Managing Successful Programmes – MSP®.

Practitioner Pre-Course Work

Contents

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Overview

This document is provided to candidates who are preparing for the Managing Successful Programmes (MSP) practitioner exam. This document is meant to be read by candidates prior to attending the course you are attending and is designed to take between 1 and 3 hours.

Please ensure that you have already obtained a copy of the official AXELOS product "Managing Successful Programmes" (ISBN: 9780113313273), and that you bring it with you to the course.

The material contained within this document will provide you with a solid grounding in programme management characteristics and the key elements in MSP. The material covers the following topics:

- Candidates Knowledge Test
- Examination information – with guidance
- What is a programme?
- High level view of the key aspects of the methodology
- MSP principles
- MSP Transformational flow
- MSP governance themes
- Appendix A: Answers to the general knowledge questions on the MSP methodology.
- Appendix B: Practical Example

Please remember to bring some photographic identification with you to show the tutor prior to the exam. Examples of acceptable photographic identification are:

- Passport
- Photographic driving licence
- Work badge

Please note that failure to produce identification will mean that you will NOT be able to sit the examination.

You should receive an email from Peoplecert inviting you to register for the exams. Please be sure to read and take the recommended actions prior to the course.

Your course materials may be in digital format. It would therefore be useful to bring a laptop or similar with you so that you can access the courseware in the evenings.

Should you have any queries over this pre-course work or any aspect of the course, please contact QA on:

Tel: 0845 757 3888

Email: info@qa.com

Good luck and we hope you have an enjoyable event!

The QA Team

Candidates Knowledge Test

The following questions will test your general knowledge of the MSP methodology.

You can choose to try the test before you start studying (in order to test your current knowledge), and/or after you have finished studying. The questions and answers are repeated in Appendix A.

1: MSP Overview and Principles

1. Name 3 MSP Principles.
2. What is the MSP definition of a programme?
3. Name 3 differences between a programme and a project.
4. What are the 3 types of programme?
5. Does a programme need a specification in order to begin delivery?
6. What characteristics could there be of a programme that has long-term societal affects?
7. What drivers could there be for a programme?
8. Which principle mandates that a programme should make a significant contribution towards achieving corporate performance targets?
9. Which principle mandates that a programme should actively engage with stakeholders?
10. Which principle mandates that a programme should create a vision statement?

Personal Notes or Questions for the course:

2: MSP Roles

1. Who creates and communicates the vision?
2. Who is the producer of the majority of the MSP documents?
3. What role could the programme manager carry out in a project, why would they do this?
4. Who is the "information hub" on a programme?
5. What, generally speaking, is the relationship between members of the sponsoring group?
6. Which documents are produced by the Business Change Manager?
7. Who is responsible for identifying, defining and tracking benefits?
8. Where should the business change manager (BCM) come from?
9. Name three standing member roles in the programme board.
10. Name 3 additional programme management team roles.

Personal Notes or Questions for the course:

3: MSP Transformational Flow

1. Which transformational flow process has the programme mandate as an input?
2. Which transformational flow process is divided into pre-transition, transition and post-transition?
3. Which transformational flow process is concerned with the co-ordination of projects?
4. Where are the majority of MSP documents created?
5. Which transformational flow process is concerned with strategic alignment to the business?
6. In which transformational flow process is the blueprint created?
7. In which transformational flow process is the activity "transition and stable operations"?
8. Which transformational flow process produces the programme brief?
9. Name 3 elements of the programme brief that are later refined into documents of their own.
10. Name 3 circumstances where a programme can close.

Personal Notes or Questions for the course:

4: MSP governance themes

1. Name 3 characteristics of a good vision statement?
2. Which document identifies stakeholders and their relevant areas of interest?
3. Which document has to pass the DOAM evaluation test?
4. What is the POTI acronym related to? What does it stand for?
5. How does MSP suggest that the programme should regard assumptions?
6. Which document tests the viability of the programme?
7. What is the MSP definition of a risk? What about an issue?
8. Define the Terms "Quality" and "assurance"?
9. Which document can identify the current, intermediate and future states of the business?
10. What are the steps in the benefit management cycle?

Personal Notes or Questions for the course:

Examination information – with guidance

There are three exams related to the MSP qualification; foundation, practitioner and advanced practitioner. This material focuses on the second level, practitioner. Further material on the advanced practitioner course will be made available to you should you be attending that course.

Practitioner

The practitioner exam is 8 syllabus area questions, sub-divided into sections, with each section further sub-divided into individual questions. Each main syllabus area question has 10 questions in it, giving a total of 80 marks possible. These questions must be answered in 2½ hours. The pass mark is 50% i.e. 40 marks. Each correct answer gains the candidate one mark. This exam is "open book" i.e. application is the key; however all that can be taken in is the MSP manual itself, no other information. This exam will be based on one scenario, with additional information for that scenario for certain questions.

Practitioner exam guidance

If the foundation is a sprint, the practitioner is a marathon; the most important thing is to *keep going*.

Question order

The order you do the questions is a matter of personal taste. Some candidates like to do the hard questions first, or the easy ones, or do the easiest parts of the questions first. Whichever way it is done, it is very important to understand that each question is separate from the others. Whatever the situation is in question 1, may not be the same as in question 2. Observations by exam markers are that candidates tend to score better in the middle questions and less in the earlier and later ones, fatigue may be a big factor in this. It may be worth considering doing the hardest questions in the "peak time", in the middle hour of the exam.

Read the question

Sounds SO obvious right? It is amazing how many times a candidate will complain that they are sure the option they have picked is the right thing to do in this situation, only to realise that the question actually asks "which of these IS NOT a correct thing to do". Read the question, underline the key items, and be clear what the question is asking you to do.

Process of elimination

Usually each question has several answers. If the answer is not presenting itself, instead of trying to figure out what it *is*, try thinking about what it *isn't*. This may leave you with the answer, or at worst, a reduced amount of guesswork.

Question formats

The sub-divisions of questions come in different types; these types will be explained on the course itself, however it is worth noting that each type has some similarities in approach. The question will

generally expect you to either answer a theoretical question, or use the scenario to identify the correct approach. Be clear which it is, as this will save you time not reading things you don't need. A common example is where the question says at the top "all of the statements here are **true**", in this case you do not need to read the scenario to check, because the statements are true!

Reading the manual

Although the examination guidance, which you will receive a copy of during the course, says that the book can be used, it also says that "you do not have time to read the manual". Although it is true that you do not have time to *read* the manual, you do have time to *check* the manual. For example, does the benefit profile identify which outputs deliver that benefit? You do have time to go to appendix A and check if this is the case or not. It does, by the way.

With all exams it always pays to put in the hours. Doing the prescribed reading and test questions is essential, but also discuss the questions with your trainer, and accept your learning style. You may be able to absorb great lists of information easily, but if not, consider the generalities of the method. Most documents are created in Defining a Programme, for example, easier to remember than exactly which ones are.

Self Study Material

This section of the pre-course study material is to be used as an introduction to MSP. It provides an overview of typical activities in most programmes, and how MSP deals with them. A very important aspect on most training courses in this subject is communicating the seemingly obvious but easily overlooked fact that programmes ARE NOT PROJECTS. If they were, there would be no need for MSP. This aspect is also covered in the material below.

What is a programme?

MSP defines a programme as "a temporary, flexible organisation created to coordinate, direct and oversee the implementation of a set of related projects and activities in order to deliver outcomes and benefits related to the organisation's strategic objectives." This is a very complicated explanation and needs some unpacking and breaking down in order to understand it.

"A temporary, flexible organisation..."

In order to deliver the change required by the programme, there has to be a state before the programme exists, and a state after the programme exists. This would imply that therefore the programme is *temporary*. This is not to be confused with "short", rather the programme has an end *point*, however this end *date* may not be very specific, at least not early on, as what is required to be delivered may not be very specific. There will, however, be a recognised end situation.

In order to deliver the change required, you need people. The people need to know exactly what is required of them, and what personal attributes the person in this role needs.

"...to deliver outcomes..."

A common phrase is that a programme is like "knitting fog". Nothing could be further from the truth. It is true that a programme has many broad elements that need to be taken into account, and that a level of uncertainty is to be expected because of these elements, but the whole point of a programme is to try to bring order to this chaos. In order to do this, the programme team must identify what is the ultimate "end goal" of this programme, and break that down into abilities or "outcomes" that the organisation must have in order to achieve that end goal. These abilities will in turn be broken down into "outputs" which will be specifically delivered by projects. The purpose of identifying outcomes therefore is to identify the broader targets of the organisation and break those down into achievable goals and deliver them.

"...and benefits..."

The main purpose of a programme is to try to help the organisation achieve its strategic aims. These aims must be beneficial to someone, and therefore one of the programmes primary goals is to identify why this programme is beneficial to the organisation, and ensure that the business is on the path to achieving those benefits. It is a common failing with projects that they will lead the business "to the water" but that the business "will not drink". Or, put another way, just because a labour saving solution has been implemented does not automatically mean that the saving has been achieved. It is important that the business uses this new solution in order to achieve the saving of effort. Part of the programmes remit is therefore to lay the foundations such that once the programme is completed the business will continue to use the solution provided to achieve the long-term benefits of the change delivered.

"...the implementation of a set of related projects..."

In order to achieve the outcomes described above, the programme must deliver the building blocks necessary to achieve this change. These are described as "outputs". It is therefore the case that projects deliver outputs and programmes deliver outcomes and benefits. These projects will all be delivering outputs that contribute to the greater goal or goals of the programme; they should therefore be managed together. This means that the programme manager can move resources to where they are most needed across all the projects, and help to resolve issues and risks that the projects cannot resolve.

"whilst maintaining business as usual"

One thing not covered by the above definition of a programme is the maintenance of business as usual. Whilst the organisation is going through change, it must still be capable of delivering its day-to-day business, the "bread and butter" work. Part of the programmes remit is to ensure that the changes it delivers are introduced into the business in such a way that they do not overly disrupt this business as usual. There can be three types of programme; vision-led, compliant and emergent. Vision-led programmes begin with an idea, the "I have a dream" moment, compliance programmes start from a position of delivering to a specific, often legal, requirement. One fundamental difference here is that when a problems is encountered, in both types a discussion should be had about how we get "up, over, round or through" the problem. In a vision-led programme, however, there is another consideration; is it worth carrying on? In a compliance programme this is not an option. The third type, emergent, describes a programme where there is ongoing work, and a decision is made to put this under an "umbrella" programme and direct its delivery, along with possible new work.

A summary of this process, with an example, is outlined below.
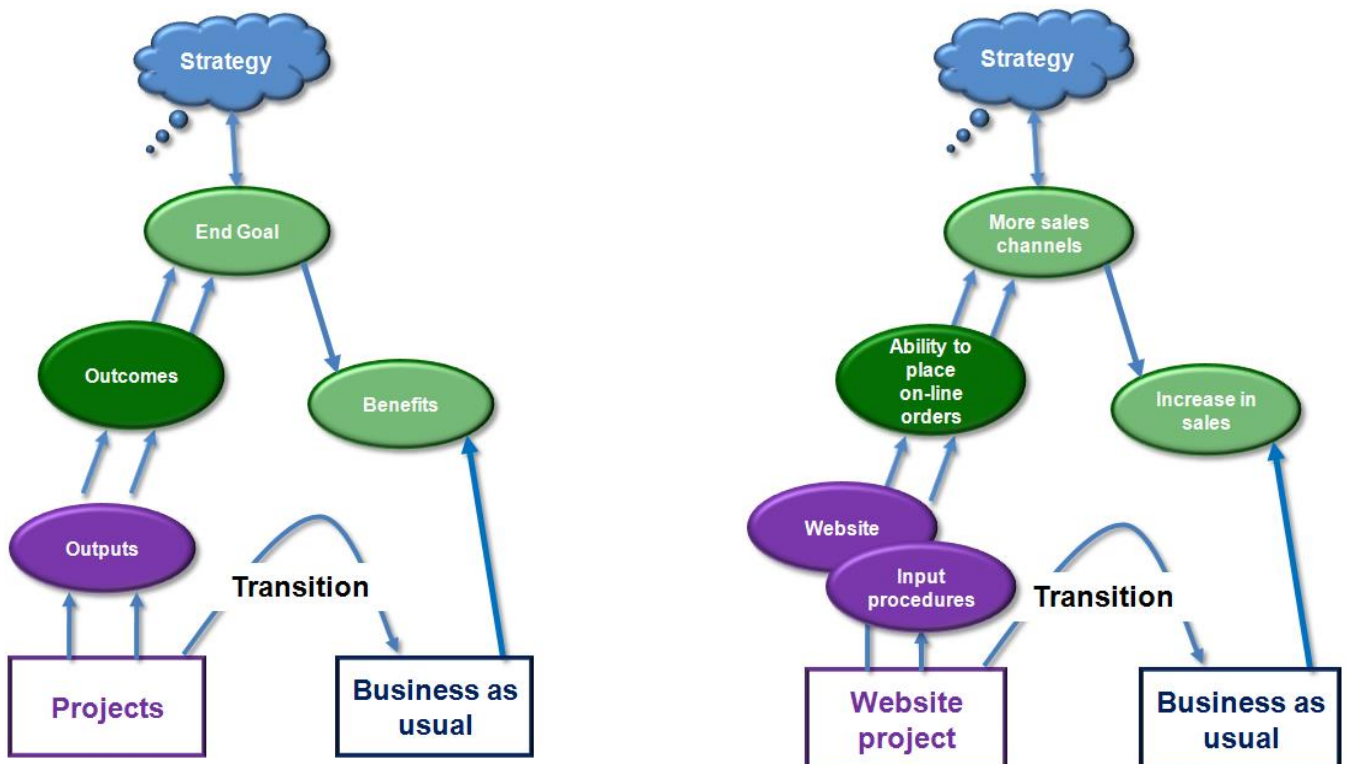
So, in the example above, the organisation has a vision of having more sales channels in order to increase sales. To make that happen the organisation needs several new ways of working, such as customers being able to order online, others might include being able to order by telephone or over the counter etc. In order to have the ability to allow customers to place orders online the business needs a website and some back office processes, along with staff training etc. In this example then, the website is an OUTPUT, and the ability for customers to place orders is an OUTCOME.

Personal Notes & Questions:

High level view of the key aspects of the methodology

Before we have a detailed view of the MSP methodology, the key aspects of the methodology are described.

MSP is based on seven principles (Fig. 3), and those principles should always be present otherwise the programme is less likely to achieve its objectives. The principles are good, common practice, which would be part of any programme management approach. The principles are the "guiding star" for the programme team members. They are based on best practice and common sense and so are applicable to any programme.
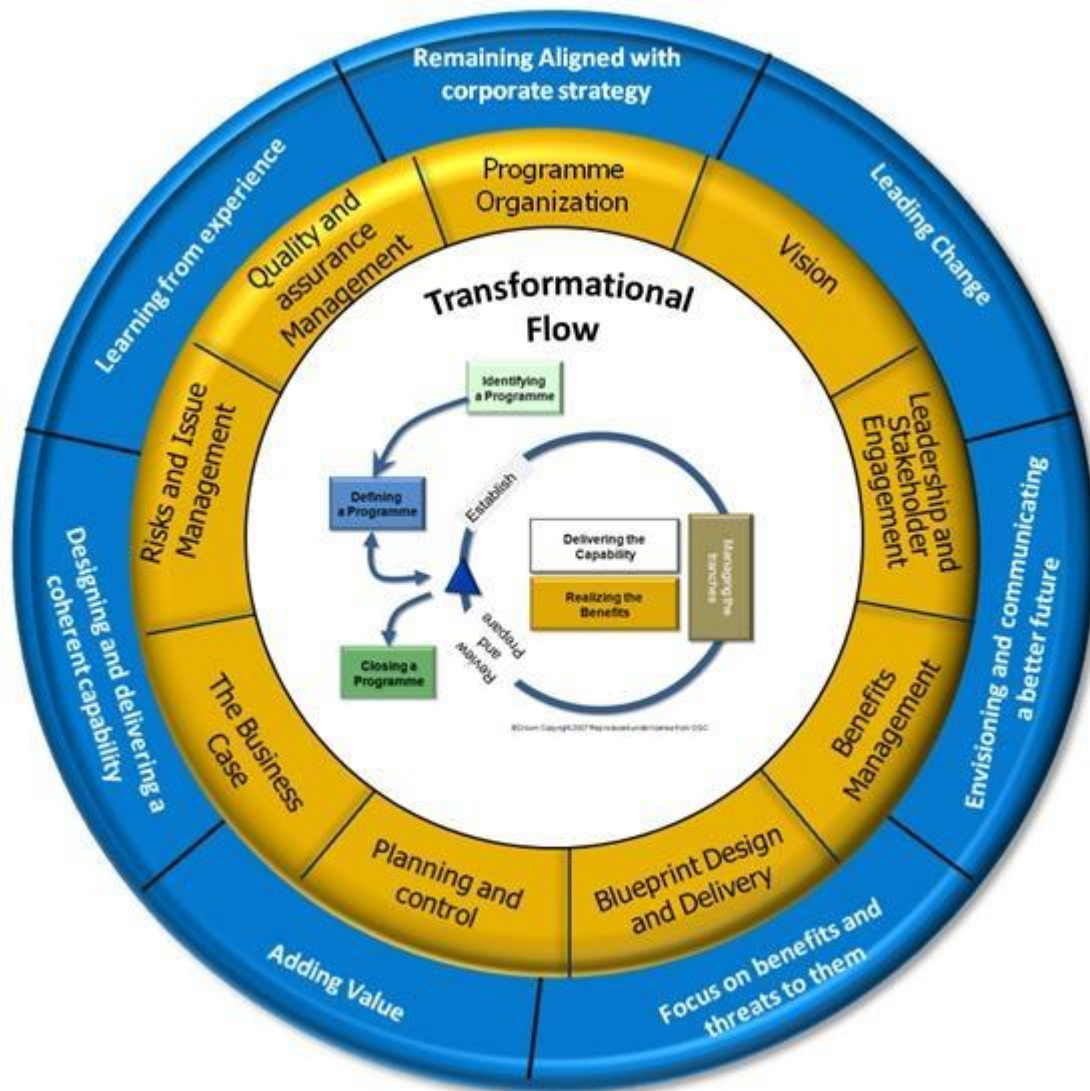

Fig. 3 MSP elements overview

The nine themes link together and are integrated into the seven processes to help deliver the programme.

Principles, Governance Themes and the Transformational Flow

It is important to understand that the various elements of MSP are not meant to be looked at in isolation, but as part of a set of overlapping tools. The **transformational flow** focuses on **when** activities occur and **who** does them at that time. It does not explain **how** to carry them out; this is covered by the **governance theme**. There is also the question of **why** an activity is carried out or a document created; this is covered by the **principles**.

So for example let's take the Business Case. The contents of a business case, and how to gather that information and put it together, are covered by the business case **theme**. It is written at the beginning of the programme and then maintained throughout; exactly when this happens is covered by the **transformational flow** elements Identifying a Programme, Defining a Programme and Managing the Tranches. The reason that it is written at all, is to justify carrying out the programme, and therefore creating a business case supports the **principle** of Adding Value.

MSP Principles

There are seven MSP principles

- Remaining aligned with corporate strategy
- Leading change
- Envisioning and communicating a better future
- Focusing on benefits and threats to realization
- Adding Value
- Designing and delivering a coherent capability
- Learning from experience

Remaining aligned with corporate strategy

Corporate strategy describes the specific direction that an organisation has decided to travel in. This could be offering new services, or breaking into a new market, or adopting new technology. When the organisation sets a course for a new destination, it is up to the staff underneath to carry out the journey. There can be a disjoint between what the corporate board are saying at the top and what the staff are actually doing at "the coal face". This principle states that the programme should stay in line with what the organisation is doing. So for example, if a programme is delivering new technology in order to improve service, and the organisation moves from this to trying to reduce costs, the programme should change focus to step into this new direction. This would be achieved by, among other things, creating a vision statement and keeping it up-to-date with regards to changes at a corporate level.

Leading change

Unlike a project, a lot of the success of a programme relies on people being supportive of the changes being implemented. In a project, the main objective is to deliver the scope. This is a complex and difficult job that requires the appropriate processes and skills in project management to deliver. A programme recognises that for that scope to be worth delivering, the items created or changed have to be used, and for this to happen the stakeholders around the programme need to understand that the change is valuable to them and worth their time to learn and use. The Leading change principle states that the programme management team needs to behave as leaders at all times, inspiring confidence and trust in their stakeholders. An example of this would be the management of issues and risks, where leaving them to chance would undermine stakeholders confidence that the programme was under control.

Envisioning and communicating a better future

If stakeholders cannot see why a programme is important and valuable, they are not likely to support it. This principle ties very closely into the leading change principle explained above. It demands that a vision statement is written to describe the desired future and why this future is good for all concerned. This principle also states that the vision statement must not only be written, but must be communicated to all stakeholders concerned to ensure transparency and understanding of the programme.

Focusing on benefits and threats to realization

This is quite a simple principle. The programme exists to deliver the vision statement or end goal. The reason for achieving this is in order to gain the benefits from doing this. It is often the case that managers will say "I want to build this, what benefits can I identify to sell the idea?". This is the wrong way round. The correct approach is to say "I want to gain these benefits, what do I need to achieve them?" Once delivering change the programme management team should always be conscious of the fact that the programme is there to deliver benefits, not projects, and so these take precedence. If a project must be changed to suit a benefit, or a benefit altered to suit a project, it is the benefit which must be kept the same and the project changed.

Adding Value

This principle relates to the activities of the programme itself. A programme should be greater than the sum of its parts. Or put another way, the sum total of benefits delivered by the projects must be increased by the introduction of the programme. If the programme does not add any value to the work being delivered then the projects should just be left to deliver themselves. This can be quite subtle though, for example, having a holistic view of resources, or risks, may allow them to be managed more efficiently and therefore the programme is adding value in this respect.

Designing and delivering a coherent capability

This principle covers the delivery of the outputs from the projects, also known as the capability. This principle states that the introduction of these outputs into the business, thus turning them into outcomes, should be done with the minimum of disruption to business as usual. The programme should also look at these outputs as part of the bigger picture and ensure that they are coming together to deliver the outcomes, and ultimately the vision of the programme.

Learning from experience

The title of this one says it all; as the programme progresses the programme management team should strive to develop and optimise the programme approach and its outputs and outcomes based on lessons being learned as the programme is being delivered.

Personal Notes & Questions:

MSP Transformational Flow
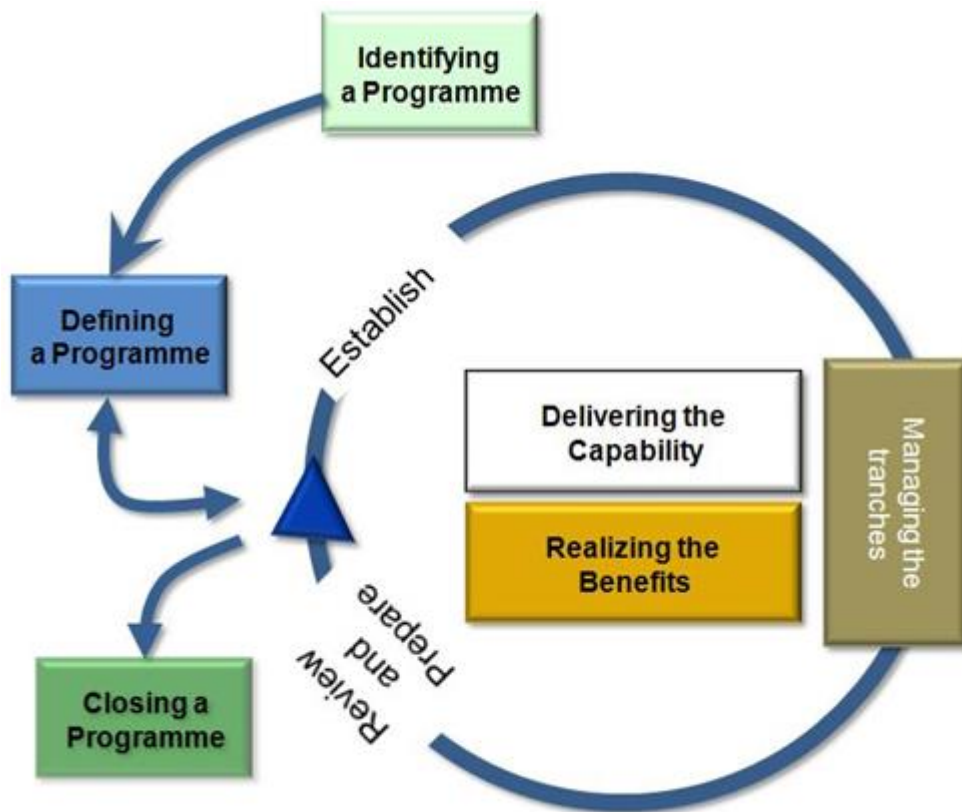
The transformational flow of MSP covers the activities required to take the programme from a simple idea to a delivered vision.

The programmes begins with a Programme mandate, a "trigger" that indicates that there is an idea worth investigating. This in turn triggers the transformational flow activity **Identifying a Programme**. Identifying a programme is about getting the ball rolling. It involves getting the key players in the programme management team on board and creating and authorising a document called the Programme Brief, which outlines what the programme is about and what the likely benefits, dis-benefits and risks are. It is important to note that it is very much guesswork at this point – it is far too early in the life of the programme to know anything in detail – but it may allow the organisation to spot a programme that definitely won't work.

Providing that the **sponsoring group** sign off the Programme Brief, the programme will now move into the **Defining a Programme** transformational flow step. Defining a programme takes the programme brief and carries out all the activities needed to expand on it, creating the majority of the documents, including the vision statement benefits, candidate projects and risks. This process also creates the blueprint and programme plan. Information gaps are identified and investigated, along with creating most of the main documents of the method.

The documents in MSP are divided into three main groups:

- Definition documents – that define the **why** and the **what** of the programme
- Strategies or governance documents – that define the **how** and **roles** of the programme
- Plans and tools – that define the **when** and **who specifically** of the programme.

For example, the benefit profile, which is a definition document, identifies what the benefit is. The benefit management strategy defines how to measure it and what role is in charge of this. The benefits realisation plan defines when this measurement will take place and who specifically will be measuring it.

The next three transformational flow elements form the engine room of the programme. **Managing the Tranches** takes an overview of the work being carried out, ensuring that the programme is aligned to the business and that **Delivering the capability** and **Realising the benefits** are working co-operatively. This ensures transition and stable operations are maintained. Delivering the capability is about co-ordinating the projects, resolving problems and managing resources, to ensure that the projects are delivered on time. Realising the benefits takes those project outputs and transitions them into outcomes by managing the pre-transition, transition and post-transition, paving the way for benefits realisation.

These three transformational flow elements repeat for each tranche. It would be very simple to say that a tranche is just like a stage or phase, but it is a little more subtle than that. A tranche is a milestone; a moment in the project when outcomes have been delivered and benefits realisation can commence. It is not about partitioning the work up, but rather identifying quick wins and key moments where outcomes and benefits can be presented to help reinforce the importance and usefulness of the programme to the stakeholders. These three transformational flow steps are carried out until the programme is delivered. At which point the programme moves to closure.

Closing a programme involves recognising that the programme has come to an end and carrying out the activities necessary to close it. This may sound obvious, but a common problem with a programme is a tendency to let it "drift on", often because there is "always something else left to do". MSP identifies several situations where programme closure would be identified, these include;

- The blueprint has been delivered
- The last tranche has been completed
- Business operations are stabilised after the changes
- All risks and issues are accounted for
- Benefits are self sustainable and measurements are under way
- A premature closure is required

The detail is rather more complex than this however as it can be difficult to identify that moment clearly. A key document called the **Blueprint** describes what the business should look like when the programme is finished. Once the business has these outputs in place, and the transitions for those activities have been completed, then the programme can be said to be closed. The method is very comfortable with, if not insistent that, most of the benefits will be realised beyond the life of the programme, and by the business rather than the programme team, therefore keeping these people around after they have completed their work is an unnecessary cost.

Personal Notes & Questions:

MSP Governance Themes

There are nine Governance Themes, they are:

- Programme organization
- Vision
- Leadership and stakeholder engagement
- Benefits management
- Blueprint design and delivery
- Planning and control
- Business case
- Risk and issue management
- Quality and assurance management

Programme organization

How can people be expected to do their job if they don't know what that job is? MSP states that
"..effective organization is critical to programme success". This governance theme covers the various
roles required for a programme to succeed. The programme management team looks like this:
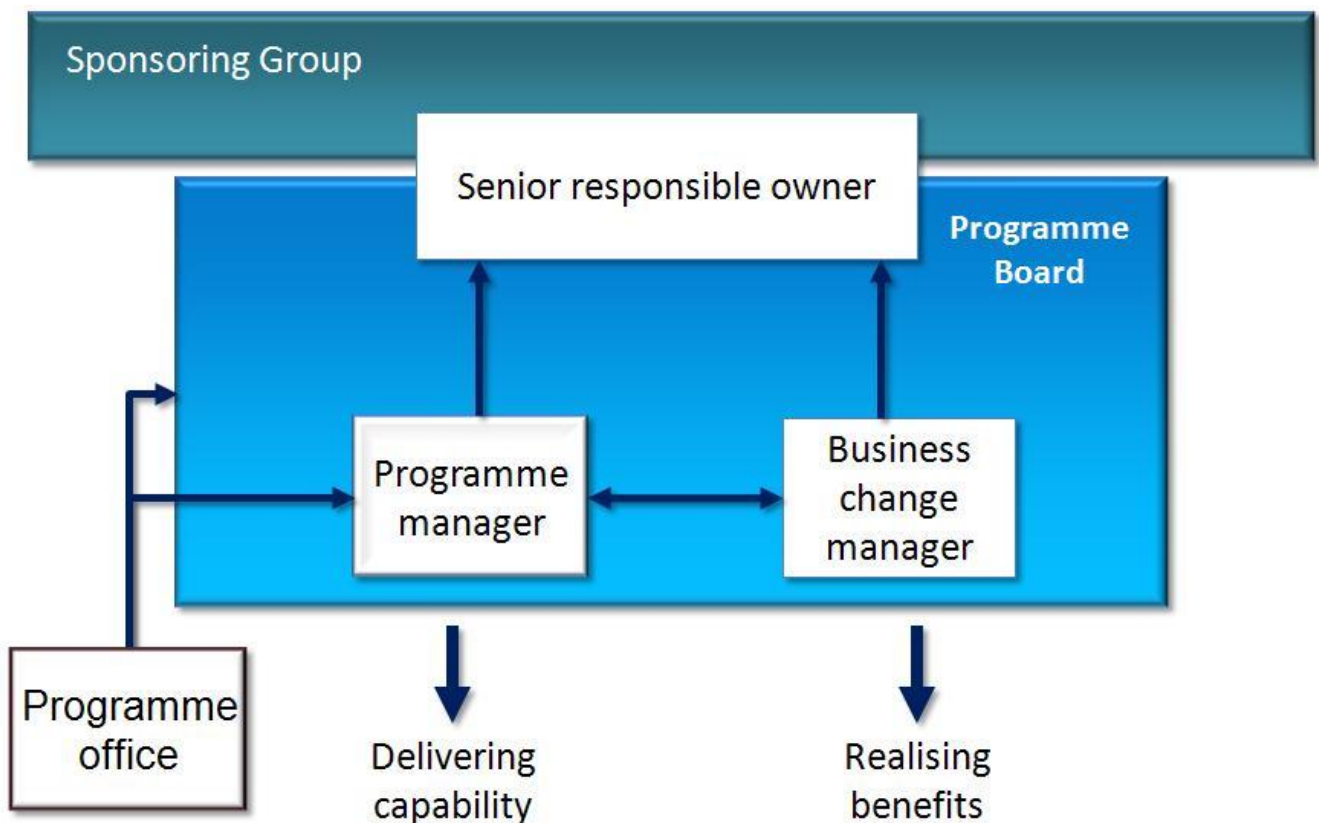
Key to previous:

Sponsoring Group - a group of peers who work together to make key strategic decisions on the direction and funding of the programme.

Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) – a member of the sponsoring group selected to act on behalf of the sponsoring group on a day-to-day basis.

Programme Board – the SRO is the head of this and has total authority over it. It includes the Programme manager and Business Change Manager. It also includes "standing members" – individuals who can provide support during the programme – these are the lead supplier, project executives and corporate function experts to provide specific services to the board.

Programme Manager – responsible for the co-ordination and delivery of the projects, even acting as the owner or executive of them. They are also responsible for the production of the majority of the programme documents.

Business Change Manager – from the business itself, takes the outputs that the programme manager delivers and introduces them into the business, ensuring that the benefits are delivered. In this way they are responsible for identifying, defining and tracking the benefits. They create the benefit profiles and the benefits map.

Programme Office – The "information hub", they take in and collate information from the projects and the business to assess the state of the programme. They report to the programme manager, but can give information to the rest of the programme management team if required. This role can also provide support and guidance on many aspects of the programme.

Additional roles – There may also be additional roles, which are each essentially an aspect of what the Programme manager, SRO or Business change manager do. If required these could be carried out by specialists and may include; risk manager, programme accountant, design authority, benefits realization manager or procurement expertise.

Each of these roles also has a set of "key attributes", which indicate the kind of skills and attitude that an individual in this role may need.

Vision

The vision chapter discusses how to write a good vision statement. The vision statement describes what the future will look like after the programme is completed. It is created by the Senior Responsible Owner, or SRO. Some of the characteristics of the vision statement are:

- Describes a desirable future
- Engages the head as well as the heart
- Can be understood by a wide variety of stakeholders
- Is short and memorable

A good vision can pave the way for a successful programme; it is first drafted in identifying a programme and refined in defining a programme.

Leadership and stakeholder engagement

"A stakeholder is an individual or group that has an interest in the programme, its outcomes or benefits/dis-benefits." This governance theme describes how to identify stakeholders and identify strategies for looking after their interests and ensuring their continued commitment to the programme. This information is documented in the Stakeholder map and profiles.

Benefits management

This governance theme explains how the programme should identify, define and track benefits during and after the programme. The activities in this theme are described in a "benefits cycle"; Identify, plan, deliver and review. The first step is to identify the approach to prioritising and quantifying benefits; these are documented in the Benefits Management Strategy. The next step is to identify the benefits themselves, and the dependencies between these benefits; this is documented in the Benefit Profiles and the Benefits Map. The benefit profiles are a key document in MSP and identify why the programme exists. They must pass four checks; they must be **D**escribed correctly, they must be **O**bservable, **A**ttributable to the programme and **M**easurable. This is known as the "DOAM" test. Finally the actual activities required to deliver and measure the success of benefit achievement are documented in the Benefits Realisation Plan. This chapter also has something to say about the importance of making sure that the business is in a position to achieve the benefits long term, after the programme is finished.

Blueprint design and delivery

Although the most important thing to achieve in MSP is the delivery of the benefits, they will not be achieved without a coherent model for what the business will look like when it is completed. This is documented in the Blueprint. The blueprint is most easily remembered by the acronym for the fields it contains; POTI: - Processes, Organisation, Technology and Information. In these categories the blueprint describes the actual outputs or capabilities that the business will need to achieve the benefits. These outputs will be delivered by the projects themselves. The Blueprint goes further than this however, in that it can show the current situation, as well as the future state of the business and, very importantly, intermediate states, and so has something to say about how the business will operate, which is more related to outcomes than just outputs. These intermediate states represent "step changes" in the way the business operates. In this situation the outputs are introduced in groups, resulting in particular outcomes. This allows the change to be delivered more slowly, reducing the risk of business as usual being disrupted, but surely the most important advantage is that it allows for transition of these outputs into outcomes, allowing for the delivery of benefits much earlier in the programme, rather than waiting until the end.

Planning and control

This governance theme is, unsurprisingly, about two things; planning the programme, and controlling its progress. The programme plan is the culmination of all of the other plans created in MSP, which are themselves the culmination of the other documents. The Blueprint, as mentioned above, defines what is to be delivered, but the programme plan identifies when it will be delivered. The benefits realisation plan identifies when benefits will be delivered, but it must work with the delivery of the projects and the transition from output to outcome for the programme to be successful. The control side covers the activities which the programme must carry out in order to ensure that the plan is being followed. Although projects themselves are expected to be relatively self-governing, there are still activities within the programme that must be monitored, as well as the major outputs from the projects. The approach to this control is detailed in several strategies but most notably the Monitoring and Control Strategy.

Business case

There are various elements that must be considered when judging whether the programme is worth starting, or worth carrying on with. These include; is the cost acceptable, are the benefits achievable, are the risks manageable, are the timescales acceptable? This information is in various documents, such as the programme plan, the benefit profiles and the risk register. In order to make a decision on whether to proceed, these elements must be compared. The Business Case provides this information in one document, and thus tests the viability of the programme. Additional information is also included, such as a summary of the programme and what other options were considered before proceeding with the chosen approach. In this way the Business Case can be updated and reviewed at key moments in the programme to help decide whether or not to continue.

Risk and issue management

A risk is "an uncertain event or set of events which, should it occur, will have an effect on the achievement of objectives." Issues are "events that have happened, were not planned, are currently affecting the programme in some way and need to be actively dealt with and resolved." Assumptions are also handled by this theme, and normally treated as risks. What both of these types of events have in common is that they can make a mess of a beautifully planned programme. In MSP, a lot of the issues will be managed at a project level, so the process for dealing with programme level issues is simple and effective; they are logged and dealt with or escalated accordingly. This governance then also deals with change, however since the whole programme is about change, a change control system is not necessary. What is needed is an understanding that key MSP documentation may be affected by changes in the environment and so these must be acknowledged and managed.

It is in the area of Risk Management that MSP focuses its attention in this chapter, as most possibilities will need to be acknowledged and options for controlling them reviewed. MSP suggests that risks occur at four levels; strategic, programme, project and operational. In identifying this MSP suggests that this therefore means that different levels of management could be entrusted to manage different levels of risk, for example, the project teams could manage project risks, and the BCM could manage operational risks.

Quality and assurance management

One subject that often causes confusion in any method is that of quality. There is the notion of objects being of "high quality" because of their materials or production processes, but this is not a true understanding of Quality. Quality is a concept that encapsulates the understanding of what a product is for, and then the identification of the things about that product that allow it to achieve that purpose. This is why a phrase often used in relation to quality is "fit for purpose"; it literally does what it says on the tin, no more, no less. To take this into the realm of programme management however, it is important to understand one vital fact; the programme does not build anything. It is the projects that construct the outputs, and so the notion of products being fit for purpose is vital here as these products will deliver the benefits that the programme needs, but this fit for purpose testing is being done at a project level. The concept of quality control, testing to ensure compliance, comes into its own here. The question that must be considered in order for the projects to perform quality control is, how does the project know what to test? What are the standards, what are the requirements? These must come from the programme. The programme therefore must identify the standards and large scale quality criteria for the projects and then communicate these down to those projects.

It is also important for the programme to keep its own house in order, and this is where assurance comes into its own. The programme must monitor itself in respect of how it deals with risks and issues, how it manages relationships with stakeholders, how it monitors benefits, and all other aspects of the programme. It is also important that the programme is independently monitored to ensure confidence in the results.

This therefore leads to the conclusion that programme quality is about two main things; the correct management of the programme through audit and review, and the correct delivery of key outputs from the projects via the same approach.

Personal Notes & Questions:

Appendix A - Answers to MSP general knowledge questions

1: MSP Overview and Principles

1. Name 3 MSP Principles.
   a. Remaining aligned with corporate strategy, leading change, envisioning and communicating a better future, focusing on the benefits and threats to them, adding value, designing and delivering a coherent capability, learning from experience.
2. What is the MSP definition of a programme?
   a. A temporary, flexible organisation created to coordinate, direct and oversee the implementation of a set of related projects and activities in order to deliver outcomes and benefits related to the organisation's strategic objectives.
3. Name 3 differences between a programme and a project.
   a. Projects deliver outputs, measurable deliverables, programmes deliver outcomes, new ways of working
   b. Quality in a programme is about processes, in a project it is about fit for purpose outputs
   c. Programmes have loosely defined timescales, projects have specific timescales
4. What are the 3 types of programme?
   a. Vision led – starting with an idea
   b. Compliant – starting with a defined target
   c. Emergent – starting with work that is ongoing and putting an umbrella over it
5. Does a programme need a specification in order to begin delivery?
   a. No, a programme could well start with a vision of what is to be achieved, and the detail could be defined later as the programme progresses. In MSP, this is seen as one of the fundamental differences between a programme and a project
6. What characteristics could there be of a programme that has long-term societal affects?
   a. Changes to societal values and behaviour
   b. Incentive-driven change to lifestyles
7. What drivers could there be for a programme?
   a. A political change
   b. An economic change
   c. A societal change
8. Which principle mandates that a programme should make a significant contribution towards achieving corporate performance targets?
   a. Remaining aligned with corporate strategy
9. Which principle mandates that a programme should actively engage with stakeholders?
   a. Leading change
10. Which principle mandates that a programme should create a vision statement?
    a. Envisioning and communicating a better future

Personal Notes or Questions for the course:

2: MSP Roles

1. Who creates and communicates the vision?
   a. Senior responsible owner or SRO
2. Who is the producer of the majority of the MSP documents?
   a. The Programme Manager
3. What role could the programme manager carry out in a project, why would they do this?
   a. The project owner or executive, this might be in order to have greater control over an important project, or a politically sensitive one
4. Who is the "information hub" on a programme?
   a. The Programme office
5. What, generally speaking, is the relationship between members of the sponsoring group?
   a. They are peers
6. Which documents are produced by the Business Change Manager?
   a. Benefit Profile and Benefits Map
7. Who is responsible for identifying, defining and tracking benefits?
   a. The Business change manager or BCM
8. Where should the Business change manager (BCM) come from?
   a. The business
9. Name three standing member roles in the programme board.
   a. Project executives
   b. Lead supplier
   c. Corporate functions
10. Name 3 additional programme management team roles.
    a. Risk manager, Programme accountant, design authority, benefits realization manager, procurement expertise.

Personal Notes or Questions for the course:

3: MSP Transformational Flow

1. Which transformational flow process has the Programme mandate as an input?
   a. Identifying a programme
2. Which transformational flow process is divided into pre-transition, transition and post-transition?
   a. Realising the benefits
3. Which transformational flow process is concerned with the co-ordination of projects?
   a. Delivering the capability
4. Where are the majority of MSP documents created?
   a. Defining a programme
5. Which transformational flow process is concerned with strategic alignment to the business?
   a. Managing the Tranches
6. In which transformational flow process is the blueprint created?
   a. Defining a programme
7. In which transformational flow process is the activity "transition and stable operations"?
   a. Managing the tranches
8. Which transformational flow process produces the programme brief?
   a. Identifying a programme
9. Name 3 elements of the programme brief that are later refined into documents of their own.
   a. Vision statement
   b. Benefits
   c. Candidate projects
   d. Risks
10. Name 3 circumstances where a programme can close.
    a. The blueprint has been delivered
    b. The last tranche has been completed
    c. Business operations are stabilised after the changes
    d. All risks and issues are accounted for
    e. Benefits are self sustainable and measurements are under way
    f. A premature closure is required

Personal Notes or Questions for the course:

4: MSP governance themes

1. Name 3 characteristics of a good Vision Statement?
    a. Engages the heart as well as the head
    b. Understood by a wide variety of stakeholders
    c. Is short and memorable
2. Which document identifies stakeholders and their relevant areas of interest?
    a. Stakeholder map or stakeholder profiles
3. Which document has to pass the DOAM evaluation test?
    a. The benefit profile
4. What is the POTI acronym related to? What does it stand for?
    a. The blueprint, it stands for Processes, Organisation, Technology and Information
5. How does MSP suggest that the programme should regard assumptions?
    a. They should be treated as risks
6. Which document tests the viability of the programme?
    a. The business case
7. What is the MSP definition of a risk? What about an issue?
    a. A risk is "an uncertain event or set of events which, should it occur, will have an effect on the achievement of objectives."
    b. Issues are "events that have happened, were not planned, are currently affecting the programme in some way and need to be actively dealt with and resolved."
8. Define the Terms "Quality" and "assurance"?
    a. Quality is "the totality of features and inherent or assigned characteristics of a product, person, process, service and/or system that bears on its ability to show that it meets expectations, or stated needs, requirements of specifications"
    b. Assurance is "the systematic set of actions necessary to provide confidence to the SRO and stakeholders that the programme remains under control and on track to deliver and that it is aligned with the organization's strategic objectives"
9. Which document can identify the current, intermediate and future states of the business?
    a. The Blueprint
10. What are the steps in the benefit management cycle?
    a. Identify, plan, deliver, review

Personal Notes & Questions:

Appendix B - Practical Example

We are now going to step through an example of a programme. There will be questions at various points for you to think about, that will then be answered. It is worth noting that the answers shown are only *an* answer, not *the* answer, as the flexible nature of MSP means that there will always be several solutions to any situation. If you find that you would do it another way, do not consider this as wrong, more than likely you are also right.

BIGTOYS Plc

Bigtoys Plc is a large toy company; they have been in business for 30 years, mainly manufacturing and distributing action figures to large and medium retail toy outlets. They have been experiencing a decline in sales over the last 18 months and commissioned some market research to find out why. The findings suggested that both the retailers and their customers consider Bigtoys products to be "old fashioned" and have "no gadgets", there was also concern expressed that it was too difficult to find out information on the products as the company do not have a website.
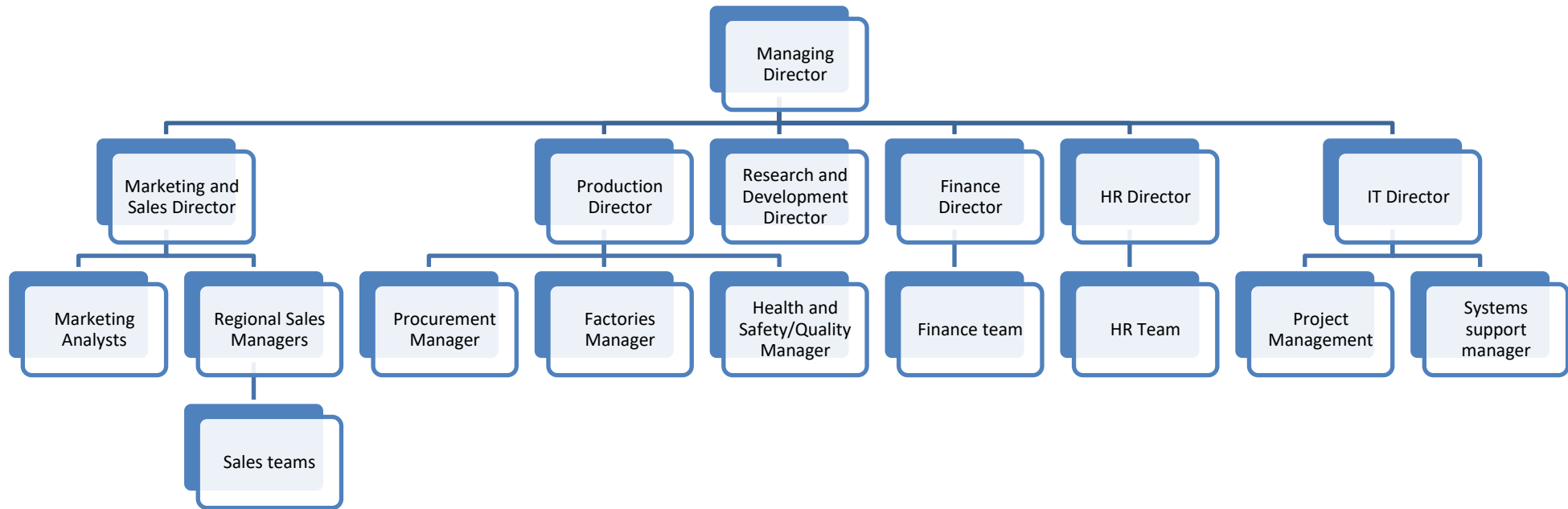
QUESTION – What do you think Bigtoys should do about this? Should they do anything about this?

The corporate boards concern over this situation prompted them to hire a new production director. She arrived a few weeks ago; she is a big advocate of the MSP method and wants to set up a programme to get this situation resolved.

The first thing that she does is organise a team to put together a **programme mandate**, to outline exactly what the problem is. What the Mandate outlines is that the organisation needs to modernise; it needs to find out as quickly as possible what their customer base wants, and give it to them. She wants this completed within 2 years.

This mandate is then presented to the corporate board, which discuss the various ways of resolving this situation and agree with the production director's basic concept. During that meeting the transformation flow step **identifying a programme** is put into action, with the first activity being to find sponsors for the programme to form a **sponsoring group.** The entire corporate board decide that they should all support the programme by joining the sponsoring group. The organisation hierarchy is shown below;

BIGTOYS Plc Management team

Organisational chart:

- Managing Director
  - Marketing and Sales Director
    - Marketing Analysts
    - Regional Sales Managers
      - Sales teams
  - Production Director
    - Procurement Manager
    - Factories Manager
    - Health and Safety/Quality Manager
  - Research and Development Director
  - Finance Director
    - Finance team
  - HR Director
    - HR Team
  - IT Director
    - Project Management
    - Systems support manager

The sponsoring group is now formed, made up of the directors of the organisation (see diagram above). The next step is to **confirm the mandate**, which is immediately done, then the **senior responsible owner (SRO)** is appointed, this is unanimously agreed to be the Production Director, as it was her idea. The SRO immediately arranges a meeting with some of the business heads to discuss the way forward. This group includes the regional sales manager, marketing manager, factories manager and project management. This team will probably go on to form the programme management team, including BCMs and programme and project managers.

They look at various options, these include;

- Keeping the products as they are marketing them as vintage toys, perhaps procuring other vintage toys and becoming a more specialist toy manufacturer
- Doing nothing and continuing as they are
- Designing a new range of more modern toys and creating new ways for customers to buy them

Question – What do you think is the best way forward?

The team decide that the best option is probably the last one; keeping the products as they are would not help the decline in sales, and catering for a specialist group would just make the matter worse. Doing nothing is not an option both technically because the problem would probably only get worse, and politically because the Production Director has put a lot of will behind getting this programme off the ground.

To this end the SRO decides that the group in the room will become business change managers, and the Research and Development Director will allocate a resource from his team to run the programme. The person concerned is an experienced R&D project manager and is trained in MSP already so will be able to hit the ground running. There was some debate over whether the Project Management Team should provide the programme manager, but the concern here was the group did not want a solution that was too IT biased and that with the project manager in R&D already trained the fit was better.

The SRO then arranged a meeting with the **programme manager (PgM)** to put together two key documents; the **programme brief** and the **programme preparation plan**. The PgM found it relatively simple to put a programme preparation plan together. Using the MSP manual he identified the key documents to be produced, which will be discussed in the next section. The programme brief was the main focus of the meeting.

Question – what do you think should go into the programme brief?

The Programme brief contains the following information;

- Outline Vision Statement
- Outline description of benefits
- Estimated costs
- Risks to the programme
- Options for delivery
- Candidate projects
- Assessment of current state of the business

At this early stage none of this information could be certain, but the SRO and PgM put together what they knew with some meetings and conversations with key players in the organisation. What they produced looked like this;

- Outline Vision Statement
    - "The business will offer modern products via more sales channels, offering greater choice for the customer"
- Outline description of benefits
    - broad estimate of about £2Million per year in sales increase, after beginning of production
    - Increase sales – tangible definite
    - Improved public image, measured via increase in positive testimonials and media reports
    - Increase in products available
    - Increase in number of methods to purchase the products
- Estimated costs
    - Costs, approximately £1Million, covering projects and management work
- Risks to the programme
    - Customers may not want the new products
    - Sales may not match the outlay required
    - Procurement may not be able to source suppliers for new products
    - Staff may not be able to adapt to new ways of working
- Options for delivery
    - Via projects to develop new products, new production processes, new procurement deals and new sales channels
- Candidate projects
    - New product research and development project
    - Review and revision of business processes
    - Implementation of web site
    - New advertising campaign
- Assessment of current state of the business
    - Organisation has an "old fashioned" attitude to the toy business, staying with its best sellers and not changing them very much, currently they have no website and no method for buying products directly with the business, but rather via the retail outlets

The SRO then presents this brief, along with the preparation plan, to the sponsoring group for sign off, which they do, allowing the programme proper to start with **Defining a Programme.**

Defining a Programme

The first thing that the SRO does when they come back from the meeting with the sponsoring group is put the **programme management team** proper together.

Question – Who would you have in the programme management team?

SRO – Production Director

Sponsoring group – Corporate Board

Programme manager – Research and development project manager

Business change managers – Regional sales manager, factories manager, production manager, IT support manager, procurement manager. (These represent the areas of the business that will be most affected by the changes to the business)

Programme office – project office team manager, resides in the IT department

The team then come together to create all the documentation required for the programme. The programme manager is responsible for the majority of the documents and so manages the creation of them, with input from the SRO and the BCMs. The key documents created are;

- A refined vision statement – taken from the draft in the brief
- A benefits map – showing all the benefits to be achieved by the programme
- Benefit profiles – these are actually written by the BCMs, as they are best placed to see how the business will benefit from the new ways of working
- A blueprint – showing what the business will look like when the programme is finished
- A projects dossier – showing the projects needed to deliver the changes required to achieve the benefits
- A business case – balancing the costs of the work with the benefits delivered
- A stakeholder map – describing the stakeholders on the programme
- Strategies – covering all aspects of the programme including how to measure benefits, how to deal with risks and issues, how to carry out communication and how to deal with stakeholders
- A programme plan – detailing how the programme will carry out the work to deliver the changes and realise the benefit
- A risk register and issue log – to record all the potential and actual problems

The documents represent the key information from which the programme will run. Within this document set there are two key documents; the benefits map and the blueprint, which will be discussed in more detail here.

Question – What are the benefits? What would need to be built to give those benefits?

The Blueprint uses the acronym POTI to identify the information it contains. The blueprint can show the current, intermediate and future states of the business, as shown below.

Information	Current	Intermediate	Final
Processes	Sales process through local and national toy retailers Procurement of materials through local suppliers	Sales process online Procurement same as current	Sales process online Process for construction of new toys
Organization	Staff work with local suppliers, not directly with customers	Staff are trained to use the internet tools and can communicate with members of the public	Staff are trained on new range of toys Staff trained on construction of new toys
Technology	Industrial standard construction machines Some stand-alone pc's for specific work in design department and finance	All staff with a desktop pc Desktop pc's connected to network and able access sales information	New toys New toy production machines
Information	Main retail store customers information	Public customer information recorded	New toy warranty information and manuals

This information clearly suggests a start, middle and end to the programme. This middle step is identified as a **Tranche**, an opportunity to demonstrate the value of the programme to the business. In this way there is a two-step process to this programme; first, the new online procedures are introduced, then when this is stabilised the new toys will be introduced.

Once all of this documentation has been created, reviewed and updated by the stakeholders, including the programme management team, the documentation is taken to the sponsoring group for sign off, which will take them into the first tranche of the programme.

The first tranche

Once the SRO is given the sign off from the sponsoring group the first projects can begin. The programme manager puts together project briefs for the website, back office online sales process and the staff training project. Each will outline what to do, and what to do if the project cannot do what is required. These are then handed over to the project managers and their work begins. During the Defining a Programme step a few concerns were identified:

1. Some staff feel that the new technology may be a threat to their jobs, with the management eventually planning to automate their role
2. Some suppliers are concerned that their business with Bigtoys may be affected by the change in direction
3. It may not be possible to find specialists for the new toys being designed and built

These concerns and others need to be addressed. The BCMs are engaged in this process along with the SRO and the Programme Manager. The SRO delivers high level, company-wide messages, assuring staff that their jobs are not going to be affected. The BCMs ensure that the staff in their local areas understand this message. The Procurement BCM speaks to the suppliers, again assuring them of Bigtoys continued business in their standard market. The programme manager identifies the third potential problem as a risk, and assigns a risk owner, the procurement manager, to this risk, asking him to identify a risk actionee to investigate this and make certain that the specialists are available to build the new toys.

These activities are carried out through the transformation flow elements **Managing the Tranches, Delivering the Capability** and **Realising the Benefits**. In **Managing the Tranches** the SRO communicates to the stakeholders and keeps them aware of progress on the work. In this transformational flow step the programme manager also keeps an overview of the programme, ensuring that the business, in the form of the BCMs, are ready for the projects and that the projects will deliver what the business needs, and deliver it on time.

In **Delivering the Capability** the programme manager ensures that the projects have the resources they need and that any problems are dealt with quickly. The projects are also co-ordinated so that, for example, the training courses are provided when the new technology is available to use; if the training was too early it would be forgotten by the time the technology arrived. In **Realising the Benefits** the BCM is monitoring how the projects are progressing and is discussing this with their staff, getting their thoughts and concerns and communicating these back to the projects via the Programme Manager. As the projects near completion, the BCM arranges for their part of the business to be ready for the new outputs, a process called **Pre-Transition**.

In tranche one, once the projects deliver their work the project managers hand it over to the Programme Manager and the BCM. At this point the BCM goes through a process of **Transition**. This involves introducing the new desktop pc's to the newly trained staff, changing their job descriptions and holding review meetings to check that the technology is working ok for them. There would also be a handover period where the project teams that delivered the technology are available for any follow-up work that may be required in the short term. Once the new technology is up and running, there will also be the need to market the new website and make the public aware of it. Once the processes and technology are up and running and the business is running smoothly in its new state the BCM moves to **Post-transition**, tidying up, and beginning to see if the benefits are being achieved. In this case, are new sales coming in, are the staff enjoying using the new technology, do the customers appreciate it?

This would then conclude the end of tranche one. At this point the sponsoring group would review the programme and how it went with the programme team, identifying any lessons and formally asking the programme manager to close the tranche down. The programme manager would then do this and start the second tranche, which would include kicking off the next group of projects. A lot of the activities in this tranche would be similar to the previous one, but with different projects and outputs. The main difference here is that the BCM would now be monitoring the progress of the benefits from the first tranche, which would now be coming in since the web site is now part of business as usual.

Once this final tranche is completed, and the projects have been delivered and transitioned into outcomes, the programme can now move into closure. At this point the BCM needs to confirm that the benefits, in this case the increased sales, will now continue without the momentum from the programme, in other words, that they are self-sustaining. The programme manager must also ensure that any issues and risks are being owned and managed, before the programme can formally be closed and the documentation be shut down.

In the aftermath of the programme the business, and in particular the BCMs, will continue to improve the processes, as part of business as usual, to achieve even greater sales.

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