# Project Assurance Training Guide

Enterprise Project Management Office

Georgia Technology Authority

State of Georgia

www.gta.ga.gov

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# Class Agenda

## Project Assurance

Upon completion of this class, the student will gain:

- An understanding of Project Assurance and why it is necessary
- An overview of the EPLC Project Assurance Methodology
- Detailed knowledge of when to conduct project assessment, what to look for at each stage of the project's lifecycle and how to identify project 'gaps'
- A working knowledge of how to intervene in a project to build consensus for implementing solutions to close project 'gaps'

# Class Agenda

## Day 1

- **8:30 AM – Module 1 & 2: The Business Case for Project Assurance & Project Assurance Overview**
- **10:15 AM – Break**
- **10:30 AM – Module 3: Initiation**
- **11:45 AM – 1:00 Lunch**
- **1:00 PM – 2:15 PM: Case Study Exercise #1**
- **2:15 PM – Break**
- **2:30 PM – Module 4: Invest Plan/Case Study Exercise #2**
- **4:00 PM – Adjourn**

## Day 2

- **8:30AM - Module 5: Design**
- **9:15AM – Case Study Exercise #3**
- **10:00AM – Break**
- **10:15AM – Module 6: Development**
- **10:45AM – Case Study Exercise #4**
- **11:15 - Modules 7, 8, 9: Deploy, Operate, Dispose**
- **11:45 AM – 1:00PM Lunch**
- **1:00PM - Case Study Exercise #5**
- **2:15PM – Break**
- **2:30 PM - Module 10: The Intervention Process /Case Study Exercise #6**
- **4:00 - Adjourn**

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# Module 1

## The Business Case for Project Assurance

## What is Project Assurance?

- Project Assurance provides guidance and counsel on the planning, execution and delivery of large, complex technology initiatives
- GTA is required to provide Project Assurance/Independent Verification and Validation Services for Executive Branch Agency IT Projects > $1M
    - (O.C.G.A Section 45-12-70 et seq.; Section 50-5-51 (1), (2) and (11); Section 50-25-1(b)(14); Section 50-25-1(c); Section 50-25-4(a)(10); Section 50-25-5.1(b)(3). The authority for IV&V is provided from **House Resolution 1263** and **Senate Resolution 754**.
- GTA provides Agencies several options for Project Assurance based on a project's Complexity, Criticality and Size

***Notes:***

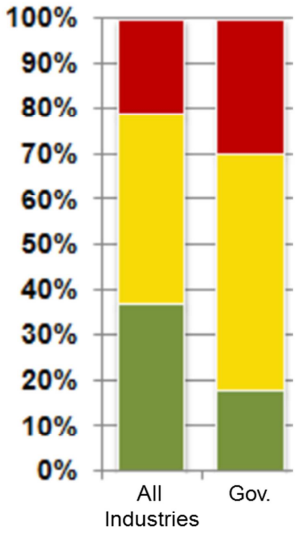
# The Business Case for Project Assurance

## IT Project Success Rate:

- *IT projects come in at a success rate of only 29%*
- *The average cost over-run is 56%*
- *The average schedule delay is 84% beyond plan*
- *Project failure range from missed expectations and cost over-runs to cancelled projects and unimplemented solutions.*

*Source: Accenture 2008*

## Government IT Projects




*Source: Standish Group*

***Notes:***

## Why Projects Fail

You would think that, over the years, project management would have evolved along with the technology that is being implemented. In truth, the high rate of project failure in today's organizations is proof that project implementation methodologies have not kept pace.

So, why do projects fail?

1. Lack of top management commitment
2. Unrealistic expectations
3. Poor requirements definition
4. Improper package selection
5. Gaps between software and business requirements
6. Inadequate resources
7. Underestimating time and cost
8. Poor project management/lack of methodology
9. Underestimating impact of change
10. Lack of training/education

***Notes:***

## The Waterfall Methodology

If you map the reasons that projects fail to the timed phases of a software implementation, although the failure points are present throughout the project lifecycle, *most, if not all, can occur before the project technically begins*.

| | Initiate | Invest/Plan | Design | Develop | Deploy | Operate | Dispose |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lack of Top Management Commitment | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Unrealistic Expectations | X | X | X | X | | X | X |
| Poor Requirements Definition | X | X | X | | | X | X |
| Improper Package Selection | | X | | | | X | X |
| Gaps between software and business requirements | | X | | | | X | X |
| Inadequate Resources | | X | | | | X | X |
| Underestimating Time and Costs | | X | | | | X | X |
| Poor Project Management / Lack of Methodology | | X | X | | | X | X |
| Underestimating Impact of Change | | X | | X | X | X | X |
| Lack of Training / Education | | X | | X | X | X | X |

The Top 10 Project Failure Points Often Precede System Design

*Prinzo, Rob. (2010). No Wishing Required: The Business Case for Project Assurance*

***Notes:***

## The Need for Project Assurance

Project assurance is about making sure that projects are delivered on time, on-budget, with client acceptance. Project Assurance closes the gap between the high rates of project failure with a higher level of expertise using an analytical process for increasing the probability of success.

Having project assurance as part of a large-scale system implementation or transformation project helps you:

- control/reduce project costs
- ensure milestones are met
- minimize surprises
- provide objective analysis
- provide peace of mind and trust among executives and project team members

***Notes:***

# Exercise 1 – Why Projects Fail

Using a personal experience, provide an example of each 'failure point':

1. **Lack of top management commitment:**

   _____

2. **Unrealistic expectations:**

   _____

3. **Poor requirements definition:**

   _____

4. **Improper package selection:**

   _____

5. **Gaps between software & requirements:**

   _____

6. **Inadequate resources:**

   _____

7. **Poor project management:**

   _____

8. **Lack of methodology:**

   _____

9. **Underestimating impact of change:**

   _____

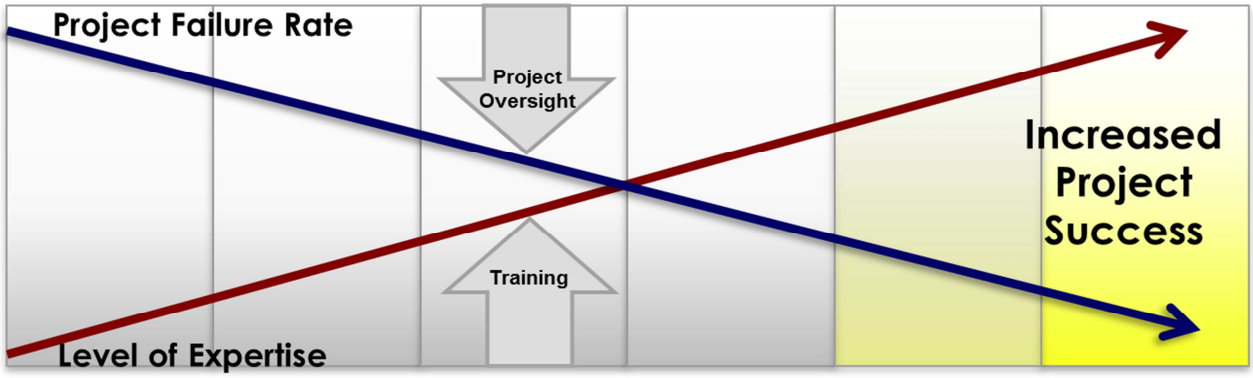
10. **Lack of training and education:**

    _____

## How Does Project Assurance Work?

Project Assurance closes the gap between the high rates of project failure with a higher level of expertise through:

1. A consistent methodology for 3rd Party Project Oversight
2. Training for project managers and team members




***Notes:***

## How Does Project Assurance Work?

- For IT projects greater than $5 million, GTA provides Project Assurance with our Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V) services. IV&V, an industry best practice, follows the basic Project Assurance process with the added benefit of an independent third party to conduct the assessments and report on the findings and recommendations.
- To procure IV&V services, GTA uses the Information Technology Project Assurance Services Contract (ITPAS). The ITPAS Contract is a contract of approved vendors that GTA issues Statements of Need to procure IV&V and other technology services on a project by project basis.
- For IT projects greater than $1 million and less than $5 million, GTA evaluates each project to determine the appropriate Project Assurance approach. Based on an evaluation of the project's complexity, criticality and size, GTA will recommend one of the following Project Assurance approaches:
    1. **Information Technology Project Assurance Services Contract (ITPAS):** Contract/List of approved vendors. GTA issues Statements of Need to procure services
    2. **Enterprise Portfolio Management Office (EPMO):** Project Assurance Services provided by GTA Enterprise Project Management Team
    3. **Agency Self Assurance:** Project Assurance services provided by Agencies that meet GTA'S Self Assurance Certification Criteria

***Notes:***

## How Does Project Assurance Work?

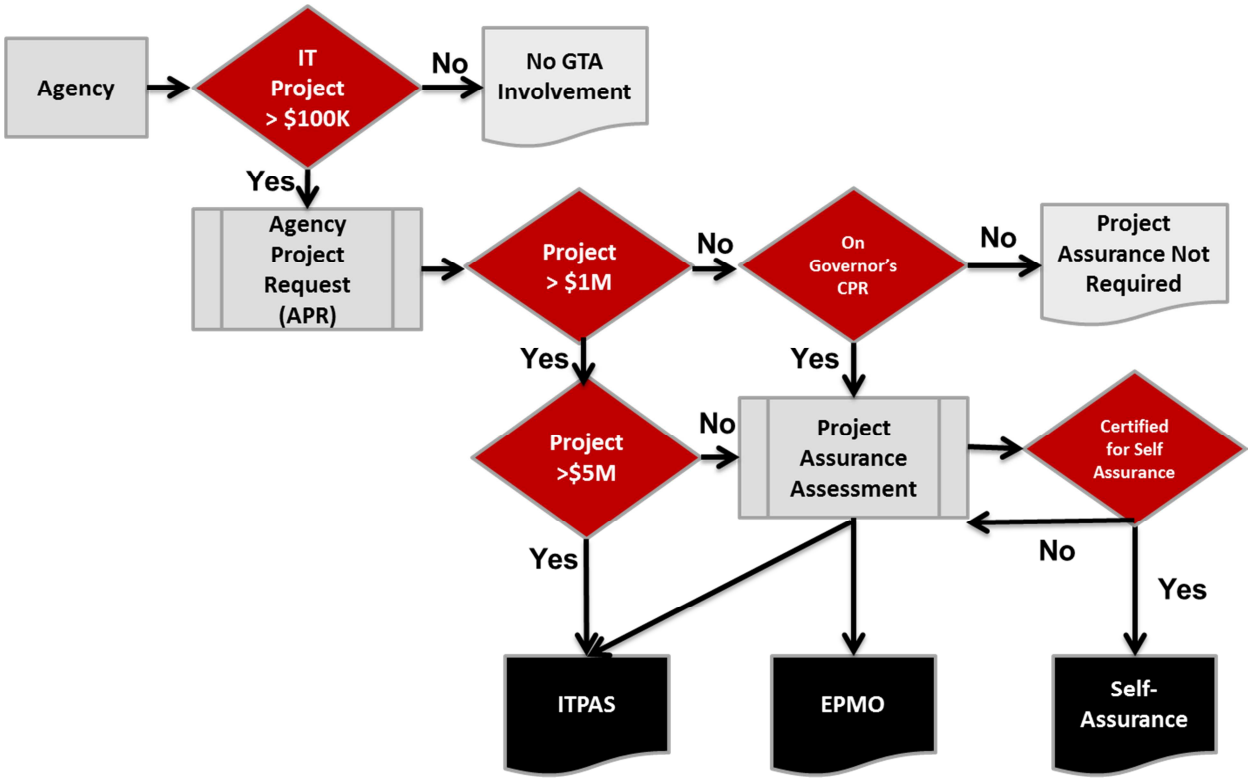
The Project Assessment is a questionnaire completed by the agency and validated by the EPMO. It is used to evaluate the type of Project Assurance required for IT Projects based on the following:

| Criticality | Complexity | Size |
|---|---|---|
| • Business Critical<br>• Enterprise Focused<br>• Strategic Alignment<br>• Customer Satisfaction<br>• Operating Efficiency<br>• Judicial or Legislative Mandate | • Technical Complexity<br>• Organizational Impact<br>• Flexible Solution<br>• Duration<br>• Staffing Capacity<br>• Project Dependencies | • Budget<br>• # of Organizations Involved<br>• # of People Involved |

***Notes:***

## How Does Project Assurance Work?

The following diagram depicts the Project Assurance Decision Making Process.




***Notes:***

## The Top 5 Benefits of Project Self Assurance

1. Reduced GTA involvement in your agency's IT projects through Self Certification
2. Save money through alternative Project Assurance approaches
3. Opportunity to obtain GTA Project Assurance Certification
4. Free training for agency project teams and project managers
5. Improve the odds of project success

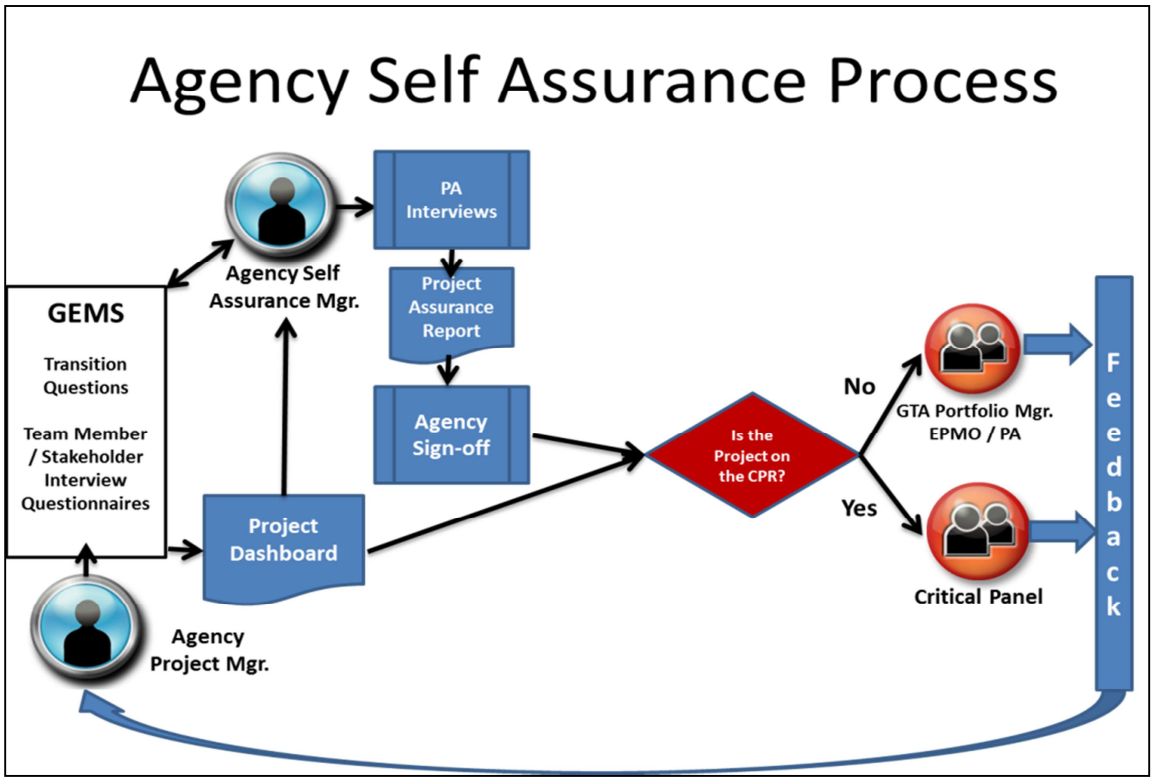
## Agency Self Assurance Criteria

- The agency makes a request for Self-Assurance Certification to the GTA Enterprise Project Management Office.
- The GTA EPMO representative makes a site visit and/or conducts an interview with the CIO (or other executives) to the agency to evaluate the following criteria:
  - That the agency has a Project Management Office and established Project Management Processes
  - The Project Management Office has full time Project Managers that have completed GTA's Project Assurance Certification Training Program
  - The agency is using the Georgia Enterprise Management Suite (GEMS)
- Based on the results of the evaluation, GTA will approve or deny the request.
  - Approval will have contingency that if the project is 'red' for two consecutive months, GTA may step in.
- Upon approval the GTA EPMO will conduct periodic validation to ensure that the agency continues to meet the Self-Certification criteria.

***Notes:***

## Agency Self Assurance

The following diagram depicts the Agency Self Assurance Process.




***Notes:***

# Module 2

## Project Assurance Overview

## Overview

Project assurance is designed to align project expectations, resources and scope with the goal of increasing the project's probability of success by addressing key project failure points and creating a collaborative environment composed of key project stakeholders to identify and resolve project issues and avert roadblocks as they arise.

Similar in concept to Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V), project assurance lets you verify that project requirements are met and validate that the project implementation will meet the requirements.

## Project Assurance Principles

Project Assurance is based on the following best practices for conducting project health assessments:

**1. Identify the real issues.** At the leadership level, you need to develop an executive dialog that allows business and organizational issues to be identified and analyzed with clarity and without emotion. Continue this dialog throughout the implementation process. Remove organizational barriers both within the organization and with third party vendors. All parties should be aligned with the common goal of project success.

**2. Set realistic time frames.** Don't rely on the existing schedule. Many organizations will set overly optimistic go-live dates in spite of the realities and limitations of the actual project. For example, the design phase extends ... but the time line doesn't. You must monitor project progress throughout the implementation and start discussions regarding key project dates early in the project's lifecycle to avoid downstream impacts.

***Notes:***

**3. Align the work streams.** You need to identify, align and continuously monitor work streams to ensure smooth progress throughout the organization. Understand dependencies between work streams during project plan development to ensure proper resource allocations and project time frames. Continue to monitor the interdependencies throughout the project.

**4. Look beyond the indicators.** Contrary to popular opinion, green may actually be red. Realistic monitoring and analysis of progress of the implementation can show that even though all project management indicators are green, warning signs indicate endangered components. If indicators are only addressing past phases, but not addressing readiness for upcoming project tasks and activities, they are definitely trailing indicators and not trustworthy predictions of the future.

**5. Manage the expectations.** Critical to maintaining control of the project, you need to manage the confluence of overly optimistic go-live dates against outside influences and interdependencies, such as available resources and realistic expectations. Set realistic expectations upfront and keep expectations current in the mind of project team members so that they don't lose sight of the forest while maneuvering around a tree.

**6. Seek objectivity.** Assessments conducted by an outside expert add both value to the project implementation and protection against the high cost of failure. Expertise delivers the know-how and the objective oversight needed to overcome organizational roadblocks. It also provides you with peace of mind. Assessments should be conducted by an executive project manager or software implementation expert who has managed enough projects successfully to know how to recognize subtle indicators, intervene to accommodate the situation, and adjust expectations accordingly.

***Notes:***

## The Project Assurance Assessment Process

The Project Assurance Assessment is comprised of three steps: identify, assess, and intervene.

**Project Assurance Assessment Process**

1. **Identify** – The first step of the process is to identify where the project is in the implementation lifecycle, so that you understand **when** to intervene. Once determined, you can know what to look for and what the likely issues may be.

2. **Assess** – The second step of the process is to assess. The assessment is a top-to-bottom evaluation of **what** to look for during the project to help you align project expectations, resources and scope with the goal of increasing the project's probability of success.

3. **Intervene** – The final stage of the process is to intervene. This process outlines **how** to intervene by presenting the findings of the assessment and working with the project team to develop an implementation plan to address the findings.

***Notes:***

## Identify

Your first step in the Project Assurance Assessment Process is to identify where the project is in the implementation lifecycle to know when to intervene. That knowledge will help you to understand what to look for and what the likely issues may be at that particular stage of the implementation.

**Project Assurance Assessment Process**

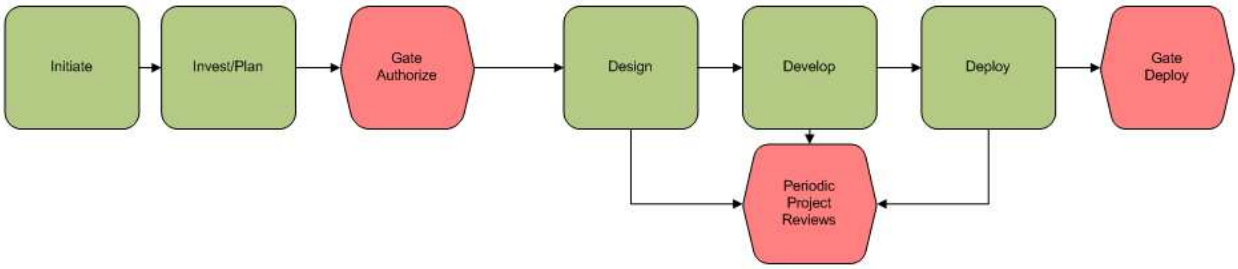
The GTA Project Assurance Process consists of eight phases and is based on GTA's Enterprise Performance Lifecycle which is organized by stages according to key points of decision making.

***Notes:***

## The Enterprise Performance Lifecycle

The GTA Project Assurance Process consists of eight phases and is based on GTA's Enterprise Performance Lifecycle which is organized by stages according to key points of decision making.

**The Enterprise Performance Lifecycle**




**Project Assurance Assessments**: Identify areas for improvement

**Stage Gate Review:** Pass or Fail decision to move to next phase

***Notes:***

## Plan – Are we investing in the right things?

In this process, we organize to determine whether to make the investment. The outcome of this phase is a determination of whether this initiative has the prerequisites and the potential to make the investment of time, resources and funds worth the benefits that will be realized once it is complete.

The Plan Segment consists of the following Stages:

- **Initiation** – Identify the high level business and functional requirements required to develop the product(s)/service(s) and the overall benefits of the proposed investment. Identify the business need, Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) cost and schedule, and basic business and technical risks. The outcomes of this stage are the approval by Agency Stakeholders of the initial project benefits, scope, cost, schedule and performance, rough order of magnitude estimates.

- **Planning** – Complete development of the Project Management Plan and refinement of project cost, schedule and performance baselines. Outcome of the Planning phase is a Project Management Plan, business, and resource requirements, and an acquisition plan for project resources, including vendor contracts, if needed.

***Notes:***

## Build – Are we doing things the right way and doing them well?

In this process, we organize to determine whether the investment is sufficiently ready to be deployed and whether it will generate the benefits defined in the Plan Process. The outcome of this process is a determination on whether this initiative has the pre-requisites and the ability to run and operate based on the services defined.

The Build Segment consists of the following Stages:

- **Design** – Finalize technical requirements and prepare the design for development based on the business & technical requirements. The outcome of this stage is completion of business product/service design and successful completion of preliminary and detailed design reviews.

- **Development** – Develop code/configuration and/or capabilities required to deploy the business product/service. The outcome of this stage is completion of all product(s)/service(s) and associated documentation; user, operator, security and maintenance documentation, and test planning.

- **Deploy –** Thorough audit and testing of the requirements, design, coding and documentation. Create and establish operational performance measures, operating manuals, customer service plans and baselines. The outcome of this stage is completed acceptance testing, training, establishment of full production capability and completion of the Post-Implementation Review.

***Notes:***

## Run – Are we getting the benefits expected?

In this process, we organize to determine whether the investment is sufficiently able to deliver on-going benefits as compared to the investment of time, resources and funds. The outcome of this process is a determination on whether this investment has a justifiable benefit for the costs of operation.

- **Operations** – Operate and maintain the system and conduct annual operational analyses. The outcome of the Operations stage is successful operation of the investment against current cost, schedule and performance benchmarks. At some point in the lifecycle of the investment, when the annual operational analysis indicates that the investment should be terminated due to reduced cost-effectiveness in operations, changes in business requirements, changes in technology, or that the investment's planned retirement date arrives a decision is made to dispose of the investment. The Operations stage transitions to the Disposition stage.

- **Disposition** – The outcome of the Disposition stage is the deliberate and systematic decommissioning of the business product(s)/service(s) with appropriate consideration of data archiving, security, migration of data or functionality to new assets, and incorporation of lessons learned over the investment life cycle.

***Notes:***

## Assess

The second phase of the Project Assurance Assessment Process is to Assess.

**Project Assurance Assessment Process**

Each Project Assurance Assessment is composed of the following seven steps:

**Step 1: The expectations meeting.** Each assessment begins with an expectations meeting. This is a meeting conducted with all the key project participants. At this meeting, the expectations for the assessment are discussed and agreed upon with all parties present. In addition, you should discuss the time line for the assessment of documents that are to be reviewed, the people that are to be interviewed, and the assessment review process itself.

**Step 2: Review Stage Deliverables**. After the expectations meeting has been conducted, your next step is to collect the relevant project documentation for this particular phase of the assessment. Based on the phase of the project, this documentation may vary. For example, during the project planning phase, the documentation may consist of the statement of work, the project charter, the resource allocation plan, the detailed project plan and the potential change management plan. Your purpose in reviewing the documentation is to gain an understanding of the project direction and the documentation that has been in place to guide the project, as well as to gain an understanding of project direction without having to conduct in-depth interviews about the project with each team member.

***Notes:***

**Step 3: Cross-reference documentation**. After the project documentation has been reviewed, the next step in the point in time assessment is to cross-reference the documentation. The interventionist should cross-reference documentation to ensure that there is consistency among project deliverables and to identify the gaps that may occur in expectations, costs, resources and budget, as well as to identify potential solutions.

**Step 4: Interview key participants.** After conducting a thorough review and cross-referencing of project deliverables and documents, it is a good idea to interview the people who wrote, approved and signed off on the documents. By interviewing key participants, the interventionist can determine if the project vision has been successfully translated into project execution. In addition, interviewing key participants helps the interventionist identify potential budget roadblocks, political concerns or other constraints that would not be apparent by just reading the project deliverables. Information gained in these interviews is critical to understanding the complexities of the relationships among the parties involved in the project as well as to understand what has and has not been successful in past projects within the organization. Interviews are also a great tool you can use to uncover people's fears and concerns and gain an understanding of what the organization is trying to accomplish. Without conducting interviews, the interventionist is left without a mechanism to build relationships with key project stakeholders that will allow for downstream issue resolution.

***Notes:***

**Step 5: Determine areas of concern and recommendations.** After all documentation has been reviewed and cross-referenced and all key participants interviewed, the interventionist now has the information needed to develop the areas of concern for this point in time assessment. Based on the project phase, the number of issues and areas of concerns will vary; however, the issues identified will represent gaps in terms of requirements, expectations, cost, budget, or resources. It is the responsibility of the interventionist to not only identify these issues and areas of concern, but also provide recommended solutions.

**Step 6: Review findings with key participants.** After the interventionist has developed a list of concerns or recommendations, it is time to review the findings with the key project participants. This process is actually done twice. First, the findings are reviewed during informal discussions held individually with the key participants to ensure that nothing has been misinterpreted in the point in time assessment and to make sure that the key participants are briefed on the findings prior to a meeting of all stakeholders. By having an informal discussion with the key participants prior to the formal meeting, the interventionist can gauge the team member's reaction to the findings as well as preliminarily discuss solutions. This also provides the key participants with time to research findings that they may not have been aware of or brainstorm solutions prior to the formal meeting. The second time the findings are reviewed with key participants; everyone should be informed and aware of all of the issues and be prepared to discuss solutions. By being prepared in the first discussion, the participants have already bought into the recommendations and solutions. If they disagree, the interventionist can be prepared to defend the concerns and recommendations.

***Notes:***

**Step 7: Final report/areas for follow-up.** As a final step in the process, the interventionist documents the point in time assessment by summarizing the process for the point in time assessment and the findings and recommendations into a final report. This document marks the completion of the point in time assessment for this project phase. However, the final report serves as the input for the next point in time assessment. This is important because leftover action items or unresolved issues from the previous phase should be high on the interventionist's list for the next point in time assessment. Unresolved issues from a previous phase will be included in the documentation review, and interviews for the next point time assessment will provide continuity between project phases to ensure that project failure points do not continue to go unaddressed.

## Intervene

In the last stage of Project Assurance Assessment Process, your role is to present the findings of the assessment and to intervene in order to make necessary project changes. The Project Assurance Assessment Process outlines **how** to intervene by presenting the findings of the assessment and working with the project team to develop an implementation plan to address the findings.

**Project Assurance Assessment Process**

***Notes:***

## Enterprise Performance Lifecycle Terminology

The Enterprise Performance Life Cycle, as the name suggests, is performance or outcome based for each step or stage in the life of a technology investment. First one must define the outcome expected, then create the outcome or deliverable, and then test whether the outcome met expectations. This simple concept forms the basis for EPLC.

At each stage, there are defined, specific deliverables expected for technology investments. The business owner is responsible to test and assure the deliverables meet the business needs. The business owner relies upon the key stakeholders and subject matter experts to advise on the quality of those deliverables. The program manager is responsible to provide the deliverables to the key stakeholders and business owner, ready for sign-off.

By decomposing the investment into these simple stages or steps, we are able to iteratively work towards a successful outcome and manage the risks involved.

- **Stage Deliverables:** All deliverables are created in support of the investment objectives. Their purpose in each stage is to provide the supporting material for the business owner to have confidence in achieving the benefits of the investment. The specific deliverables outlined in the EPLC come from industry standards and independent research. In general, each deliverable will be evaluated and measured by the relevant stakeholder for completeness, accuracy and adequacy.

***Notes:***

- **Exit Criteria:** Exit Criteria is established as Stage 'fitness' measures that must be attained to successfully complete a given stage. This creates a defined measure of performance at key points in the life of an investment and provides the Business Owner with a means of gauging progress or performance. Exit criteria can be documents, deliverables or specific actions that must be accomplished. Generic Exit criteria is set to monitor the overall status of the investment. Stage Exit Criteria can include any necessary corrective actions needed to bring the project into alignment with the original goals, objectives and performance requirements.

- **Stage Gate Reviews:** Stage Gate Reviews are required at the end of the Plan and Build processes to provide a formal review of the Stage Exit Criteria. Periodic Project Reviews may be required during the Build stage depending on the complexity and criticality of the investment. In addition, annual Application Assessments will be required to revalidate the operational investment, depending on the complexity and criticality of the investment.

## The Difference between Project Assurance Assessment and Stage Gates

The GTA Project Assurance Process will outline what to look for in the stage deliverables and exit criteria for each of the eight stages in the Enterprise Performance Lifecycle. The Project Assurance Assessment approach is to review and address project fitness during the phase to minimize the gaps that lead to project failure; whereas the Stage Gate Reviews are formal decision points to evaluate the project and determine if it should continue to the next phase in the Enterprise Project Lifecycle.

# Module 3

## Stage 1: Initiate

## Project Stage Overview

Since the first assessment is conducted during the Initiation Stage, let's take a closer view of what the organization is trying to accomplish and clarify what you should look for.

At this point in time, be sure to understand both the business drivers and what business problems the organization wants to solve.

- Is it the ability to make better business decisions by streamlining a process or having better access to information?
- Is it updating old technology platforms in order to improve competitiveness?
- Or is it a complete technology transformation to take the organization to the next level?

Understanding the overall organizational strategy is paramount to a successful first intervention which is conducted during the Initiation Stage.

### *Potential Failure Points:*

- Lack of top management commitment
- Unrealistic expectations
- Poor requirements definition
- Inadequate resources
- Lack of methodology

### *Notes:*

### *Assessment Purpose:*

Identify the high level business and functional requirements to develop the product(s) / service(s) and the overall benefits of the proposed investment.

### *When to Conduct this Assessment:*

After the Stage deliverables have been developed, before the project is presented for approval and funding.

### *What to Validate/Exit Criteria:*

1. The scope of the project has been adequately described in the Business Needs Statement and Project Charter and that the high level requirements have been met.
2. The project organizational structure is scaled to support the project and the project manager and team are qualified.
3. The preliminary project plan adequately defines how the project will be executed, monitored and controlled.
4. All applicable security and privacy standards have been considered in sufficient detail as part of the business case.

### *Notes:*

# Project Assurance Assessment Process

## Step 1: Conduct Expectations Meeting

**Meeting Purpose:** To set the expectations and timeline for the assessment.

**Who Should Attend**

- Business Owner
- Strategic Planner
- Program Manager
- Information Security Officer
- Procurement Officer
- Budget/Finance Officer
- Representative from Oversight Agencies

### Expectations Meeting Template

| **Intervention #1 - Expectations Meeting** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Meeting Purpose** To set the expectations and timeline for the point in time assessment. | | | | |
| **Who Should Attend** The decision makers from the various project entities internal to the company (executives, business owners and technology). If external partners are engaged and relevant, then they should be included as well. | | | | |
| **Date:** | **Time:** | | **Room:** | |
| **Agenda:** | | | | |
| **Notes / Minutes:** | | | | |
| **Action Items:** | | | | |
| **Attendees** | | | | |
| Name | Position | Phone | e-mail | Attend (Y/N) |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

## Step 2: Review Stage Deliverables

### *Business Needs Assessment*

The Business Needs Assessment is a document that outlines the current state of an organization, its desired future state and an evaluation of alternatives and recommendations of how to achieve the future state. Key components of the Business Needs Statement/Assessment include:

- Description of the current state or 'as-is' processes and systems
- Description of the challenges with the current processes and systems
- Gap analysis which validates the opportunity to improve a business process or correct a deficiency related to a business need
- Need for the acquisition of key items to include hardware, software and services
- Business and Technical Requirements of the proposed solution(s)
- Security and data privacy considerations
- Impact of the change the proposed solution(s) will have on the organization
- High level fit gap between the proposed solution(s) and the proposed processes, systems or organizational changes
- Analysis of alternatives with pros, cons and recommendations for moving forward
- Detailed Business Case for the Investment to include:
  - Project budget to include software, hardware, infrastructure, consultants, training, personnel and on-going support costs.
  - Cost Justification and Return on Investment (ROI) models

### *Notes:*

## Agency Project Request (APR)

The purpose of the APR is to communicate to GTA a high level overview of the business need and anticipated approach to meeting that need. Experience has shown that when the business engages with their technology partners early in the concept discussions it leads to a better common understanding of the requirements and solution alternatives.

The APR is a required document for any technology investment that is anticipated to cost $100,000.00 or more. The cost should include all expenses associated with the investment, including maintenance and support over the first five years of operations (Total Cost of Ownership).

The new APR form is designed to capture information which will begin the conversation between GTA and the business owners. It is used internally (within GTA) to start identifying the appropriate resources to support early planning activities and engage the Infrastructure Service Providers as appropriate.

The key elements in the APR are:

- Business need and business drivers
- Alignment to agency and state strategic plan
- Basic funding information (source, availability and cost estimates)
- Anticipated timelines for the initiative
- Business benefit expectations

***Notes:***

## *Project Charter*

The Project Charter is a document that outlines the project that will help the organization achieve its desired future state and how the project will be structured. Key components of the Project Charter include the following:

- A detailed statement of the business need and performance outcomes
- A description of the:
  - Project management structure
  - Project meeting structure
  - Issues resolution process
  - Change control process
  - Governance structure
  - Project organization chart
  - Risk plan

## *Notes:*

## *Stage Deliverables Review Template*

| Documentation Review: Business Needs Statement | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Reviewer Name:** | | |
| **Evaluation Criteria** | **Completeness** | **Comments** |
| 1. Description of the current state or 'as-is' processes and systems | | |
| 2. Description of the challenges with the current processes and systems | | |
| 3. Gap analysis which validates the opportunity to improve a business process or correct a deficiency related to a business need | | |
| 4. Need for the acquisition of key items to include hardware, software and services | | |
| 5. Business and Technical Requirements of the proposed solution(s) | | |
| 6. Security and data privacy considerations | | |
| 7. Impact of the change the proposed solution(s) will have on the organization | | |
| 8. Analysis of alternatives with pros, cons and recommendations for moving forward | | |
| 9. Detailed Business Case for the Investment to include:<br>• Project budget to include software, hardware, infrastructure, consultants, training and personnel.<br>• Cost Justification and Return on Investment | | |

| Category | Description | Score |
|---|---|---|
| **Completeness** | 1=incomplete deliverable or deliverable does not exist<br>2=deliverable needs to be more detailed<br>3= deliverable is complete | Click here to enter text. |
| | **Total Score** | |

## Step 3: Cross Reference Stage Deliverables

### *Documents to Cross References*

1. Business Needs Statement/Assessment (Final)
2. Project Charter (Final)
3. Project Management Plan with Components (Draft)

### *What to Look For:*

- Consistency in overall methodology for moving forward
- Gaps in functional and technical requirements
- Interdependencies between proposed requirements: business process, current software system version, hardware/software compatibilities
- Dependencies between timelines and business events
- Potential roadblocks due to organization structure, funding or regulatory agency
- Organizational gaps, impact of change and change management approach

### *Notes:*

## *Document Cross Reference Template*

| **Reviewer Name:** Click here to enter text. | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Documents to Cross Reference:**<br>1. Business Needs Statement<br>2. Agency Project Request<br>3. Project Charter | | |
| **Items to Cross References** | **Consistency Score** | **Comments** |
| 1. Consistency in overall methodology for moving forward | | |
| 2. Gaps in functional and technical requirements | | |
| 3. Interdependencies between proposed requirements: business process, current software system version, hardware / software compatibilities | | |
| 4. Dependencies between timelines and business events | | |
| 5. Potential roadblocks due to organization structure | | |
| 6. Organizational gaps, impact of change and change management approach | | |

| **Category** | **Consistency** |
|---|---|
| Excellent | 3 = Documents are consistent with one another with only minor gaps. |
| Good | 2 =Documents are consistent with one another with some gaps and omissions. |
| Poor | 1 = Documents are inconsistent with one another with major gaps and discrepancies. |
| | **Score** |

# Step 4: Interview Key Participants

## *Who to Interview:*

- Business Owner
- Strategic Planner
- Program Manager
- Information Security Officer
- Procurement Officer
- Budget/Finance Officer
- Representative from Oversight Agencies

## *Interview Questions*

1. What are the business drivers/key objectives of this project?
2. What has been your process to get to this point in time?
3. What are your expectations?
4. How will you define and measure success?
5. How have similar initiatives in the past been handled? What was the result?
6. Is the agency/project team collaborating with any other agency?
7. Is there potential redundancy with any agency or SOG initiative?
8. Are you concerned that any key groups are not involved in the project at this point? If so, who?
9. What is the current process for decision making? Who is accountable?
10. What issues and concerns do you have at this point in time?
11. What other events are occurring in the organization that may have an impact on this project?

## *Notes:*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

## Key Participant Interview Template

| Assessment #1 | |
|---|---|
| **Name:** | **Position:** |
| **Phone:** | **e-mail:** |
| **Date:** | **Time:** |
| **Question:** | **Response:** |
| 1. What are the business drivers of this initiative? | |
| 2. What has been your process to get to this point in time? | |
| 3. What are your expectations? | |
| 4. How will you define and measure success? | |
| 5. How have similar initiative in the past been handled? What was the result? | |
| 6. Is the agency / project team collaborating with any other agency? | |
| 7. Is there potential redundancy with any agency or SOG initiative? | |
| 8. Are you concerned that any key groups are not involved in the project at this point? If so, who? | |
| 9. What is the current process for decision making? Who is accountable? | |
| 10. What issues and concerns do you have at this point in time? | |
| 11. What other event are occurring in the organization that may have an impact on this project | |
| 12. Other Questions | |

## Common Issues identified during the Initiate Stage

In reality, the Initiation Stage starts with tactical issues such as a system replacement, outdated technology or poor business processes. As problems are examined further, the team determines that the issues are larger than expected and further study or an assessment is required. Common issues identified during the Initiate Stage include:

- What may have started out as a fairly straightforward project led to a complex project as people stepped back and looked at the impact on the larger organization.
- Failure to validate the expectations of the executive sponsors nearly always spells trouble for the project.
- Are the timetable expectations realistic in terms of industry standards and what is standard for the organization?
- Does the organization have a history of project success?

***Notes:***

# Project Assessment Report Template

| **Project:** Click here to enter text. | **Reviewed by:** Click here to enter text. | **Date:** Click here to enter text. |
|---|---|---|
| **Assessment Process Summary**<br><br>Click here to enter text. | | |
| **Summarized Findings**<br><br>Click here to enter text. | | |
| **Project Management**<br><br>Click here to enter text.<br><br>**Issues / Areas of Concern**<br><br>Click here to enter text. | | |
| **Functional Areas**<br><br>Click here to enter text.<br><br>**Issues / Areas of Concern**<br><br>Click here to enter text. | | |
| **Technical Areas**<br><br>Click here to enter text.<br><br>**Issues / Areas of Concern**<br><br>Click here to enter text. | | |
| **Change Management**<br><br>Click here to enter text.<br><br>**Issues / Areas of Concern**<br><br>Click here to enter text. | | |

## Project Assurance Assessment Report

### Known Issues/Risks

| Risk Description | Area of Risk | Impact | Probability of Occurrence |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Click here to enter text. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. |
| 2. Click here to enter text. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. |
| 3. Click here to enter text. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. |
| 4. Click here to enter text. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. |
| 5. Click here to enter text. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. |
| 6. Click here to enter text. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. |
| 7. Click here to enter text. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. |
| 8. Click here to enter text. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. |
| 9. Click here to enter text. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. |
| 10. Click here to enter text. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. | Choose an item. |

**Recommendations:**

Click here to enter text.

# Case Study Exercise #1

## Business Needs Statement Review

The State has initiated a project to implement an enterprise expense reimbursement system to automate the process for employee travel and expense reimbursements. The current process consists of a manual review of all expense reimbursements by the centralized payroll staff. Key executives believe implementing a web based system with automated approval reviews will improve the overall efficiency of the process and allow the payroll staff to focus on their core business operations.

The project is already underway and is currently in the **Design Phase**. Although all the project indicators are showing that the project is on track, the Steering Committee feels that something is not right and has asked you to conduct an assessment of the project and make recommendations for improvement.

### Part 1

Read the Fictional Project Overview on pages 2-4 in the Project Case Study Supplement.

### Part 2

Read the Statement of Business Need on pages 6-9 in the Case Study Supplement and evaluate the Statement of Business Need using the Deliverable Review Template on page 10.

# Module 4

## Stage 2: Invest/Plan

## Project Stage Overview

In the Invest/Plan Stage, you still have your executives involved - they set the direction for the project. But now the project team is charged with finding and buying the software and services needed to implement the change.

By now the organization should have a project manager on the team and someone from the purchasing function. The project manager is interacting with both the business side as well as the technical side to make sure that all of the requirements are met.

In addition, the project team is putting together the project methodology, the project plan and the resource requirements, making the strategy more tactical resulting in a much bigger project organization comprised of technical, functional, change management and training project managers.

### *Potential Failure Points:*

- Lack of top management commitment
- Unrealistic expectations
- Poor requirements definition
- Improper package selection
- Gaps between software and business requirements.
- Inadequate resources
- Underestimating time and costs
- Poor Project Management / Lack of Methodology

### *Notes:*

### *Assessment Purpose:*

To address the software and services selection; close the gaps between the proposed software and/or services and the business requirements; to ensure that there is a strong project management methodology in place; that the project has adequate resources and that the timeline and scope are realistic.

### *When to Conduct this Assessment:*

The second intervention is conducted during the planning stage, towards the end of the vendor selection process, before vendors are finalized and negotiations begin.

### *What to Validate/Exit Criteria:*

1. The full scope of the project has been adequately described in the Business Case and the high level requirements meet the business need.
2. Business Processes affecting the investment have been documented.
3. The Acquisition Plan has been approved by the Contracting Officer and there is obligated money for contract awards. All applicable contract clauses have been considered.
4. The Project Management Plan and component plans have been reviewed and appropriately updated. [This includes Risk Management, Acquisition Plan, Change Management, Configuration Management, Requirements Management, Communication Plan, WBS/Schedule, IV&V Planning, Quality Assurance, Records Management, Staff Development Plan, and Security Approach.]

### *Notes:*

# Project Assurance Assessment Process

## Step 1: Conduct Expectations Meeting

**Meeting Purpose:** To set the expectations and timeline for the assessment.

**Who Should Attend:** Business Owner(s), Strategic Planner, Program Manager, Information Security Officer, Procurement Officer, Budget / Finance Officer, Representative from Oversight Agencies

## Step 2: Review Stage Deliverables

## The Acquisition Plan

A defined process for the procurement that outlines the all the steps in the procurement process which include:

- Requirements validation
- Consultation with procurement and/or legal
    - Identification of Service Level Agreement(s) (SLAs) and Memorandum(s) of Understanding (MOU) required for the project or procurement
- Consultation with Finance or Budget Officer
- Request for proposal development
- Vendor proposal evaluation process to include::
    - Response timeframe
    - Vendor demos & presentation
    - Site visits
    - Reference checks
- Vendor proposal scoring methodology for overall response (technical and financial)
- Final selection process and award notification

After all the procurement steps have been identified and the process flow has been developed, the procurement timeline should be established.

***Notes:***

## *Request for Proposal*

In order to ensure uniform and comprehensive vendor responses, the RFP should include all relevant information regarding the procurement requirements as well as proposal response guidelines.

The RFP should include:

- An overview of the procurement
- The steps in the procurement process
- The point of contact and process for vendor questions
- The procurement timeframe
- Legal requirements
- Vendor qualifications (Mandatory, Minimal and Preferred)
- Project background, scope statement and anticipated timeframe
- Project requirements or product specifications
- Proposal response guidelines for technical and financial response
- Request for vendor references
- Additional project/product information to assist in vendor response
- Sample Contract/Terms and Conditions

## *Notes:*

## *Final Vendor Proposal, Contracts and Statements of Work*

The selected vendor proposal should address the project requirements and/or product specifications outlined in the RFP. The selected proposal should be the one that has the highest overall score based on the Vendor Selection Scoring Methodology outlined in the Procurement Process Flow.

Upon final selection of the vendor, it is important to make sure that the selected vendor proposal:

- Addresses all the requirements of the RFP
- Does not include any vague or unclear responses
- Includes all assumptions for project timeline, resources and scope
- Outlines vendor and client roles and responsibilities
- Details the proposal costs and change control process

The final contract is the document that binds the vendor to deliver the project and/or product and outlines the legal terms and conditions of the relationship. For detailed issues regarding service delivery, the contract will reference both the RFP and final Vendor Proposal. Because of this reference, it is important to document any changes to scope, specifications or costs as a result of the procurement process and communicate them to the project team. It is also paramount that the project team understands the processes and timeframes regarding deliverable review and acceptance as these items are typically tied to vendor payment.

## *Notes:*

## Project Management Plan with Components

The Project Management Plan is a document that defines in detail how the project outlined in the project charter will be executed. The Project Management Plan includes the following:

- Accurate translation of the scope of the project from the contract/statement of work.
- High level timeline for implementation to include procurement, implementations and roll-out.
- Resource Requirements – (project team, consultants, additional FTE's)
- Training required for the project team
- Work breakdown structure with multiple levels, activities and dependencies
- Project Management structure to include:
    - Meeting structure and issues resolution process
    - Change request process
    - Project governance structure, Quality Assurance and/or IV&V
    - Project organization chart
    - Risk assessment and mitigation plan
    - Records management
    - Security approach
- Approach for organizational change and training to set the structure for the project to include:
    - Stakeholder/Sponsorship Analysis
    - Change Impact Assessment
    - Communication Plan
    - Training and Support Plan

***Notes:***

## Step 3: Cross Reference Stage Deliverables

### *Items to Cross References*

1. Acquisition Plan and Supporting Documentation
2. Request for Proposal
3. Vendor Proposals, Contracts/Statements of Work
4. Project Management Plan with Components

### *What to Look For:*

- Consistency within the RFP back to the requirements, timelines and costs outlined in the Statement of Business Need from the previous phase
- Gaps between the vendor proposals and the requirements requested in the RFP
- Changes in scope between the contract/statement of work and RFP
- Additional purchases, such as supporting software or hardware that will result from the selection of a particular vendor solution
- Ability of the organization to meet vendors proposed timeline
- Process for interviewing the vendor account managers or project team
- Transfer of scope, resources and timeline from Implementation Plan developed in the Strategy Phase
- Consistency between Project Charter and Detailed Project Plan
- Presence of all work streams as identified in the project charter and previous point in time assessments in the detailed project plan
- Integration of change management tasks into the detailed project plan

### *Notes:*

## Step 4: Interview Key Participants

### *Who to Interview*

People relevant to the project including the: Business Owner, Strategic Planner, Program Manager, Information Security Officer, Procurement Officer, Budget/Finance Officer and Representative from Oversight Agencies

### *Interview Questions*

1. Has an Alternatives Analysis been done to support the Business Case?
2. Are there any anticipated potential workforce disruptions, Labor Relations or Employee Relations issues associated with the project/investment?
3. Are there any potential workforce planning issues such as employee development and training, staffing levels, filling skill gaps with contractors, and/or A-76 activities associated with this project/investment?
4. Describe the procurement process to date?
5. How do you feel the process is going?
6. What are your impressions of the vendors/proposals?
7. What are your impressions of the project team?
8. Do you have past experience or relationships with any of these vendors?
9. Are there any key people missing from the procurement process?
10. What are your concerns moving forward?
11. What other event are occurring in the organization that may have an impact on this project?
12. How do you feel about the overall timeline?
13. What do you see as the impact of organization change?
14. How do you plan to address it?
15. Is project communication adequate?
16. Are decisions being made in a timely manner?

### *Notes:*

## Common Issues identified during the Invest/Plan Stage

### *Invest*

Things you need to consider during the acquisition phase include:

- Vendors have their own software strategies and limitations
- Were these explored before the organization committed to a solution?
- Is the vendor solution comprehensive – i.e. includes training, support, etc.?
- Were the executives involved in the evaluation stages to get vendors interested in participating as well as assuring a good fit?
- Can you get budgetary estimates prior to issuing the RFP so that when you get a cost proposal, you're not shocked at the price?
- Will vendors commit to a time frame that fits your organization's needs?

Organizations often rush to buy software or services before completely defining and validating all of the requirements. Because software purchases are often viewed as technology enablers, not business improvement enablers, buyers rush to see the software demonstration without having a clear definition of what they want to purchase. This allows the software vendor to drive the buying process, not the buyer. Your organization should only move forward with the software acquisition after validating that it will deliver what is required.

### *Notes:*

At the end of the day, you need to make sure that the organization has all of the acquisition requirements, both functional and technical - from executives, business owners, technical owners, finance and training, clearly understood and communicated. And make sure that the expectations set in the strategy phase are matched by the technical and functional realities of the chosen system. If there are discrepancies between the plan and the actual, such as how much the system will cost or the length of time it will take to implement, you need to reset expectations. The executive sponsors need to know about the discrepancies and adjust accordingly. Do we add more money or time? Or do we scale back the scope?

## *Plan*

During the planning phase, gray areas are like pools of quicksand that await the unaware. Given the chain of events that usually occurs during software acquisitions, it is likely that there are several gray areas because the project scope usually changes as part of contract negotiations. A common procurement strategy is to ask vendors to quote all possible services from which the buyer will pick and choose. These lines often blur during long negotiations, and team members may not remember what was discussed or may confuse discussions between different vendors. At the end of the day, it is vital to remember that what is in the contract is the only thing that counts. The contract is usually transformed in the Statement of Work or Project Charter.

## *Notes:*

At this point, you need to make sure deliverables are properly defined. The planning stage is also the phase where the project scope is turned into the detailed project plan, the document that will guide the tactical implementation containing time lines, work breakdown structures, resources and dependencies. It is critical at this stage for the interventionist to not only validate that project structure and governance, work-streams, timelines and resources are in alignment, but also identify all the dependencies between timelines, resources and work streams. Ask the tough questions … will everything come together on time? Are there scheduled routine business events that will pull resources away from the project? Is there an unrealized dependency that will affect project scheduling?

Although the real answers to the these questions will play out over the project, it is the interventionist's job to look forward into the implementation to make sure the project work streams are properly aligned. The interventionist needs to pose tough questions early on and require concrete answers. Common questions may include: who is responsible for change management? Is this included in the scope? When will a key decision be made? You need to recognize that vague answers to direct questions are always a red flag and that sometimes, answers may not be available. If that is the case, then the questions need to be asked continuously through the point in time assessment until the answers are firm.

***Notes:***

This is often the case with change management issues. If you have been involved in system implementations long enough, you know that change management services are often misunderstood by buyers. Because the scope is hard to define, many organizations take on change management themselves to save on consulting fees. To further hamper success, change management activities often start during the development phase, late into the project. To increase the odds for a successful outcome, the best practice is to begin change management discussions early in the project life cycle to set and align expectations. This approach lets you rely on resources that are available to participate in planning and design and to ensure proper deployment and work stream alignment.

***Notes:***

# Case Study Exercise #2

## Request for Proposal Review and Cross Reference

### Part 1

Read the Request for Proposal on pages 12-17 of the Case Study Supplement.

### Part 2

Evaluate the Request for Proposal using the Deliverables Review Template on Page 18. Be sure to cross reference the information in the RFP with both the Business Needs Statement and the results of your evaluation of the Business Needs Statement.

# Module 5

## Stage 3: Design

## Project Stage Overview

At this stage, you are at the project team level - team leaders and the people who will be using the system. Their input was solicited into the design of the system, and, at this point in time, there's a lot of flexibility in moving things around.

What often happens, as the project team creates documents and validates software design, is that the project team may find that requirements were not fully understood or there may be interdependencies that weren't uncovered until now. You may discover other issues that need to be addressed that were not dealt with as part of the software purchase.

You may experience a business event like W2s, Open Enrollment, 1099 processing … events that cause the design phase to go longer and impact development schedules as a result.

### *Potential Failure Points:*

- Lack of top management commitment
- Gaps between software and business requirements
- Underestimating impact of change
- Inadequate resources

### *Notes:*

## *Assessment Purpose:*

The purpose of the fourth intervention is to ensure that: there are minimal gaps between the software and the business requirements, the organization understands the impact of the change and the project has adequate resources allocated to the project.

## *When to Conduct this Assessment:*

Towards the end of the design phase after the initial drafts of the System Design Documentation have been developed.

## *What to Validate/Exit Criteria:*

1. No outstanding concerns among stakeholders regarding design adequacy or feasibility
2. Design is adequately documented to allow effective and efficient development
3. Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery plans are adequately documented to provide clear procedures and responsibilities
4. Security Documents are as complete and accurate as possible
5. Variances from baselines have been identified and mitigated
6. The Project Management Plan and component plans have been reviewed and appropriately updated

## *Notes:*

# Project Assurance Assessment Process

## Step 1: Conduct Expectations Meeting

**Meeting Purpose:** To set the expectations and timeline for the assessment.

**Who Should Attend:** Business Owner, Strategic Planner, Program Manager, Information Security Officer, Procurement Officer, Budget / Finance Officer and Representative from Oversight Agencies

## Step 2: Review Stage Deliverables

### *System Design Document*

- Fit-gap assessment of business requirements/processes to proposed solution to include plan for system configuration plan, required development, reports and interfaces
- Percentage of requirement gaps identified with priority and level of effort
- An overview of the entire hardware and software architecture and data design, including specifications for external interfaces
- All lower-level detailed design specifications of the Business Product, such as general system characteristics, the logical and physical data model, user interfaces, and business rules
- Requirements Traceability Matrix that describes how the system design will satisfy the functional, business, security, and technical specifications in the Requirements Document
- Definition of the release strategy
- Data conversion, interface and reporting strategy and design
- Change requests based on discovery conducted as part of design

### *Notes:*

### *Project Management Documents and Detail Project Plan*

- Status Reports, Issue Logs, Risk Assessment/Mitigation Plan
- Plan performance on schedule, percent complete ability to complete
- Changes to the go-live date and timeline
- Resources availability and utilization by the projects
- Level of effort and timeline for the development phase
- Critical issues or items of concerns
- Any risk that have a potential of being realized

### *Change Management and Training Plan*

- Completion of Stakeholder Analysis and Change Impact Assessment
- Leadership impact, awareness and participation
- Identification of new behaviors
- Identification and description of training required for users and system support personnel

### *Security Plan*

- Description of the security controls, as defined by the National Institute of Standards and Technology that are designed and implemented within the system

### *Notes:*

### *Business Continuity Plan*

- The complete descriptions of the strategy and courses of action if there is a loss of use of the established business product (e.g., system) due to factors such as natural disasters or system or security failures
- Recovery time and recovery point objectives
- Backup procedures and responsibilities
- Post-disaster recovery procedures
- Validation that the business continuity/disaster recovery plans for all systems associated with this project/investment have been tested within the last 365 days

### *Test Plan*

- Definition for all the types of tests (unit, functional, integration, system, security, performance (load and stress), user acceptance, and/or independent verification) that are to be carried out
- Test Case Specifications that describe the purpose and manner of each specific test, the required inputs and expected results for the test, step-by-step procedures for executing the test, and the Pass/Not Pass criteria for determining acceptance
- Description of the roles and responsibilities of individuals involved in the testing process and the traceability matrix
- Description of the resources needed for the hardware and software environments documented in the test plan

### *Operations and User's Manual*

- Identification and description of post go-live operations and procedures

### *Notes:*

## Step 3: Review Stage Deliverables

### *Documents to Cross References*

1. System Design Document (Final)
2. Project Management Documents
3. Detailed Project Plan (Final)
4. Change Management and Training Plan (Draft)
5. Security Plan (Final)
6. Business Continuity Plan (Final)
7. Test Plan (Draft)
8. Operations and User's Manual (Draft)

### *What to Look For:*

- Indication that the percentage of software gaps equal the amount predicted in the procurement phase
- That the timeline for the design phase has been completed on time
- Additional scope has been added that will affect the development cycle
- Go-live date extension
- The resources listed in the project charter engaged in the project based on the original time commitment and are contributing to the project team
- Identification of dependencies between development, testing and training
- Identification of dependencies between development, testing and security/business continuity

### *Notes:*

## Step 4: Interview Key Participants

### *Who to Interview*

People relevant to the project including the: Business Owner, Strategic Planner, Program Manager, Information Security Officer, Procurement Officer, Budget/Finance Officer and Representative from Oversight Agencies

### *Interview Questions*

1. What are your concerns about the project?
2. Do you still feel that the overall timeline is reasonable?
3. What other events are occurring in the organization that may have an impact on this project?
4. Who is not engaged in the project that should be?
5. Based on the design session, do you see additional changes or impacts to the organization or users?
6. How do you plan to communicate change?
7. Are decisions being made in a timely manner?
8. Do you currently have a business continuity plan and when was the last time it was tested?
9. Are the contracts being fulfilled according to the award or approved changes?
10. Do you feel the budget is sufficient to meet the needs of the project? If not, do you have a contingency plan?
11. Have performance goal and project success criteria been developed and communicated? Do you anticipate any issues in meeting the goals?

### *Notes:*

## Common Issues Identified During the Design Stage

Resources, time frames, scope and commitment

1. **Resources**. Do you have enough resources to complete the project? Go back to the project plan or charter and determine who was going to be committed to the project.
    - Are they the right people?
    - Are they torn between their regular job and the project?
    - If they've been marked as a resource, are they really contributing anything? If not, it is a liability.
2. **Time frame**. Typically, project managers develop the overall timeline for a project up-front, with stake holders for development tasks that will be finalized after the design phase. The failure issues that arise after design include:
    - Is the time frame appropriate?
    - Has the design phase been extended due to extra meetings?
    - Have additional requirements been identified that will require development and testing?
    - Will you try to make up time in development and testing?
    - Will you change the go-live date?

***Notes:***

3. **Scope and Focus.** In many cases, key people in the design phase are often the same people who are going to be assisting with the testing and training. In the rollout, they are the ones who know the product, the business functionality and how the system needs to be configured to be effective within the organization. They are the validation input, the training input, and the message makers. In short, they are invaluable to your project's success.
    - Who are your key people?
    - Do you have enough key players?
    - Are they overcommitted and causing bottlenecks?

Also, at the conclusion of this point in time assessment, it is appropriate to begin discussions about the go-live date. Ask yourself realistically, is it still in reach? Even if everything is on track, it's a good exercise to have these discussions so that they will not be taboo later in the project when they may be necessary.

Due to the 'disconnects' that occur during the design phase, be sure that scope, timeline, and resources are all in alignment. Because you have the Project Assurance structure in place, it is easier to communicate with the top level management with a dialog that lays out what is taking place and why that may extend the timeline of the project. At this point, you have everybody available that you need to solve the problem and there may be multiple solutions: resources can be added to the project, changes can be made to the go-live date or changes can be made to the scope of the system rollout in the form of a pilot or phased launch.

***Notes:***

# Case Study Exercise #3

## Project Plan Review and Cross Reference

### Part 1

Read the Project Plan on pages 20-21 of the Case Study Supplement. Review the Project Plan for completeness based on:

1. The deliverables and processes outlined in the Enterprise Performance Lifecycle
2. The results of Exercises 1 & 2.

### Part 2

List your findings and areas of concern on page 22 of the Case Study Supplement.

# Module 6

## Stage 4: Development

## Project Stage Overview

By the time you reach the end of the development phase, it should be apparent as to whether or not the project is going to come in on time and make the go-live date. If you have followed the project assurance methodology, things should be on track and you can focus on increasing user acceptance and ensuring a smooth cut-over.

However, if the project is falling behind, then you need to focus on getting the project back on track by evaluating the pillars of project management: time, resources and scope.

### *Potential Failure Points:*

- Lack of top management commitment
- Unrealistic expectations
- Inadequate resources
- Underestimating time and cost
- Poor project management / lack of methodology
- Underestimating impact of change
- Lack of training/education

### *Assessment Purpose:*

The purpose is to ensure that the project management methodology for testing is in place, the impact of organizational change is being addressed and the proposed education and training plans will meet user requirements.

### *Notes:*

## *When to Conduct this Assessment:*

Towards the end of the development stage

## *What to Validate/Exit Criteria:*

1. The Software Product satisfies the requirements established and refined during the Requirements and Design Phases (Updated Requirements Traceability Matrix).
2. The Test Plan ensures that all test cases will be adequately evaluated and executed, and system is tested to ensure requirements are met.
3. Testing of the Business Product supports the decision to move to the Implementation Phase.
4. Implementation Plan provides detailed information on the move of the Business Product into production.
5. Security Risk Assessments are complete and in compliance with regulatory requirements.
6. Variances from baselines have been identified and mitigated.
7. The Project Management Plan and component plans have been reviewed and appropriately updated.

## *Notes:*

# Project Assurance Assessment Process

## Step 1: Conduct Expectations Meeting

**Meeting Purpose:** To set the expectations and timeline for the assessment.

**Who Should Attend:** : Business Owner, Strategic Planner, Program Manager, Information Security Officer, Procurement Officer, Budget/Finance Officer and Representative from Oversight Agencies

## Step 2: Review Stage Deliverables

### *Project Management Documents and Project Plan*

- Status Reports, Issue Logs, Risk Assessment/Mitigation Plan
- Critical issues or items of concerns
- Any risks that have a potential of being realized
- Plan performance on schedule, percent complete and ability to complete
- Changes to the go-live date and timeline
- Resources availability and utilization by the projects
- Level of effort and timeline for the development phase

### *Notes:*

### *Test Plans and Reports*

- A generally accepted methodology for testing that includes processes for unit testing, system testing, acceptance testing and performance testing
- Steps outlining the set-up of the testing environments/databases
- Finalization of the types of tests, the acceptance criteria for those tests, and the manner of testing
- Test plans, test cases, test files and/or test data defined and developed
- The evaluation of Performance Metrics
- Defect tracking and issue resolution process
- Documentation that acceptance testing been completed and the outcomes verify readiness for training and implementation
- A summary report created at the end of the test phases that completely documents the overall test results, including summarizing the test activities and describing variances including the identification of unexpected problems and/or defects that were encountered.

### *Training Plan and Schedule*

- Description of the goals, learning objectives, and activities of the information that is to be provided to stakeholders who use and/or support the Software Product solution
- Complete and accurate documentation on the deployment of the Software Product
- Schedule of key communications, messages and delivery method for training and cut-over preparation
- Plan/schedule for the development of training materials
- A list of the required training classes, trainers and delivery methods
- A list of the users that need training

### *Notes:*

## *Software Product*

- The Software Product that results from the development effort satisfies the established requirements.
- If this is a software development effort, does the Software Product include the original source code, the binary executable, and the data repository?
- If this is a software development effort, has the developer transformed the logical information documented in the design phase and transformed it into source code?
- The necessary infrastructure and associated products have been acquired, configured, and integrated.
- The Software Product includes a Version Description Document that identifies and describes all configuration items that comprise a specific build or release of the Software Product.
- Static code has been analyzed to identify security vulnerabilities.
- A Validation Readiness Review has been conducted to provide assurance that the software that is about to enter system testing has completed a thorough unit/module/software integration test.

## *Operations and Maintenance Manual*

- Description of the Software Product and the production environment.
- The information necessary for the operations, help desk and support staff, to effectively handle routine production processing, ongoing maintenance, and identified problems, issues, and/or change requests

## *Notes:*

### *User Manual*

- An explanation of how to use the established Software Product from a business function perspective

### *Security Risk Assessment*

- A formal risk assessment including the analysis of the security functional requirements and the identification of the protection requirements
- Identification of all threats to and vulnerabilities in the information system; the potential impact that a loss of confidentiality, integrity, or availability would have and the identification and analysis of security controls

### *Implementation Plan*

- Implementation Plan describes how the Software Product will be installed, deployed, and transitioned into the operational environment

### *Organizational Readiness Assessment*

- Detailed cutover plan to include schedule and resources for go-live weekend
- Plan for end users support for cut-over and transition period

### *SLA's / MOU's*

- Draft Service Level Agreement(s) (SLAs) and Memorandum(s) of Understanding (MOU) specifying each party's requirements, responsibilities and period of performance including performance guarantees

### *Notes:*

## Step 3: Cross Reference Stage Deliverables

### *Items to Cross References*

1. Project Management Documents and Project Plan
2. Test Plans and Reports
3. Training Plan and Schedule
4. Software Product
5. Operations and Maintenance Annual
6. User Manual
7. Security Risk Assessment
8. Implementation Plan
9. Organizational Readiness Assessment
10. SLA's/MOU's

### *What to Look For:*

- Any outstanding development items that are preventing testing and/or training from moving forward
- Dependencies that will prevent the system to be ready for the development of training materials
- Alignment between the timelines for communication
- Any significant defects, security concerns or show stoppers

### *Notes:*

## Step 4: Interview Key Project Team Members and Stakeholders

### *Who to Interview*

People relevant to the project including the: Business Owner, Strategic Planner, Program Manager, Information Security Officer, Procurement Officer, Budget/Finance Officer and Representative from Oversight Agencies

### *Interview Questions*

1. What are your concerns about the project?
2. Do you still feel the overall timeline is reasonable?
3. What other events are occurring in the organization that may have an impact on this project?
4. What are other opportunities to communicate change to the organization? What has worked well in the past?
5. Who is not engaged in the project that should be?
6. Based on the testing session, do you see additional changes or impacts to the organization/users?
7. How do you plan to communicate changes?
8. Are decisions being made in a timely manner?
9. As a result of the Development activities, do any of approved change requests for the project require modification in cost, schedule, scope, resources, or acquisition planning?

### *Notes:*

## Common Issues Identified during the Development Stage

By the time you reach the testing phase, it should be apparent as to whether or not the project is going to come in on time and make the go-live date. If you have followed the project assurance methodology, things should be on track.

But if the project is falling behind, then you need to focus on getting the project back on track by evaluating the pillars of project management: time, resources and scope. In addition, the interventionist should also review testing logs to evaluate and prioritize defect resolution. By having a Project Assurance framework in place, holding discussions regarding your findings and any impact on the go-live date should be expected and productive.

If your project is on track, the questions to ask at this point in time assessment include:

- Will the organization/users be ready for the new system and what is the acceptance level?
- What have past acceptance levels been?
- What was successful in terms of communication and training?

***Notes:***

Given that project scheduling is always negotiable and that it is nearly impossible to make all users happy, the interventionist should work with the project team to identify ways to improve user acceptance. For example, include more users in acceptance testing, hold additional classes, on-site/side-by-side user coaching and support during cut-over, post go-live conference calls or impromptu training sessions all have a positive impact on end user acceptance.

In addition to acceptance, the interventionist should also address user support for the cutover and transition period and work with the project team to anticipate user support needs:

- What type of issues will the users face in the new system?
- Who will they call?
- Where can they get answers?
- Can we handle the call volume?
- Should we establish an online help desk?

As they say, you never get a second chance to make a first impression. If a user's first impression is frustration reinforced by further frustration because they can't get help, then the system will be poorly perceived – no matter how well the project was implemented.

***Notes:***

# Case Study Exercise #4

## Interview Evaluation and Cross Reference

### Part 1

On pages 24-26 of the Case Study Supplement, review the results of your interviews with the following project stakeholders:

- Tim Johnson, Director of Finance
- Sallie Jeffries, Software Vendor Project Manager
- Dale Barnes, IT Director

### Part 2

1. Cross reference the interviews to each other and list your areas of concern on page 27 of the Case Study Supplement.
2. Cross reference the interviews to your results of Exercises 1-3 and list any additional areas of concern on page 27 of the Case Study Supplement.

# Module 7

## Stage 5: Deploy

## Project Stage Overview

You're ready to ice down the champagne. The system is about to go live. But is it really time to declare victory?

A more realistic approach may be to celebrate the achievement, but know that in some cases the work is just beginning. Now is the time to get to those pesky and unpopular tasks that the project team has been procrastinating on, such as documentation, change requests, production support processes and knowledge transfer. Plus, don't forget the deferred scope or Phase II initiatives.

### *Potential Failure Points:*

- Lack of top management commitment
- Inadequate resources
- Underestimating the impact of change
- Lack of training/education

### *Assessment Purpose:*

The purpose of this assessment is to ensure that top management is committed to the project for the system cut-over and the next phases of the project, that there are adequate resources in place for the go-live and that the education and training provided has sufficiently prepared the users for using the new system.

### *Notes:*

## *When to Conduct this Assessment:*

The final intervention should be conducted towards the end of the Deploy Stage before system cut-over.

## *What to Validate/Exit Criteria:*

1. The Software Product is ready for production service and notification of the new solution is provided to all users and staff who are affected
2. No outstanding concerns among stakeholders regarding implementation
3. Security and authorization to operate documents are complete and the system is considered Certified and Accredited
4. Variances from baselines have been identified and mitigated
5. The Project Management Plan and component plans have been reviewed and appropriately updated

## *Notes:*

# Project Assurance Assessment Process

## Step 1: Conduct Expectations Meeting

***Meeting Purpose: To set the expectations and timeline for the fifth assessment.***

**Who Should Attend:** : Business Owner, Strategic Planner, Program Manager, Information Security Officer, Procurement Officer, Budget / Finance Officer and Representative from Oversight Agencies

## Step 2: Review Stage Deliverables

### *Project Management Documents and Project Plan*

- Status Reports, Issue Logs, Risk Assessment/Mitigation Plan
- Critical issues or items of concerns
- Any risks that have a potential of being realized
- Plan performance on schedule, percent complete and ability to complete
- Changes to the go-live date and timeline
- Resources availability and utilization by the projects
- Level of effort and timeline for the development phase
- Project Acceptance Documentation

### *SLA's / MOU's*

- Service Level Agreement(s) (SLAs) and Memorandum(s) of Understanding (MOU) specify each party's requirements, responsibilities and period of performance including performance guarantees

### *Notes:*

### *Business Continuity Plan*

- The complete descriptions of the strategy and courses of action if there is a loss of use of the established Software Product (e.g., system) due to factors such as natural disasters of system or security failures
- Recovery time and recovery point objectives
- Backup procedures and responsibilities
- Post-disaster recovery procedures
- Validation that the business continuity/disaster recovery plans for all systems associated with this project/investment have been tested within the last 365 days

### *Operations and Maintenance Manual*

- Description of the Software Product and the production environment
- The information necessary for the operations, help desk and support staff, to effectively handle routine production processing, ongoing maintenance, and identified problems, issues, and/or change requests

### *Project Completion Report*

- Description of any differences between proposed and actual accomplishments, documented lessons learned, provides a status of funds, and provides an explanation of any open-ended action items, along with a certification of conditional or final closeout of the development project.

### *Notes:*

## Step 3: Cross Reference Stage Deliverables

### *Documents to Cross References*

1. Project Management Plan
2. Business Continuity Plan
3. SLA / MOU'S
4. Project Completion Report

### *What to Look For:*

- Documentation that the system has been thoroughly tested and that there are no significant defects or show stoppers
- Documentation that the majority of users have been trained on the new system
- Documentation that the users are aware of the go-live date and support plan
- Based on the amount of change impact, will there be extra support for end users during the cutover and transition?
- Contractors and consultants roll-off schedule
- A plan to address deferred scope and a release schedule

### *Notes:*

## Step 4: Interview Key Project Team Members and Stakeholders

### *Who to Interview*

People relevant to the project including the: Business Owner, Strategic Planner, Program Manager, Information Security Officer, Procurement Officer, Budget/Finance Officer and Representative from Oversight Agencies

### *Interview Questions*

1. What are your concerns about the project?
2. What other events are occurring in the organization that may have an impact on this project?
3. Who is not engaged in the project that should be?
4. How do you plan to communicate changes?
5. Are decisions being made in a timely manner?
6. Were any applicable additional tests conducted to validate documentation, training, business continuity plans, disaster recovery, and installation?
7. Has acceptance testing been completed and do the outcomes verify readiness for training and implementation?
8. Have performance goal and project success criteria been developed and communicated? Do you anticipate any issues in meeting the goals?

### *Notes:*

## Issues Identified During the Deploy

During the final point in time assessment, the interventionist should ensure that the project is properly closed out, transitioned to operations, knowledge transfer from consulting resources has taken place and that deferred scope is prioritized. In reality, many project teams are too burnt out to properly wrap up a project and the significant effort put forth on the project is soon forgotten.

Project team members will often urge the interventionist to communicate to the executive or steering committee the need to continue to have a collaborative structure post go-live. Their reasoning is that once the project is over, the focus will shift to other things. Those of us who have been involved in enterprise software implementations realize that the project is never really over. As an integral part of an organization's infrastructure, the system continues to need nurturing, making it important to continue the collaborative process and structure post go-live.

***Notes:***

# Module 8

## Stage 6: Operate

## Project Stage Overview

The outcome of the Operations Stage is the successful operation of the investment against the current costs, schedule and performance benchmarks. At some point in the lifecycle of the investment, when the annual operational analysis indicates that the investment should be terminated to reduce cost-effectiveness in operations, changes in business requirements, changes in technology or that investment's planned retirement date arrives a decision is made to dispose of the investment.

### *Assessment Purpose:*

To ensure the continual operation and maintenance of the system and evaluate the continued investment in the system/technology.

### *When to Conduct this Assessment:*

Annually. Beginning approximately one year after go-live.

### *What to Validate/Exit Criteria:*

1. Annual review of the operation provides a framework for deciding what enhancements or modifications are needed or whether the Software Product should be replaced or disposed of.
2. Documentation and the training programs include input from stakeholders.
3. Variances from baselines have been identified and mitigated.
4. The Project Management Plan and component plans have been reviewed and appropriately updated.

### *Notes:*

# Project Assurance Assessment Process

## Step 1: Conduct Expectations Meeting

**Meeting Purpose:** To set the expectations and timeline for the second assessment.

**Who Should Attend:** Business Owner(s), Strategic Planner, Program Manager, Information Security Officer, Procurement Officer, Budget/Finance Officer, Representative from Oversight Agencies

## Step 2 - Review Stage Deliverables

### *Annual Operational Analysis*

- A review of the EPMO evaluation and the performance metrics during operation to determine whether the Software Product is meeting original user requirements.
- List of new requirements or changes.
- A plan to analyze alternatives for deciding on new functional enhancements and/or modifications to the Software Product, or the need to dispose of or replace the Software Product altogether?
- Evaluation of system performance, user satisfaction with the system, adaptability to changing business needs or new technologies that might improve the system.

### *Disposition Plan*

- Description of how the components of the operating Software Product will be handled at the completion of operations to ensure proper disposition of all the components and to avoid disruption of the individuals and/or any other Software Products impacted by the disposition
- An end of life security plan of the Software Product
- Methods for the deliberate and systematic decommissioning of the Software Product with appropriate consideration of records management

### *Notes:*

## Step 3: Cross Reference Stage Deliverables

**Documents to Cross References**: n/a

## Step 4: Interview Key Project Team Members and Stakeholders

### *Who to Interview*

People relevant to the project including the: Business Owner, Strategic Planner, Program Manager, Information Security Officer, Procurement Officer, Budget / Finance Officer and Representative from Oversight Agencies

### *Interview Questions*

1. What are your concerns about the system?
2. Do any of the approved change requests for this project/investment require a modification in the financial analysis?
3. Do measurement indicators support the performance measures agreed upon?
4. Are contingency plan test dates for all systems associated with this project/investment within the last 365 days?
5. Is continuous security monitoring of selected controls conducted on an ongoing basis to ensure that maintenance patches and enhancements have not introduced any vulnerabilities?
6. Have the Operations Manual, Business Case Analysis, and Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery Plan been updated as required?
7. Looking back, what would you have done differently?

### *Notes:*

# Module 9

## Stage 7: Disposition

## Project Stage Overview

The outcome of the Disposition Stage is the deliberate and systematic decommissioning of Software Products and services with appropriate consideration of data archiving, security, migration of data or functionality to new assets and incorporation of lessons learned over the investment lifecycle.

### *Potential Failure Points:*

- Lack of top management commitment
- Unrealistic expectations
- Poor requirements definition
- Improper package selection
- Gaps between software and business requirements
- Inadequate resources
- Underestimating time and cost
- Poor project management/lack of methodology
- Underestimating impact of change
- Lack of training/education

### *Assessment Purpose:*

To ensure the deliberate and systematic decommissioning of Software Products and services

### *Notes:*

### *When to Conduct this Assessment:*

The final intervention should be conducted towards the end of system life

### *What to Validate/Exit Criteria:*

1. Data archiving, security, and data and systems migrations are complete
2. Final phase-end review has been conducted
3. The Project Management Plan and component plans have been reviewed and appropriately updated

### *Notes:*

# Project Assurance Assessment Process

## Step 1: Conduct Expectations Meeting

**Meeting Purpose:** To set the expectations and timeline for the second assessment.

**Who Should Attend:** Business Owner(s), Strategic Planner, Program Manager, Information Security Officer, Procurement Officer, Budget / Finance Officer, Representative from Oversight Agencies

## Step 2: Review Stage Deliverables

### *Disposition Plan*

- Description of how the components of the operating Business Product will be handled at the completion of operations to ensure proper disposition of all the components and to avoid disruption of the individuals and/or any other Business Products impacted by the disposition
- An end of life security plan of the Business Product
- Methods for the deliberate and systematic decommissioning of the Business Product with appropriate consideration of records management

### *Archives*

1. Plan to preserve vital information including documentation of project execution and the data from the production system
2. Lessons Learned

## Step 3: Cross Reference Stage Deliverables

**Documents to Cross References**: n/a

### *Notes:*

## Step 4: Interview Key Project Team Members and Stakeholders

### *Who to Interview*

People relevant to the project including the: Business Owner, Strategic Planner, Program Manager, Information Security Officer, Procurement Officer, Budget/Finance Officer and Representative from Oversight Agencies

### *Interview Questions*

1. Have security objectives, including secure data and system transfer, sanitization and disposal of media, been accomplished?
2. Has the Disposition Plan, including the orderly breakdown of the system, its components and the data within, been followed?
3. Has a final phase-end review been conducted after the system retirement to ascertain if the system and data have been completely and appropriately disposed of?
4. Are completed contracts closed appropriately?
5. Looking back, what would you have done differently?

### *Notes:*

# Case Study Exercise #5

## Determining Findings and Recommendations

### Part 1

1. Review the results of Exercise 1 -4.
2. Using the Project Assurance Status Report Template on Page 29 of the Case Study Supplement
   A. Complete Section 1 by providing an Overview of the Assessment Process
   B. List your findings for Issues/Areas of Concern for the following sections:
      I. Section 3: Project Management
      II. Section 4: Functional Areas
      III. Section 5: Technical Areas
      IV. Section 6: Change Management
   C. Summarize your findings in Section 2

### Part 2

1. Based on the results of your Project Assurance Assessment, make your recommendations to improve the project's odds of success on page 30 of the Case Study Supplement

# Module 10:

## How to Intervene

## Overview

The final stage of the Project Assurance process is to intervene. The Project Assurance process outlines **how** to intervene by presenting the findings of the assessment and working with the project team to develop an implementation plan to address the findings.

**Project Assurance Assessment Process**

## Attributes and Behaviors and the Intervention Process

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to know that how you deal with people in difficult situations can be the most important component in project success. So far, you've learned about the critical intervention points and the point in time assessments that outline **when** to step in and **what** to look for at each step along the way. In this section, we'll take a look at the art of the intervention – or the **how** – in the form of the attributes and behaviors of a successful interventionist as well as processes you can use for conducting project interventions.

***Notes:***

## The Attributes of the Interventionist

A successful interventionist has critical behavioral attributes that, when practiced together generate intelligent oversight and project synchronicity.

An interventionist is: objective, analytical, strategic and diplomatic

**Attributes of an Interventionist**

| | |
|---|---|
| Objective | Analytic |
| Diplomatic | Strategic |

*Prinzo, Rob. (2010). No Wishing Required: The Business Case for Project Assurance*

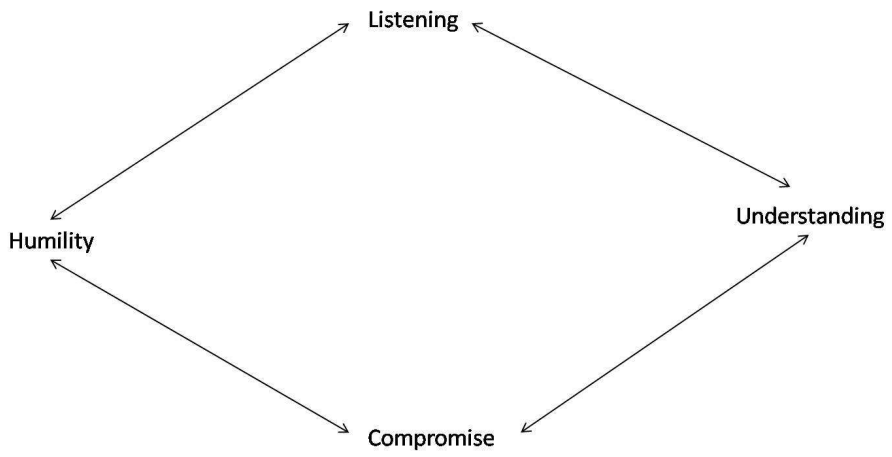
***Notes:***

## On Becoming an Interventionist – Behaviors

By now you know what a fan I am of 'how' things are done. The successful interventionist will master personal behaviors in order to achieve the desired goal: listening, seeking to understand, humility and compromise. Within the context of the four behaviors is their interrelationship. There is no hard stop to one behavior before another begins. For example, in seeking to understand an issue, you must listen well and carefully to what is said – and not said. In approaching a compromise, you need to disarm the natural oppositional response of resisting interference with humility.

This diagram shows the interrelationships of four interventionist behaviors that I believe will net you the greatest return: listening, understanding, compromise, and humility.

**Behaviors of an Interventionist**

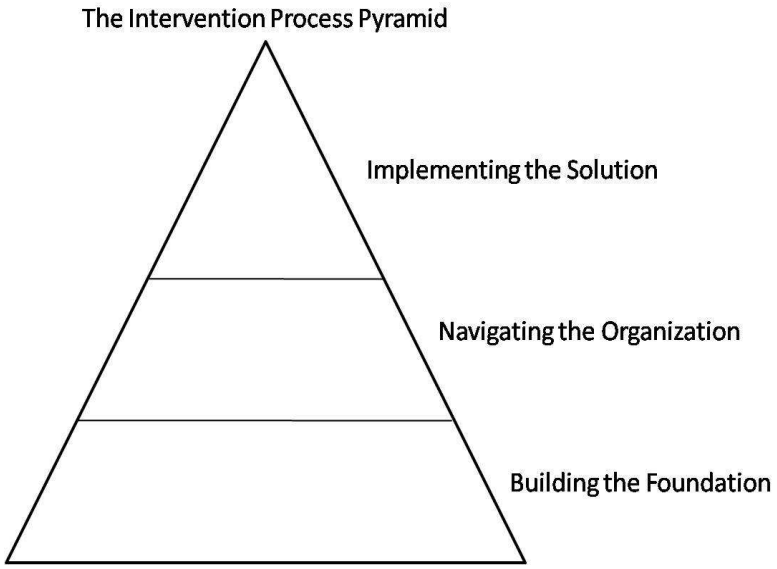



*Prinzo, Rob. (2010). No Wishing Required: The Business Case for Project Assurance*

***Notes:***

## The Intervention Processes

Now that we have discussed the successful attributes and behaviors of the interventionist, we can outline the process for communicating project issues, building consensus and implementing solutions. The intervention process pyramid has three layers: building the foundation, navigating the organization and implementing the solution.

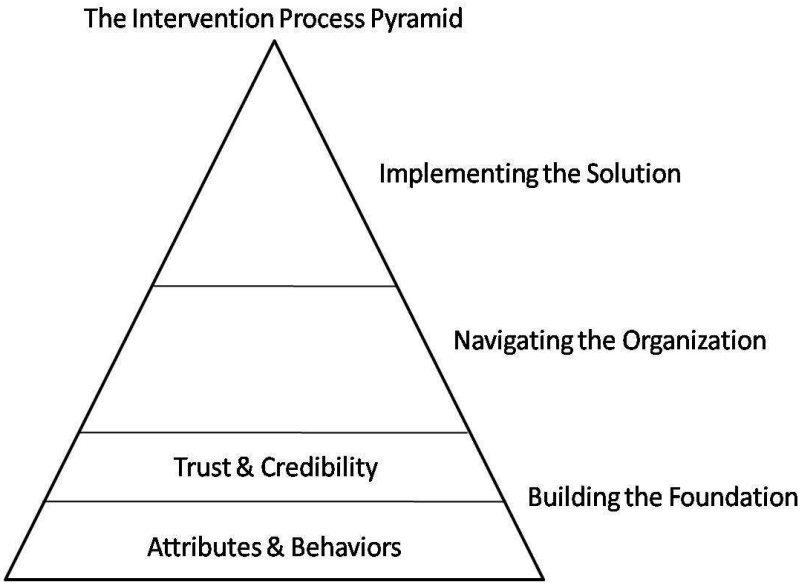



*Prinzo, Rob. (2010). No Wishing Required: The Business Case for Project Assurance*

***Notes:***

## Building the Foundation

All good relationships are based on trust and credibility. Trust and credibility are best established through a person's attributes, behaviors and actions. If you have been selected to perform a project assessment, you already should have the experience and credentials needed for the job – in fact; this provides you with initial credibility. But if your attitudes and behaviors fail to establish a rapport and relationship of trust with the project team, your credibility is all for naught. To build a foundation for successful intervention, you begin with attributes and behaviors that you use to build trust and credibility.




*Prinzo, Rob. (2010). No Wishing Required: The Business Case for Project Assurance*

***Notes:***

## Navigating the Organization

***Identify the Decision Making Process and Sources of Power***

Here is a very effective (and possibly familiar) process for determining how decisions are made:

1. **Start with the obvious.** As simple as it may sound, start with information contained in the project documents such as the needs assessment, project plan or charter. These documents should contain at a minimum: the definition of project team members roles and responsibilities, the organization chart, issue resolution process and project governance structure.
2. **Validate the information through observations and interviews.** Ask questions such as "Can you make that decision?" "Who made that decision?" "What is that person's role?" Once decision makers start to emerge, ask questions to determine whom the influencers are, such as "Whose advice does the decision maker seek?" or "What is their process for gathering information?"
3. **Observe how decisions are made.** As part of the assessment, attend a project governance meeting or steering committee meeting. Observe the process and communication patterns of the executives. For some organizations, such as vendors or consulting firms, the process is easy to assess, as there is usually just one person in charge of the account. Inside of an organization, the decision making power will be harder to diagnose.

***Notes:***

After you have determined the sources of power, it is a good idea to rate the project team members based on their role in the decision making process, the strength of your relationship with each team member and their accessibility. Rating the team members on these criteria will help in developing a strategy for communicating your findings.

Each project team member should be rated according to the following criteria:

**Decision Role**

- Decision Maker
- Influencer
- Champion
- Negative Influence
- Team Member/Contributor

**Relationship Rating**

- Strong
- Moderate
- Weak

**Accessibility**

- Easily Accessible
- Accessible
- Un-accessible

## *Notes:*

## *Conducting Mini-Briefings*

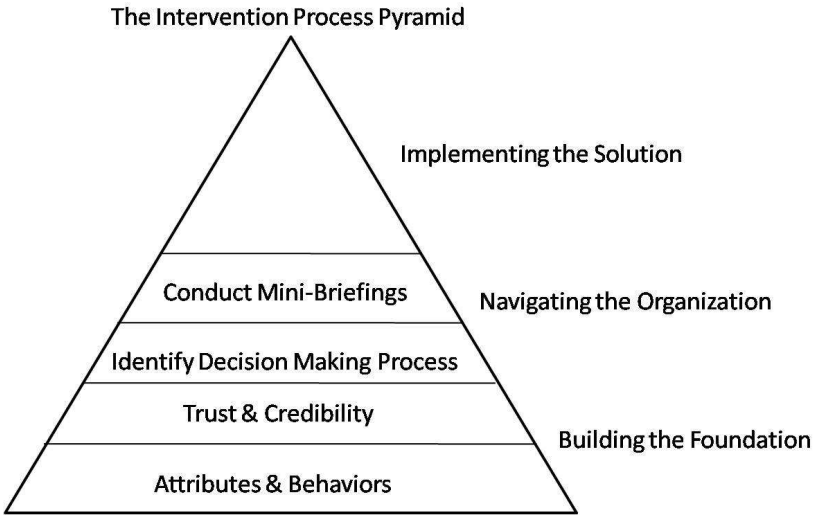
The mini-briefing can be a scheduled event or informal conversation where the interventionist provides an overview of the assessment and the potential recommendations. This pre-discussion serves several purposes:

1. **No surprises.** People have an opportunity to be prepared for a difficult discussion if necessary.
2. **Validate your findings**. It is possible that you may have misinterpreted or have been given incorrect information. If either is the case, then you will save yourself from an embarrassing situation and keep your credibility intact by validating your position ahead of time.
3. **Provide an opportunity to fix a problem**. Often times, executives may be unaware of a particular issue and the fix may be relatively simple. By providing them an opportunity to fix a problem, you are saving them from a potentially uncomfortable situation while building trust with that individual.
4. **Provide an opportunity to start thinking.** Whether it's about potential solutions or digesting your recommendations, getting everyone on the same page ahead of time helps when you get a group of executives together. If potential solutions are complicated, it is good for people to think through them before a meeting. It helps everyone to understand the solution and determine the pros and cons, preventing rash decisions that may be pressured by an executive in a position of power.

## *Notes:*

## Implementing the Solution

The final stage of the intervention process is implementing the solution. By this time, you have built the foundation consisting of trust and credibility and navigated the organization by determining the decision-making process. Next, you've validated your findings through the mini-briefings. Now it is time to assemble the project team and sponsors in order to present your findings and develop the action plan for solution implementation.




*Prinzo, Rob. (2010). No Wishing Required: The Business Case for Project Assurance*

***Notes:***

## *Communicate the Findings*

The project assessment report will most likely contain good and bad news. Since communicating bad or less than positive news to people is never easy, here are some guidelines:

1. **Soften the blow**. Use pre-meetings to inform everyone involved and avoid surprises.
2. **Set the stage**. First discuss your process and how you reached your findings. Let people know what documentation you reviewed and who you interviewed.
3. **Start with good news.** Positively acknowledge people's accomplishments, achievements and cooperation in the assessment process.
4. **State the facts.** Pure and simple, without emotion or finger pointing. To quote a popular phrase *"it is what it is."* Mention (without names) any opposing views or disagreements to your findings that you sensed from the mini-briefings.
5. **Ask for input.** Let people state their views if they disagree, but always focus on facts, not emotions.
6. **Present your recommendations.** There is nothing worse than someone who points out flaws without solutions. If it is a difficult problem with alternative solutions, outline them. And, if you truly cannot solve the problem, state that and lead a discussion to come up with solutions.

## *Notes:*

## *Negotiate Solutions*

The final part of solution implementation is to negotiate solutions. It is probable that all of your recommendations will not be accepted or possible, given the parameters of the project. The key is to gain consensus that your findings have created legitimate concerns and need to be addressed. Any number of reasons – time, budgets or politics – may prevent the implementation of the solution as you see it. Therefore it is important to work with the executive team to (at an absolute minimum) acknowledge the risk, but ideally, to find alternative solutions to project issues. The solutions should be documented, added to the project plan or action item log and reviewed at the next point in time assessment.

The following are several tips and techniques used in successful negotiations:

- Don't Assume – Ask
- Ask for the whole list
- Look for variables
- Stay neutral, stick to facts
- Pitch high
- Trade, don't concede
- Don't agree to separate parts
- Ask "what if" questions

## *Notes:*

In addition it is also important to understand both your negotiating style as well as the negotiating style of the people that you are negotiating with. Below are some of the common negotiating styles:

**Common Negotiating Styles**

- **Accommodating:** Individuals who enjoy solving the other party's problems and preserving personal relationships.
- **Avoiding:** Individuals who do not like to negotiate and don't do it unless warranted.
- **Collaborating:** Individuals who enjoy negotiations that involve solving tough problems in creative ways.
- **Competing:** Individuals who enjoy negotiations because they present an opportunity to win something
- **Compromising:** Individuals who are eager to close the deal by doing what is fair and equal for all parties involved in the negotiation

*Source: Shell, R.G. (2006). Bargaining for Advantage. New York, NY: Penguin Books.*

***Notes:***

## Summary

The Intervention Process Pyramid does a nice job depicting the process of communicating project issues, building consensus and implementing solutions. Built on a solid foundation of attributes and behaviors, we can see not only the traits of a successful interventionist, but also the process required to be successful as well. In summary, the four attributes – objectivity, analytical, diplomatic and strategic – work together with the four behaviors – listening, understanding, humility and compromise – to build the foundation for trust and credibility.

Trust and credibility help the interventionist ask the tough questions and observe the behaviors to navigate the organization, mapping the decision making process and conducting the mini-briefings. Successful organizational navigations create the collaborative environment necessary for group communication and negotiations.

*Prinzo, Rob. (2010). No Wishing Required: The Business Case for Project Assurance*

# Case Study Exercise #6

## Conducting an Intervention

### Part 1

Review the Project Team Relationship Rating Criteria on page 32 of the Case Study Supplement.

### Part 2

Based on the relationship ratings, determine a high level strategy to communicate your findings and recommendations. On page 33 of the Case Study Supplement, outline your strategy for communicating with the following people:

1. Dale Barnes, IT Director
2. Tim Johnson, Finance Director | Project Sponsor
3. Mary Potts, CIO | Project Sponsor
4. Adam Bell, VP Vendor | Project Sponsor