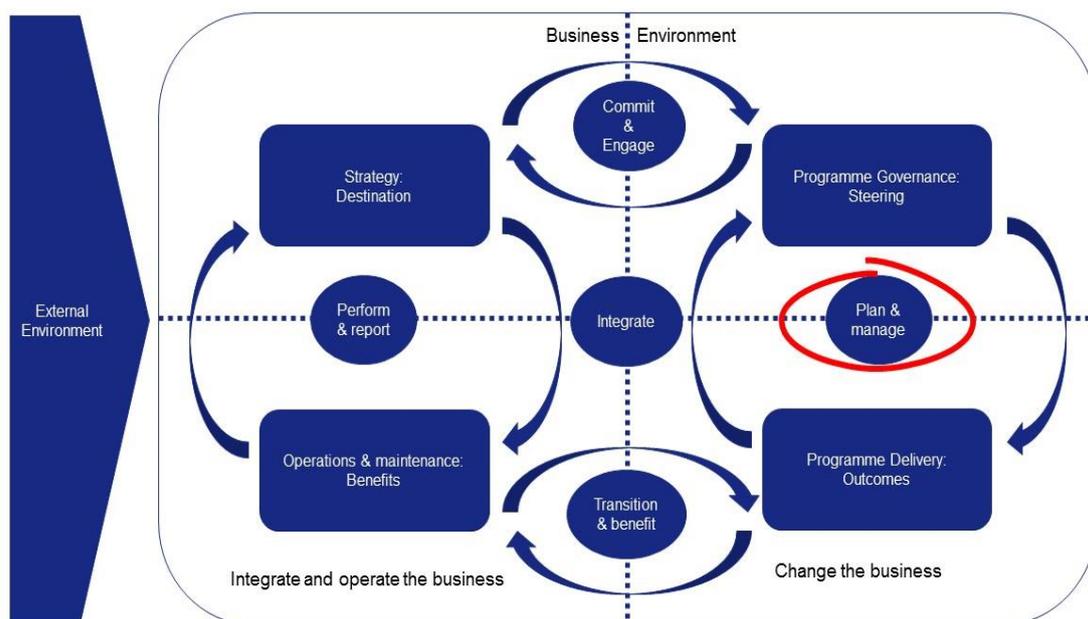


Managing uncertainty, planning and controlling delivery.

This is the fifth post on the Change and Programme Management series. Today, we are looking at improving the efficiency of planning and control and managing uncertainty while striving for simplicity.

CHANGE AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT IN CONTEXT



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For planning and scheduling, I often use the analogy of a book with each chapter / page representing a key workstream of a programme helping you and the organisation you are delivering change for to navigate the course while time passes as you write the story.

A key principle is simplicity as it applies to measurement also: too often we measure everything and understand nothing!



The critical success factors that underpin the operation of effective planning and control are a good integrated plan compiled by planning and business specialists that have had the time to consult the organisation, listen and be heard.

Don't get me wrong here I am not suggesting we should all start using the best scheduling software on the market to go about this. In my eyes, portfolio and programme scheduling software are extremely useful tools but far too often they end up controlling you and your organisation rather than giving you control an understanding of key milestones and quarterly deliverables. What is needed is a good line of sight to stay the course and a trajectory that can be adjusted as and when needed by re-sequencing, re-scoping, accelerating or slowing down...

These factors are:

Strategic objectives alignment – performance measures aligned to the strategic objectives of the organisation.

Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) – a common structure to link scope of work, estimates, budgets, schedules, earned value progress, performance and cost reports.

Baseline management (the line in the sand) – integrated baseline scope covering programme timescales, resources and budget cost and contingencies for the approved business case,

Progress Management – as the programme progresses the actual delivery times, resources and costs are recorded, analysed and compared to the baseline,

Variance Management – all changes from the original baseline are managed and incorporated into subsequent controlled copies of the original baseline called the current baseline. The current baseline is progressed to reflect the current situation and subjected to analysis,

Reporting – all baseline and progress information is collected, analysed and reported in a simple yet robust manner, based around schedule, cost and quality performance reports.



Clearly communicating the status of the delivery brief to all parties including the client. Reporting requirements will change as projects and programmes move from inception, through their lifecycles. It is important that the reporting system is designed to focus on metrics that matters at the relevant stage.

Optimal governance, programme change control, risk management and reporting of an approved baseline scope, will allow a business to manage risk, deliver value and drive programme and project decision making while saving time and efforts.

Once again the measures that matters for effective control should be simple and reliable.

Once this process is in place and data and information are flowing more or less painfully, it is then down to management to trust it and act upon it. As there is often no worst decision than no decision at all – even a bad one.

And don't forget more information is often less intelligence...

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