



ReAssure

CHANGING CHANGE AT REASSURE

Originally founded in 1963, ReAssure is a life and pensions company which buys and administers complex closed books of business from other companies. The organisation is focused on acquiring business and not new business. Although ReAssure may not be a household name, they are not a small company. In fact, ReAssure is one of the biggest life companies in the UK – they have over 3 million policies on their books, and look after investments of over £44 billion for their customers.

They have invested heavily in their buildings, infrastructure, IT and more; making the business far more dynamic, collaborative, results-focused and progressive. A joined-up change delivery function was imperative to the ongoing growth and success of the business.

News at One met COO, Jon Whitaker, who shared how he approached the transformation of Change Delivery within ReAssure.



JON WHITAKER
COO, REASSURE



JANE LOGIE
CONSULTANT, PROJECT ONE

THE CHALLENGE

Following the acquisition of Guardian in 2016, the organisation restructured and rebranded as ReAssure. Jon Whitaker, who joined originally to integrate Guardian into ReAssure, then took on the role of COO, with a key objective to transform the change delivery function.

“It was clear from the CEO’s brief that it was an area that needed a lot of focus. As an organisation, we had a good track record of delivering the big migrations of acquired businesses – our USP is bringing businesses into our in-house system set. We had not experienced the same level of success with delivering a wider range of smaller, value-adding change.” Said Jon.

Although ‘big integration’ delivery was successful, as a growing business, ReAssure has an increasing amount of other change to go through. Their processes didn’t adapt themselves very well to more ambiguous change – it was taking too long, and behaviours were wrong – the change delivery functions were fragmented. Taking a traditional waterfall approach led to a lack of collaboration, which meant issues were not being discovered until late in the process.

Jon explained what he thought was key to the success of this programme. “We had to bring together a number of separate independent functions. I was determined to have one change framework that we all work to, regardless of function. Getting the behaviours right, where people are focused on the outcome first – rather than the process and their function – was absolutely key in driving the collaboration we knew we needed, to be successful.” Said Jon.

The ReAssure business is complex. By definition, they inherit some of the more diverse and complex industry products, pulling them together, administering them out of one system, compliantly, and in a more cost-effective way. This involves an awful lot of knowledge of the underlying products, which you wouldn’t see in the market today, as well as expertise of their different business functions, administration systems and Financial Services regulatory knowledge – where the bar is continually being raised. Therefore, to be successful ReAssure had to harness their knowledge in those areas.

“We needed an experienced practitioner’s view of how you deliver change in a complex, regulatory environment like ours. That’s when I thought of Project One.”

Jon Whitaker

The way they were delivering more ambiguous internal change was not allowing their knowledge to be effectively harnessed, to drive the best outcomes.

Looking at how to tackle this, Jon decided to evolve the existing approach. “Using an off-the-shelf methodology and moving everyone to it quite quickly could have been quite disastrous – you can’t stop the bus and make those changes.” At the same time, they were delivering on the Guardian integration, and going into 2017 with big policy migrations from old systems on to their system, major regulatory changes were going through and they had kicked off a big deal with L&G which is now in full train.

“We needed a vision of where we were trying to get to. It would have been easy to get a text book agile manifesto type approach from a whole range of external providers – I wasn’t convinced that was right for our business. We needed an experienced practitioner’s view of how you deliver change in a complex, regulatory environment like ours. That’s when I thought of Project One.” Said Jon.

Continued...

PROJECT ONE LEADING CHANGE

“We all know you can’t process design your way to greatness...but having great process design combined with a team that stand shoulder-to-shoulder, choosing to succeed together, is incredibly powerful.”

Jane Logie

Initially, Project One undertook a short piece of work to provide a framework that assessed the way ReAssure were operating, where they wanted to get to, and the actions required. They then agreed the framework of what they wanted to achieve over the next 18 months. A programme that Project One would help to implement and manage overall.

“It was really helpful because Project One drew upon their experience of what ‘good’ looks like and identified common flaws, producing a best practice framework – not an out-of-the-box change methodology.” Said Jon. “Project One Consultant, Jane Logie, had the credibility and experience to work at a senior level and with different components of the business that contribute to change – this was critical for me.

“The number of functions integral to the overall change process do not all report to me and the only way it was going to work was if we tackled it holistically. That’s why having someone like Jane on board was vital. She had also worked at other large insurance companies, and knows some of the peculiarities of our business.”

THE APPROACH

A number of transitions were identified to take ReAssure through to Q4 2018 and an efficient change delivery function. During the engagement, Project One was responsible for three sprints, each of which built upon the foundations of its predecessor.

SPRINT 1:

Focused on the completion of a **change capability assessment** and the presentation of findings and recommendations. The final presentation was shared with executives and functional heads and consensus reached that there were significant capability gaps and a desire to take action.

SPRINT 2:

Focused on putting in place strong foundations for **future capability development**. A new multi-modal model was defined and approved, along with three transition states. A revised end-to-end Target Operating Model removed overlap and duplication, and clearly set out functional accountabilities. In addition, the **‘Changing Change’** Programme was reorganised into a more logical set of workstreams, with clearer focus on deliverables by transition state.

SPRINT 3:

Had many strands including:

- Leadership of the ‘Changing Change’ Programme
- The definition, approval and implementation of tier 2 Target Operating Models
- Reengineering of key processes (sequential, gating, estimating, demand & supply, KPI’s, benefits, common data/reporting, fast track – edge cases)
- Defining new backlog management, sponsorship and behaviours
- The identification of quantifiable savings resulting from the changes implemented.

Throughout the three sprints, Jane worked with the senior team creating opportunities for them to develop a shared and compelling vision for end-to-end change, and to challenge them to collaborate and become a living example of the ReAssure **One Team** approach.

THE OUTCOME

The objective of the ‘Changing Change’ initiative was to replace the programme of change with a continuous improvement culture that lives and breathes.

This resulted in a seismic shift with people engaging in, and thinking about the end outcome for the piece of change and how best to achieve it.

“We’re harnessing our skills and applying our knowledge and innovation far more effectively to find smart solutions to very complex problems – that is very interesting and exciting.” Said Jon.

“The power of getting the team involved in the delivery of end-to-end change, and working collaboratively with common vision and behaviours, has probably been the most important thing that we’ve done.”

Aside from the financial benefits where substantial savings can be re-invested into the business, ReAssure is targeting a 20% productivity improvement. There is a real sense of drive and ambition for the future, a more innovative culture and a team that understands the wider impact of change, using the same terminology and equipped to continue to make progress with pace and energy.

“We are replicating existing products cost effectively, that still requires a degree of innovation but it’s more about innovation of the solution, rather than innovation of the product.”

Jon Whitaker



MAKING A REAL DIFFERENCE

The top four things that helped to make a real difference:

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Jon always wanted to get his team truly engaged in the programme and he supported them in terms of time and resource to make this possible.

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The new operating model removed duplication and overlap and made it clear where accountabilities resided, enabling the team to ‘play in position’, as well as be part of the whole.

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Having a ‘cheerleader’ and someone who could accelerate development of new ways of working.

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Project One’s bespoke approach, assessing the situation and the needs of the business, and becoming a true partner.