

SERVICE

# Programme Turnaround

When a critical project or programme is in distress, the situation can be extremely pressurised and emotions can run high. There's a lot at stake, for the business and for the people involved.

Sometimes the bad news is unexpected – the status goes from green, green, green straight to red. Other times it's the creeping pressure of a plan that gets constantly re-planned for just one more month. Whatever the symptoms – underperformance or relationship breakdown with your suppliers, a programme that seems to have lost sight of its original rationale or benefits, dysfunctional team or governance, or just taking too long and costing too much – we can help you identify and fix the real root causes and refocus the programme on its overall goal.

We are committed to helping our clients with their toughest challenges and we are often the go-to people for our clients when delivery of their toughest transformational changes runs into trouble. Our people are all experienced practitioners who can apply the practical experience that only comes from delivering transformational change for a living. We're not programme auditors, and we don't believe in a box-ticking approach. We're prepared to come off the fence and give you an honest opinion about what to do, rather than constantly hedge bets as some other firms do when they're more interested in managing their risk than yours.

We have been involved in many turnaround situations over the years and we know what it takes to bring a programme back from the brink and set it on course for success. This is hugely challenging, yet it is one of the most satisfying things we do for our clients.

*“When a programme is in distress, you have to seek evidence and have empathy. You need to form a clear fact-based understanding of the true status and of what choices actually exist. Alongside this, you must have sensitivity and strong leadership skills to gather and re-galvanise the team for success. It's about the head and the heart.”*

**Jonathan Kennedy**  
Partner



## SERVICE - Programme Turnaround

### Tell Tale Signs

The bigger and more complex a programme is, the more likely it will have occasional difficulties, tensions, hiccups, and setbacks. But when do the natural bumps and grinds of a big transformation turn into something serious enough to require a significant course correction or turnaround? In our experience, some tell-tale signs might include:

### Strategic Rationale and Outcomes Focus

- The business has lost confidence in the programme and is questioning the overall rationale – cancellation is no longer seen as a dirty word.
- There is little reference to decisions and principles agreed early in the programme.
- The programme has an overwhelming focus on technology delivery rather than the business change it is enabling.
- The real end-benefits of the programme are not clear, or there's no way of measuring them.

### Approach, Plans and Delivery Rigour

- A lot of money is being spent and a lot of effort is going in, but the programme just doesn't seem to be delivering.
- Status reporting appears too good to be true and does not line up with the mood of the organisation. Status was green, green, green ... then red just before a major event, or before a hard milestone that couldn't be bluffed.
- There's no clear plan, or a constant churn of re-planning – the end date mysteriously seems to move out as fast as the programme is "progressing".
- Ambitious targets are being chased and the programme is running hot.
- Above all, there is no coherent evidence-based view of the programme status – there are only opinions. Some are saying it's OK, others that it's doomed. Hard facts and evidence on the real status seem frustratingly elusive.

### Leadership and Engagement

- It's not clear who's sponsoring the programme and/or the role of the business has diminished.
- There's in-fighting or considerable "politics" amongst stakeholders.
- The key senior people who set the programme up have since left or moved on.

### Joined Up and Experienced Team

- There is an 'us and them' attitude between the programme team and the rest of the business.

- Morale among the programme team is low and there is little confidence in deliverability.
- Tensions are running high between key people in the team.
- The programme organisation is overly complex and it is not clear who is on the hook for what.
- Supplier and commercial relationships are under extreme pressure or may even have broken down – the client is blaming the vendor and vice versa.
- It seems like the team just doesn't have the right experience, or is too lightweight for the scale and complexity of the change.
- The team is highly stressed and the well-being of individuals is suffering.

These are some of the classic signals that a programme is not in control and on course – a significant correction or turnaround may be necessary. Understanding the root causes and helping you to address them is what we focus on when we take on such a task.

### Fact-based understanding

Our starting point is to work out exactly what the truth of the programme is – by gathering evidence rather than just opinion, and by leveraging our experience of similar situations elsewhere. For example, a programme may be running hard towards a launch date but may be struggling to close out the last mile of testing or business acceptance. Where exactly are they? Is it a case of battenning down the hatches and keeping going, or is this a sign of a more sophisticated problem that requires a different way of thinking?

If you're making decisions based on the wrong view of where you are, or simply keep doing what you are doing, you are likely to compound the problem.

That's why it's so important to form an evidence-based view of where you actually are. It's a critical first step that gives you not only a clear view of the facts but also a common set of evidence around which people can gather and start to rebuild a shared sense of team and purpose. An independent fact-based reference point is for everyone.

### Establishing realistic priorities

We then help you to align the programme sponsors and executive team to acknowledge where we are, so we can have constructive and realistic conversations about priorities. This often involves uncomfortable trade-offs between scope, time and money. We are very sensitive to commitments that may have been made previously and work with you to reach balanced decisions based on options grounded in reality. We'll help you bring sponsors and executives on the journey.

## SERVICE - Programme Turnaround

### Reorganising for success

Once we are clear on what's important what we're now aiming for, we can help you re-organise for success. This may involve tuning the existing organisation to get the right people in the right roles, or it may involve a more fundamental organisational change involving going back to first principles around capability, accountability and supplier choices. This may involve re-evaluating, and in some cases restructuring, supplier relationships and commercial arrangements.

### Setting a new standard

Re-building a team requires more than drawing a new organisation chart. In distressed programmes, we often find teams operating with 'crisis management as the norm'. We will refocus this energy on the programmes goals and priorities. Rigorous but efficient programme processes, delivery predictability, crystal clear accountability, common goals and robust leadership will need to be re-established and built into the team's DNA. We will lead by example and re-set the bar.

### Simple steps

Regardless of scale, we aim to break down the complexity of the situation and identify a set of relatively simple metrics and steps that everyone can understand and align around – from the team on the ground to business and IT sponsors. This common view of progress and success helps to drive accountability and keep focus on the important things.

### A big return

The biggest unplanned cost on a programme is often slippage in the dates. It's a brutal example of the adage that time is money. So it goes without saying that the faster things can be brought back under control, the better. We typically bring a very small team, maybe just one or two highly experienced people. We'll break down the problem, help the executive team understand and align around the options and agree a way forward, and refocus the team. We often also get involved in very targeted short term roles to issue-bust specific gnarly challenges facing the programme.

For a relatively small cost you get a big return from this kind of involvement.



## How we can help

We've worked with many of the world's leading companies on their most challenging transformation programmes – from early vision, strategy and business case, right through the hard yards of delivery. This gives us the hard-won experience and insight to help.

We are committed to helping our clients with their toughest challenges and we are often the go-to people for our clients when delivery of their toughest transformational changes runs into trouble.

We've been involved in many turnaround situations over the years and we know what it takes to bring a programme or programme back from the brink and set it on course for success. This is hugely challenging, yet it is one of the most satisfying things we do for our clients.

This isn't about a programme audit, or a box ticking approach. Many consulting firms have an advisory practice, where the people only 'advise' rather than 'do'. Our people are all experienced practitioners who have the practical experience of being in the programme delivery hot seat themselves. This

means they can apply practical experience, understand the real content of the issues, and empathise with a programme team that is in a bad place. We're prepared to come off the fence and give you an honest opinion about what to do, rather than constantly hedge bets as some other firms do when they're more interested in managing their risk than yours.

With our 'low volume, high value' model, we won't overwhelm with large teams or take months to produce results. Typically, only using one or two highly experienced and high calibre people, we can assess and turn around major programmes in weeks. Above all, this is about sound judgement – doing enough analysis and drawing on our experience to help our clients make a confident call on what's right for them.

We work as close knit part of your team, doing the work 'with you, not to you', and getting to results that have real ownership and buy-in.

To read more about the services we can provide to define and deliver the right change for your business, [click here](#).

## SERVICE - Programme Turnaround

### Our experience

Here are just a few examples of our work in this space:

- We helped a global consumer goods organisation turnaround and then deliver a significant Finance transformation across over 100 countries. This involved both implementing a new suite of SAP systems for financial consolidation and all group management and financial reporting, and also streamlining their financial reporting by consolidating the group financial results directly from the source ledgers in each of their 600+ Legal Entities around the world. [See full case study here.](#)

***“Berkeley did an outstanding job. The key factors that made them successful were the rigour of their programme management skills; their willingness to ‘roll up their sleeves’ to really understand the issues and deal with them; and the way they collaborated seamlessly and successfully with our people. We simply could not have done it without them.”***

**Vice President of Finance Performance & Analytics**

- A FTSE top 30 Consumer Goods and Retail group was undertaking a shared ERP implementation across two of its major UK-based subsidiaries. This critical and complex programme had a history of cost overruns and missed delivery dates. When further technical and delivery challenges materialised, the programme sponsors invited Berkeley to conduct a health check of the programme and recommend a way forward. Berkeley successfully turned around the programme, and it went live on time and on budget against the revised plan. The post-turnaround phase of the programme was seen as a best-practice exemplar for others in the group to follow.

***“Berkeley successfully turned around a failing project. They brought the clear skillset and leadership which was previously missing.”***

**CEO**

***“Berkeley were very well structured and extremely thorough. The confidence and success that it generated moved through the team. Overall a good turnaround IT project which was very well managed by Berkeley.”***

**Group Finance Director**

- A major foods group was implementing a finance and supply chain transformation. The programme was struggling with extending timelines and increasing costs, plus some significant scope questions around stock management and cutover approach. It was clear that a ‘re-set’ was needed, and the company turned to Berkeley to help. We turned around the programme first by understanding, engaging and driving clear resolution on the scope issues – with full stakeholder backing and alignment. We then led a re-planning phase and restructured the programme team. The programme went on to deliver successfully, on time and on budget against the post-turnaround scope and plan.

***“Berkeley brought focus and the external view and realism that the project was not in a good state then worked with new and existing project members to drive a good plan. I enjoyed working with them, very high drive and focus.”***

**IT Director**

- We led the successful turnaround and re-launch of a major, US\$38m Group Finance Transformation for an Oil & Gas Major, the goal of which was to improve quality of service and increase efficiency of the Finance function by delivering standardised processes, organisation structure, data and systems across the Group.

