

CASE STUDY

Coordinating and controlling complex change

Making a vital difference

With 12,000 branches across the country and over 20 million customer visits a week, the Post Office is part of the fabric of people's lives in the UK and has recently been undertaking a significant business transformation. Berkeley worked with its leadership team to help them coordinate and control this transformation activity to help ensure the transformation was a success.

“Given the scale of the transformation and the complexity of the changes the Post Office was facing, it was vital we strengthened our ability to manage this effectively. Berkeley brought the right levels of experience and challenge and just as importantly the right approach to engaging with the organisation and commitment to build internal capability.”

Sue Barton, Strategy Director

Ensuring the long-term success of a much-loved organisation

The Post Office was facing a number of strategic challenges to its long-term success - from changes in its core markets, for example the move of customers online, to increasing competition from new providers and customers with ever higher expectations.

In response it undertook a major three-year business transformation delivered via a large number of different programmes and projects. Amongst other things these were transforming the way its branch network operated, how it managed relationships with its customers and how its IT organisation delivers successfully.

Although well equipped to manage business as usual operations, the Post Office had less experience driving through business transformations on such a scale, with so many moving parts, or with such far-reaching implications. Their Executive Committee (ExCo) recognised they would need support to mitigate key risks and realise the full benefits of the transformation, so they called us in to help.

Identifying the solution

We worked closely with the Strategy Director and her ExCo colleagues to assess how best to coordinate and control the transformation. The ExCo needed to be able to put their arms around the programmes without stifling them while at the same time ensuring that the individual programmes were joined up so that they complemented rather than conflicted with each other.

Strengthening governance

An important part of the solution was to strengthen the quality of governance over the transformation. To this end, we recommended and oversaw the creation of an executive level Transformation Board with clear accountability and responsibility for delivering the transformation alongside clear links to the individual programme boards. This Board enabled us to drive home the importance of senior management really taking responsibility for the implementation of change.



“We combine our experience of how best to manage and coordinated change at scale to deliver for senior management with our ability to work as one with your programme teams to ensure the management of your change portfolio is effective.”

Mark Stafford
Partner



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Creating a small high impact team

To provide the critical coordination and support needed we set up a small experienced strategic programme management office (SPMO). Working as the “engine” of the Transformation Board, the SPMO was initially staffed by three of our consultants with a plan for the Post Office to take up these roles as part of building their own internal capability.

The SPMO focused on defining, developing and coordinating the overall road map for the transformation as well as working very closely with individual programme teams - challenging and supporting them in equal measure to make sure they were delivering in the right way and in line with benefits and costs. The SPMO, for example, oversaw ongoing confidence assessments across all the individual programmes so that it became quicker and easier to make improvements and share best practice. The experience and independence of the SPMO was vital here, as was the operational flexibility it showed when working across a range of different types of programme.

Making the best use of management

The Post Office management team have been able to make more effective use of their time, by removing duplication of effort on individual programmes and, crucially, by having a clear picture and ownership of the transformation.

Minimising the risks and maximising the benefits

Transformation on this scale inevitably comes with considerable risks – the risks of not delivering, of spending money unwisely,

of doing things poorly in an uncoordinated way. Putting in place a small high impact SPMO with the wherewithal and drive to coordinate complex change enabled the Post Office to minimise the risks and maximise the opportunity for full benefits realisation.

Building long-term capability to manage complex change

Through helping the Post office coordinate and control their transformation programme, we also helped build their long-term capability to manage complex change as a part of their core business capability. This starts as something as simple as knowing the right questions to ask but will pay real dividends for future change programmes.

“A myriad of interconnected projects, programmes and business as usual initiatives were managed to deliver the transformation with the scale of change driving very significant levels of investment as well as resource commitment from all parts of the organisation. Berkeley helped define smart, pragmatic approaches to effectively coordinate the transformation while bringing the organisation with us and building the internal capabilities we need to do this ourselves longer term.”

Sue Barton, Strategy Director

