TN Division of TennCare

ENTERPRISE TOOLS:

FROM EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE
TO ALL-IN-ONE PLACE

NASCIO Award Category: Enterprise IT Management Initiatives

Submitting State: State of Tennessee

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Executive Summary

In the State of Tennessee, there is a network of over 150 distinct vendor partners crucial to providing citizens with access to healthcare and Medicaid services. The significance of this task cannot be overstated, and any inefficiencies directly jeopardize the health and wellbeing of individuals relying on these services.

While collaboration with various partners is productive and impactful, it's not without challenges. One hurdle stands out distinctly: the disparity in tools utilized.

Each module provider and application systems integrator employs a unique set of tools and business processes to accomplish their tasks. One might inquire about the severity of this issue. Isn't it, after all, beneficial for vendors to use their preferred tools for Design, Development, and Implementation (DDI) alongside Operations and Maintenance (O&M) work? It is true that this approach allows teams to commence work promptly, circumventing the delays typically associated with system access, training, and adoption. However, when the scope of initiatives increases, it can become difficult to manage initiatives across different tools which can result in decrease in quality, increase in overheard, and result in inconsistent and inaccurate reporting.

Given this challenge, Tennessee envisioned a streamlined scenario where all partners could use the same tools and processes, promoting an environment of harmonious and efficient communication.
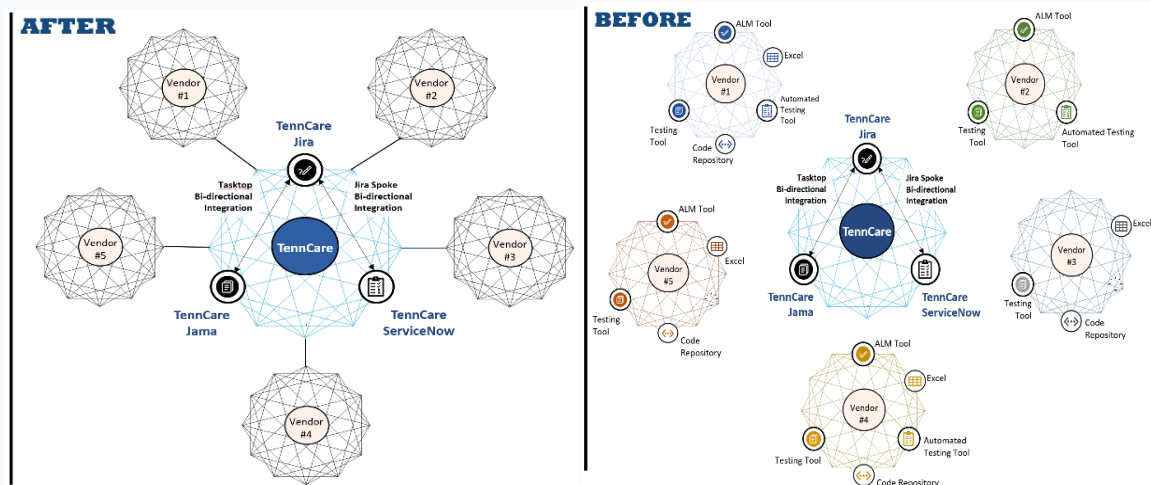

Figure 1: Tool Landscape After Implementation   Figure 2: Tool Landscape Before Implementation

Not stopping at mere imagination, the state took decisive action to make this vision a reality with a two-fold solution:
1. **Migrate and onboard all Systems Integration Partners** to utilize standard enterprise-wide tools: Jira, Jama, and ServiceNow.
2. **Develop bi-directional, real-time system integrations** between your IT Incident and enhancement tracking tool (ServiceNow) and your software development lifecycle (SDLC) tool, Jira to ensure that teams can effectively and efficiently address Production application enhancements and defects.

TennCare Information Systems (IS) department collaborated with not one, but three partners to bring this vision to reality. These different partner teams collaborated with TennCare IS leadership to tackle this implementation from all sides: development, project management, training, and adoption and operational support. The vendor partners being onboarded to these new tools and processes participated in timeline rollout discussions, training sessions, and UAT.

The result? A true enterprise implementation approach for an enterprise tools vision!

Project Description

IDEA

In January 2023, the Division of TennCare made the crucial choice to onboard and train their partners on three main tools:

- ServiceNow – TennCare's main tool for tracking Incidents, Problems, Defects, and Enhancements across **85+ business applications.**
- Jira - An issue tracking and management software application that allows vendor application teams to track and address over **30+ issue types** (everything from Risks, Decisions, to Dev Activities), manage projects, and automate workflows.
- Jama – An application used for tracking **Requirements, Design Artifacts, and application testing** (test cases, test runs, etc.).

TennCare selected these tools to be the cornerstone applications specifically to support enterprise-wide centralized test governance, project management, and release oversight.

By onboarding all users to use the same tools, it addresses the key issues plaguing TennCare:

1. The inability to see across all projects and know, at a glance, if they are progressing well or encountering difficulties
2. Difficulty reporting these initiatives at an enterprise-level instead of project-by-project.

Inefficient project components can make it hard to pinpoint problems, causing disorganization and leading to a lack of harmony in the project's execution. However, when all project teams are synchronized and functioning effectively, not only does the project operate more smoothly, but the teams can also concentrate on innovating and delivering high-quality results for the intended beneficiaries. This efficient operation prevents wasted time spent on rectifying inconsistencies and misalignments in the use of various tools, processes, and reports.

The Differentiator

What sets this implementation apart? In their pursuit of excellence, TennCare did not stop at creating Jira and Jama projects for each partner and respective modules. Instead, they incorporated two additional processes into their implementation strategy and orchestrated system integration 'go-lives' to further streamline operations. This unique and innovative approach underscores TennCare's dedication to refining processes and enhancing user experience.

Jira / ServiceNow System Integrations:

Incident – Problem – Defect Process

ServiceNow is used by the TennCare Technical Service Desk to log and track Incidents that occur across all business applications. If the Technical ServiceDesk team is unable to resolve the Incident, the application teams will log a corresponding Problem and Defect ticket in ServiceNow. With all the tickets in ServiceNow, TennCare needed a way to integrate the Defect record with Jira so the application teams can triage, address, and deploy the necessary fix. The ServiceNow and Jira teams developed a new issue type called "ServiceNow Defect" and set up a bi-directional, real-time integration between the "Defect" record in ServiceNow and the "ServiceNow Defect" record in Jira.
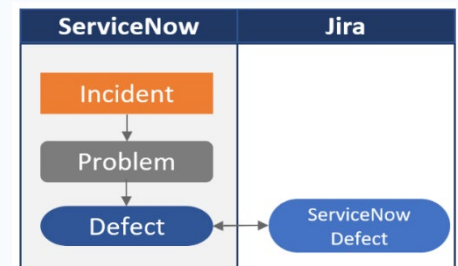
Figure 3: Incident - Problem - Defect Bi-directional Integration

This new system integration was vital for TennCare to have proper ticketing management, efficiently address application issues, identify trends, and follow the proper software development lifecycle (SDLC) processes.

Demand to Enhancement Process

TennCare needed a way for users to request changes to existing applications and new products, applications, services, and functionality in a central location. TennCare rolled out the Demand to Enhancement process that gave partners and state employees a way to request these items in a standard Demand form. Once the Demand is submitted, the Enterprise Demand Manager reviews the Demand and either identifies it as a net new project or enhancement to an existing business application.
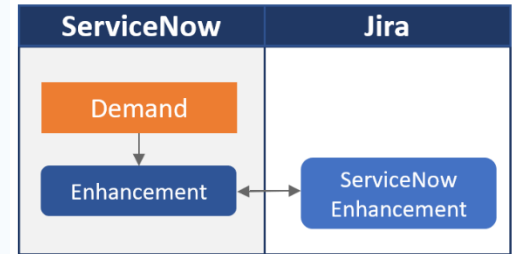

Figure 4: Demand to Enhancement Bi-directional Integration

While this new process significantly bolstered TennCare's ability to track new project and enhancement requests in one location, TennCare still needed a way to integrate these enhancements with the application teams utilizing Jira for the corresponding SDLC work. The ServiceNow and Jira teams developed a new issue type called "ServiceNow Enhancement" and set-up a bi-directional real-time integration between the "Enhancement" record in ServiceNow and the "ServiceNow Enhancement" record in Jira. This new system integration is incredibly impactful for TennCare as it allows them the opportunity to track and review project and enhancement requests at an Enterprise level while the scope, design, and development happens simultaneously in Jira.

Universal Application & Easily Reproducible

The challenges experienced by various projects and state agencies are similar, predominantly revolving around the issue of tool overload. The predicament arises when there are too many tools in use, each operating in isolation, without any form of integration amongst them. This lack of interconnectivity between systems often leads to complications, causing a ripple effect of operational inefficiencies.

TennCare's approach can be used by any state agency that struggles with disparate tools. The more bi-directional integrations between systems, the better. Less redundant work. More efficient collaboration across partners and state employees. More citizens receiving help at the quickest speed.

This project tackles head-on one of the State CIO Top 10 Priorities – 07: Consolidation and Optimization. The main objective of the Enterprise Tools initiative has been centralization of tools, services, and operations.

IMPLEMENTATION

So, how did TennCare implement an Enterprise vision for tools adoption across partners?

Figure 5: Implementation Teams
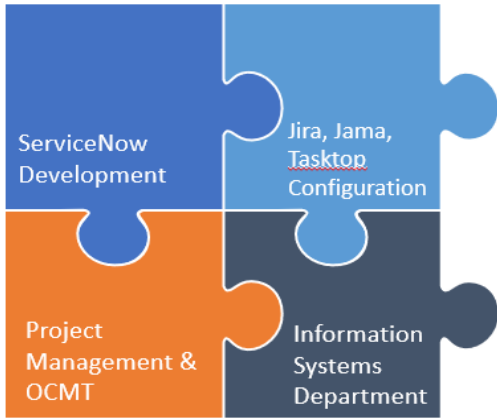
TennCare leveraged the strengths of their vendor partners as their primary resource.

Each partner tapped to work on this Enterprise Tools vision took one piece of the puzzle. From a project management perspective, TennCare rolled out the two integrations in a phased approach for each vendor. TennCare collaborated with incoming vendor partners on how to make the switch to these Enterprise tools, and thoughtfully aligned on a timeline that meets TennCare's expectations but also allowed vendors to make a successful and smooth transition.

While vendors were onboarded in a phased approach, subsequent phases will focus on onboarding different business applications as TennCare go-live to Production and enter the O&M phase of their projects. At this natural junction in their project life cycle, TennCare will need to leverage the two integrations for incident/defect resolution and enhancement deployment.

Timeline of Enterprise Tools Initiative:

Phase One: Configuration & Development (first 0-9 months)
- Jira projects configuration
- Jama projects configuration
- Tasktop sync configuration between Jira and Jama projects
- ServiceNow and Jira development of bi-directional integration
- Granting vendor partners access to tools
- End-user training, user guide, and quick-reference guide (QRG) development

Phase Two: Onboard First Vendor (months 10-12)
- End-user training
- Vendor partner UAT and signoff
- TennCare go-live Go/No-Go Decision
- Post go-live Office Hours
- Post go-live hyper care to address any defects

These activities were replicated for each system integration go-live.

Phase Three: Onboard Vendors 2-4 (months 13-15)
- End-user training
- Vendor partner UAT and signoff
- TennCare go-live Go/No-Go Decision
- Post go-live Office Hours
- Post go-live hyper care to address any defects

To speed up development and keep costs low, TennCare utilized existing solutions rather than relying solely on custom development. The bi-directional integrations were configured leveraging a ServiceNow add-on app called Jira Spoke. From the Jira side of the integration, the tools team leveraged webhooks that are native functionality to Jira.

IMPACT

From Chaos to Consistency

While the roadmap and scope for this Enterprise Tools vision is ever evolving, the impact is clear. Prior to the introduction of the Enterprise Tools initiative, the landscape of TennCare and vendor partners was chaotic. However, the successful implementation of the Enterprise Tools initiative has streamlined processes and enhanced collaboration. As of May 2024, five vendor teams have been onboarded to the Enterprise tools and processes. TennCare went from having five project teams to 19 leveraging their own Jira and Jama projects for their SDLC processes and project work.
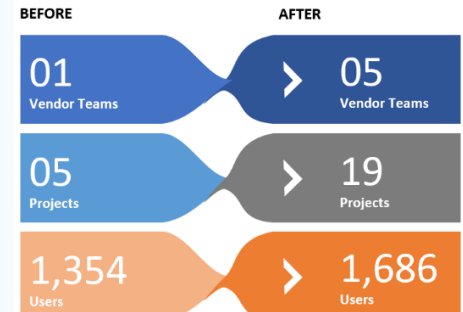

Figure 1: Jira Landscape Before & After

Beyond just tool usage, one of the most significant impacts is the volume of Incidents, Defects, and Enhancements that have been worked across the TennCare business applications since implementation.
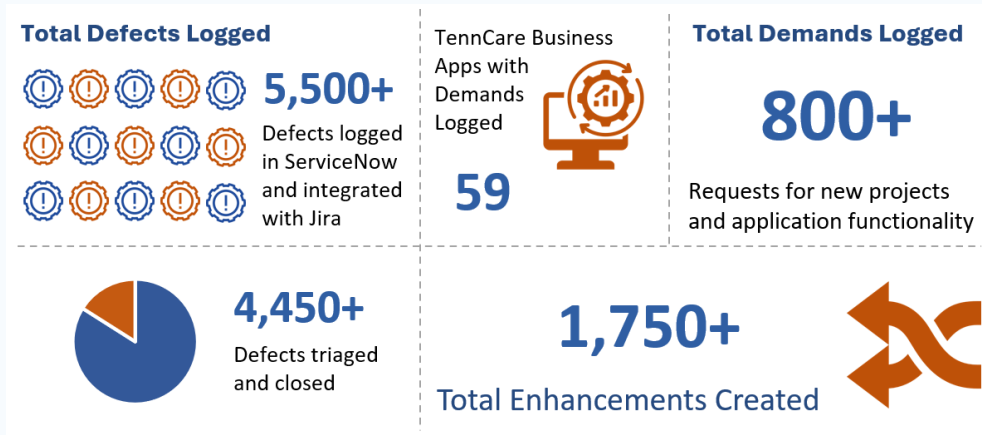

Figure 2: Snapshot of the Defects, Demands, and Enhancements Created

So, what's next? TennCare will continue to onboard new vendors to the three main tools and transition existing business application teams to the Incident-Problem-Defect and Demand to Enhancement processes.

TennCare is committed to making the integration processes as efficient as possible with iterative enhancements. And, as TennCare identifies new tools to leverage, the leading question will be, *can these tools integrate with TennCare's Enterprise vision?*

As TennCare continues to invest in these tools, integrations, and processes TennCare will see an even higher return on investment. It takes minimal development or configuration to stand up new projects and onboard new vendors as the system integrations can be enabled quickly. The trainings, user guides, and QRGs are housed in ServiceNow's Knowledge Base so each new vendor can quickly get up to speed on the available tools, processes, and expectations from TennCare.

For TennCare, the Enterprise Tools vision is now a reality. By onboarding vendors to the same tools and creating bi-directional system integrations—vendors work with a consistent set of tools, while also providing leadership and teams with a holistic view and real-time collaboration.