
An old school approach to new technology

Does new and exciting technology require a new and exciting approach to project management? In our experience, it's far better to apply classic principles of project delivery best practice. If you want to make sure your IT investments deliver value for your business, it helps to stay old school when you're assessing, managing and implementing it.

It's all too easy to get carried away with new developments and opportunities in the inherently fast moving world of IT. Technologies can promise much, and deliver a great deal, too. But you can pay a high price in wasted time, effort and money if you fall for the wrong solution at the wrong time, or try to implement the right solution in the wrong way. How do you navigate the risks and complexities, while not missing out on the undoubted opportunities to turn technology to your business's advantage?

You might think that new project management techniques are required to tackle new IT prospects and projects. But often it's the classic qualities of good old-fashioned project planning and management that make the vital difference.

Drawing on our experience of helping clients successfully plan and deliver major complex IT projects and programmes, here are a few tips that have stood the test of time to become classic best practice:

- Always put your business aims and objectives first – never forget the technology is only ever there to serve you and your business, no matter how wonderful and whizzy it might seem.
- Don't be seduced by the latest technology – make sure you assess it with a critical, business-focused eye.
- Look for experienced, independent advice from people who are truly on your side and willing to work closely with you to help you develop the right IT solution for your business.
- When assessing, developing and implementing your IT solution, involve all the key people – including, critically, the ones who are going to use it (not just those who are paying for it).
- Use your good judgement, and the good judgement of trusted advisers, to work out how best to exploit the opportunities new technology presents. Make sure you gather enough information and insights to make well-informed decisions – enough, but no more. If you allow yourself to get bogged down in too many complexities, you're in danger of doing nothing and missing out, which can be just as bad as making the wrong move.
- Whether it's a specific IT programme, or your IT as a whole, keep an ongoing watch so that you stay fully informed and can make the right decisions at every stage and invest in IT that truly delivers for your business.