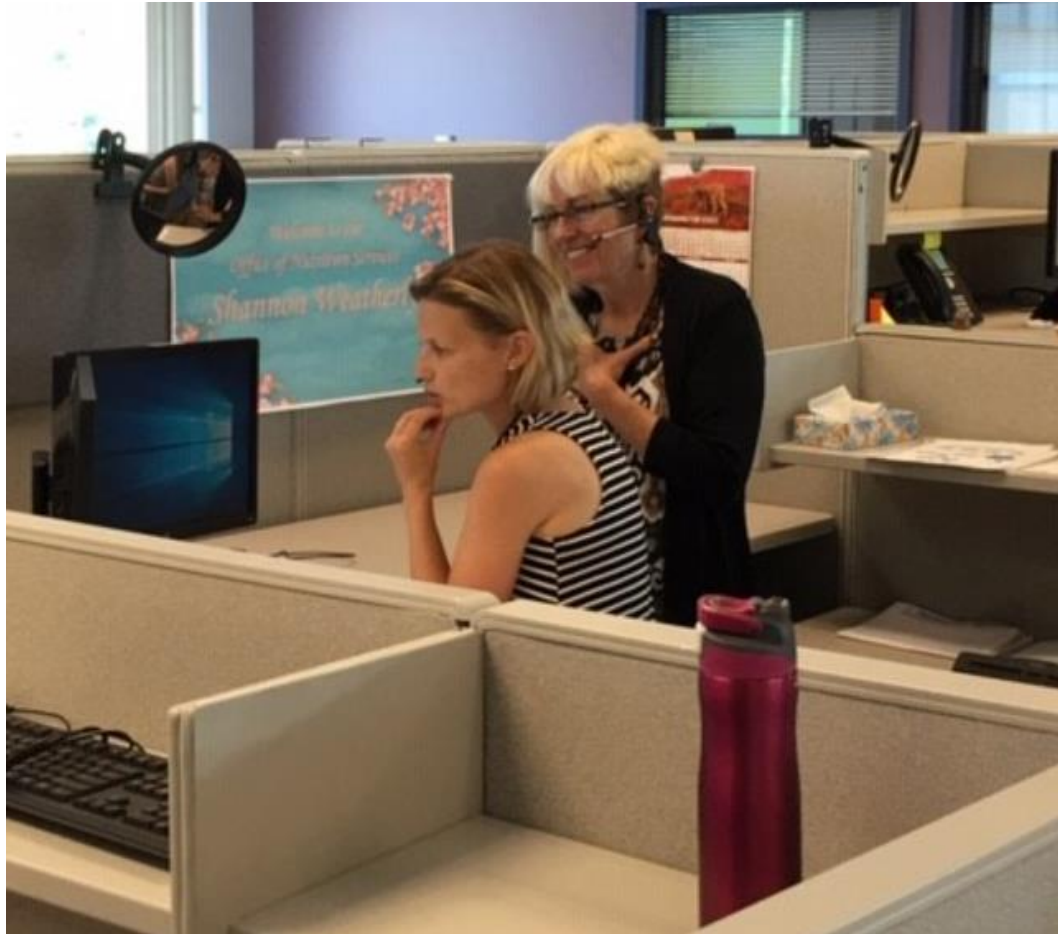
Recognize

Personal lessons learned

- Don't push the river
- Let good people do their jobs
- If something looks odd, question it
- This is a marathon
- Course corrections are to be expected and not feared
- Put your oxygen mask on first
- Stay in close contact with the project

- **There are no dumb questions**

Tools for managing the impossible

- Q2
- Outward Mindset
- Decision-making tools
- Work-life harmony
- Brain chemistry
- Trust

Q2

- **Quadrant 1: Necessity**
  - Unforeseen events and pressing problems.
- **Quadrant 2: Extraordinary Productivity**
  - Working on strategic, high-impact tasks.
- **Quadrant 3: Distraction**
  - Minor, yet urgent tasks that distract you from your key goals.
- **Quadrant 4: Waste**
  - Neither important nor urgent.

- https://www.actitime.com/time-management/time-management-covey-matrix/

✕	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	**I** **Fire Fighting** Crises Pressing problems Deadline-driven projects	**II** **Quality Time** Prevention, capability improvement Relationship building Recognizing new opportunities Planning, recreation
Not Important	**III** **Distraction** Interruptions, some callers Some mail, some reports Some meetings Proximate, pressing matters Popular activities	**IV** **Time Wasting** Trivia, busy work Some mail Some phone calls Time wasters Pleasant activities

○ http://patrickdichter.com/2017/02/02/more-q2-in-q1/
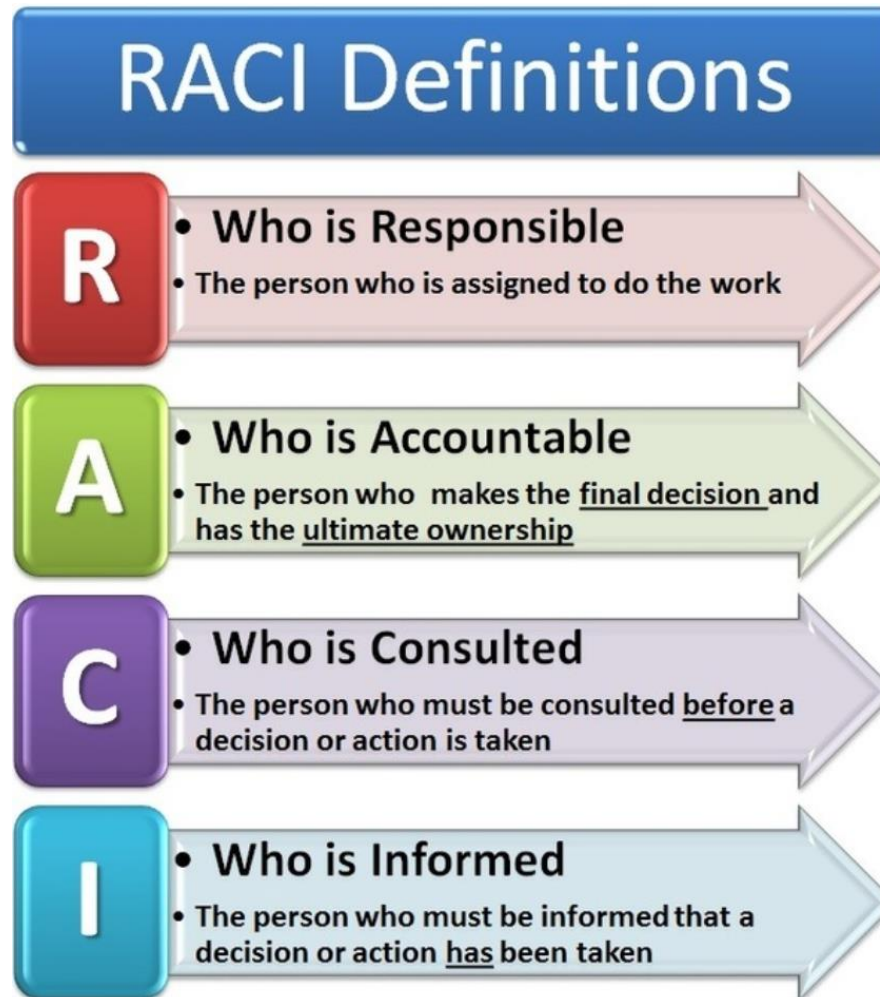
Outward Mindset

- Two mindsets:

  - Inward:
    - People are vehicles, obstacles, or irrelevant

  - Outward:
    - People matter, their goals and objectives are important to me

- https://arbingerinstitute.com/BlogDetail?id=48

Decision-making tools: **Who has the D?**

- "A good decision executed quickly beats a brilliant decision implemented slowly."

- Some decisions matter more than others

- Ambiguity is the enemy

- Speed and adaptability are crucial

- Decision roles supersede org chart

- Well-designed org reinforces roles

- Involve the impacted people

- https://hbr.org/product/who-has-the-d-how-clear-decision-roles-enhance-organizational-performance/R0601D-PDF-ENG
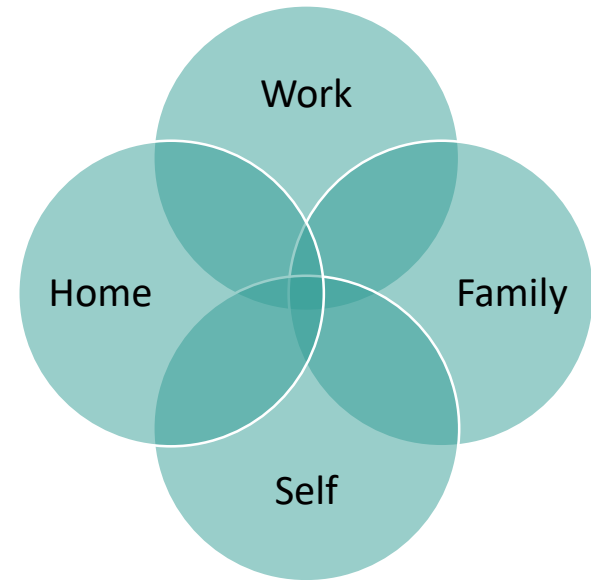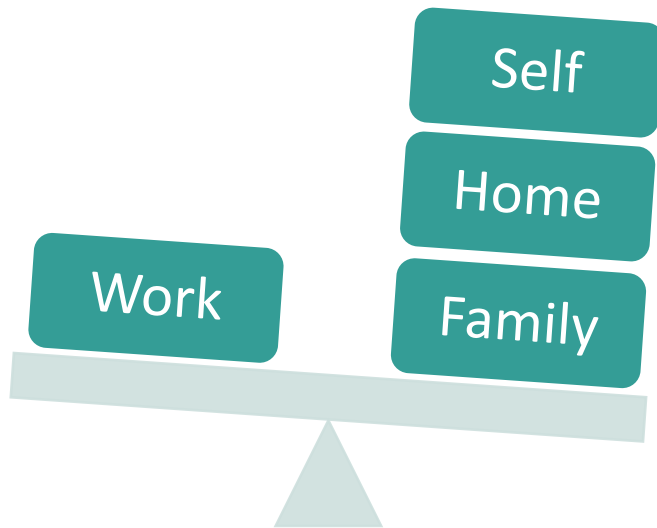
Decision-making tools: **RACI**

RACI Definitions

R • Who is Responsible
• The person who is assigned to do the work

A • Who is Accountable
• The person who makes the <u>final decision</u> and has the <u>ultimate ownership</u>

C • Who is Consulted
• The person who must be consulted <u>before</u> a decision or action is taken

I • Who is Informed
• The person who must be informed that a decision or action <u>has</u> been taken

Decision-making tools: **RACI in action**

	Annie	Bill	Charly	Devi
Project Planning	A	R	C	
Define Requirements	C	R	R	C
Develop Options	C	R	R	
Finalise Solution	A	R	C	I
End User Training	I	A		R

Work-life balance vs. work-life harmony

- https://www.mindfulleader.org/blog/26701-3-essential-elements-to-creating-harmony

- https://medium.com/@katemccready/work-life-balance-vs-work-life-harmony-ea23ba05e279

Work-life harmony

Work-life balance	Work-life harmony
Divides work from life	Work, life, family, are all connected
Mechanical division of time	The right expenditure of energy at a given time for the challenge at hand
Can create conflict: "I'm not giving enough time to family/work/myself"	There are times when it is entirely appropriate to focus all one's energy on work. Sometimes, that energy needs to be focused on family. Other times, we just need to catch up on sleep.
Parts of life are in competition for my time	My time is mine to use as I think best

Brain chemistry

- We still live in the jungle

- Our brains are wired for survival

- Higher functions – "thinking brain"

- Lower, automatic functions – "instinctive brain"
    - Fight, flight, and freeze
    - Does not process or remember well
    - Designed to preserve life

- http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/journals/ed_lead/el200912_willis.pdf

- https://bebrainfit.com/effects-stress-brain/

Brain chemistry

- Low stress = more information passes to the thinking brain

- High stress (sadness, boredom, anxiety, anger) = more information directed to the instinctive brain

- When we are relaxed, we can decide what we focus on

- When we are stressed, we lose control over the incoming information

How stress destroys happiness

- Excessive worry and fear
- Anger and frustration, impatience with self and others
- Mood swings, crying spells, or suicidal thoughts
- Insomnia, nightmares, disturbing dreams
- Trouble concentrating and learning new information
- Forgetfulness and mental confusion
- Difficulty in making decisions
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Irritability and overreaction to petty annoyances
- Excessive defensiveness or suspicion
- Increased habit behaviors

How to help yourself

○ Stay healthy

How to help yourself

- Stay rested

How to help yourself

- Stay aware

Trust

- Employees who trust their colleagues and leadership are more likely to be open, honest, empathetic, collaborative, and constructive.

- Practical trust vs. emotional trust

- Trust equation

- Bottom line: **Reduce your self-orientation to increase others' trust**

- https://blog.jostle.me/blog/ways-to-build-trust-at-work

Building trust

- Credibility
  - Tell the truth
  - Admit when you don't know something or are wrong
- Reliability
  - Do what you say you'll do and are meant to do
  - Explain yourself
- Intimacy
  - Extend trust and include others
  - Watch your reactions
- Reduce self-orientation
  - Let others talk
  - Listen mindfully
  - Take responsibility for failures where appropriate

Cascades Project Management

Becky Waite

Senior Project Manager

Todd Mountain

EBT Project Manager

Cascades Project Manager

Marcus Bailey

Project Director

Questions?

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