

ORCHESTRATING AN EFFECTIVE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

Employ the right conductor and let the lead violinist play. True transformational change is critical; businesses simply cannot afford to get it wrong.

In recognition of this, a senior leader is invariably made accountable with the brief to act as the sponsor and figurehead throughout the transformation programme. At the outset, this all makes perfect sense.

WHY ARE YOU DISTRACTED BY DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME DELIVERY?

Programmes of significant, business-critical change have many, moving parts. Each part needs to be recognised, managed and co-ordinated. This creates significant and, at the outset, unforeseen additional workload for programme sponsors.

Frequently, the work required is on unfamiliar ground and at a breadth and depth that will challenge the experiences of the most seasoned business leader. It is this additional strain that soon dominates. It distracts the sponsor from delivering the coherent, trusted change leadership that was the very reason they were selected in the first place.

As a result, sponsors often look for, or are offered, help from external partners to provide transformation programme leadership and bandwidth to help shape and drive delivery, therefore enabling the sponsor to invest their limited time most effectively.

This is a well-trodden path, so why does this often not work? Why does the 'noise' from internal stakeholders continue? Crucially, how do you ensure that the programme continues to be led with integrity, so that it consistently does the right things for the good of the business?



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THERE IS A WAY

Firstly, you have to accept that transformational change leadership is a significant, niche capability in its own right. It's certainly not just about delivery.

In addition to focusing on delivery and keeping the programme in control and concentrated on results, successful transformation also requires balanced attention to ensure: clarity and buy-in to the vision; the required conditions exist to enable successful change; that the business does actually change as a result of the programme; and that the business benefits are realised.

In doing this, understanding, and then winning the hearts and minds of the entirety of the stakeholder landscape, it allows you to effectively scale the programme leadership work, with everyone informed and pulling for the change:

CxOs, responsible for the business results

Business owners, whose teams will lead the delivery of benefits

Those impacted by the change, who must be engaged robustly

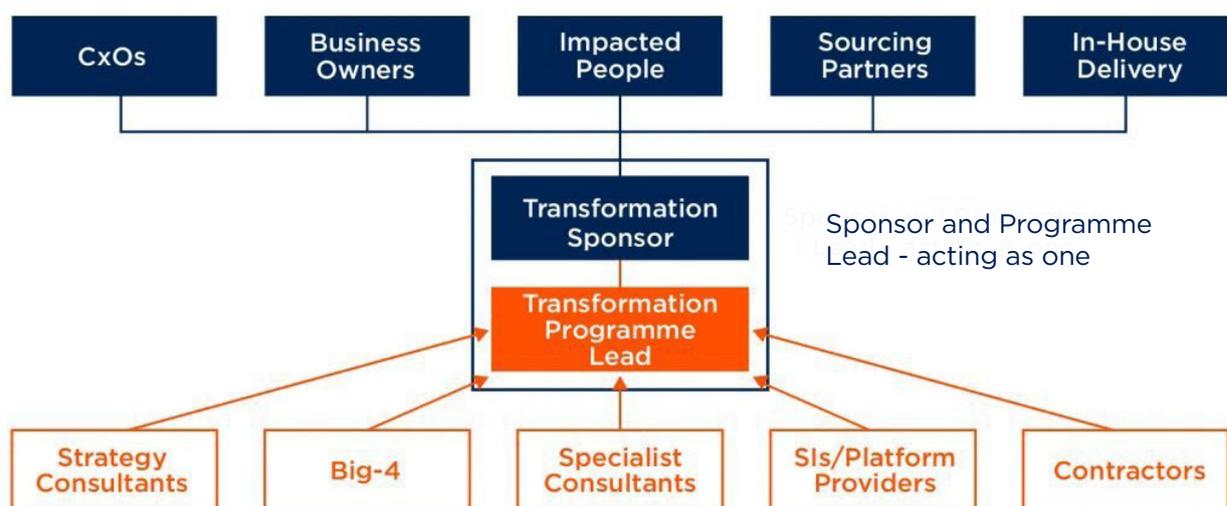
Sourcing partners, who may deliver certain services for the business

In-house delivery, who will want to lead key aspects of their work

Secondly, and arguably the most underestimated success factor, is having the experience and ability to understand (without bias) and then draw the best out of the external partner ecosystem.

In large transformation programmes, inevitably there will be multiple organisations providing a variety of core services to support delivery - the programme's "ecosystem".

Businesses often look to these same organisations to provide the programme leadership experience and capacity that they seek. It should be no surprise that these same organisations fall over themselves to provide that transformation leadership support.



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SELECTING THE RIGHT LEADERSHIP SUPPORT

Draw on the core strength of your suppliers but be wary of the hidden pressures they face to sell you more.

Hire the wrong transformation leadership support and experience shows that as a business sponsor, rather than optimising your own leadership impact, you will instead be further increasing your problems and workload. Here are our change experts insights into some of the challenges to think about when approaching suppliers:

Big-4 consultancies: bundle transformation leadership as part of functionally aligned consulting proposals. The problem here is that the experienced practitioners that you actually need to orchestrate complex business-critical change are now at Director or Partner level and are incentivised to sell and lead significant teams of more junior people who you probably don't really need.

SI's/Platform providers: normally proposing more technology-centric solutions, but in generic terms, suffer the same internal politics as the Big-4. Their talented Directors and Partners need to sell even bigger teams or deals, due to tighter margins!

Too often, internal pressures to deliver committed margin from the deal means that more of their leadership time turns to managing the contract position, rather than driving for the best outcomes for the programme.

Functional domain specialist consultants: in generic terms 'a much smaller Big-4', specialising in supply chain, customer management, digital etc. The model is smaller, the pyramid pressures are the same. The heavy-hitting orchestrators you need are either busy running the company, or more likely not there at all.

Strategy consultants: promise a seamless transition from strategy support to transformation programme leadership and PMO. Great strategy advisors and great transformation leaders are like chalk and cheese.

Contractors: the talent is certainly there. The best people are hard to find and without lots of experience, are very difficult to test in a selection process. The issue here is that you are placing your own success in the hands of an individual. There also may be an IR35 risk that you will have to now manage.

Over the years, Project One has hired many highly experienced, highly capable change and transformation leaders. They most often join us from the organisations in the diagram on page 2.

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WHAT DEFINES THE RIGHT KIND OF LEADERSHIP SUPPORT?

In all cases, by sourcing support through these channels, there is a significant risk that programme leadership will lose neutrality and objectivity. You run the risk of letting delivery partners 'mark their own homework', or being overly biased on how they mark the work of their ecosystem competitors.

So, what defines the right kind of transformation programme leadership support? As a sponsor, how can you ensure that your "right-hand" shares your own passion to act with your business' interest at all times? Here are some suggestions:

- 1) Seek the deep experience and wherewithal to manage both the internal stakeholders and external delivery partners
- 2) Look for an approach that manages all dimensions of successful transformation
- 3) Ensure there is delivery know-how (and resilience) to tenaciously drive delivery, despite the inevitable bumps along the way
- 4) Demand the necessary independence and collaborative ethic to co-ordinate all the delivery partners involved
- 5) Make sure that you are very comfortable that your support stands alongside you, giving you the objective and impartial advice required.

Transformational change is hard enough, without letting other interests get in the way. Businesses need to secure the right partner to orchestrate the transformation programme in their best interests. Choose the right partner and the transformation music will be sweet. Choose the wrong partner and the orchestra will disband before exiting rehearsals!

DO YOU NEED CHANGE EXPERTISE?

At Project One, we are change experts. We are one of the fastest growing independent change consultancies in the UK and are proud to have been named a Leading UK Management Consultancy by the Financial Times.

We work with many of the UK's leading organisations, across multiple sectors, to deliver transformational and business-critical change, at scale and with a fully employed model. If you'd like to learn more or just need a sounding board, please get in touch with:

**David.Knappett@
projectone.com,
Consulting Director.**