
Keeping a grip on complex programmes

High stakes; small team

Complex change is risky business – before you know it, you’ve spent a lot of time, money and effort for little gain. Yet the benefits of getting it right can be considerable. So a great deal is at stake here and a small high impact team can make all the difference.

The secret to a successful programme management office

It’s fair to say that programme management offices don’t have the best reputation. They’re associated with armies of consultants, with slowing down or, worse, obstructing programmes.

Yet you don’t need a big team to coordinate big transformations that are critical to your business. With the right kind of strategic programme management office (SPMO), you can improve the chances of successful change as well as share and embed best practice. So what do we mean by right?

- Keep the SPMO small
- Make sure the team are true programme management experts that have the skills and experience and vitally, approach and attitude
- Give the SPMO genuine backing from the top
- Give it licence to challenge as well as support programme implementers
- Encourage the SPMO to demonstrate value as early as possible
- Make sure the SPMO focuses on meeting clear objectives without being wedded to set processes or policies – allow it to flex
- Use the SPMO both to drive home the immediate change at hand and to encourage and build long-term capability to manage change well in the future

SPMOs in action

A public sector organisation is successfully coordinating 15 major programmes and projects with the help of a three-person SPMO