



CASE STUDY

RAF – Applying Benefit Realisation Management (BRM) to their organisation-wide transformation programme

Background

In order to operate effectively, the RAF recognised the need to have efficient processes and the right behaviours to sustain them, underpinned by continuous improvement. Therefore, 18 months ago, the RAF embarked on a major Transformation Programme which they hoped would deliver improvement activities across the whole organisation and which, in turn, would create the capacity the organisation needs for the future. The programme follows MSP programme management methodology which is wholly aligned with Benefits Realisation Management. Currently, the programme is half-way through and the team is expected to function until December 09. After this point it is anticipated that a culture of continuous improvement would have been embedded.

In undertaking such a significant programme of work, one of the tools the RAF used was 'leaning'. This delivered a strategic RAF Process Model which identifies the RAF's core processes and those processes which support it, as well as the dynamics that should be at play in an efficiently operating RAF. It also demonstrated many opportunities for eliminating waste.

The RAF realised that although they had devised a strategic process model, they needed to link this process work to benefits. They were guided by advice contained in their first Gateway Review, which advised that they had a pressing need to engage a specialist to lead them through the Benefits Realisation Process. A number of stakeholders engaged in Transformation had attended masterclasses led by Gerald Bradley from the consultancy firm **sigma**, including the SRO who became convinced of the power of the **sigma** approach.

The Benefits Management Strategy that RAF Transformation has devised with **sigma** aims to ensure that the RAF Process Model is delivered. It involves the identification, prioritisation and implementation of clearly defined, measurable and compelling benefits. Benefits mapping is crucial in prioritising and linking improvement activities to the Process Model; moreover, through the allocation of metrics to benefits, a mechanism for measuring success is in the process of being created. The intended benefits will need to be constantly reviewed to ensure that they remain aligned with the RAF Vision and delivery of the RAF Process Model.

sigma was commissioned to:

- Provide awareness of BRM to all key senior stakeholders in Transformation.
- Assist the team in developing a method for integrating of the BRM work with the Lean Work and RAF Process Model.
- Provide foundational BRM training for the Programme Team and for the Lean Facilitators, to increase RAF understanding of the power, potential and practicalities of applying the BRM approach.
- Facilitate a 'train the trainer' workshop for the RAF facilitators.

- Complete skills transfer through applying this approach at facilitated workshops, relating to different aspects of the Transformation Programme.

Challenges faced by sigma

Although the **sigma** intervention was welcomed and supported by some at a senior level, **sigma** faced several significant challenges, including:

- How to retrofit benefits to the RAF Process Model, in the light of a growing recognition by RAF staff that they should have started the programme with BRM
- How to win over those, at all levels, who thought Lean was sufficient, (benefits are determined at a tactical level during the Lean process work, not up front - it is target driven not benefits led).
- How to transfer sufficient skills in a relatively short timeframe.
- How to integrate the work of seven independently defined themes.

What we did

After providing some initial BRM training, **sigma** facilitated, for senior stakeholders, a Strategy Workshop soon followed by a Benefits Workshop. Although the resulting maps were subsequently refined and amended, the process clearly demonstrated the power of the approach, thus increasing buy-in.

Further workshops began to identify necessary behavioural and cultural changes in addition to providing a framework for prioritising the large number of improvement opportunities identified through the Lean Process. This added value and convinced more people of the power of BRM. **sigma** was then asked to provide further training for the RAF facilitators and to work with them to apply the approach systematically to the seven previously identified themes of the Transformation Programme.

Once this series of workshops had been completed and further refinement undertaken by the RAF facilitators, under the guidance of **sigma**, the full set of maps were linked together using a redeveloped and weighted Strategy Map. This enabled a complete prioritisation of all the required changes and has laid the foundations for cohesive benefit tracking and reporting.

During the assignment we noticed the attitude to BRM of many of the key stakeholders move from resistance to indifference to mild interest to enthusiasm.

Results achieved

The following were achieved in line with expectations:

- Creation of route maps to success for each of the seven themes.
- The RAF Transformation Programme is now developing a prioritised change implementation plan driven by benefits and aligned to RAF Process Model.
- Highlighting of the need for specific behavioural and cultural changes.
- Transfer of BRM skills to RAF Personnel.
- The early stages of the embedding of BRM within the organisation.

In addition to the above, there was such enthusiasm for the approach that there was commitment to apply BRM above and beyond the Transformation Programme and already the Team are sharing experiences and advice with other MOD change programmes. BRM thinking is now considered as an important foundation for programmes in the RAF.