

Using BaseCampHQ

In A Complex Government Agency Project Setting

By: Phil Marnell

(ATLANTA, OCTOBER 2009) The idea of an electronic medical record was percolating all over the media and seemed to be one of the main topics on every single news broadcast. The vision of General (Ret.) James Donald, then the Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Corrections was to bring the efficiencies and potential care improvements into the real world of healthcare delivered in a prison setting.

The complexities were enormous, the organizational disruption would be substantial and the cost of the project was a major concern. But the benefits to the agency (and, by extension, the taxpayer) were equally huge. Plus, there was really no way to account for costs in the centuries-old manual/paper system that was in place, and the costs of healthcare "inside the fence" was rising meteorically, just like it was in the outside world.

Recognizing how healthcare for offenders fit into the continuum of public health and the greater community good, Commissioner Donald gave the go-ahead and work began on the project.

Any project that big requires powerful planning tools. But licensing for the 800-pound gorilla Project system made it impractical as a tool the entire statewide team could access, let alone learn to use. On top of that there were complicated steps internally just to get the software installed.

But, something was needed - and fast! Enter: [BaseCampHQ!](http://www.basecamp.com) It's web-based, so there's no requirement other than a browser. It's not expensive. It's very easy to use, and also very powerful. Early-stage project steps were easily input into, and managed from the BaseCampHQ interface, and the entire statewide team had just the visibility they needed to keep the project moving forward.

The screenshot shows a Mozilla Firefox browser window with the address bar displaying 'https://pilotprototype1.basecamp.com/clients'. The page title is 'OHSBeta: Projects'. The main content area is titled 'Latest activity in your project' and features a 'Late Milestones' section with a red alert: '33 days late: Activated project charter [OHSBeta | E_ | Phil Marnell]'. Below this is a list of activities with columns for status, description, assignee, and date. The activities include 'To-do' items like 'Sub-divide the list of SOPs into areas and/or fields of operations and expertise' and 'Assemble online version of *ALL* SOPs for reference', as well as 'Message' and 'Milestone' items like 'Notes from pre-planning discussion - 16SEP09' and 'Hardware resolved/issued for prototype sites'. The date for all activities is '16 Sep'.

Status	Description	Assignee	Date
To-do	Sub-divide the list of SOPs into areas and/or fields of operations and expertise. This is the way an update would look? (SOPReview_1)	Reopened for Phil M.	16 Sep
Comment	Re: Sub-divide the list of SOPs into areas and/or fields of operations and expertise. This is the way an update would look?	Posted by Phil M.	16 Sep
Comment	Re: Sub-divide the list of SOPs into areas and/or fields of operations and expertise. This is the way an update would look?	Posted by Sondra C.	16 Sep
To-do	Assemble online version of *ALL* SOPs for reference. (SOPReview_1)	Reopened for Anyone	16 Sep
To-do	Compile listing of SOPs (SOPReview_1)	Reopened for Anyone	16 Sep
To-do	Replicate the SOP repository so there is an 'ALPHA' version, which remains unchanged (SOPReview_1)	Reopened for Anyone	16 Sep
Message	Notes from pre-planning discussion - 16SEP09	Posted by Phil M.	16 Sep
Milestone	Hardware resolved/issued for prototype sites (Due 13 Nov)	Assigned to Phil M.	16 Sep
Milestone	SOPs: Level I directives issued, field protocols in place (Due 30 Dec)	Assigned to Phil M.	16 Sep
Milestone	Activated project charter (Due 25 Sep)	Assigned to Phil M.	16 Sep
To-do	Establish deliverables, responses and receivers of IV&V materials throughout the project (IV&V_Setup)	Assigned to Anyone	16 Sep
To-do	Establish scope of IV&V (IV&V_Setup)	Assigned to Anyone	16 Sep