



The ***vision***
to stay ahead

Lewis Hamilton – the best BCM ever

1 Introduction

We sometimes have a bit of a struggle explaining the role of the Business Change Manager (BCM) in the context of programme management. After the recent success of Lewis Hamilton it makes an interesting analogy to show the criticality of the BCM role in the Mercedes programme to dominate Formula One racing.



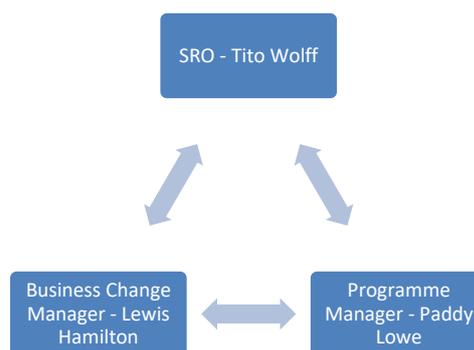
In this scenario the capability building programme sits with the technical development team who created the car and its support infrastructure. The benefits in the programme is race wins and championships, with the strategic value being the enhancement of the Mercedes brand.

In addition, the Mercedes F1 has been through 4 distinct stages of evolution. These can be aligned with the programme management concept of Tranches, namely, time bound stages of investment and achievement that build the programme towards achievement of the vision.

1.1 MSP governance model

The [Managing Successful Programmes \(MSP®\)](#) framework has a very straightforward governance model. There are 3 main roles involved with programme delivery:

- **Senior Responsible Owner (SRO)** – accountable for the success of the investment and delivery performance improvement
- **Business Change Manager (BCM)** – responsible for delivery of improved business performance and benefits
- **Programme Manager (PGM)** – responsible for delivery of the business infrastructure capability from which performance can be improved



2 Delivering the Mercedes vision

We are assuming the programme actually started within Mercedes well before the acquisition of Brawn GP in 2010. The programme initiated against the backdrop of a vision to enter the high cost and high rewards world of Formula One racing to enhance the Mercedes brand and become the premier name in the sport.

Tranche 1 - Establish the Mercedes racing team - The programme moved into delivery when Mercedes returned to Formula One for the 2010 season after buying a minority stake in the [Brawn GP](#) (for those of you that want the whole [story, click here the Wikipedia version](#)).

Tranche 2 – Start racing as Mercedes – 2011 and 2012 were the first years of racing and despite all the technical capability being built by the development team, the outcomes and benefits in terms of race performance were not delivered. In classic programme management terms, the projects were

not delivering the capability needed to achieve the benefits – in this case, the car was not winning races.

Tranche 3 – Win the world championship – in 2013 major changes were implemented to increase technical capability and performance, namely:

1. **New Senior Responsible Owner** – Formula One uses term Team Principal. Toto Wolff, was appointed to be accountable within Mercedes for the success of the business investment.
2. **New Programme Manager** – new appointment, Paddy Lowe, the Executive Director Technical, becomes the Programme Manager (though he would probably appreciate being called Programme Director)
3. **New Business Change Manager** - On 28 September 2012, it was announced that [Lewis Hamilton](#) would join the team from the 2013 season onwards.

In this scenario, the Formula One business is all about winning races, so however good the technical capability of the car is, the driver is responsible for ensuring they deliver the benefits through their performance on the track.

In 2014, at the Russian Grand Prix the Mercedes won their first Formula 1 Constructors' Championship. Hamilton won the last race of the season, held in Abu Dhabi, to clinch the World Drivers Championship.

Tranche 4 – Dominate the sport – the full exploitation of the technical capability has been illustrated by the ongoing performance and realisation of benefits through race wins and brand enhancement. In 2015, Mercedes and Hamilton retained the world championship, 2016 Mercedes retained both championships, but Rosberg usurped Hamilton to be drivers champion and in 2017 both Mercedes and Hamilton were crowned champions again, thus achieving global domination of the sport.

3 Conclusions

This analogy illustrates a number of common lessons for programme leaders:

1. Programmes cannot succeed without top class business change managers that can deliver performance improvement, which is why Mercedes recruited the best drivers
2. Business change managers (drivers), cannot achieve the benefits without the right capability, in this case the engine and chassis
3. The best programme leadership and business change managers still require the delivery teams performance at the highest levels on the day, in this case the pit team analysed performance and made the changes seamlessly

This article has been written by Aspire Europe Ltd, Rod Sowden, Managing Director of Aspire Europe Ltd and Lead Author for MSP® and P3M3® and author of a number of other books on how to deploy programme management effectively.

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