NGA's Quest to 'Bubble up' Innovation to Change People, Processes and Policies

And to do so, it's taking a page from the startup world.

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Christy Monaco
Chief Ventures Officer, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency

As chief ventures officer at the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, Christy Monaco helps bring novel ways of thinking from the outside world into her agency and spearheads efforts to "bubble up" innovation to change people, processes and policies.
"Technology is not the problem," she says. "There's so much technology that's being developed in our space, in the geospatial space, in AI, in computer vision, machine learning — that's not the problem. Where the difficulties are are the people, the processes and to some degree, the data."

The government culture has very different rewards systems compared to the private sector, especially the startup space, Monaco points out. So, NGA is training employees to look at succeeding methodologies in the private sector — including agile and lean startup — and then take those into the agency and apply them.

"It helps us foster innovation from within, but it also helps us learn terminologies so that when we speak with our outside partners, we're on the same page," she says.

Watch the full interview above.

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