



MN.IT Careers: Building a Workforce for the Future

October 8, 2012

Background

There is general recognition by the State of Minnesota's stakeholders and business leaders that new technologies can drive the overall efficiencies at the State in order to, as Governor Mark Dayton says, "save money, reduce waste, and make government work better for the people of Minnesota," and that the effective and intelligent use of data and high-value communications tools will improve government outcomes.

Therefore, the 2011 IT consolidation legislation was not so much a directive – as some might surmise – to do less information technology activity, but to do MORE, by finding ways to manage existing executive branch IT resources better and smarter.

And though consolidation may require the certain rearrangement of physical assets (data center, servers, etc.), the ultimate value of consolidation and the measure of our success will be how we maximize the potential of our workforce in order to meet the ever-increasing demand for technologies that can make a difference.

It's about the people.

Like other institutions built in the twentieth century, the State of Minnesota's current information technology environment has grown organically throughout state agencies and programs in a manner that has created redundancies and inefficiencies in the use of resources (both people and "things"). This has resulted in inequities and inconsistencies in security and IT service delivery across the executive branch.

Moving the status quo to a new organizational structure is not enough. We must change the way in which we use and deploy the resources we have in new and better ways that garner better results.

In the current distribution of our IT workforce, a large portion of our staff does common and routine "lights on," or "factory" activity that keeps the State's basic IT infrastructure running smoothly. They do it well, but they duplicate functions in multiple organizations using multiple and disparate processes and tools. As a result, very little of our collective staff is trained and available to stand-up and manage the new technologies that ultimately make the state's business more efficient and that enable the electronic government our customers increasingly demand, i.e., data management, analytics, customized applications, web-based services, data security, etc.

In order to realize value from our IT workforce and make government work better, we need to reverse the ratio. We need to maximize the efficiencies of "lights on", "factory" work within state government IT in order to free up our workforce to create and manage the newer, more value-add technologies that meet the business drivers outlined in the State's new five-year [IT Master Plan](#).

Moving all IT employees into a single organization allows us to begin the journey. But it is only the first step. In and of itself, it provides little value and promises few efficiencies. *Who we report to matters little if what we do and how we do it remains the same.*

We need a human resources plan that turns the tide and enables both a more nimble and efficient management of common/shared technologies, and frees up and prepares a significant portion of our workforce to perform the higher value work required for the new world.

Business Drivers for State Information Technology

Improve the state's business climate and quality of life through better government service.

Foster interactive democracy.

Simplify the end-user's experience with government.

Promote "smart government."

Make the State of Minnesota an employer of choice.

Facilitate government reform.

Ensure that government and citizen data is protected and the business of government never stops.

- 2012 Minnesota IT Master Plan

This is good for everybody.

For the State, the costs saved in minimizing duplicative functions can be invested in training staff and standing up new technologies. It helps the State address the current "brain drain" from high ratios of technical resource retirements, and leverages both attrition and training to get a new workforce with the right skills assigned to the higher value jobs.

For employees, it will equalize classifications and pay across the organization, and provide training that increase individuals' value in the marketplace by focusing on newer IT applications and skills, and on efficient, standard tools and processes.

The MN.IT Tactical Plan

Defining Our Services

The MN.IT 2-Year Tactical Plan, based on the objectives of MN.IT's March 2012 operational Strategic Plan, addresses the envisioned changes primarily from a technical service point of view. What can we do differently in order to achieve our goals and improve service outcomes for the State?

The Tactical Plan's overarching theme is this:

Make the IT infrastructure super-efficient so we can focus our people, money and creativity on the services that most directly make a difference for our customers and citizens.

The plan outlines the milestones for creating the MN.IT Cloud, standard IT services managed and delivered through central management. Implementation of this approach will occur over the next 4-5 years, with immediate priorities being met within 1-2 years. Focus in the plan is on the following three service categories and all of the initiatives necessary to bring them to fruition:

- Hosting Services
- End User Services
- Service Level Management (ITSM)

The cloud strategy denotes change at both the central and the agency-based office levels.

As the consolidated cloud approach is built out over time, MN.IT's emphasis on service management at the agency-based office shifts away from "lights on," standard service activity to the management of more agency-specific business applications and data management, areas of IT that require specialization and proximity to the customers' business.

Meanwhile, the consolidated cloud services will be designed from the ground up to meet the requirements of an enterprise-wide service. They will be built out over time, even as current service delivery is maintained until the transformation is complete. Staffing for the new cloud services will be open to all MN.IT employees, regardless of their current assignments or location.

MN.IT Careers: Planning the People Side

It's About People

When a consolidation strategy is invoked, everybody inevitably assumes that the impact on employees will be negative, so they wait for the other shoe to drop. When are you going to cut my job? What will become of me when you consolidate my function? The assumption is that, inevitably, there will be “winners” and “losers” and, overall, fewer opportunities for the existing workforce.

This is neither a winning strategy nor the intention of MN.IT Services.

Our strategy - and the purpose of the MN.IT Careers project - is to develop a systematic methodology for focusing our workforce, based on several principles:

- MN.IT Services is a knowledge bank of talented individuals we are lucky to have and eager to tap.
- Nobody has an inside track on the new service positions – we're looking for talent and know-how, wherever it currently sits.
- We will provide training options to employees interested in new opportunities and new technologies.
- We'll leverage the attrition from large numbers of retirements and use training to strategically focus our workforce.
- We will keep the information flowing in order to minimize disruption and broadcast the opportunities.

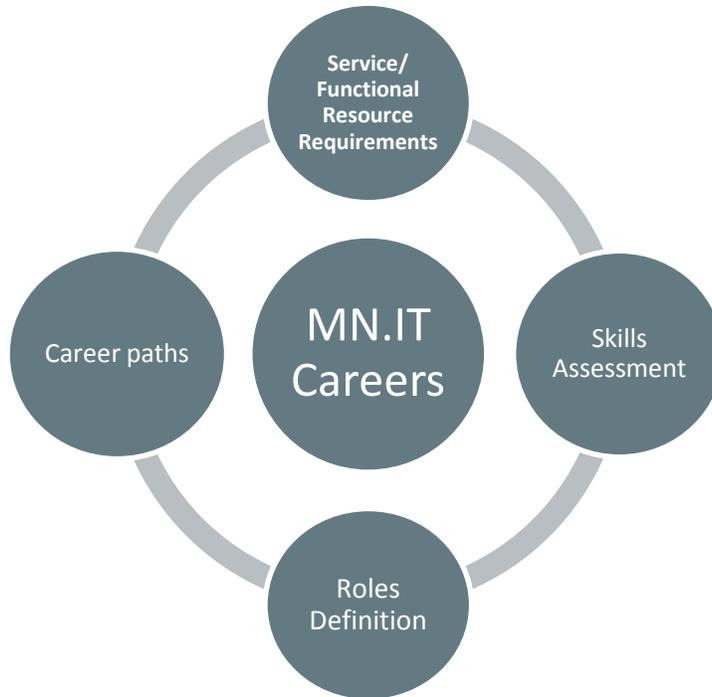
In transitioning from the current structure to our future organization, many MN.IT employees will experience some form of change either to their own jobs or to the scope and definition of their teams and functions. However, with careful planning and coordination, the transformation can benefit both the ultimate service customer and the individual employee. That is the goal.

Regardless of whether an employee eventually stays in his/her current division/agency office or joins a new MN.IT Cloud service team, he/she should be able to expect clearly defined roles, standard classifications and compensation, adequate training to successfully perform on the team, and a career path that encourages life-long service at the State.

Project Objectives

The primary objective of the MN.IT Careers project is to develop a systematic methodology for managing and developing state IT employee careers in the midst of a multi-year consolidation in a manner that maximizes individual employee potential and facilitates service alignment and delivery. In the process, MN.IT Services can set a precedent for human resource management that can serve the entire State in meeting the challenges ahead.

MN.IT Careers involves the following four areas.



Service/functional Resource Requirements

- Working hand-in-hand with service design teams and MN.IT management, HR will help identify and quantify the staff size and skills necessary to perform the MN.IT Cloud services and other agency functions in the most efficient way possible.
- Working with service design teams and agency-based CIOs, HR will look at the resource implications for declining and/or legacy technologies that need to be retired and/or replaced.
- Working with service design teams and MN.IT management, HR will help define the necessary skills and staff size for unique and new technology services and functions that need to be developed.

Skills Assessment

- HR will help individual employees and managers perform skills assessment and gap analysis, based on service requirements, of those MN.IT Services resources that become available for new assignments.

Roles Definition

- HR will work to ensure that there are standard expectations, compensation and qualifications for all jobs within the organization, be they current functions or new functional areas and services, regardless of where or for whom the services are performed.
- HR will develop and manage a fair and open process for:
 - Defining resource needs and filling positions for consolidated service operations.
 - Implementing a plan for redeployment or retraining staff associated with legacy systems/skills.
 - Building capabilities in the appropriate division(s), including agency-based offices, for unique and/or new service opportunities.
- HR will work with divisions and agency-based offices to help implement functional alignment and standardization for functions that remain agency-based.

Career Paths

- MN.IT will create an ongoing training and certification program – a “MN.IT U” – for employees that are, through efficiencies or service retirements, available but unprepared for MN.IT’s new and/or emerging technologies and services.
- HR plans will be geared toward creating/maximizing career paths for all functions and staff.
- HR will create a succession planning program and a recruitment program that actively seek to attract the skills we need and to place new employees strategically as retirements continue to accelerate.

The Project

The deliverables and key milestones for this project are outlined in the MN.IT Services Tactical Plan as follows:

Enterprise Goals, Workforce Management and Careers Development							
	FY13			FY14			
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
MN.IT Careers Project	Concept development			100% planning complete: workforce plan, training plan and recruitment plan in place			
Full Timeframe	1 year						
Key Benefits	Increased career opportunities for current employees; increased ability to attract and keep IT talent to the State; training program that builds new skills and prepares employees for new technologies and high-value functions						

These deliverables are just the beginning. They will outline how we will move forward to meet the goals for MN.IT Careers over the next several years of organizational transformation.

My function at MN.IT is being consolidated, what are my options?

- Positions in the new consolidated function
- Opportunities within all of MN.IT
- Opportunities in my office

Do I have the skills I need?

- Skills assessment tools



Creating Career Paths at MN.IT Services

Conclusion

Building Careers

Change is never easy. Regardless of the positive outcomes anticipated for all involved, it is hard for employees to cope with massive reorganization and the inevitable confusion during transition. It is easy to succumb to the stress of not knowing how everything will eventually play out. There are several things that can help: a clear vision of the future, an articulated plan to get there, and strong communications every step of the way. The MN.IT Careers Project is committed to managing the people side of this transformation in a way that brings the best results.

More importantly, the project's goal is to create an IT organization in which everyone's roles are understood and valued, and one to which the best talent is attracted. This is not just a project about moving people around, but about building a new IT service organization for the State of Minnesota that is an exciting and rewarding place to work.