

AMTEC Consulting

change and programme management



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intellectually straightforward...*

*but experience shows that it can be
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Supporting leadership and facilitating change

Public sector managers are adopting structured approaches to organisational change to more effectively translate strategy, initiatives and directives into practical and deliverable programmes. They need flexible, pragmatic techniques to conceive and scope complex change programmes for the best possible chance of success and to minimise the potential for failure or delay.

In support of these requirements, OGC has recently refreshed its *Managing Successful Programmes™* framework to help organisations to address transformational programmes, i.e. where there is a marked step change from the current way of working.

To underpin successful change, many organisations are looking to strengthen their capabilities in the following areas:

- **Programme Leadership** – ensuring that Senior Responsible Owners and senior managers have the skills and expertise to inspire and lead their programme, and are able to focus their time and energy in this area.
- **Programme Strategy** – ensuring that the overall programme has an effective strategy with a clearly defined outcome, a manageable roadmap and in-built flexibility to respond to risks and new initiatives.
- **Facilitating Change** – ensuring that the complexities of cultural and behavioural change are recognised and addressed in ways that encourage staff to embrace change.
- **Programme and Project Management Approach and Competency** – ensuring that the organisation has the required programme management capabilities and that its life-cycle, standards, processes and cultural environment underpin the success of the programme.

In this paper, we present real lessons learned from practitioners in the field. This invaluable feedback can help managers to avoid stressful and demoralising problems and achieve a successful outcome from even the most challenging change programme.



Programme Leadership

Personalised coaching and mentoring can help you to balance the demands of your day job with the challenges of this leadership role.

Developing the Senior Responsible Owner's skills and capabilities

Stepping up to this role can be a major undertaking for managers, not only due to the challenges of the role itself, but also the need to hold down a substantial day job. To support senior civil servants in this role, many organisations are now supplementing standard training courses with one-to-one coaching and mentoring. This is an effective way of rapidly injecting and developing directly relevant skills that can be applied straight away.

The Lessons Learned

- Identify the key requirements of this role in the context of your organisation and the programme(s) for which you are responsible.
- Identify and address any gaps between the requirements of the role and your current skills and abilities as the Senior Responsible Owner.
- Be clear about your generic personal development needs versus your needs on a specific programme – you may gain more insight by stepping back from the programme in order to see your broader-based needs.
- Form your team by bringing in individuals with a supportive mind-set and an ability to get onto your “page”; this will also help you to sustain momentum.
- Be open to the needs of staff – many have quite straightforward needs, such as seeing managers “walk the talk” and knowing that although there is change, existing skills will not be discarded.
- Develop a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of the programme.
- Choose the right pace – change programmes often start with a flurry of activity, when what is needed is often a low-key start, gradually building in momentum.
- Recognise that for policy-making environments, bridging policy into delivery is likely to be a major challenge for the organisation.
- Use clear, consistent and regular communication with all staff and management to win the hearts and minds of the people on the programme and those affected by it.
- Create a robust stake-holder engagement plan and implement it.
- Focus on your personal prioritisation.



Programme Strategy

Getting your programme effectively initiated and facing in the right strategic direction is essential if you are to achieve a successful outcome.

Applying strategic programme management

Significant benefits can be accrued from the pragmatic application of structured techniques to ensure the programme is strategically aligned to, and directly supports, the organisation's overall aims and objectives. This alignment is one of the major benefits of adopting a structured approach at programme initiation stage and decreases the chance of embarrassing failures or delays.

The Lessons Learned

- Establish a thorough and robust understanding of the “as-is” position.
- Obtain independent and objective perspectives to assess and test the “vision” of the programme.
- Define a pragmatic roadmap for addressing the gaps between the “as-is” and “to-be” situation.
- Seek out “challenge” functions to test the robustness of your approach.
- Keep the organisation in the driving seat and in control of its affairs by engaging people who can fit in as part of your team and work together to achieve the agreed programme goals.
- Use the organisation's strategies as a “springboard”.
- Share ideas with other organisations tackling a similar challenge, even if different from your own, and obtain powerful insights into how your roadmap and strategy should look.
- Remember that sound strategies and roadmaps are usually easy to communicate – diagrams and simple presentations are the right tools, but get creative input to put the messages together.
- Build in flexibility when setting the direction – standard tools include adapting the rate of change (serial or parallel paths), flexing the delivery mechanism (e.g. internal, external, partnership) and appropriate use of options and priorities.
- Take a broad-based view – a robust strategy should make sense from the perspective of all major stake-holders, including staff, management, customers, partners, regulators and suppliers.
- Don't underestimate the challenge of developing a clear and actionable blueprint to convert the programme's vision into reality (i.e. delivery) – one that the programme team and stake-holders can understand.



Facilitating Change

Winning the hearts and minds of your staff is one of the most critical aspects of successfully achieving organisational change.

Preparing the organisation for change

Senior civil servants are now being asked to address an increasing number of initiatives – many of which can only be achieved if the organisation changes the way it behaves. Such change can be intellectually straightforward to articulate, but experience shows that it is hugely difficult to deliver. One of the key inhibiting factors is winning the hearts and minds of your staff and getting them to travel the journey with you.

The Lessons Learned

- Provide staff with the rationale and vision for the future by producing destination statements that clearly and concisely explain the “future state” and what it means for them.
- Make your vision real by building on existing success, providing examples from other organisations and using pilots and test deployments.
- Avoid a scenario in which the “vision” of the outcome is too generic or too detached from everyday life to really inspire staff and management.
- Don’t underestimate the challenge of identifying a path for the programme and the need to get staff to travel with you – this requires a clear strategy and emotional visioning.
- Communication is key – you need a comprehensive stake-holder engagement plan that uses an appropriate set of methods (e.g. briefings, presentations, emails, intranet, newsletters) and is actively managed throughout the transformation.
- Use interim blueprints and checkpoints throughout the organisational transformation to ensure that you know where you are and can demonstrate that the planned change is being achieved.
- Ensure that there is a strong momentum for the transformation, otherwise it will never get off the ground.
- Don’t underestimate the challenges of assembling and developing a coherent capability within the programme team.
- Identify and leverage from local change managers, champions and other stake-holders to support and re-enforce the programme’s messages.
- Remember that permanent change is best delivered from within the organisation and not by external influences.



Programme and Project Management Approach and Competency

Embedding project-based working practices requires strong communication skills and the support of stake-holders across the organisation.

Adopting project-based working practices

More and more public sector organisations are trying to improve their performance by developing their own skills and capabilities in programme and project management. This is leading to a focus on the deployment of their own approach, life-cycle and standards, and the development of programme and project management (PPM) competency for all relevant staff.

The Lessons Learned

- Ensure the PPM approach is robust, clear and comprehensive and adaptable to all sizes and types of project, without being bureaucratic. Use the lessons learnt from OGC, NAO and others.
- Use clear, consistent and regular communication with all staff involved – essential if you are to win the hearts and minds of your staff.
- Embrace all stake-holder groups, such as Procurement and Human Resources. These groups will want to be engaged in the project and help it succeed – becoming important allies for the PPM approach.
- Deploy one-to-one engagement with those people responsible for major projects and programmes. This will gain their buy-in to the approach and build up a core of allies who can help to spread the PPM message.
- Obtain value and influence by establishing a “PPM community” which can champion the value of the PPM approach and help local or less experienced project managers to deploy it successfully.
- Be clear on what you are implementing – a good PPM framework addresses both behavioural and technical competencies, and is phrased in terms of what the individuals “are” rather than what they “do”.
- Keep the framework relevant – it must be thorough enough to cover all the requirements but small enough to be manageable. Focusing on some competencies will be more effective than identifying them all and leaving people confused as to where the emphasis lies.
- Future-proof your framework – not only must it encourage creativity and innovative approaches, but it must consider the skills required for the future rather than just those skills that have worked in the past.
- Don’t treat the framework as a once-a-year appraisal tool – behavioural change is a gradual process that must be worked on continually, not crammed in when appraisals are due.

Case Study: programme strategy and initiation



Department for Transport

About the project

Having reviewed and considered the recommendations made by the Cabinet Office's Capability Review, the Department for Transport (DfT) initiated a substantial programme of organisational change with the objective of introducing new ways of working.

The programme needed to address the following four key areas: building and demonstrating strong and cohesive leadership; making the right strategic choices; effectively delivering today's services and tomorrow's improvements; and sustaining and building capability.

The Approach

AMTEC Consulting helped DfT by providing strategic programme management support. As the programme was already up and running, AMTEC was required to join the existing team, work as an extension to the department's existing practices, and provide a degree of challenge and leverage from the Programme Management Office.

AMTEC supported the programme in the following areas:

- Providing guidance to senior civil servants in relation to the direction and overall management of the programme.
- Advising on its scope, organisation, governance arrangements, stakeholder engagement and reporting processes.
- Reviewing progress to date to ensure it represented a strong basis upon which to run the programme.
- Providing support and guidance on how to most effectively plan the change programme.

The Outcome

With the programme still at an early stage, the strategic programme management support has helped to create a sound scope and a robust and practical roadmap for the programme. It has also set the scene for the business change life-cycle that will drive through the required new ways of working.

Case Study: project management approach and competency



Natural England

About the project

Natural England is a newly formed government agency. Its Board was keen to ensure that the organisation adopted an appropriate project management approach as a key way of delivering its organisational aims and objectives. A Project Management Centre of Excellence was created as the unit responsible for designing, creating and implementing the chosen approach to project management.

The Approach

AMTEC was asked to support the creation of the organisation's project management regime and Centre of Excellence, which was sponsored by the Executive Board. Specific tasks included:

- Developing the Investment Appraisal process and governance arrangements for the Executive Board so that they could make fully-informed investment decisions.
- Developing project standards based on a "scalable" PRINCE2™ model and aligned to the organisation's corporate planning and reporting.
- Supporting the stakeholder engagement and embedding of the project management regime, including the establishment of a project management community.
- Developing and delivering project management training for the organisation's project managers.
- Providing substantial quality assurance support on all major projects by reviewing business cases and project plans, and writing Board papers with investment appraisal recommendations.
- Working with project managers and supporting them with the adoption of the organisation's project management regime.

The Outcome

Natural England now has the benefit of a solid and practical project management approach, with standards and processes to support it. The organisation is further developing its project management community as a key tool for embedding its best practice approach.



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