

GOVERNANCE AND CONTROL IN A GLOBAL CRISIS

I recently had time to reflect on what constitutes the right level of governance and control when an organisation reacts to a global crisis. In this instance, the culture contrast was something we often don't see – essentially a 'start-up' company being spawned from a fully mature and well-respected national institution.

The need for speed meant that things just simply had to happen, initially without the right governance or control in place. People used their own instinct and judgement, based on solid experience and applied intelligence.

Attempts to impose a formal governance model, without the required 'delivery at pace' focus, were initially ignored as it hindered progress. The teams were pushing forward, creating capability and delivering projects at a speed and intensity I've never seen before.

The years of experience of those involved meant that they instinctively knew the right things to do, at the right time, and very quickly a pragmatic approach to governance was created.

Lean programme boards were established to direct overall strategy and drive decision making. A pragmatic approach to change meant that divisional change was managed and controlled by that division, unless it crossed divisional boundaries, at which point it was directed through a Joint Design, for approval and then prioritisation.

KEY LESSONS

The key lesson here is all about applying the right level of control at the right time. You need to:

- Maximise delivery benefits by ensuring you have the right executive engagement and ownership to quickly set direction, establish the overall priorities and business outcomes to be achieved
- Deliver faster by controlling your projects and programmes at the appropriate level and reducing complex governance where it is not needed
- Quickly 'triage' new demand, tailoring the application of change governance, based on risk and reducing bureaucracy to enable fast-paced delivery
- Centrally track change to ensure streamlined and consistent release management, especially when multiple cross-divisional change is being delivered, to ensure optimised delivery
- Lay the foundations for good governance and control at project and programme level. This includes: programme planning; reporting and monitoring; risk and issue management; financial management; change control; and information management and governance secretariat support.



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DRIVE ASSURANCE

Good governance and control will also assist, support and help drive the appropriate level of assurance to meet today's delivery challenges:

- **Intelligence and Empathy:** thoughtful control, delivered by people who instinctively understand delivery and benefits realisation; able to quickly identify and address problems, whilst never getting in the way
- **Perspective:** provides insight on both programme and BAU elements of delivery – and how they need to work together, especially when change is rapid
- **Value Enhancing:** generates an active pull for assurance from programmes
- **Enduring impact:** develops and rapidly evolves capability around change processes, tools and people
- **Fit for purpose:** engages the right stakeholders, balancing diplomacy, calling out what needs to be done.

ADAPTING TO A NEW DELIVERY ENVIRONMENT

The need to mobilise and deliver at increasing speed is critical as the world adjusts to the recent changes we have seen, and new challenges on the horizon. It is possible to be fast and dynamic, rapidly deploying new and innovative solutions to meet today's urgent challenges. But that doesn't negate the need for robust governance and control – applied pragmatically and matured as the organisation develops. With the right experience, and the right approach this can be achieved 'on the go' – but you must have the right experienced team, or you can quickly get yourself in a mess.

Setting up for success is even more relevant and essential now, and at Project One, we recognise that effective governance and control are still essential to successful programme delivery. We also understand that in exceptional times, having the skills and ability to grow this capability from lean 'start-up' to maturing organisation, in a very short period, has never been more important.

DO YOU NEED CHANGE EXPERTISE?

We deploy small teams of experienced change experts to help you set-up and execute brilliantly, and at pace. If any of this resonates and you would like to discuss further, please contact: david.knappett@projectone.com