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Regulation In Practice

Tools to Transform Your Regulatory Agency

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Modernizing your regulatory agency means a host of big changes—for both internal and external stakeholders. And with those changes come challenges. Follow these five actionable steps to guide your regulatory agency down the path of transformation.

Manage Change

Break down change at your agency into steps, following the five phases of change:

1. *Capacity Building:* Lay down the foundation for change, both IT-related and non-IT-related.

2. *Process Standardization:* Examine what happens at your organization to support large changes.

3. *Customer Service:* Look at who you serve and review how the change affects that population.

4. *Integrated Services:* Combine process standardization with customer service and focus on how to streamline your efforts.

5. *Continuous Improvement:* Stay in a state of continuous improvement, getting better and working to the next goal.

Build Capacity

In the first phase, Capacity Building, you build a foundation for change.

Most importantly, your regulatory agency defines your organization's mission and vision. Staff need to understand an end goal; something they strive for. When considering big organizational changes, put those changes against your mission and vision statements. Ask whether to make that change in light of your mission and vision. The "stress test" helps clarify whether your agency moves forward—or not—with these changes.

Mission: Your agency defines what you do and how you do it. Communicate that to your internal stakeholders to permeate the organization.

Vision: Look to the future about what you plan to achieve. Focus on communicating a big, bold statement to your external stakeholders.

Stakeholder analysis: Understand decision-makers, subject matter experts, and other stakeholders to help you with decision-making through the change.

Regulation In Practice

Tip: Stakeholder Analysis Tool

Follow these steps in the stakeholder analysis tool to define the roles and the tasks in a project:

1. List out participants involved in the change, such as your staff, your customers, and the legislature.

2. Write out the objective for each participant related to the change.

3. Rate that participant's influence.

4. Add potential risks for each participant.

Distribute the information to those involved with the project to give them direction on who to turn to during the project for input and support.

Culture mapping: Memorialize how your regulatory agency handles change. Identify the behaviors around change to identify what your staff must address as change occurs.

Overall project goal: Set high-level objectives for the change, such as saving money or improving service, for example. Start thinking about how you plan to measure those goals.

Understand the process of change, endure the hardship of change, and celebrate those short-term wins along the way!

Standardize Processes

In phase 2, Process Standardization, you focus on internal stakeholders to support the change.

Process maps/flows: Identify your process flows and how everyone performs that work.

Guiding principles: Ensure that the process maps and flows at your regulatory agency follow the laws and regulations of your state. If your rules spell out applying a late fee, for example, then your processes must reflect that. Along with this, ensure that your processes reflect the values of your regulatory agency.

SMEs: Identify your subject matter experts (SMEs) for each process and share their knowledge with everyone involved. Make that information part of your official documentation.

Communication & consistency: Decide when and how to communicate information about the project. Choose who to involve. Select the tools to support sharing, like Teams or Slack, for example.

Transformation/change/plan: Take all of the preceding items in phase 2, from process maps to SMEs, and add them to a transformation plan as an important reference guide.

Goals and scope: Outline the parameters of the plan by deciding the scope and boundaries of the project. Review with stakeholders and decide if the goals and scope make sense to all involved.

Serve Customers

In phase 3, Customer Service, you focus on the external stakeholders.

Storyline: Understand the "storyline" for those customers; map out the timeline for a customer from A to Z to better recognize where they need support.

Customer persona: Sketch out what the average customer looks like; for example, describe their educational level. Assess their average website use ability. Ask yourself, how foolproof does our process need to be?

Process accessibility and efficiency: Ask how you need to support customers in adapting to the change. Envision how you hope the process goes for the end user.

Integrate Service

In phase 4, Integrated Service, you decide how to integrate phase 2, an internal focus, with phase 3, an external focus. Your regulatory agency creates an "information highway," blending the internal processes with the external focus.

For example, you create a business process—an internal component. You shift to an external focus, with your customers inputting information. You put a workflow on top of that, and then need to make that information accessible, streamlined, and easy to use.

Automation: Focus on making the information readily available with automation. For example, communicate with your licensees via text message.

Transformation: As you modernize and make changes to your process, ask how your regulatory agency must adapt. For example, if you add an AI chatbot to answer questions, that changes the way your staff work, likely meaning less time on the phone.

Tip: Spider Mapping

Pair your internal processes with your external solutions. Using a "spider mapping" exercise, list out your internal processes and then write out your external solutions. Spider mapping, oftentimes a graphic organizer, helps your regulatory agency brainstorm ideas, listing a main idea (the body of the spider) and then concepts that flow from that (the legs of the spider.) For example, if you describe applications as an internal process, possible external solutions to list include website and auto alerts.

Improve Continuously

In phase 5, your regulatory agency commits to continuous improvement.

Analyze data: Your regulatory agency must consistently review the data to gauge your progress towards meeting your objectives.

Revisit your mission and vision: As you complete your major changes and transition to improving continuously, review your mission and vision again; decide if either of those need updating.

Reevaluate goals: After you meet your goals, come up with new goals to work towards. This keeps your regulatory agency moving forward.

Celebrate the wins: Acknowledge that you met your goals. Recognize what you achieved and what you learned.

Evaluation: Review the standards you set for your team and your organization. Evaluate how you perform after the changes. Reverting to past ways costs your regulatory agency a lot in terms of money, time, and energy. So, keep tabs on your organization's performance post-change.

Agency Transformation - Five Steps to Becoming a Model Agency

Sam Hardin, Chief Revenue Officer at GL Solutions, presented these steps at the annual 2024 NARA - NWRA Licensing Seminar and Leadership Symposium during his speech, "Agency Transformation - Five Steps to Becoming a Model Agency."

- Learn more about the National Association for Regulatory Administration (NARA). NARA's mission is to "promote the health and safety of children and adults in regulated settings."

- Learn more about the National Workforce Registry Alliance (NWRA). NWRA describes their organization as a "non-profit membership organization composed of state early childhood professional development registries and early learning workforce allies. We work to strengthen state registries, standardize the equitable collection and analysis of workforce data, and cultivate space for collaboration."

- Learn more information about modernization and agency transformation on the Resources and News tab at https://glsolutions.com.

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