

CTRL + ALT + TRANSFORM

WHY AWARD-WINNING ITS PROJECTS ARE ABOUT MORE THAN
TECHNOLOGY

August 4, 2026

TEAM
KENTUCKY



The Lie We Tell Ourselves

**“Once the software is done,
the hard part is over.”**

**How Hard
Could It
Be?
(Spoiler:
Very.)**

From Procurement to Award-Winning Implementation



We Were Never “*Just*” Implementing Software

We were transforming:

- **Business processes**
- **Employee workflows**
- **Taxpayer interactions**
- **Organizational culture**
- **Customer service expectations**

Nobody Wakes Up Excited About Tax Software

Nobody says: “I hope my Department gets a new tax system today.”

Staff Wanted:

- **To do their jobs successfully**

Taxpayers wanted:

- **To get in**
- **Get out**
- **Move on with their lives**

Leadership wanted:

- **Better service**
- **Better compliance**
- **Better outcomes**

Everyone Had To Own doris

WORKING IN SILOS

Separate. Disconnected. Limited Impact.



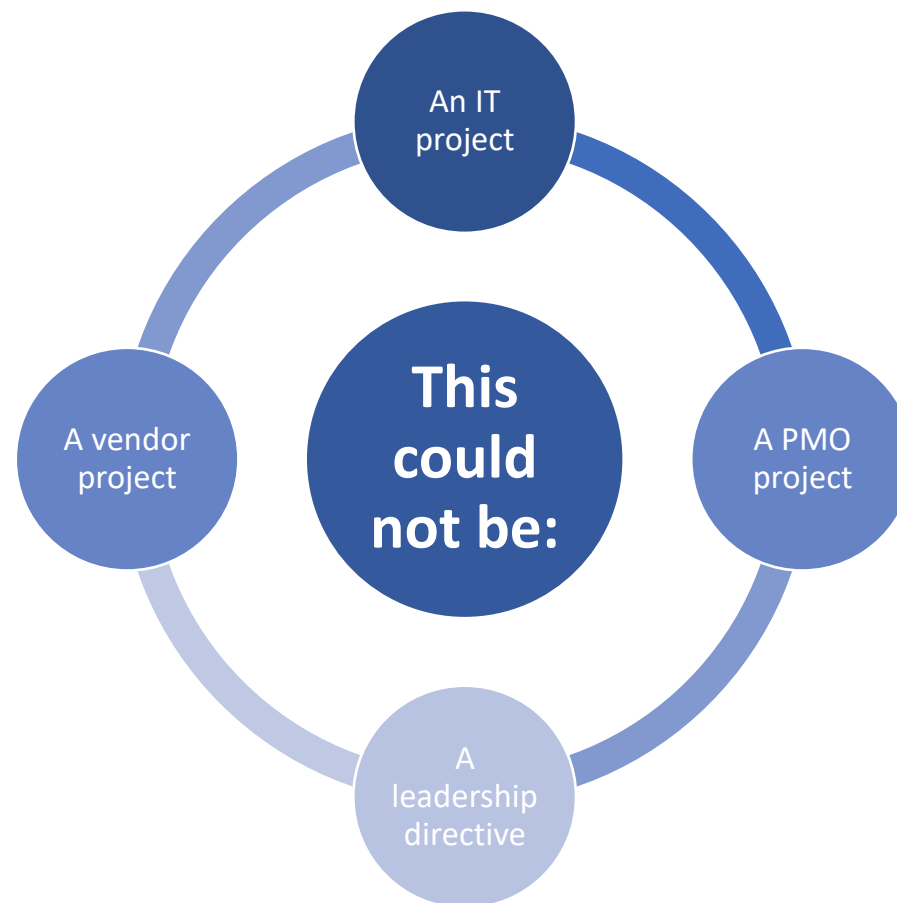
WORKING TOGETHER

Connected. Aligned. Greater Impact.



TOGETHER, WE GO FURTHER.

One team. Stronger outcomes.



Your Critics May Become Your Champions



We learned:

Resistance isn't always opposition.

Often, it was expertise expressing concern.

The people who challenged us:

- **Found risks**
- **Improved designs**
- **Prevented mistakes**
- **Became advocates**

Death by "One More Thing"

The Most Expensive Phrases in Any Project

- **“Let's revisit that.”**
- **“I wasn't in the meeting.”**
- **“I need to check with someone.”**
- **“That's not what I meant.”**
- **“Can we make one more change?”**
- **“We thought everyone agreed.”**

Change Starts Here: The doris Change Request Form



Identify the Requested Change

Identify the Current doris Functionality

Background and Context for the Change Request

Operational Need for the Change

Downstream doris Impact

Severity of Operational Impact

You Can't Deploy Buy-In

**OCM Was
Not A
Workstream.
It Was The
Work.**

doris festivals

Internal
newsletters

Demonstrations

CPA Outreach

Town halls

Leadership
working
sessions

How-to videos

QRGs

Train-the-
Trainer

We Didn't Manage Change. We Built Belief.

Many projects communicate:

✗ Here's what is changing



We tried to communicate:

✓ Here's why it matters

We focused on:

- Building trust
- Creating confidence
- Reducing uncertainty
- Helping people see themselves in the future state

Go-Live Is Not the Finish Line

Most organizations focus on launch. We focused on support.

Customer Contact Center:

- **Dedicated support staff**
- **Password assistance**
- **MyTaxes support**
- **Taxpayer guidance**

Results:

- **Over 10,000 calls presented on Day One**
- **Wait times eventually reduced to under 30 seconds**

Things I Was Completely Wrong About

- **How much training we'd need**
- **How many reports we'd need**
- **How many refresher sessions we'd need**
- **How many passwords people would forget**
- **And what constitutes a medically advisable amount of caffeine.**

Things Nobody Puts In The Press Release

- **People cried.**
- **People argued.**
- **We changed our minds.**
- **We found problems.**
- **We fixed problems.**
- **We worked weekends.**
- **We drank alarming amounts of caffeinated beverages.**
- **Someone definitely slept on the floor.**

The Project Plan Never Mentioned Sleeping on the Floor

Expectations

- Calm
- Organized
- Predictable

Reality

- Controlled Chaos
 - Sleeping on floors
 - Emergency calls
 - War rooms
 - Commissioner casting his vote standing on a table
 - 10,000 calls to CCC on Day 1

Celebrate More Than Go-Live

Celebrate:

- ✓ **Testing Completion**
- ✓ **Training Milestones**
- ✓ **Successful Deployments**
- ✓ **Small Wins**
- ✓ **Team Contributions**
- ✓ **Progress**

Not just:

 **Go-Live**



The Awards Have a Few Names

The Success has Hundreds

The Awards Were Nice. The Outcomes Were Better.

What Meant More

- **Taxpayers successfully serving themselves**
- **Employees embracing the system**
- **Faster service**
- **Better experiences**
- **Reduced manual work**

Dear 2020 Beth

If I could go back and give myself advice:

- **It will take longer than you think.**
- **Change management is not optional.**
- **Training is never done.**
- **Governance matters.**
- **People matter more than software.**
- **Buy more coffee.**

And:

You're going to survive.

Barely.

But you're going to survive.

What I'd Do Again

- 1. Invest in OCM early**
- 2. Empower business owners**
- 3. Communicate constantly**
- 4. Build support before launch**
- 5. Protect scope through formal change control process**
- 6. Celebrate wins, even the small ones**

What Actually Made It Award-Winning?

Not This:

- ✗ **Software**
- ✗ **Vendor**
- ✗ **Project Plan**
- ✗ **Technology**

This:

- ✓ **Ownership**
- ✓ **Communication**
- ✓ **Training**
- ✓ **Governance**
- ✓ **Recognition**
- ✓ **Persistence**

The Software Was Never The Hard Part

The hard part was:

- **Building trust**
- **Managing change**
- **Maintaining momentum**
- **Creating ownership**
- **Keeping people moving in the same direction**

Final Thought

**Award-winning technology projects
are not technology projects.**

**They are people projects enabled by
technology.**

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