ONIT
MANAGEMENT CONSULTING

Onit Helps Utility Implement GIS Software in Essential Strategic Upgrade

1. Issue: Onit's client, a municipal utility providing power to more than 181,000 Washington state residents, was replacing its decade-old Geographic Information System (GIS) with a more modern and customizable mapping solution. The success of the project was of great importance to the utility, as the new GIS tool would form a foundation for multiple initiatives related to grid modernization, safety, security, and other key strategies.

Onit was engaged to provide Organizational Change Management (OCM) support for the GIS implementation, combining its business process skills and Prosci change management expertise to help staff make best use of the new tools.

2. Strategy: Onit immediately recognized the importance of stakeholder education and engagement to the project's leadership. A successful GIS implementation would lay the foundation for multiple projects to come. This made stakeholder understanding of the potential of their new GIS platform essential to unlocking the creativity necessary to plan and execute future projects.

As some misalignment existed between the client's vison and the goals being pursued by the system integrator, Onit's strategy included leveraging its business process expertise to facilitate consensus around GIS build requirements, then crafting an innovative and engaging OCM strategy to capture users' imaginations.

3. Crafting a Solution: Onit's first task was to establish a process mapping template that would better help stakeholders envision an ideal implementation and clearly identify points of change between current and future states. This included properly identifying the impacted workstreams, involving all necessary stakeholders in mapping, and using a gap analysis to determine impacted roles and the level of impact.

Onit then focused on OCM engagement, using a combination of communications and outreach activities to build awareness and foster a desire for involvement. Tactics included a naming contest for the GIS web app (welcome to the world GISmo!); a visually rich newsletter showcasing staff use cases; an involved Change Agent Network (CAN); and a series of short, engaging feature spotlight presentations highlighting different aspects of the product.

Onit also worked with the client training team and system integrators to create the Training Plan. This included defining the training needs for each impacted role, and identifying which processes to convert to more detailed desktop procedure documents. Through its iterative work mapping processes, Onit was able to identify previously overlooked roles that would also be impacted and ensure that all impacted roles were accounted for in the Training Plan.

Onit's approach brought together the OCM, Process, and Training deliverables into a unified and coordinated package with user engagement at its core.

4. Results:

- Client received a full suite of detailed process documentation with staff trained in documentation techniques for future updates.
- Client received an OCM Strategy Playbook for use in future programs, including a newsletter template, outreach activity templates, video best practices, and model CAN guidelines. The Playbook was optimized for the client's specific type of business and organizational culture.
- Client saw high levels of staff engagement, generating genuine interest in the project.