

Best Practices in Programme Management

Don't throw the baby out with the bath water!

Background

In our current world, circumstances continue to change and will do so as we move forward. This is true in all walks of life and none more so than in the area of organizational delivery of change. The necessity to continue to deliver new and innovative approaches to the way we progress change in organizations is critical.

Over the best part of the last twenty-five years, I have been a part of these changes in areas such as project, programme and portfolio management, benefits management and change management. So, it was great to see the advent of the fifth Edition of Managing Successful Programmes (MSP®) last year in response to the changing programme environment within which we now operate.

Successful Programme Delivery

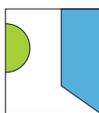
In many organizations and jurisdictions, where experience in programme management has been developed over the past 20 years, the supplementing of previous guidance in the fourth edition of the Managing Successful Programmes framework with that now contained in the fifth edition enables programmes to respond to the changing emphasis we see around us.

The necessity to continue to deliver new and innovative approaches to the way we progress change in organizations is critical.

Some of the key highlights from the fifth edition include:

- Alignment of Managing Successful Programmes more to the strategic / business focus of organizations.
- Greater recognition of multi-organization programmes.
- Recognition of multiple delivery approaches.
- Strengthened focus on the delivery of benefits.
- Financial focus more prevalent, e.g., references to funding mechanisms, investment appraisal and financial contingency.
- Focus on Decisions – including a Decisions Register.
- Risk-based assurance activities; and
- Addition of the three aspects of capability in the form of Culture, Infrastructure, and Knowledge and Learning within the Target Operating model.

continued



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Organizations in companies and jurisdictions which have an experience base in programme and project management can therefore take the guidance from the fifth edition and work the revised approach into their existing practices building on those developed over a number of years (up to 20 years in some cases).

The use of new terminology, revised and updated principles, themes and processes can all be further tailored to suit the environment within which programme practices are to be used within the same overall flexible progressive delivery of the future state target operating model.

All that to say, that where organizations have an experience base of programme management operationalized in the organization the necessary skills already exist to underpin the transition to the fifth edition while at the same time allowing the tailoring to suit the business environment of the organization.

The Challenge - Do not throw the baby out with the bathwater!

However, in organizations and jurisdictions which have only recently started to recognize programme management as a delivery mechanism, the loss of the detail from the fourth edition will pose challenges with operationalizing effective programme management at the delivery level.

The lack of experience in programme management for example in using MSP® coupled with a lower maturity in project management, which often exists, results in a void which cannot easily be filled. Much of the detail contained in the fourth edition which provides greater clarity in a number of areas will no longer be visible as practitioners will only be exposed to the fifth edition. Often heard is the phrase ‘we are now basing our practices on the fifth edition.’

A few areas where the MSP® fourth edition might provide much needed guidance include:

- Clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and capabilities of key roles.
- Terms of reference for decision-making bodies.
- Detailed typical content of documentation.
- Detailed assurance activity.
- Detailed programme and project control mechanisms; and
- Detailed risk and issue management.

Whilst the fifth edition does provide high-level content in some of these areas through the asking of questions, the inexperienced practitioner may well be left with further questions such as ‘how is it done?’ ‘what should I include?’ ‘what level of detail is expected?’ much of which can be answered from the fourth edition of MSP®.

When operationalizing programme management within organizations it is the detail and examples that inexperienced practitioners look for to support the development of their content for their approach to programme delivery.

Working within a jurisdiction which has only recently adopted programme management as a delivery approach, the need for the underpinning detail which is found in the fourth edition of MSP® is still very relevant as it does fill the gap between the higher-level business considerations and the inexperienced practitioner requests of ‘how do we actually do this?’ and ‘what does that mean in practice?’

The guidance captured in the fourth edition goes a long way to answer many of these questions for the inexperienced practitioner so **‘we should be careful and not throw the baby out with the bath water!’**



Alvin Gardiner MBA, MAPM

Alvin Gardiner MBA is an international portfolio/programme and project management consultant and trainer with over 30 years of experience in the Public Sector including 15 years as a Senior Executive working for Registers of Scotland Executive Agency. He holds an MBA from the Open University. He is an accredited, Management of Portfolios (MoP®) and Managing Benefits™ registered practitioner. He is also an MSP (Managing Successful Programmes) Advanced Practitioner and Approved trainer. He is a member of the Association for Project Management (MAPM), is APMP Certified, and is a trainer in APM Fundamentals and Project Management

Qualification certifications. Over the past twenty years, Alvin has worked on numerous assignments with key UK and Canadian Government organizations. He was Lead Author on the White Paper 'Delivering Complex Change Successfully within the Federal Government Environment'.

Alvin Gardiner, Practice Lead, MSP®

MSP® was originally introduced in the United Kingdom in 1999. It has undergone several experience-based updates over the years and is the foremost framework of its kind in the world. Recognizing the need for experienced consultants in Managing Successful Programmes (MSP®), The Right Door Consulting & Solutions Inc. has recruited five experts from the UK who are available to assist the Federal Government of Canada in their journey to successful programme management.

Please take a moment to look at our new marketing paper - *Managing Successful Programmes (MSP®) Our Team* which can be found on our website www.therightdoor.ca

MSP® Virtual Training Courses are now available!

Do you or your colleagues require training on MSP®? Virtual Training Courses are now available! Led by top MSP® Training experts in the UK, certification can be obtained for Foundation and Practitioner levels in 5 days. For more information, please visit our [website](http://www.therightdoor.ca) or contact Kathy Ring email kring@therightdoor.ca or by calling cell: 514 970 4242.

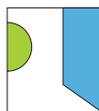
We continue to support our clients working remotely, and safely during the COVID-19 precautions.

If you are interested in learning more about MSP Best Practices, contact Heather Buchan at hbuchan@therightdoor.ca.

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