

6 October 2020

Dear Colleagues:

As you are aware, DG4, DG5 and DG6 college ctcLink Executive Sponsors participated in ctcLink Risk meetings on Sept. 1 and 3, 2020, an activity hosted by the ctcLink Steering Committee. All DG4, DG5 and DG6 colleges participated except Clover Park, which had only recently named its new executive sponsor.

There was not a one-size solution or singular fix to the issues, but there was common concern about the impact of ctcLink implementation efforts on employees. By far, the common theme was more about *people* than *technology*.

Our Bottom Line is Human

The ctcLink implementation process is a partnership and a highly iterative process, requiring organizational change management, engagement, prep work, data cleansing, data validation, testing, and training to get your colleges ready for success.

The ctcLink implementation finish line is just a starting line for an entirely new way of conducting business. And while we can't change the work, we can change our approach.

While we clearly need the support and guidance of the ctcLink Project Team to be successful, *the colleges own the local work of preparing to go live on ctcLink*, and to do that, we need to support our staff through these current unprecedented circumstances.

The Ask

- Deployment Groups 4, 5 and 6 must stay on task to help us all meet the implementation timelines and stay on budget.
- The health, well-being and retention of employees is essential. College leaders need to find ways to support staff members doing ctcLink implementation work, even in this worst-case scenario.
- Now is the time to focus priorities and figure out what can be reasonably let go. Frontline staff need permission to set aside existing work or other initiatives in order to focus on meeting ctcLink deadlines. These are local decisions that are specific to each college.

What We Heard

Even in the "old days" (2019!), ctcLink local efforts were an additional part-time job; and in some weeks, it's another full-time job.

Multiple issues — working from home, social unrest and racism, budget and staff cuts, kids learning from home, decrease in enrollments — are all contributing to the impact on employees attempting to focus on ctcLink work. Issues fell into several broad categories, with a few representative examples listed below.

Morale

- Employees are trying to balance home/family needs with work needs. Children attending school remotely at home and parents needing to assist during school hours.
- Work-from-home (WFH) fatigue, people quitting. Colleges are starting to see resignations, retirements because staff are feeling stressed and overwhelmed.
- Feeling of disconnection, isolation.
- Colleges are reliant on a handful of people for the vast majority of ctcLink work.
- Juggling families, pets, children, school while trying to do ctcLink work on top of their regular work is extremely difficult.
- Some staff are "breaking": employees in tears, retiring, resigning, burned out.

Staff & Furloughs

- Different methods of implementing furloughs across the system; some colleges have not started furloughs.
- Exempt staff often work close to 50 hours a week (or more). For ctcLink, they sometimes work 60+ hours week. With a 1-day furlough you can only work 32 hours in the week. This creates huge pressure on completing both project work and regular day-to-day work.
- Trying to be flexible which days people take as furlough, so they don't take furlough during major ctcLink activities.

Unions

- Union contract provisions are being discussed at several colleges.
- HRMC is surveying its membership about pay differentials for ctcLink leads or additional work.

Technology

- Technology challenges are an issue for many colleges. Staff can't do data validation with a single monitor or remote meetings without audio, microphones and video.
- Colleges have cannibalized classrooms so employees can take home one or two monitors. Sent home a lot of equipment with staff (e.g. Vari-desks, headsets)
- Some employees don't even have desks at home or a place to put a second monitor.

Recommendations

Again, there was not a one-size-fits-all solution or singular fix to the issues, but the executive sponsors offered the following ideas of what's working for them.

Executive Sponsor DG Cohorts

Executive sponsors need to support each other and presidents need to support their executive sponsors.

DG4 sponsors meet monthly and it's been valuable as a way to share ideas, get advice and do "reality checks" on whether an issue is local (e.g. skill-, training- or mindset-based) or if the issues are deployment-group-wide.

DG5 - Chad Stiteler, BTC, agreed to organize the DG5 Executive Sponsors.

DG6 - Chris McLain, LWIT agreed to organize the DG6 Executive Sponsors.

Leadership Engagement

- If you are not already doing so, meet with your Executive Sponsor and PM/OCM regularly to understand the local situation.
- Check in with your college's frontline ctcLink team. What do they need?
- Help your employees do less. What can they give up?
- Include ctcLink issues/updates regularly during executive cabinet and board of trustees meetings.
- Lift up and celebrate your people.

Backfill and Staffing

- Lesson for DG5 and DG6: Staff gave up a few inconsequential things, but not the big things. It's now too late to shift that. We would have been much more prescriptive about how much day-to-day work staff will need to give up and how much time is needed for ctcLink.
- Need to backfill positions early enough and hire people with the skillset, because there is no capacity for onboarding in the middle of implementation activities.
- Brought back a retired employee with skillset to fill in on Legacy tasks.
- Expanded a part-timer with skillset to temporary project-based full-time.

- DG5 and DG6 can learn from DG4 experience that you need to train someone in advance with adequate time.

PeopleSoft Business Analysts

In this economic climate, it's not a likely option, but the colleges that used the model set forth in [College Roles, Departmental Dependencies & Organizational Alignment](#) and hired PeopleSoft Business Analysts find them to be vital to their local success. The Business Analyst training available from ctcLink Training can only go so far, because staff cannot do this work in addition to their full-time jobs.

Solutions and actions colleges are taking

- Fridays are devoted to ctcLink work for most departments.
- Negotiated with childcare provider to provide K-5 childcare for employees.
- Cabinet updates about where all the departments are with ctcLink so leadership can better support their staff and the work required.
- Working with staff to get them to try to ease up on their internal expectations and let tasks go.
- Weekly check-ins to balance out emails with human check-ins to encourage, motivate, thank.
- Microsoft Teams to increase communications and community-building to help people feel connected even though working remotely, has helped employees stay connected.
- Implemented a recognition program to give opportunity for people to notice and be noticed. Has created a nice sense of camaraderie and positivity as we go into fall.
- Be flexible with working hours/days and when people must take furlough days.
- Dedicated ctcLink budget approved that includes surge positions.
- Streamlined a lot of the process around backfill. If a supervisor asks for overtime, part-time hourly support, temporary classified positions, they just fill out the form and submit to HR.
- Hired outside consultants to work on business process maps and future state mapping

As expressed by Kevin Brockbank in his June memo, beyond the local ctcLink Project Manager at each college, your local subject matter experts (SMEs) and team leads dedicated to ctcLink project work — enrollment, financial aid, human resources, fiscal, grants/contracts, payroll, accounting/business, continuing education, and IT/help desk to name just a few — are engaged in *critical activities on the ground to move the project forward*.

Those with HP Legacy system knowledge are particularly critical to the transition to ctcLink. It is critical that these individuals remain fully engaged in the work to keep your colleges on track for your scheduled implementation date. Without these individuals continuing the work necessary for your scheduled deployment it will create a significant risk for your college and the entire project. Please consider these ramifications when evaluating personnel and budget decisions.

Feel free to contact me if you have questions.

On behalf of the ctcLink Steering Committee,

Tim

Tim Wrye

Executive Director of IT Services and CIO, Highline College
ctcLink Steering Committee Chair

Risk Meeting attendees

Kevin Brockbank, Spokane – WACTC Tech Chair

Bob Mohrbacher, Centralia – DG4

Eva Smith, Edmonds – DG4

Tim Wrye, Highline – DG4

Kurt Buttleman, Seattle – DG4

Reagan Bellamy, Wenatchee Valley – DG4

Rodger Harrison, Bellevue – DG5

Chad Stiteler, Bellingham – DG5

Linda Schoonmaker, Big Bend – DG5

Pat Cisneros, Everett – DG5

Darin Jones, Grays Harbor – DG5

Camella Morgan, Green River – DG5

Ed Jaramillo, Skagit Valley – DG5

Nate Langstraat, Whatcom – DG5

Agnes Figueroa Martinez, Bates – DG6

No attendee, Clover Park – DG6

Brian Dexter, Columbia Basin, for Rebekah Woods – DG6

Chris McLain, Lake Washington – DG6

Paul Corigliano, Renton Tech – DG6

Cheryl Roberts, Shoreline – DG6

Al Brown, South Puget Sound – DG6

Missy Yates, South Puget Sound PM – DG6

Davina Fogg, Walla Walla – DG6

Teresa Rich, Yakima Valley – DG6

Christy Campbell, Chief Technology Officer, ctclink Program

Janelle Runyon, ctclink Communications Manager

Susan Maxwell, ctclink College Advisor

Sherry Nelson, ctclink Communications Coordinator