

MSP Survival Guide for Senior Responsible Owners has been written specifically for you (the SRO), full of helpful advice to make your hectic life easier.

There are many reasons why programmes fail but failure to grasp the scale of the change being delivered and weak leadership of the programme teams, are often contributing factors.

As you are unlikely to have time to read the MSP guide or to go on courses, we have covered the main things that you will need to know in a format that can be easily referenced.

In this series of extracts, we are publishing the Magnificent Seven tips from each chapter.

The author of the MSP Survival Guide is Rod Sowden, who is the current lead author of the main MSP® manual. He is the Managing Director of Aspire Europe and has been heavily involved in delivering major programmes, developing ideas and guidance that are used around the world.

Magnificent Seven tips

1. Manage the team evolution - be prepared for the team to evolve over the lifecycle. You will need different skills and behaviours from your programme manager as the programme matures.

2. Have clear terms of reference - ensure that every individual has clear terms of reference, good practice that you use in running your operations and services should be applied here

3. The programme board is not a stakeholder group - don't confuse the programme board with a stakeholder meeting, only the people attending should have the authority to make decisions.

4. Don't confuse qualifications with competence - qualifications do not mean people are experienced so be aware of this, particularly as various qualifications have terms like "Practitioner" associated with them.

5. Build your team – things you have done to build effective teams before need to be done here. People will be working together for a long time so they need to be committed to the cause and have a balance. Ensure that there is a development programme of training and knowledge transfer

6. Use the organisation to involve key groups - the programme team have a range of roles and skills needed, use these as an opportunity to build stakeholders into the process, particularly in the change team.

7. Beware of your organisations immaturity - it will define how much support you are going to get. If necessary, build in external expertise to set the programme up so you don't get off to a bad start, the chances are you will never recover.

“Organisations need to practice qualitative corporate governance rather than quantitative governance thereby ensuring it is properly run.” “You cannot legislate good behaviour.” – Mervyn King, Bank of England

Your programme will need an organisational structure, many programmes fail because they get this wrong from the outset. There are two sides to a programme:

- A) the bit that creates capability, which is where much of the money is spent on projects
- B) the bit that delivers the transformation, where the benefits come from changing the way the environment operates.

If you would like to buy a copy of the MSP Survival Guide for SRO's, please [follow this link](#) and use the following code **SG15**.

It is all too common to find programmes unbalanced and dominated by project thinking to build capability, you need to ensure that the programme is business focused or the benefits will never appear.

You need to have the best possible team around you. The designing of your team will in many ways be the defining moment for the programme, there are many things you need to consider. A common error is to assume that project managers will make good programme managers, this is not always the case. Cranfield identified 4 types of programme manager, this is well worth paying attention to.

The 4 Cranfield programme manager types:

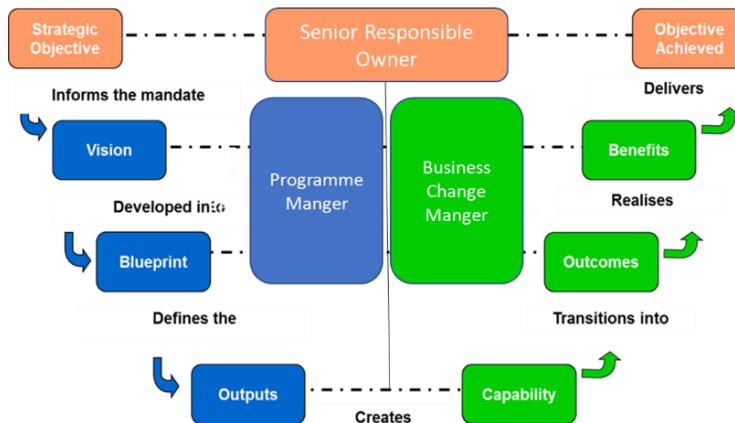
- **Level 1** - Concern for delivery of programme scope and focused on detail of project delivery
- **Level 2** - Concern for wider organisational impact of programme but primarily focused on the delivery of the project
- **Level 3** - Concern for achievement of high-level programme outcomes and focused on the achievement of benefits
- **Level 4** - Concern for development of strategic capabilities and the wider context of the programme

We have found this a really useful insight into understanding the different types of programme managers and when you need them during the programme lifecycle. If you have a level 1 programme manager at the start of a programme, you will quickly get into project delivery and probably lose the strategic context. If you have a level 4 programme manager during the delivery phase of a complex programme, it is likely the control will be weak as the detail will be missing. Consequently, this highlighted the need to plan for different programme managers at different stages of the programme.

Ideally, you should have the level 1 and 2 characteristics, so should be looking for balance with your own perceptions and remember that the perceptions you will need, change over the lifecycle of the programme. In the early days, the focus should be on strategic context but once you move into delivery, you need someone with stronger control instincts.

This image is critical to understanding the model and how the roles work. The blue boxes on the left show what the Programme Manager delivers to the programme whilst the green boxes on the right show what the Business Change Manager delivers. The roles are fundamentally different in their focus. Once the Programme Manager has delivered the outputs and created the capability, the Business Change Manager takes that forward to deliver the outcome and benefits.

The MSP Survival Guide for SROs – Programme Organisation



Programme structure aims and objectives of the programme at the front of your thinking. There will be many twists and turns, setbacks and problems to be overcome. Risks to be managed and decisions to be made. You set direction for the Programme Manager and Business Change Manager to provide leadership and energy to create the new capabilities, deliver the change and realise the benefits.

The V diagram illustrates that the programmes normally serve to deliver a corporate objective.

- The corporate objectives drive the development of the programme vision
- The vision is expanded into a blueprint for the future organisation
- The blueprint defines what the projects need to create
- The projects deliver outputs which creates capabilities
- The capabilities are transitioned into outcomes
- The outcomes enable the realization of benefits
- The benefits contribute to the achievement of the corporate objectives

The SRO's personal Magnificent Seven

Finally, a Magnificent Seven of personal advice for you.

1. Earn respect - You will need to have the respect of your staff, peers, superiors and key stakeholders. You will have to sell the concepts and the vision of the future to a wide range of stakeholders.

2. Hunt for talent - You need people who can help you achieve the goals. Build an effective and dynamic team to support you.

3. Believe in the programme vision - Have personal belief in the strategy and objectives of the organisation, be able to translate them into the programme to ensure the benefits are clearly allocated.

4. Have confidence to change direction - Have the self-belief to change direction if you do not believe the programme is aligned to corporate strategy – this can happen at any stage during the programme's life.

5. Be politically astute - Take the major decisions when they are needed. The programme board is not a democracy – it advises and supports you.

6. Make time available - This role is unlikely to be full time and will need to be managed alongside your day job.

7. Monitor individual performance - Continually monitor the performance of the key individuals so that you have the right people in the right places as the programme develops.