

Programme Assessment

Background

Ask any programme manager about the key to their success, and they will say that delivering a programme is often more like a “dark art” or by chance, than a predictable science.

They may also say that a programme going ‘off the rails’ was one of the most stressful things they have professionally experienced. And unfortunately, it’s all too common.

When well initiated and managed programmes end up off course, it is usually because of powerful factors outside of the formal scope, which influence or directly impact upon the healthy execution of the programme. ie.

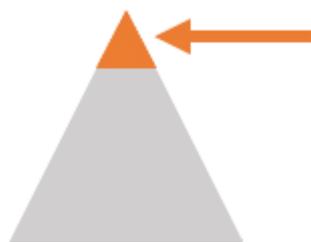
Company culture, working practices, organisational structures, informal networks, politics and power plays, HR policies, job descriptions, financial rewards and incentives, personal relationships, differences of opinions, regulatory changes, unplanned events...

Scope of Service

Our programme assessment is ideal for correcting an in-flight programme which has significantly deviated from its intended course.

It is short, quick and time bound so as to provide a summary level “snapshot” to the programme management intended as a health check and subsequent decision-making tool.

Major aspects of the operational running of a programme will be surfaced rapidly, along with bringing to light any hidden biases and “blind spots” that are limiting success.



Valuable insights into deeper issues are quickly learnt by shining the torch into the tip of the iceberg

The programme assessment will identify remedial and preventative changes to make, as well as laying the foundation for more detailed analysis and problem diagnosis if required later.

It is time bound as overall value diminishes past a certain point; and can be applied equally to large programmes, individual projects, new product propositions and customer facing services.

Approach

Various different research methods are used to surface the true picture of what is happening in a programme, and why. Our exact approach changes, but we always seek to include aspects of information gathering, desk-based research, one-on-one interviews and quantitative analysis.

Each research method will cover one or more of the following areas:

- Historical problems
- Critical risks and dependencies
- Gaps or missing capabilities
- Influencing or bearing factors
- Staffing and resource profiles
- Financial and contract management
- Structural and governance
- Operational model
- Other areas as deemed relevant to the programme

Interviews

A small number of individuals and suppliers who have been involved in the programme are usually interviewed. Sometimes multiple interviews per person are required, with their help in between to provide requested documentation, system access etc as needed.

Each interview is tailored to the individual. Interviewees are carefully chosen and early access sought so as to ensure major programme aspects are quickly surfaced, and that these can be cross-checked and validated in the other interviews.

Outcomes

The programme assessment is completely standalone and will leave programme managers informed as to the operational problems being experienced.

A summary level model of the programme will be developed, with selected overlays to illustrate critical aspects or areas of interest.

Recommendations will be provided covering the immediate and suggested changes to make; in order to get the programme back on track and running well.

Previous clients have used the programme assessment to bring risks under control, re-orient work towards value creation, improve financial management and cost control, and improve staff morale.

An ancillary benefit which often occurs is the opportunity for individuals and suppliers to reflect upon their experiences to date, discuss and verbalise these constructively, and to achieve focus and clarity going forward.

Delivery

Every programme assessment follows a general approach but is always tailored to each client.

Depending on the issues being experienced and the level of analysis required, the assessment is delivered in one of three different variations (**1, 2 or 4 weeks in duration**).

You will receive the following items throughout and upon the completion of the assessment:

1. Knowledge uncovered during research efforts
2. Analysis of what is happening and why
3. Recommendations for immediate and suggested future changes
4. Comprehensive written report
5. Presentation of findings to programme management and/or other stakeholders

Follow-ons

Whilst the programme assessment is completely standalone and will provide you with everything needed to get started on implementing the necessary changes, a number of follow-on services are available should you wish. These include:

1. Ad-hoc support during change implementation and embedding
2. Implementing specific changes as part of the programme team
3. Conducting a formal assessment and assurance after changes have been performed
4. Periodic assessments to ensure the changes have remained
5. Running (or overseeing) procurements to source change partners
6. Preparation of budget requests and business cases to enable changes
7. Referral to 3rd parties who have specific expertise if required



Frank Ray

I'm a professional engineer by education who has worked as a self-employed software developer, business analyst, project manager and management consultant for the past 20 years.

I specialise in quickly making sense of complex situations, diagnosing critical issues and uncovering hidden constraints which are limiting success, and offering practical solutions aligned with key drivers.

Senior management make decisions, initiate projects, develop new propositions, implement systems and assure quality based on my work.

I have worked with many different clients during my professional career and use that wide exposure across sectors and industries to inform my approach.

I will be surprised if you have a problem or issue that I haven't already seen elsewhere.

Nomenclature

For simplicity's sake, we have chosen the term “programme” to refer to any temporary organisation of work with an intended fixed outcome & end point, and the term “programme manager” to refer to the individual in charge of this organisation.

Please note the following when reading this document:

programme and **project** can be used interchangeably

programme manager, **programme director**, **project manager** and **delivery manager** can be used interchangeably

programme and **service** may possibly be used interchangeably *

programme manager and **service manager** may possibly be used interchangeably *

** ask me more about when our Programme Assessment Service can, and cannot, be applied to an already operational service*