



Constructing a collaborative approach

Following previous successful transformation projects within Project Management and Construction environments, the Managementors team were invited by one of their clients to carry out an in-depth analysis of their Capital Delivery Programme.

The client's teams were struggling to deliver the remaining programme of works. Projects were experiencing continuous slippage, which was resulting in significant financial implications. Senior management recognised a lack of challenge and accountability, which was being exacerbated by a strong blame culture across the operation. Managers within the business felt the organisation was too big to successfully implement change and staff morale was particularly low.

The business was also aware there were a number of bottlenecks in the process and that the different functions, notably Design and Operations, were not working effectively or collaboratively together.

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“The team were very approachable, clearly committed to what they were trying to do and felt part of our team. They unblocked a number of blockages that we had in our delivery and were always positive and working with the good of the business in mind.”

Head of People

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Case study

Name: Capital Delivery within the Water Industry

Sector: Construction, Project Management

Location: Glasgow

Key challenges

- Inconsistent ways of planning across multiple projects, with insufficient detail and plans not aligned to the overall programme
- Lack of trust in the data and too much time spent on non-value adding activities
- Retrospective programme management with insufficient focus on risks and opportunities, resulting in frequent cost shocks
- Weak subcontractor management and little visibility of subcontractor performance
- Poor interface between Design and Operations functions, leading to significant rework and build issues as the programme progresses

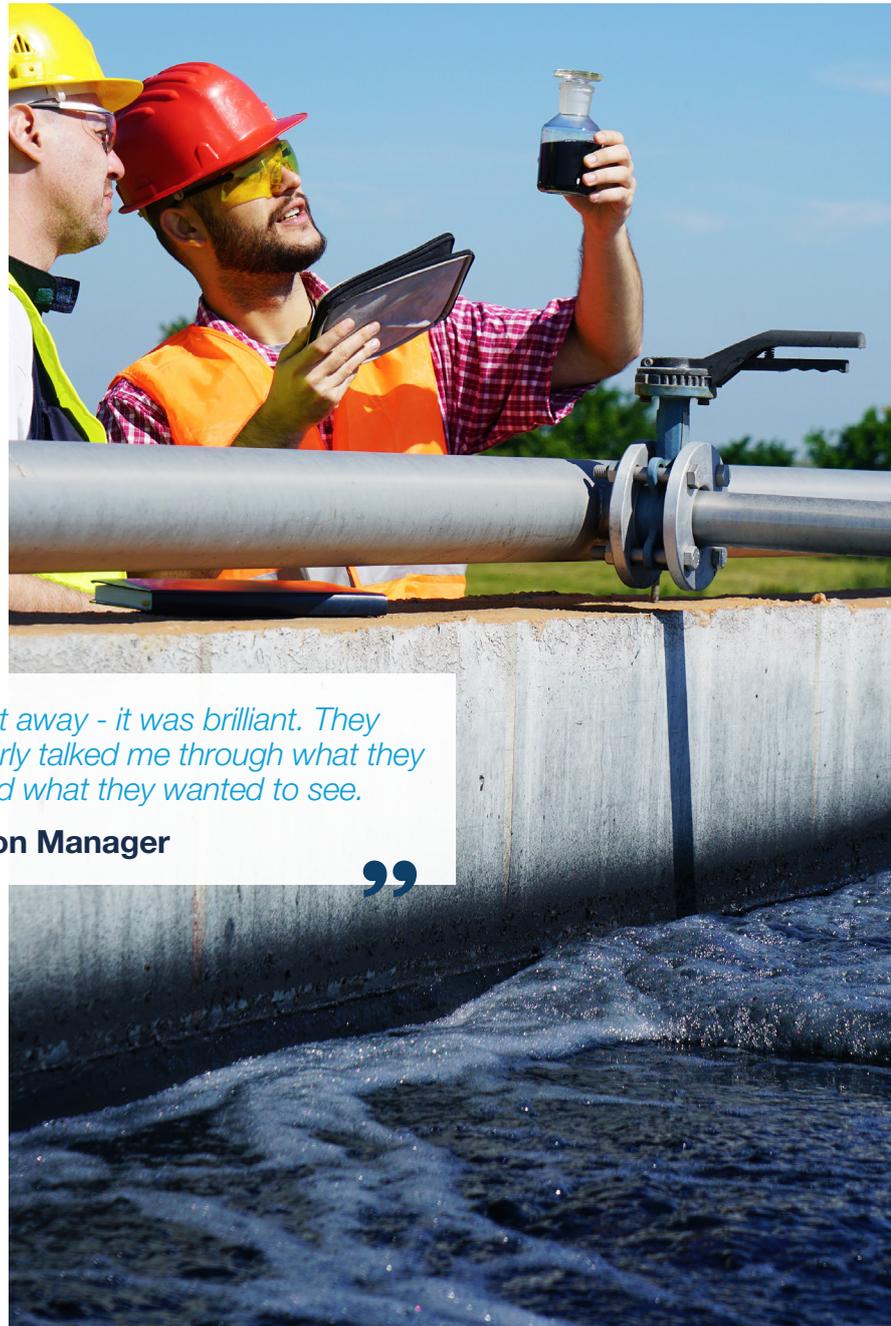
Key gains

- Implementation of standardised approach to planning with roles, responsibilities, inputs and outputs clearly defined
- Sufficiently detailed '4 Week Look-Aheads' allowing for daily short interval control and alignment to the overall programme
- Greater visibility of day-to-day issues at senior management level to drive resolution of priorities
- Individuals identified to champion new ways of working and ensure sustainability
- Less rework, fewer cost shocks particularly in relation to ongoing design spend and, ultimately, fewer delays to programme delivery
- Collaborative interface between Design and Delivery allowing a 'right first time' approach to be fostered

Approach & Outcomes

Taking a facilitative approach, Managementors worked in partnership with project stakeholders to tackle key areas requiring improvement within the operation.

Improving the quality and consistency of planning was a key area of focus. In the early weeks of the project, it became apparent there was no standard methodology for planning and that the quality, structure and detail of project and programme plans varied substantially. In some instances, detailed plans did not exist, and in others the level of detail was not sufficient to effectively control against. Or, activities did not accurately relate to the high level programme. An enhanced planning approach was quickly developed and rolled out to all sites. In-depth planning reviews were then held with each Project Manager and representatives from each project function, to ensure all key project activities, dependencies and requirements were captured and that the project team was aligned and committed to the plan.



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The team engaged straight away - it was brilliant. They reached out early on and clearly talked me through what they were trying to achieve and what they wanted to see.

Information Manager

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Weak interfaces between teams was another area of growing frustration for the business, most notably between the Design and Construction teams. A series of design ‘surgeries’ were facilitated to draw out the issues and blockers faced by members of these teams. Poor visibility of design challenges prior to delivery, and a lack of collaboration between design and delivery at key milestones, quickly emerged as themes. Once the key issues had been tabled, the group was together able to develop and agree an enhanced and more collaborative delivery process. Key elements of this were the introduction of a joint site ‘recce’, and representation from Design at project review meetings to enable issues to be identified and addressed earlier on, leading to less rework, fewer cost shocks particularly in relation to ongoing design spend, and ultimately fewer delays to programme delivery.

The ability to accurately and coherently channel information from the ground up was widely accepted as a positive step in the right direction. Equally, the improved interface between Design and Delivery has allowed a ‘right first time’ approach to be fostered, meaning fewer last minute changes to design and, where design changes are required, the right expectation is set in terms of capacity, turnaround and understanding. The standardisation of the planning tools, templates and sessions has meant consistency across the various levels of management and the ability to conduct a like-for-like comparison of performance and challenges.





Additionally, a number of process and Management Operating System (MOS) elements were reviewed, enhanced and reinforced during the lifetime of the project; for example, the Compensation Event (CE) and issue capture/escalations processes. Escalations and the data supporting them came from a number of sources but without any degree of rigour. As such, the process of escalation was reviewed and key elements introduced to formalise the process, as well as to distinguish internal issues from client or supplier issues. Examples of these elements included the standardisation of daily, weekly, fortnightly and monthly review sessions in order to control against the plan and the introduction of effective issue capture and escalation mechanisms. A formal daily review meeting was introduced to review issues impacting on performance. Tooling was developed to create a user-friendly method for capturing issues and escalations, ensuring they were being flagged at the appropriate level of management and that clear actions and owners were assigned. Following the development and implementation of these elements, the business has made significant progress in terms of raising, escalating and resolving issues at the earliest available opportunity and creating a strong foundation for enhanced performance of subsequent projects. CEs, in particular, are now discussed and raised in line with a more collaborative approach, allowing quicker feedback and a more constructive discourse.

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Our data management was a bit all over the place. By centralising it, it really helped me and it gave me some good pointers and things to look for – top marks for that. They had the same vision as myself in bringing everything together.

Information Manager

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I thought it would be more of a desktop consultancy approach but the team were on site, speaking to the guys on the ground. They were all very engaging and pragmatic and the communication was great.

Design Lead

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Alongside the process review and MOS development elements of the project, a series of training workshops were held, accelerating managers' understanding of the project and key principles such as active management, effective planning, short interval control, effective communication and elements of the MOS. Care was taken to ensure that staff from a mixture of functions attended these workshops, to encourage the sharing of issues as well as improve cross-team understanding and collaboration. Attendees were also trained on how to conduct 'Day in the Life of' (DILo) studies and, in addition to the training workshops, a programme of DILOs was completed by a selection of Operations Managers and Project Managers. This was positively received and resulted in greatly increased internal visibility of issues on sites that had not been escalated previously and improved the ownership of issue capture at a higher level in the business. Items, such as sites, having better ability to procure materials and sub-optimal subcontractors performance (which were impacting the plan and response times on Technical Questions and Requests for Information) were highlighted and addressed.

In the final weeks of the project, the focus turned to developing a network of 'Champions' as well as a supporting MOS review process in order to facilitate the sustainability of the changes made, as well as provide a strong foundation for the business to roll out the new ways of working to other regions. Distinct roles within the 'Champion' team were agreed and defined i.e. 'Sponsor', 'Practitioners', 'Auditors' and 'Support Services', and training sessions carried out to ensure that the roles, responsibilities and expectations were clear. The Managementors team will continue providing targeted support to the Champions through a number of follow-up days that will be carried out over the coming months. Adopting the MOS Champion structure as part of 'business as usual' has also enabled the team to fully embrace a culture of continuous improvement, with the subsequent development of a new issue reporting function. This is contributing to an even greater level of understanding and, with enhanced visibility of the detail and challenges faced on site, senior managers are empowered to make day-to-day decisions supported by the provision of real time information.

With more detailed, meaningful and consistent planning and active management, the delivery teams now feel in a position to meet the requirements and are confident they can deliver the remainder of the programme.



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