



Our Project and Programme Management Practice

Good project and programme management is the key factor that determines whether an organisation is successful at implementing change. It is the one activity that draws together the many aspects of change—technical matters, cultural issues, finance, HR, organisational design, business processes, etc.—into a coherent, planned and managed activity. It gives confidence to senior executives that the complexity and risk of change is being properly and systematically addressed. It gives structure and understanding to those involved with developing and implementing detail. And for stakeholders it gives unity and clarity about purpose and outcome.

Dbi's project and programme management practice provides expert support to organisations seeking to achieve successful business change—whether a new IT system, an office relocation, an internal re-organisation, a merger, the adoption of new business processes or many other types of change.

Change is only of value if it delivers benefits. Within the context of ensuring successful implementation, we maintain a strong focus on the benefits sought. Our consulting philosophy is that successful business change depends on success in three key areas: managing the benefits; managing the risks; and managing communications.



At Dbi we know that consultancy is a people business...

... so we have built our company, culture, and processes on this basis with confident, experienced people at the top of their game. Our clients can deal with real people who take a genuine and personal interest in you, your business and in helping you solve your problems.

Our services

Our project and programme management practice can satisfy a wide range of client needs, including:

- Providing a full project management team to scope an IT project, capture and document requirements, carry out a competitive procurement process, then manage the relationship with the appointed supplier, coordinate technical implementation with business process changes, conduct testing and user assurance, and ensure successful go-live
- Recovering a project that has run into problems—for example, when a previous project manager has left at short notice with no handover, or when the project's progress is significantly different from that expected
- Supplying an experienced individual as a programme or project manager, working alongside client staff to bring an external perspective, wider experience, and specific skills. This is often associated with transferring skills to client staff, helping them prepare for future projects without external support
- Providing an individual or a small team to run a project or programme support function
- Working with an organisation to help develop an appropriate in-house project management methodology, including process development, assessment methodologies, performance reporting strategies, staff training, management of the change and post-change evaluation.

"Key to success has been the consultant's friendly, outgoing personality, which has helped build bridges when required, and his ownership, exceptional dedication and loyalty to the Programme."

Quote from MoD client

Our approach

We deliberately avoid having a 'standard', one-size fits all, methodology. Distinct client situations, various organisational ethos and diverse types of project require different approaches. Our senior consultants are empowered to discuss and agree with clients the approach that best suits the client's needs.

As a starting point for this, we base our approach on using Buying Solutions' Best Practice toolkit, particularly MSP™ (for programme management) and PRINCE2® (for project management). These can readily be tailored and adapted for a very wide range of situations.

Programmes and projects are unlikely to succeed without a really solid foundation of preparation. We place much emphasis on getting this right, ensuring clarity of objectives, shared understanding of benefits, clear ownership of risks and carefully planned communications. Plans need to recognise—and accommodate—dependencies both within the programme or project and external to it.

Finally, the only reason for undertaking a project or programme is if benefits derive from it. But this can easily be forgotten. We maintain a steady focus on benefits—from their initial definition, through early realisation plans, to eventual achievement. As circumstances change, we ensure that the impact of the changes on the eventual benefits is considered.

"I have extensive experience within central Government of working with Consultants. I have no hesitation in saying that the consultant supplied for our project was one of the best with whom I have worked."

Quote from Government Agency client

- Management of complex implementation programmes
- Business change and transformation programmes
- Definition and start up
- Project management of wide range of technical and non-technical projects
- Health checks before and during project life cycle
- Project assurance reviews and advice
- Project recovery
- Programme and project support offices
- MSP and PRINCE2 training

Case Study: Becta



Dbi was engaged by Becta to analyse their programme and project management needs, and to develop a tailor made methodology. The range of projects is broad – the largest at the time of this work involved costs of £15M over three years, the smallest involved the development of a single website for a special needs school for less than £15,000. At any one time, around 100 different projects are underway.

The Outcome

We developed a comprehensive approach to programme and project management, based on the principles of PRINCE2 but tailored to the specific needs of an Agency with its very wide range of types of project, and of project management skills. During the course of the assignment, a number of additional points became evident, including the need to separate the management of projects from that of the services that resulted. A further need was to standardise on induction training for new project managers and we developed a range of training modules. Finally, the overall benefits of a full PRINCE2 approach were recognised as having a place in the case of certain larger and more risky projects, and a programme of PRINCE2 certified training was also put in place.

The Benefits

The benefits to the client from this engagement were: improved management control giving the basis of a new relationship with Becta's sponsors; an improved ability to change Becta's delivery arrangements to align with the external requirements; and through a standardisation of approach greater confidence by senior management in the organisation's ability to deliver its wide portfolio of projects.



Case Study: Economic and Social Research Council

The Economic and Social Research Council engaged Dbi to provide project management and technical support for its project, to introduce a web based Portal with comprehensive search, personalisation and authentication facilities. The Portal should become the primary access route for academics, the media and others searching for social research resources held by ESRC and by academic institutions and others throughout the UK.

The Outcome

We provided a team of three over the 16 month project. Initial actions by the team were to capture and document a comprehensive requirements specification, drawing information from a series of focus groups, including members of parliament, researchers, academics, journalists and members of the public. A procurement strategy was created, tenders were received and evaluated, and support was given to supplier selection. Throughout, we provided project management using PRINCE2, and in the later stages of the project we developed and managed a detailed test plan, leading to acceptance by ESRC of the Portal.

The Benefits

ESRC Society Today -<http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/>- was successfully launched on time and on budget access to an unrivalled range of high quality social and economic research. It is a unique social sciences research resource, with the emphasis on accessibility and ease of use. It is a demonstration of the ESRC's commitment to using the online environment to maximum effect. The website brings together all ESRC-funded research with social science research from aof other high quality UK and international sources, including Institute (formerly SOSIG), the UK Data Archive, the Office of National Statistics and the Social Sciences Research Network (SSRN).

About Dbi

For a quarter of a century, Dbi Consulting has been providing high quality, independent consultancy, primarily to the UK public sector. We are very proud that we have built up an enviable reputation for performance, competence and professionalism.

In addition to the management consultancy that has been the core of our business throughout this time, we now offer the provision of high quality interim managers. Throughout our corporate history we have developed an assignment management approach that ensures the consultants, associates, interim managers, clients and client staff can work together fully and effectively.

What we do

Dbi provides consultancy and interim management services, primarily to clients in the UK Public Sector—Central and Local Government, Agencies, NDPBs, Defence, Education and Health. We also work with a smaller number of commercial and other private sector companies.

Our consulting experience over the past quarter of a century is wide-ranging, but we have built up particular expertise in certain core services, which we brigade into the three practices of:

- Project and programme management
- Business Improvement
- ICT services.

The Project and Programme Management Practice includes:



Pat Coulter, Managing Director

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Pat has wide experience of Central, Local Government and organisations working with the public sector both as a civil servant, officer and a management consultant. He has a track record in cross-organisational working including inter-agency involvement and collaborative, partnering, new working arrangements including using technology to deliver business objectives. He has helped organisations to deliver and improve services and partnerships, coherent strategies and plans, improving how organisations are meeting the needs of their customers, how to respond to new initiatives. Pat enjoys spending time with his family and travelling.



Kevin Silk –Consultant

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Kevin is an innovative information systems professional with a background of developing, managing and supporting large scale information systems in the Local Authority sector. He has worked on a number of projects to develop Information Systems that improve the quality and quantity of Management Information for customers. Kevin is experienced in working both independently and as part of large multi departmental teams within the Project Management and IT development areas. When not studying for his Masters, Kevin can be found fell walking or playing football and is the only member of Dbi to have been bitten by a shark!

If you would like to know more about our project and programme management services, please contact Pat, or a member of the Assignment Support team, on 01926 834700. We would welcome the opportunity of an informal, no commitment, discussion with you.