guiding light

NTRODUCING a Project Support Office (PSO) is easily done. Introducing an effective one is not! As the principal impact is on the culture. In most organisations, sponsors typically preside over project managers, who in fact make up their own minds over what and how to carry out their projects.

by **Christopher Worsley**

CEO: CITI Group

Funding is often obscure, and value assumed. Well implemented PSOs give portfolio managers real powers and responsibilities for money and facilities, as well as overall project performance. This is seen as such a threat to the status quo that few organisations manage the change.

shared beliefs

A culture is the set of shared beliefs and practises which are so deeply established in a group that its basic premises are rarely if ever examined. They shape the very way the group conceive of their purpose. For this reason it's very hard to deliberately shift the 'deep' culture. Attempts to do so often evoke the characteristic cycle of resistance, anger, and poor morale, with enormous disruption to activities and loss of invaluable informal patterns of relationship and procedure.

Yet, all healthy cultures constantly evolve. An organisational structure evolves in response to changes in the environment, guided in part by its culture, but at the same time the culture itself adjusts to the changing demands of the structure and the environment. But when the rate of change demanded by the environment requires specific organisational responses, it is no longer safe to rely on unmanaged 'evolutionary' cultural change. After all, evolution has left humans with appendixes, ear lobes and a propensity for bad backs!

For many organisations, managed successful cultural change is not an option – it's a fundamental requirement. All the usual caveats of leadership, clarity of objectives, and commitment from the top go without saying, but how do you actually make it happen? Real cultural change is a dynamic process. It depends on a constant re-examination of the effectiveness of the methods used and constant vigilance to detect the establishment of informal fiefdoms and unofficial perks arising from weak points in funding control, as these often provide the focus for people's resistance to change.

A key factor influencing acceptance is the balance between rewards offered by new opportunities and penalties incurred by old behaviours. Large institutions are most vulnerable to cultural ossification because the opportunities and penalties are rarely linked directly to individual behaviours, and the shared 'higher' values of the 'deep' culture always show strong self-preservation tendencies.

The problem is that, as Francis Bacon said years ago, "He that will not apply new remedies, must expect new evils: for time is the greatest innovator". And the times have changed – unless an institution changes to match them it, de facto, has changed whether it meant to or not. Projects are now too significant a part of most organisations' investment to let them be. You are going to have to dust off the cultural change process and get it to work.

Guiding you through the tides of cultural change.

world-class connec

A GLOBAL telecommunications giant has chosen CITI as a partner to build a world-class project management community. Recently positioned as the global leader, they are stepping up the momentum as they add to an already extensive portfolio of services which in turn makes ever greater demands on excellent project performance.

This year, as part of their programme to drive excellence into their business performance and respond to their clients and their competitors, they are investing in their project community. Their spokesperson, who heads this initiative, is very clear, project performance is fundamental to their success, and the performance of their project managers – and indeed the whole project community – underpins their success globally.

vision

"Their vision fits well with CITI's own mission," says Loretta Devonshire, CITI client manager. "Our business is to make project management a valued and respected discipline, and recognised as an essential skill in today's business world. Their commitment to quality project management was evident every step of the way during the procurement. What they are looking for, what they want to achieve, and what they will get from CITI is the very best development programme for their whole project community."

Over the next 12 months, working closely with their project and programme management community programme, CITI is to deliver a comprehensive package of development events. Based on a 'needs analysis', backed up by profiling of individual skills and knowledge, individual development plans will be translated into action: training to achieve APMP and Prince2 accreditation; targeted development of specific disciplines, as well as education programmes that develop the rounded skills, experience and judgement that underpin excellent project management. As part of the programme, CITI will also support the implementation of consistent, 'best practice' project management processes and procedures.

nurturing your PPSO to ma

SO you've got a Project and Programme Support Office (PPSO)! Is it serving your organisation's needs? Are you a PPSO customer, a PPSO supplier, or do you work within the PPSO itself?

Whatever your relationship to your PPSO, the chances are that your organisation has a greater need now than ever before for efficiency and effectiveness in project and programme management – and make no mistake, your PPSO can play a vital role in increasing that capability.

If your answer to the question: "How big is your PPSO's contribution to organisational well-being?" is "How can I tell – what could or should it be?", then read on, because we can help answer that. We've analysed many PPSOs. We've found that numerous organisations know they need to take action to improve delivery performance, but aren't clear as to what they should do.

The differing needs and engagement of senior managers, of programme managers and of project managers tend to direct PPSOs toward one of four types. These can be characterised as:

➤ **Administration**

The PPSO provides clerical and administrative support to the project and programme community. They tend to 'file' things.
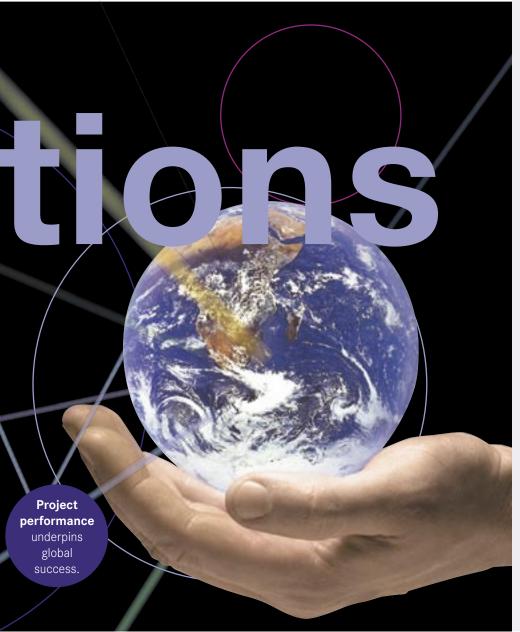
➤ **Control**

The PPSO's emphasis is on gathering information from and exerting budgetary, methodological and reporting control over, projects. They tend to 'audit' things.

➤ **Guidance**

These PPSOs focus on enhancing the capability of project and programme management by establishing and propagating

tions

Project performance underpins global success.

cultural change presentation

ALREADY in its fourth year, the Best Practice Showcase is going from strength to strength, and has firmly established itself as the "must-attend" event in the diaries of the UK 's leading programme and project management professionals. With over 650 participants, including project directors and programme heads from all sectors, a very high level of discussion and learning can be relied upon.

Speaking on the hottest delegate-chosen topic, Dr Christopher Worsley, CEO of CITI Group, presents a seminar on the challenge of cultural change. He is joined by Toni Frascina, Business Improvement Manager at Sheffield Hallam University. A commonly held view of universities is one of ivory towers separated from the 'real world' of business. With changes made by governments over the last two decades this view could not be more wrong. Many universities accept that they exist within a competitive environment, where the future will be as uncertain for them as for any other organisation.

Sheffield Hallam University is one university embracing the opportunity to determine its own successful future. Over the last two years, the Vice chancellor Diana Green has been championing a major change initiative to make Sheffield Hallam stand out from the rest. In this session Toni and Christopher discuss cultural change and the challenges the University has overcome to deliver the Vice Chancellor's vision. They are presenting at 11.30am on 9th June 2006. This session is one not to be missed!

**To book on this seminar visit
 www.bestpracticeshowcase.com.**

ximise its performance

best practice, promoting project management development and education, and providing expert advice and guidance on specific projects. They tend to 'advise' people.

➤ **Partnership**
A partnership PPSO collaborates with senior management to ensure that the project portfolio and the delivery capability of the project and programme community is aligned. They plan for future delivery needs in terms of capacity and capability. They tend to be rare!

These four types represent an increasing corporate commitment. Of course, there is a right PPSO for your organisation – and it might be an Administration type. It does depend on what you want, and perhaps

who you are. The need for more predictable performance may lead to a Control type, more consistency may suggest Guidance, while improved alignment between strategic requirements and delivery capability would require Partnership.

We can help you to decide what type of PPSO would be best for your organisation, and provide support in migrating to your preferred type.

If you could use some help in identifying your next steps along the path to a healthy, effective PPSO, your next move should be to confirm or assess your current organisational PPSO capability.
To do this, please complete our free online questionnaire at www.citi.co.uk/ppsoquest.

Administration

Control

Partnership

Guidance

a framework for change

THERE is an unrelenting pressure on organisations, and the individuals who populate them, to change and develop. This in turn places unprecedented demands on change management communities especially the project and programme managers.

Research published in the annual IT Skills Trends Review from the Institute for Management of Information Systems indicates that the UK IT workforce faces terminal decline unless project management skills become an immediate focus for existing employees.

So, how do organisations assess and develop their change management capability? Many now speak of the 'professionalisation' of the project and programme management communities and the development of 'centres of excellence' for change management capability.

clear route

With increasing pressure on individuals to develop such capabilities, it is vital that they understand, not only what is expected of them, but are provided with a clear route to enable them to develop the necessary capability to carry out their role effectively. An effective development framework can provide the visibility required.

CITI research into 'what makes an effective project manager' reveals that capability is a combination of knowledge, attitudes and behaviours, skills and experience – with experience being the biggest predictor of performance. An effective development framework therefore needs to provide a blend of development activities which enable an individual to develop in all of these areas.

Training, focusing as it does on imparting knowledge, and education, are not of themselves sufficient although they can play an important role, as can the attainment of professional qualifications. Other development activities must be available to enable individuals to put this acquired knowledge into practice and develop the skills, adopt the necessary attitudes and behaviours, and acquire the right 'real world' experience.

effective

Effective development frameworks offer development activities that include coaching and mentoring, networking opportunities, and exposure to 'real world' situations under the supervision of those more experienced.
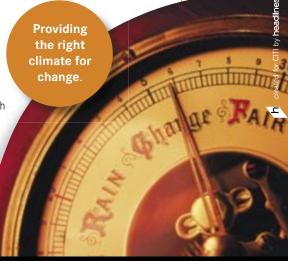
One of the most important things which a development framework should provide is clarity, both to the organisation and the individual. For the individual, this means clarity as to the skills and capabilities expected of them in a particular role, how to develop those capabilities, and how to progress from one level or role to another. Individuals should be able to recognise their current position in terms of capability, identify where they need or would like to be and plan a series of development activities to enable them to get there. For the organisation, visibility of both organisational and individual capability enables improved matching of supply to demand.

Consequently, an essential ingredient of a framework, is an underpinning analysis of the skills and competencies required to fulfil a particular role. Only when these are clearly defined can an individual understand in detail what is expected of them and development events be selected or designed which will have the desired effect on skill levels, attitudes, behaviours, experience and, ultimately, performance.

Having invested in the development of individuals, the more sophisticated organisations recognise the capability and further developmental opportunity of these individuals to 'give back' to the communities of which they are a part. They become the educators, coaches and mentors of the future, passing on the benefit of their experience.

The combination of a clear career path and a development route to enable the desired progression, can be a powerful planning and motivational tool for the individual wishing to progress and be effective in the challenging world of change management. Learning and development is a lifelong challenge – are you ready for it?

Providing the right climate for change.

putting principles into practice

CITIs open courses fast-track project managers' practical experience by providing not only tried and tested tools and techniques, but also a safe environment in which to use them through the use of real case studies. It takes methods like PRINCE2 and MSP and puts them into a real business environment so delegates can see what works and what doesn't – and more importantly learn from their mistakes. **To find out which course you should attend and the next dates visit www.citi.co.uk/which-course.**

The right course for you depends on your experience and your role.
➤ **Project team members with no experience** – The **Introducing Project Management** course gives attendees practical tools and techniques for managing work packages. They experience how projects are different to business as usual by planning a real project.
➤ **Project managers with no previous formal training** – On our **Making Projects Work** course attendees get to experience real project situations in a safe environment and learn how to manage real project challenges including resource reduction, scope creep or what to do when the end date is brought forward!
➤ **Senior project managers with at least five years' experience** – Our **Advanced Project Management** course focuses on accelerating the attendees' experience. Through computer based simulations and case studies, attendees can experience the outcomes of decisions they make on their projects, taking the learning from the course into a realistic business environment.
➤ **Programme managers** – Our **Delivering Programmes** course helps programme managers to understand the attitudes and behaviours necessary to deliver programmes and gives them the tools to deal with the realities of making decisions driven by benefit cases. Using two real cases, one involving a major transformation and the other a merger of two similar businesses, the delegates go through the experience of managing a programme.