CLEAR STAR

CASE STUDY

Improving Programmatic Delivery and Governance in a Key Government Supplier

https://clearstargroup.co.uk +44 (0)20 7748 9948 info@clearstargroup.co.uk

© Clear Star Group 2024. Please do not share without explicit written consent

Situation

This key government supplier, responsible for delivering vital digital and technology solutions for defence, had major issues with programme and project delivery, with most of their major projects significantly behind schedule, over budget.

- **Projects consistently ran over budget and behind schedule**, struggling to improve the predictability of delivery, tackle technical debt in programmes and meet customer expectations
- **Poorly implemented agile practices** in delivery teams, working in to rigid waterfall programmes had led to issues with clarity of alignment of work to objectives, and unnecessarily complicated governance
- **Senior Leaders dragged into the depths of project delivery detail,** constantly in fire-fighting mode and struggling to fix long-term delivery.

Previous attempts to improve delivery had not properly embedded, people had become obsessed with process and low-level management to keep work on track. As a result, the teams were not taking ownership of fixing the problems.

Task

Clear Star were asked to:

1. **Help stabilise** current projects and programmes, embedding changes that would provide a strategic shift and support long term improvements in delivery in the organisation.
2. **Drive improvements in programmatic governance** to ensure that the projects and programmes in the organisation had the right level of rigour in place, helping to prevent future problems and ensure that potential problems were identified early.

Actions

1. **Worked with Senior Leaders to prioritise our areas of focus**
    - Ensured a shared understanding of problem areas and how they are manifesting in delivery
    - Defined key results for steams of work
    - Agreed cadence of reviews to enable reprioritisation based on progress and emerging issues
    - Provided executive level coaching to .....
2. **Improved Project and Programme Governance**
    - Refocussed Senior Leadership level governance meetings on portfolio level views, supporting more strategic decision making
    - Revised project and programme governance meetings to include key stakeholders from across the organisation, and ensure decisions were being taken by an empowered group

© Clear Star Group 2024. Please do not share without explicit written consent

3. **Improved Delivery Practices**

    - Provided coaching and learning opportunities to improve understanding of agile delivery practices among delivery teams
    - Improved rigour in delivery through implementation of core ceremonies, transparency of backlog and improved alignment between agile delivery teams and waterfall programmatic governance

4. **Improved transparency and collaboration across the Portfolio**

    - Brought together the major programmes in a Big Room Planning event, to improve collaboration and understanding of priorities for the next quarter, as well as improved management of dependencies
    - Improved sharing of monthly reporting to drive transparency across areas

5. **Transformed the Portfolio Management Team**

    - Worked with the team to provide them with clarity on their roles and the role of the team
    - Empowered the team to take ownership of the outcomes they needed to deliver, and how to change the processes they owned to add more value
    - Developed learning opportunities to increase understanding of agile ways of working so that they could better support the project teams
    - Collectively developed a strategic backlog of change, focussed on the outcomes they need to achieve.

Results

This work delivered transformative outcomes:

- Significantly reduced amount of time Senior Leaders spent in governance meetings (by approx. 40%)
- Increased rigour in reporting through increased alignment.
- Clarity between delivery team backlogs and programme schedules
- Focussed the Portfolio Management Team on outcomes, moving away from managing processes
- Enabled Senior Leaders to focus on strategic direction, by empowering Senior Programme Managers to take ownership of day-to-day decision making, supported by clear escalation paths.

Our work has set up this organisation to take ownership of their continued transformation, building confidence in the teams to embed a continuous improvement culture.

© Clear Star Group 2024. Please do not share without explicit written consent