

CSS Quick Facts – Responsibilities of Executives in Integrating CSS

For the CSS Integration Guide:

Executives are defined as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or Director of State DOTs and their leadership team, who provide overall vision, direction, and guidance for the organization.

Responsibilities of Executives in Managing CSS Integration

There are four major roles that DOT executives have in managing CSS integration. These include:

- They are the visionary leaders who develop and communicate internally and externally the case for change and the CSS vision.
- They are the “project managers” of the CSS assessment and implementation planning process.
- They are responsible for creating and maintaining the accountability structure that ensures that everyone in the organization is fulfilling their responsibilities in implementing CSS integration.
- They are the CSS champions who demonstrate their commitment to CSS integration by “walking the talk,” providing on-going and visible positive reinforcement of CSS success, and ensuring clear individual and organizational accountability for lack of progress.

DOT executives have two additional responsibilities, “aligning” the organization and balancing CSS implementation with overall program and project delivery.

Alignment

When the four primary responsibilities are combined and executed well, every individual in the organization is committed to CSS integration, knows their role, and has the resources to make the changes they have been asked to make. This is referred to as “alignment” – positioning individuals in the organization to support the CSS vision. Individuals who are not aligned can be a significant barrier to successful integration. At the staff level these are often people who are perceived as resisting change. Before assuming that someone is “resistant” it is important to ask:

- Is the case for change meaningful to them? Do they have a reason to commit to CSS integration?
- Do they understand what they personally need to do differently in their day-to-day work? Do they have the skills and have they been trained?
- Do they have the resources they need to implement CSS in their specific job?

Staff alignment is important but executive and management alignment is absolutely critical to CSS integration. At the staff level only the individual’s day-to-day work is impacted when that employee is not aligned. An executive or manager has a much larger sphere of responsibility and their lack of alignment impacts every employee who works under their supervision. Because they are responsible for communicating the case for change and CSS vision, overseeing action plan development and implementation, and maintaining the accountability structure among their staff, the impact of their lack of commitment and participation is much greater on the organization overall.

Balancing CSS Integration with Program/Project Delivery

In addition to the responsibilities above, the executive team must also balance the demands of delivering projects and services in the program and budget with the transition to a new CSS “way of doing business.” The key to balancing these is the careful and thoughtful sequencing of action plans and resource allocation through the development of the CSS integration implementation plan. These discussions must take into account the existing commitments of the organization to deliver its products and services. Therefore, Executives should have a commitment to “patient persistence.” CSS integration is not going to be done in one year, potentially not even in five years. The CSS self-assessment and integration implementation plan provide the long term road map for what needs to change. Regularly revisiting this information to add new action plans will ensure that the CSS integration is supported and maintained over time.

For further information contact Rod Vaughn, FHWA Resource Center, rodneyn.vaughn@dot.gov

www.contextsensitivesolutions.org

