CLEAR STAR

CASE STUDY

Supporting a Large Government Department to Become Service Orientated

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Situation

This large Government department, responsible for delivering and operating vital digital solutions for defence, struggled with a **poor reputation for delivery, including multiple red rated programmes**:

- **Projects consistently ran over budget and behind schedule**, delivering poor and out of date solutions misaligned with user needs.
- **Rigid waterfall delivery models** prevented responsiveness to global changes and evolving operational requirements.
- **Delivered solutions saw no further investment** resulting in them become obsolete and requiring new significant investment to replace them

Senior leaders wanted to adopt a new organisational and operating model that improved the value delivered to their customers while reducing costs through increased efficiencies and economies of scale, by:

- Re-structuring (people, money and reporting) around **enduring services** rather than projects and programmes, grouped into **portfolios of services**
- Bringing together **innovation, change and run** within each service, with Services tasked with understanding future customer needs and developing a response, and for **"evergreening"** Services to maintain operational capabilities
- Transitioning leaders from project and programme management roles into **service leadership** and **service portfolio leadership** roles
- Creating an environment of **delegation, empowerment, and transparency**, that enables local decision making, including the veer and haul people and money to emerging priorities
- New **management and governance** structures built on licences to operate that break down silos and drive collaboration between services

Task

Clear Star were asked to:

1. Support senior leaders to **develop a clear vision for the new operating model**
2. **Enable the adoption of an incremental and iterative** approach to the delivery of the change built on experimentation and testing, local shaping, and a senior leader guiding coalition to co-ordinate, enable and remove blockers
3. **Provide subject matter expertise** into and co-ordination of the emergent design, including fleshing out how key elements of this would work in practice
4. **Train and coach new Service leaders and their leadership teams** in the new operating model, their new roles & responsibilities, and the behaviours required from the new cross functional leadership teams
5. Support senior leaders in driving new **leadership behaviours and organisational culture**

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Actions

1. **Ran a series of briefing events and interactive discussion workshops with Senior Leaders on service orientated operating models**

    - Ran open briefing events on key topics including organising around value, new contracting models, bringing together change and run, and new leadership models, including a number of external speakers
    - Facilitated a series of collaborative senior leader discussions on how different elements of the model might work. Topics included service definitions, new measures of success, business cases, service management and governance and service dependencies
    - Developed an example case study of how a Service might operate
    - Facilitated discussions on how Services could utilise both agile and waterfall delivery modes to deliver change, and when each would be applicable

2. **Implemented the required incremental and iterative delivery approach**

    - Established a Guiding Coalition of senior leaders to review progress, blockers, issues, prioritisation and other decisions on a fortnightly basis
    - Established an experimental and iterative approach based on quarterly big room planning, independent empowered teams, engagement with communities of interest, and transparent demonstration of learnings and progress
    - Training and coached an internal change team to co-ordinate activities and support the Guiding Coalition, allowing the client to become self sufficient

3. **Designed and captured the shared understanding of key elements of the new operating model**

    - Facilitated and led numerous discussions on how the Service operating model should work
    - Provided key expert input in several areas including Service level reporting, Service leadership team structures, delivery lifecycles, and Service hierarchies and decomposition
    - Captured the emergent shared understanding in a high-level operating model summary document that was used to validate and drive further shared understanding
    - Lead the strategy for determining a new approach to business cases based on enduring funding of Services, aligned to and exploiting wider Defence changes on new business case models

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4. **Provided coaching and training to new Service Owners and Service Leadership Teams**

    - Provided senior leader coaching on culture elements (empowerment, psychological safety, intent-based leadership, leadership language, teaming cultures, and transparency)
    - Provided senior leader coaching on the new operating model (roles & responsibilities, new funding and business case models, transitioning from programme to service leadership, and other elements of the new operating model)
    - Lead workshops for each Service area to help them understand the impact and changes required by the new operating model and their new roles
    - Facilitated a Service Owner Community of Practice to enable sharing of experiences, challenges and lessons learned
    - Provided 1-to-1 coaching to new Service Owners and members of Service Leadership Teams
    - Developed and delivered a training pathway to nearly 200 members of Service Leadership Teams
    - Developed a Service Delivery Handbook for Service Leadership Teams

Results

A clean and successful transformation built on:

- A clear shared vision from senior leaders on the outcomes required
- Shared buy-in and a shared sense of ownership of the change and the new operating model across the organisation
- A sustainable approach to the change, led by the organisation itself, rather than being imposed on it, and based on experimentation, and local and iterative design
- A shift in organisational culture to move to towards collaboration, empowerment, and delegated decision making, driven by new cross functional Service leadership teams, and resulting in lower decision latency
- Three levels of leadership successfully transitioned from Project and Programme Roles into new digital Service Roles
- Usage of both waterfall and agile delivery methodologies depending on circumstances across different Services
- Transformational change without sacrificing in-flight delivery performance

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Feedback from the client called out that our work had:

- “Ensured staff looked favourably on the transformational changes”
- “Built a shared sense of ownership of the change across the organisation led by a key cadre of supports”
- “Embedded a mindset that it was ok to experiment, get things wrong or try something completely different and learn from it”
- “Accelerated implementation and supported rapid development and learning through sharing of our knowledge and experience”
- “Driven service thinking and starting to shift their culture towards one that treats services as an important part of what we are here to do”
- “Enabled leaders to think differently and engage with their teams in new ways”

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