



The Problem

A large government agency had been building a list of projects that they wanted to deliver across various parts of the business. With many stakeholders at all levels of the organisation it was apparent that the promises being made would be a significant challenge to deliver. Ever increasing requests for time extensions, more money and more people were starting to create stress for everyone.

What are the real benefits?

Creating a list of what was to be done was only the beginning. With more than 80 “ongoing” projects and only 4 project directors something had to change.

We went back to basics. Which projects were needed in order to meet compliance requirements? Which projects were critical to stay in business? Which ones were most expensive and would take the longest?

Every organisation has a way of determining what they see as a benefit. Governments are no different.

We applied the benefits assessment criteria presented by NSW State Treasury and trained the governance teams on the differences between financial and economic benefit.



From this criteria a weighted priority could be applied to all projects on the list quickly.

What we didn't have yet was commitment to change!

“Kill your darlings”



Like all executive teams, “pet” or favoured projects were on the list. This simply means projects underway by preference rather than an overall benefit contribution assessment to the business.

In order to really create an effective way to deliver benefits we needed to gain an agreement to the approach from those in a position to decide which projects to invest in.

By making the process about an objective way to decide we were able to gain agreement on **how** the process would work before we saw the outcome. This included not only the amount of resources to be applied (people, money, time, systems) and the size of the benefit aimed for, but also the amount of time before that benefit would be able to be banked. This last criteria is often overlooked and is critical for effective benefits realisation decisions. \$100Million is not going to help you in 100 years if you need it in 12 months!

With that process now in place the projects were able to be categorised and the results presented to the executive team. Some projects were then able to be ceased and resources applied to those that were of higher priority.

Of greater usefulness was the process itself. As new projects came to the executive team all projects could then be assessed (including those already underway) to determine how to best use the current resources.

Our Conclusion

Benefits Management is not just about the “size of the prize”. It is a process to achieve the right amount of benefit at the right time based upon the right investment of resources. It requires an investment in effective process on the part of an organisation and a commitment to supporting that approach. Continuous review of that process as times change is also important in order to make sure that you can continue to see benefits from the investments you make.