Implementing an integrated planning framework
It’s more than just a technology fix

Client’s challenge
Our client, a large regional municipality that provides a range of services (e.g. community health care, water, waste collection), has been committed to improving both its strategic planning, performance management approach and its public reporting processes. As a part of this commitment, it had developed an integrated planning framework (IPF) in order to guide the integration of its planning processes and improve its ability to execute, monitor and report on strategic activities. It was determined that a new technology solution would be required to support the implementation of more integrated planning processes.

The municipality recognized that it needed assistance with the multi-year implementation of the selected technology tools and chose Oracle|Hyperion EPM Planning Public Sector and Oracle Business Intelligence solutions. What it didn’t realize was that there’s a lot more to implementing a successful integrating planning framework than finding the right supporting technologies.

PwC’s solution
In order to help the municipality successfully implement its chosen technology tools, our team knew we had to confirm the fundamental principles underpinning the IPF and used to select the technology solution were also reflective of the processes that would be used with the new technology. As a part of the first phase of the project, our team conducted a high level assessment of IPF specific processes (e.g. strategy, planning, budgeting and performance reporting). As a part of our more detailed assessment, we knew that we had to dig deeper into the client’s business processes than the initial work conducted related to the development of the IPF. This assessment was about getting at the “So what?” and “Now what?” – not just the “What?” Since we didn’t have the time or mandate to conduct a complete current state process review, our team focused on understanding those processes specifically associated with an integrated planning approach (e.g. strategy, planning, budgeting and performance reporting).

Over the course of an 8 week period, we worked with the client to assess the identified gaps in more detail and to build a roadmap that would address these challenges in parallel with the technology implementation. Our approach was highly collaborative yet focused, involving a diverse but select group of stakeholders from across the organization.

The success of our approach could be seen in the client’s decision to move quickly on the implementation of the roadmap – within a week of the delivery of our final recommendations. We’ve continued to support the client’s implementation team – helping them identify an appropriate governance structure and to begin actioning the foundational deliverables identified in the roadmap. We’ve also worked collaboratively with them to continue make sure activities are well aligned.

A collaborative approach
Our team recognized that because of the scale of the processes affected, a much wider range of internal client stakeholders needed to be involved in the process assessment, the identification of solutions and the development of the roadmap for implementation. To be successful, stakeholders across the organization needed to recognize the gaps identified within their own operational areas and become champions for change and for the technology tools being implemented to support the changes.

That’s why our approach included a high degree of client collaboration. This included facilitating client workshops to discuss our initial findings and to facilitate discussions among key stakeholders so that they could agree on the challenge areas, help identify solutions and come to agreement on a roadmap for change.

Our highly interactive approach was critical for helping the client buy-in to the changes necessary to support the integration of the IPF Program and the technology implementation. By bringing the entire executive team together and discussing and agreeing to solutions in the room, everyone involved recognized their contribution to the Program and their role in managing the implementation of the roadmap moving forward.

Asking the tough questions
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Part of our role was to meet one on one with key client stakeholders and ask them tough questions in order to understand their actual level of maturity compared to their perceived level of maturity. By helping each stakeholder critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of their functional areas, we were better able to identify gaps and to help facilitate a roadmap that would address the gaps at every level across the organization.
Gaining leadership support

Over the course of the gap assessment, our team was able to engage a wide range of stakeholders across the organization. By collaborating with key stakeholders on the gap assessment, identification of solutions and the creation of a roadmap for change, we helped create support and buy-in for the IPF project and for the culture and process changes that will be required for the municipality to embrace integrated planning and the implementation of the technology tools needed to support it.

The fact that the steering team has taken a more active interest in the success of the IPF project and the technology implementation is apparent in their ongoing interest in staying up to date on the progress of the Program. An update on the IPF is now a standard agenda item at monthly senior leadership meetings – with updates disseminated across the organization through director and manager-level meetings.

Impact on our client’s business

We believe that in order for a technology implementation project to be successful, there needs to be alignment between core business processes and the technologies being implemented right from the beginning. Over the course of our work, we helped our client gain a stronger appreciation for the non-technical factors that will be critical to their ability to achieve their desired objectives over the next 12-18 months. This understanding has helped our client achieve value in a number of ways, including:

• Focusing not just on where to go – but on how to get there: Prior to the project, our client had a strong understanding of what they wanted to accomplish and had developed a strong integrated planning framework to guide their approach. Over the course of our work, we helped our client to also recognize the importance of understanding where they are today so that they could create a more efficient roadmap for achieving their objectives. This understanding will help them to avoid the need to backtrack on project initiatives or spend additional budget on updating tools after implementation.

• Recognizing change isn't just about technology: Over the course of the project, we reaffirmed to our client that technology is just one enabler for change. In reality, there are many other components to a successful transformation, including leadership sponsorship, culture change, and the development of processes that support the desired objectives and the technologies to be implemented. The lack of any enabler can affect the long-term success of a transformation initiative. We were able to provide greater clarity and direction regarding enabling components.

• Creating buy-in and ownership for the project across the organization: We showed our client that including affected stakeholders in a project can have a significant impact on success and buy-in. Our collaborative approach helped create profile for the IPF, in addition to commitment among senior management and directors for the changes required to successfully implement a more integrated planning approach. We also helped stakeholders recognize their personal responsibilities and accountabilities for changes so that individuals could be held responsible for implementation activities.

• Improving the use of resources: By focusing on addressing process gaps early in the technology implementation project, our client will be better able to align its IPF and technology implementation activities right from the beginning. This should result in more efficient use of its resources (i.e. people, time and budget) over the entire project.

Overall, our client recognizes how much our collaborative approach has helped them better align their IPF and technology implementation activities, while also increasing buy-in for the changes among their key stakeholders. They are much more confident about the potential success of the transformation initiative than they were at the beginning of the engagement.

Recognising change isn't all about technology

In the public sector, transformation is becoming the norm. Demand for higher level of transparency and the more efficient use of resources is forcing governments and public sector institutions to rethink how they operate. When it comes to business transformation, organizations need to recognize that technology is only one enabler of change. Successful change requires a whole lot more than technology. Consider these lessons learned from our client’s experience as you determine a plan for moving forward:

• Understand where you are and where you want to go: Be honest with your assessment of your strengths and weaknesses as this assessment will help you create a more effective and efficient roadmap for achieving your desired outcomes.

• Get buy-in – from the top and from across the organization: Large scale transformation affects many people. Ensure your senior management team understands the need for change and is leading initiatives to create buy-in among all affected stakeholders. The more people that buy-in to a change, the more likely the change will be successful.

• Align process changes and technologies: To be efficient and effective, technology tools need to be developed in a manner that aligns to business processes. Technology implementation activities and business process change activities should be highly integrated to ensure both are well aligned to the desired outcomes of the project.

• Identify ownership and accountabilities: When it comes to successful change, governance and accountability is critical. Individuals need to own transformation efforts and be held accountable for them. Such ownership and accountabilities should remain in the business after the change initiative has been completed – ideally with the individuals who owned the activities throughout the transformation. This creates a more powerful case for change and buy-in across all functions within an organization.

To learn more

To learn more about PwC and how we can help your organization understand how to best implement large scale transformation and technology initiatives, please contact:

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